

## Appendix 2

### **KNOWLEDGE-BASED DECISION MAKING: THE PROCESS**

World Service Conference Summary 2006,

*Catherine J. Executive Committee Chairperson,*

*Cecelia L. Executive Committee member at-large,*

*Marge S. Executive Committee member at-large*

Members of the Executive Committee who had each been a part of the knowledge-based decision-making process from the beginning of its use by the Board defined the process as looking at a topic through certain agreed-upon criteria to see if it is something that the group wants to pursue. The idea is talked about first to see if the group agrees with all or part of it. If so, pertinent background information is gathered and shared with those responsible for making the decision. Then, if it is decided that the idea is something that is worthwhile, a decision can be made through motion and vote.

Knowledge-based decision-making has four essential elements based on a philosophy of: open communication between leadership and membership; dialogue before deliberation; all decision makers having common access to full information; and it exists in a culture of trust

How does this relate to the Twelve Concepts of Service? It is based on the following:

- mutual trust
- designated authority—traditional and legal
- participation
- leadership
- The Right of Decision
- our spiritual foundation

Why is it a good model?

- It allows thorough examination of mega issues without an end in mind.
- It allows those who make the decision to become far less important than the fact that a good decision is made.
- It is a process for ongoing strategic thinking and strategy development.
- It allows us to develop a reputation for value and nimbleness in carrying the message.

What does this mean for Al-Anon as a whole? It provides Al-Anon with:

- Recognition as a credible organization
- A reputation for value
- A culture built on trust and communication

The Board has used this process in its meetings since members were first introduced to it by the Chairperson of the Board. There were some members who were unclear as to how it was different from the way decisions had been made in the past. The chart on page 7 shows some comparisons between the traditional value and the knowledgebased value. With this process, it is not necessary to choose sides or develop evidence with an end in mind. Rather, it provides for open dialogue, so everyone's needs are heard, expectations and preferences are acknowledged, and ethical dimensions are

considered, being ever aware of the likely evolution of the environment in which members live. The benefits of this process are great:

- Group members are more likely to support the decision made
- Group effort is more likely to yield better results
- Participants become part of the process, more voices are heard, more solutions generated
- Recognition that responsibility for action rests on everyone
- Actions tend to lean toward the greater good for the organization
- Negativity is diffused

After the presentation, Conference members shared their thoughts, experiences, and ideas for using this process. Some of their experience follows:

At one Area's World Service Committee meetings, a District Representative is assigned to write down and bullet the items that evolve from the discussion and, at the end of the discussion, the ideas are reviewed. If clarification is needed on anything, members are encouraged to ask questions or share their interpretation of the discussion. One Delegate announced that her Area was using this process and didn't realize it! Another Delegate shared that "this is really an informed group conscience." One more said, "This can be used in my personal life. It's about opening our minds and being willing to learn new things."

Additional References to KBDM in the World Service Conference Summaries 2008 and 2014, available on [al-anon.org](http://al-anon.org).