Humility, Entry 1 of 1

Balancing willingness and humility means that we are able to step up to the work we are able to do, and also admit that sometimes we need help.

—Guiding Principles, Tradition Eight, “Spiritual Principles”

Seeing our principles at work in NA service helps many of us learn how to apply them in our personal lives. Tradition Eight is a good example, reminding our groups to practice humility and prudence by being realistic about what we can and cannot accomplish through our voluntary service efforts. Some tasks or projects might require more time, energy, or expertise than we have available in our group or service body. In some cases, we pay someone else to carry out the work on our behalf, like printing T-shirts or serving a banquet meal at the convention. Much of what we do can be done by trusted servants; humility helps us sort out the difference.

Our personal recovery offers us many chances to step into a realistic view of who we are. For example, our humility deepens when we admit powerlessness in Step One, accept help in Steps Three and Seven, and embrace our strengths and limitations in Steps Four and Ten. We continually gain experience sorting out what we can and cannot do for ourselves. Sometimes, we simply embrace our strengths or expand our capabilities. Other times, we accept our limitations.

“I wanted to save money on a plumber by fixing a leak myself,” a member recalled. “My partner reminded me that I’d made several valiant attempts at home projects in the past year, and none turned out very well. If I want to become a fix-it person, I can make the time to take a class or get help from a friend. But while the water is leaking, I might just need to call an actual plumber.”

I don’t have to be capable of everything. If my needs or desires outweigh my ability, I will practice humility by asking for help.