

**This piece of literature is in process. Please send your brief short stories of experience, strength and hope related to any of the questions. Your stories will be considered for possible inclusion in the workbook in its final form.**

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**If you have a story to share, please send it to  
Conceptsmeeting@weareallua.org**

## **Concept 1**

**The ultimate responsibility and authority for Underearners Anonymous World Services should always remain with the collective conscience of our whole Fellowship as expressed through the UA groups.**

## **Reading (from DA)**

The ultimate responsibility and authority for Debtors Anonymous World Services should always remain with the collective conscience of our whole Fellowship as expressed through the D.A. groups.

This Concept recognizes the fundamental fact that all authority in D.A. flows through the groups and their members. As the Second Tradition recognizes, the ultimate authority in D.A. is a loving God as expressed in our group conscience. The groups are the primary interpreters and discerners of the Higher Power's will for the future of D.A. They remain at the top of the "inverted triangle," which represents the D.A. service structure. It is they who select the general service representatives (GSRs) and who create the Inter-groups represented by Intergroup service representatives (ISRS) who attend the annual World Service Conference. The groups retain the power to discipline all elements of D.A. service through their control of D.A.'s finances. Since D.A. is constrained by the Seventh Tradition from seeking out-side funding, ultimately the groups provide the source of D.A.'s income, either directly through group contributions or indirectly through group purchases of literature.

It is because the groups retain this ultimate authority that the positions of GSR and ISR are so important in D.A. It becomes necessary that a communications link exists to express that authority, and the GSRS and ISRs are that link. In consequence, it becomes vital for the GSRs to listen carefully to their individual group members and the conscience of the group as a whole as expressed at business meetings. Only if GSRS or ISRS are informed of the group conscience can they carry that understanding beyond the group level to the World Service Conference. It is equally important that these representatives ensure that their groups are fully informed of the facts upon which these

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decisions are based. Thus, it is their responsibility to report back to the members all information relevant to the World Service structure.

The groups cannot exercise this responsibility and authority by themselves. They must act through the World Service Conference, composed of GSRS, ISRS, Trustees, and appropriate office staff. The watchword for this Concept is responsibility. Groups and their members must act responsibly in learning about issues that affect D.A. as a whole and in exploring the possibilities for D.A.'s future. Often groups resist providing adequate time to their GSR to report back on matters of general importance. This is one of the most obvious ways in which groups disregard Concept One through lack of awareness. Responsibility to keep the group informed also rests upon the GSR or ISR. Information flows both ways via the GSR or ISR. It is that person's duty to represent the group and attempt to express its conscience. If GSRS fail to recognize their responsibility to discern the group conscience, they are tempted to act as if they are the ultimate arbiters, failing to consult and listen. Equally important, the GSR has the obligation to report back to the group on his or her decisions and votes and to accept criticism gracefully if there has been a failure to listen.

### Stories and questions (from Alanon)

Responsibility and authority are often misplaced for Underearners. Sometimes, we take on all authority and responsibility because we assume that others are incapable and need our help. At other times, we hide and allow others to be the driving force in everything, and we passively follow along because we are afraid of loss, or we want approval and legitimacy from authority figures. Many underearners have little or no experience with shared responsibility and balanced authority.

Our underearning may have started in childhood and as children we might have found ourselves taking care of our parents, and assuming parental responsibility for our siblings. Many of us may have grown up feeling responsible for what we could not control and were not emotionally equipped to manage. We were children, but felt we had to take on the role and responsibility of a parent. We also may have found ourselves in relationships or educational, or work environments where roles were distorted and boundaries of authority and responsibility were unclear.

Confusion about roles and responsibilities can affect how we step up into action, at work as well as at home. Our success and our serenity depend upon our ability to take responsibility for what is ours, and to let go of the rest. By having enough trust to let go of control, we can actually retain and exercise our true power.

Concept One affirms that as individuals we are responsible for our own lives. We cannot expect others to take on our responsibilities; nor should we assume the responsibilities of others. This Concept reminds us to focus on what belongs to us. Letting go of our misplaced authority over

the lives of others, and accepting our responsibility to ourselves, allows us to take care of our own needs and desires, while allowing others to do the same.

### **Accepting her request**

While we often focus on the Concepts as they apply to service, I've found that they apply in all of my affairs. I have ultimate authority and responsibility for my life and prosperity, which is why I must keep the focus on me. My father remarried at age 82. While I was glad for my father, I was unhappy that he was replacing my mother. Moreover, I was given medical power of attorney for both my father and his new wife because her daughters did not live close by. Her daughters were not happy, and I felt uncomfortable. Meditating on the Concepts, I came to see that my stepmother had ultimate responsibility and authority for her life. She had chosen me. That revelation helped me accept what I had been asked to do.

**In what ways does Concept One help me to keep the focus on myself?**

**How can Concept One help me to trust the decisions of others?**

### **What is my responsibility?**

I have a kind of love/hate relationship with responsibility. When, in the past, I was stolen from, I assumed responsibility because I didn't put my checkbook in a safer hiding place. When my doctor challenged me to try a 12 step program, namely UA, I didn't want any responsibility for my own recovery. In many cases, I ignored the chaos around me, so that I didn't have to think about my part or responsibility. Now when I use Concept One, I realize that I am not responsible for the blizzard outside. However, I am responsible for leaving 20 minutes early for work, so that I can take my time and drive safely. I am not responsible for the chaos around me. I am, however, responsible for my words and actions. I often blamed others in my life for not being a better parent, spouse, and so on. It never occurred to me that I expected the others to do something he or she wasn't capable of doing. Even if being a good parent or spouse was the desire and intent, those people were as powerless over their shortcomings as I was.. I came to realize that my responsibility was to accept the situation, or find another way for those needs to be met.

**In what situations have I assumed responsibilities that were not mine?**

**In what situations have I allowed others to assume responsibilities that should have been mine?**

### **I am not the ultimate authority**

Before coming to UA, I was so busy trying to put out the fires of my underearning that I became ever more and more isolated, holding tightly to the belief that I had to be the ultimate authority. After I had attended an UA meeting and shared part of my story, I was handed a card that read: "There are two foundations of fact. One, there is a higher power. Two, you are not it." I

understood this message more deeply when my son, an adult child of a dysfunctional person, returned home as a dysfunctional person.

In a loving discussion, he revealed to me my part. "Mom, when I was growing up, you didn't allow me to do things for myself. The lesson I learned was that I couldn't do things for myself." I had robbed my child of the opportunity to solve problems on his own, to be successful from his own efforts, and to learn how to live life with dignity. I had passed my underearning to my child.

I still carry that card as a reminder, and it guides me back to the principles of the program. I know today that when I stop being the ultimate authority, then I can detach with love, keep my hands off, and "Let Go and Let God."

**How can Concept One help me to detach and "Let Go and Let God," instead of trying to control the lives of others?**

### **Balanced responsibility**

Concept One speaks to me about responsibility. When I was new in UA, I thought that I was the mature one in my marriage. I took responsibility for everything. As my awareness grew, I learned that in healthy relationships, responsibility is shared and balanced. Over the years, I have experienced motherhood, divorce, career changes, re-marrying, and now grand-parenting. Many times, I have felt that it was my responsibility to keep everyone happy, or at least calm. In UA, I have learned that I am only responsible for myself. As long as I remember that I am not the ultimate authority, I can experience peace and joy in all areas of my life. UA has helped me to grow up, and feel good about the person I am becoming, "One Day at a Time."

**How can practicing the principle of Concept One help me to assume responsibilities in a more balanced way?**

## Concept 2

**The UA groups delegate authority to the General Service Board for legal and financial responsibilities, insofar as their actions are determined at the WSC convocation. The UA groups consider the World Service Conference to be the true voice and conscience for the whole Fellowship on all matters, including policy, except for any change in the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. The General Service Representatives of the groups (GSRs) are the majority voice of the Conference..**

For some of us underearners, relying on others to complete an assigned job or task may be difficult. Lack of trust often plays a part in our thinking that we must do everything ourselves, because no one else seems capable. Concept Two reminds us that we can delegate certain responsibilities to others.

When we delegate responsibility for a task, it is important to maintain a dialogue between ourselves and those doing the work. This dialogue ensures accountability, strengthens understanding for the person doing the work, and helps us build trust in each other. In UA, delegation of duties is necessary to the overall success of the worldwide fellowship.

The same principle applies in all areas of our personal lives. Delegating certain duties to others makes it possible for us to do far more than we could do alone. It also brings the joy and fulfillment of having common goals, mutual trust, and shared success.

### **Shared responsibility**

Concept Two inspires me to learn to delegate. In the past, I believed I was the only one who had a grasp of the truth. Delegating some tasks to others required little exchange, negotiation, or discussion. The principle of Concept Two was the last thing in my mind! I traveled alone on the road of fear, manipulation, and control. These paralyzing feelings held me hostage, and cheated me out of enriching experiences with others. Over the years, some remnants of old habits still show their ugly heads from time to time. I am still learning how to delegate responsibilities to others. Another challenge for me was learning to listen. When my comments or answers were whirling around in my mind, it was often difficult to actually hear what was being expressed. With time, I came to understand that this behavior was not necessary, because everything would fall into place. It is now more important to give my sustained and exclusive attention to the person talking. However, this remains a work in progress. Thanks to the love and understanding of numerous UA members, I am learning the real meaning of Concept Two. I am discovering the joy of mutual trust, and the importance of shared responsibility.

**In what ways does Concept Two show me how to give responsibility to others?**

### **Letting go**

There is a mental image I get when I think about Concept Two. I close my eyes, and picture myself with one hand on Concept One, while the other reaches for Concept Two. The space between the two Concepts is far enough so that I have to let go of Concept One in order to catch hold of Concept Two. I've learned that I gain trust by letting go of some responsibilities, and giving them to someone else. At the same time, I allow others to exercise their initiatives and skills, while celebrating their accomplishments. This provides an opportunity for them to strengthen their self-esteem. As I see it, delegation is a win-win situation.

**In what ways does delegating responsibilities help me to trust the abilities of others?**

**How does accountability free me and others to experience growth?**

### **Being accountable**

For me, Concept Two is about accountability and delegation. Before UA, I felt accountable to an extreme. I felt that everything that happened was somehow a reflection on me. Whether it was my child who got into trouble at school, or a member of my family behaving in an inappropriate way, I believed it was either my fault or I was afraid I was going to be blamed even if it wasn't. In addition, I did not delegate. If something had to be done, I did it myself. In UA, I learned that being accountable does not mean that I take on the responsibilities of others, or feel guilty for other people's actions. I do my own job to the best of my ability, asking for help if necessary. If I am working on a committee, I do my part, and let others do theirs. for help if necessary. In

When my children were little, they had jobs to do. In practicing these principles in all my affairs, I did not re-wash dishes that my eight-year-old had just washed, or do a homework assignment for my ten-year-old. Now that they're grown and my husband is newly retired, I must learn different ways of being accountable. Our delegation of chores is a mutual decision, not mine alone. I value the way my husband takes care of the budget, and I know that he is grateful for the meals I prepare. Moreover, it is not my job to manage how he works his program, nor is it his to manage mine.

Through conscious contact with my Higher Power, I have been given things to do in my life. I am accountable for the results. How I get those results is up to me.

**When delegating, how do I define boundaries to separate my responsibility from someone else's?**

**How has my Higher Power helped me to determine what is my responsibility and what I need to delegate to others?**

### **Following through**

In my lifetime, I have taken charge of everything around me in order to get it done according to my specifications. My misguided belief was that no one around me could do anything right. I crippled or undermined others by doing too much. It inevitably got to the point where others either couldn't or wouldn't do anything for themselves. When life became overwhelming, I would dump everything and run away. In many cases, those things that were truly my responsibility would not get done. I was too involved in making sure that things were done right in the lives of others. In UA, I've learned to discern what is and what is not my responsibility. I only accept those jobs that are appropriately mine, and that I will be able to follow through to completion. Sometimes this means I have to say no, and get out of the way. In my experience, if I release a task, someone else can step up to do it or not. If no one steps up, it could be that my sense of that task's importance is over-sized. If someone does step up, then it is my responsibility to support that person's efforts. I learned this skill in UA, and carried it into my work life, friendships, and family. Now, I can use it as I participate in being a productive member of my community.

**When delegating, how do I define boundaries to separate my responsibility from someone else's?**

**How has my Higher Power helped me to determine what is my responsibility and what I need to delegate to others?**

### **Making better decisions**

When I came to UA, accountability meant nothing to me. I truly felt that I did not have to answer to anyone. Through service work, I learned that being accountable kept me honest and focused on the responsibilities at hand. When my husband had a stroke a few years ago, I was thrust into the administrative and operational duties of running the household alone. I had complete oversight and control of his medical care. Some of the decisions would affect his life forever. My life changed as I undertook these responsibilities. Each day, I sought out medical advice and support from doctors, and prayed for guidance to do the right thing. With each decision made, I reported to our children, family, and friends. As my husband's health improved, he gradually took back the responsibility for his health and medical care. I cheerfully stepped aside. Because of his long-term disabilities, I still run the household. My husband trusts me to do the best for our family. I am accountable for any decision that I make. When there is a financial decision or home repair that needs attention, we discuss the situation, and make the decision together. We are each accountable to our relationship. I believe that HP has delegated to me the administrative and operational duties of my life with free will. By letting go and using the tools of the program, I am making better decisions for my life. When the tasks seem too great or the decisions fall in that gray area in life, I remember that growth is a process. I go to a meeting. and continue to learn that I am accountable to the group, my family, the greater whole, and my Higher Power.

**How does the principle of accountability help me to realize that I can rely on others when needed?**

**Concept Two as a parenting tool**

Before UA, I would not let my children make a mistake or misbehave, because I thought it reflected on me as a bad parent. It is now my children's responsibility to be accountable for their progress in their relationships. I help them be accountable for their progress in school by allowing them the opportunity to fail, and deal with the consequences when they do not give their best efforts. I give them the opportunity to be accountable to teachers and other adults by experiencing how their interactions with others affect their relationships. I let them face the consequences of their actions without anger or reprimands from me. I no longer shame them. I extend acceptance, love, and tolerance, while encouraging them to be accountable.

**How can allowing my family the freedom to make their own decisions increase my understanding of accountability?**

**Minding my own business**

Even though I, in the past, delegated tasks to my employees, I had a habit of telling them how to do the work, and then doing or redoing the work myself. I thought this was managing. It was fear. I failed to understand that telling someone, in excruciating detail, how work was to be done was not helping that person understand what the primary purpose of the work was. Because I so doubted my own worth and value and was always trying to reprove it, I couldn't respect and value the worth and value that my employees brought to my business.

I now realize that it is my job to hire people and communicate their responsibilities clearly and effectively. That frees me to mind my own business. I achieve greater prosperity, and serenity when I focus on my responsibilities and where my expertise, gifts and energy is uniquely needed. A big part of that is building my business which can only happen when I respect my trusted employees work and let their strengths shape how my company grows.

Minding my own business also makes me better at part of my job which is managing my employees. When an employee isn't doing what is needed for the business, it is my job to help them better understand and more effectively focus their efforts on the primary purpose of their work. When I make the effort to better explain to a worker what their responsibility is, and then let go, more often than not, they do their work just fine without me. They know that I am there to help if needed. Letting go frees me, and they appreciate that I don't nag. And, for the employees who aren't good fits for the jobs I hired them for, I have greater clarity and ease around either shifting them to different roles or releasing them so they can find jobs that better fit who they are and how they work.

**In what ways does the principle of Concept Two show me how to let go of responsibility and let others find their own way to carry out a task?**



## Concept 3

**As a traditional means of creating and maintaining a clearly defined working relationship among the groups, the World Service Conference, the World Service Conference-Approved Committees and the Underearners Anonymous Trustees, are each endowed with a traditional “Right of Decision.”**

Building upon the principle of delegation stated in Concept Two, Concept Three is about mutual trust. In delegating, we trust that those who have been given authority will use it wisely. Developing mutual trust in one another offers us the dignity and freedom that we all deserve. As Underearners, during our formative years or in the environments where we developed our underearning practices, we might not have been given the opportunity to make decisions. As a result, we might not be inclined to give others this opportunity either. Even though we may have been told to think for ourselves, in many cases, we were not allowed to do so. We may have been constantly monitored to make sure that the responsibilities we were given were met in a certain way. As a consequence, we may have developed a lack of trust toward coworkers, family members, friends, and others because of their attempts to control various aspects of our lives.

In UA, we discover that we do, indeed, have the right to think for ourselves, and make appropriate decisions for our lives. We also learn that we can share the decision-making process with others when appropriate. Taking responsibility for our own lives gives us the inner strength to reach out to others for possible solutions or added assistance. Placing our faith in a Power greater than ourselves helps us to trust the outcome of the decisions we make. In learning to trust these decisions, we learn to extend that same trust to others.

### **The right of decision**

Initially, I believed that my emotional upheavals were due to uncontrollable forces acting upon my life. As disturbing as that was, I could not explain why for 20 years, I have been working at changing my situation and it still felt as though the deck was stacked against me. I came to UA, and worked the Steps and Traditions. That was a big help, but there was still some nagging, unfinished business. When I began studying Concept Three, I found the answer. It wasn't the actions that others were taking that bothered me. It was someone taking away my right of decision.

My wife asked me to go to the grocery store to buy milk, which I did. To my surprise, she complained that she had wanted two-percent milk. I had all kinds of milk to choose from at the grocery store, but apparently I was not given the right of decision. Both of us were unhappy with the results. If my wife wanted a specific kind of milk, she could have given me exact direction. Otherwise, I think she should have accepted what I brought home.

From a child's perspective, I understand misinterpreting instructions. As an adult dealing with a spouse or a boss, such misinterpretations can lead to serious issues in personal relationships. My right of decision plays an important role in my feelings within my relationships, and within my

circumstances. Do I find myself dominated by others? Are other people in my life making decisions that adversely affect me? Have I been given an opportunity to have a voice and a vote in those decisions?

Flexibility in making decisions keeps the results from being one-sided. When there is inflexibility, it is time to evaluate the relationship and the circumstances.

**How do I feel when I am denied the opportunity to make my own decisions?**

**What are ways in which I create situations where I deny others their right of decision?**

**I was afraid to make a decision**

At first, I began helping out when my partner, due to illness, was unable to function as I thought he should. Soon, I was making all of his decisions to help him live his life in a way that I thought appropriate. I became the queen! My motto seemed to be, "My way or the highway." My partner was my subject, and our lives were within my realm of power. I felt every decision fell into a category of either black or white. There were no gray areas. I could only see things one way-my way. But my way didn't make my life easier, lighten my load or support his recovery to full ability. I found that I couldn't bully someone into recovery. I became ineffective, and lost confidence. I was afraid to make a decision because it felt futile.

When I came to UA, I saw people cooperating. Sometimes they made mistakes, but no one jumped down anyone else's throat for not following UA's suggested guidelines. When mistakes were made, members reminded each other of the Traditions, Concepts, or the group conscience vote. Then the subject was dropped. No one was king or queen, but everyone seemed to be willing to follow the guidelines. I learned that leadership is not a position in which I wield authority and make laws. Rather, leadership is a gentle understanding of the way the principles of UA work, and the willingness to stick to those principles, regardless of what other people are doing. There will always be some gray areas, but I can feel confident enough to make a decision. If it is the wrong decision, I can change it. If I aim for excellence instead of perfection, I believe that I can become an effective leader.

**How has Concept Three helped me to develop trust?**

**I don't have to micromanage**

I grew up in a dysfunctional home. The one of my parents, with good intentions, micromanaged my life, my other was either absent or disruptive. My parents were doing the best they could, and I believed that this was the way things were done. Although I rebelled under this micromanagement as a child, when I became a parent I tried doing the same with my children's lives. I told them what they should eat, wear, do, and become. As the office manager of a small business, I also tried to micromanage the work of other employees. My colleagues, as well as my children, rebelled under my attempts to supervise their lives.

When I attended my first UA World Service Conference, I saw Concept Three in action. I was amazed at the process used to make decisions, and realized my group trusted me. As I began to trust myself and others more, I saw my children making decisions about their lives. With the help of their Higher Power, they were led in directions that were better than anything I could have imagined. At work, I began to trust other people to perform their work without my micromanagement. By doing so, I realized that other people often had knowledge that I lacked, and ideas that were better than mine. My life has become much more serene by using Concept Three, as well as the other Legacies of the UA program.

**In what ways does my need to manage the lives of others limit everyone's serenity?**

**How does Concept Three help me to give others the right to make their own decisions?**

### **I was controlling the outcome**

After recovery was in my home for some time, I asked my partner why he seemed to be doing less of the cooking and kitchen chores that support our family's daily needs. He responded that I'd made it clear that the kitchen was my domain. I didn't like hearing that answer. His response revealed to me that I was still trying to control the outcome of any decision made about what to cook, and how to cook it. The *helpful hints* I'd been providing were just another way of not allowing someone, who had been delegated the responsibility, the right to make the decision of how to carry out the task. If I wanted participation, I needed to trust decisions made by the one doing the job. I made a conscious decision to release my jurisdiction over the kitchen. As a result, I found that I enjoyed the creativity of his cooking style, while I reveled in the togetherness it created.

**How does having an atmosphere of mutual trust help me to delegate responsibilities?**

**When have I seen benefits beyond what I expected, as a result of trusting someone else?**

### **My lack of trust was damaging**

Concept Three reinforces for me the importance of trust. In my relationship with my husband, I had a hard time trusting him because I was applying past experiences with other people to him. When I did my Fourth Step inventory, I realized how damaging my lack of trust was to our relationship and to me. I was in constant exertion exhaustion and wouldn't share the actions associated with our combined household responsibilities with him. I was being judgmental and unfair by not giving him my trust, when he had done nothing to betray it. My failure to trust him is my way of taking control, which is exactly the type of attitude that keeps me in exertion/exhaustion.

In UA I have learned to let go of my fearful expectations. When I trust my partner and truly believe that he is worthy of my trust, I experience a great weight being lifted from me. This

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principle of trust not only applies to my husband, but also to my Higher Power. Even though I pray to my Higher Power for guidance and answers to questions, I must trust enough to let go. He has all the information available to make the best decision for me.

## Concept 4

**Throughout our Conference structure, we maintain at all levels a traditional “Right of Participation,” ensuring a voting representation..**

Concept Four addresses a deep spiritual need—belonging. When we participate within a group of people bound by a common goal, we may discover that we can be connected to others, rather than be isolated and alone.

This participation is based on a spiritual foundation of mutual respect. Mutual respect, however, can't take place without self-respect. Many of us affected by Underearning have had problems with self-respect. Perhaps we were told that our opinions didn't matter, or that we were incapable of contributing to the discussion or situation. In UA, we learn to respect ourselves. Our opinions do matter, and our participation is valuable to the overall success of the common goal.

Participation involves giving of ourselves and including others. However, it is not always possible or appropriate to include everyone in every decision. In a family, for instance, some discussions are appropriate for everyone's participation, while others may be strictly parental. Participation is the key to harmony, but only when it is appropriate and welcomed. When all those who should contribute do, there is less resistance, disagreement, and dissatisfaction. Harmony develops, and the result is a greater trust within our families and other relationships. Participation gives us the courage to speak when appropriate, the maturity to be silent when needed, and the detachment to listen to other points of view without judgment. Concept Four reminds us that we don't have to do everything, only our part.

### **Participation, not isolation**

When I was growing up in my dysfunctional family, we did not participate much with others. If we could avoid it, we did not even participate with each other. We were isolated from the world and from each other. I think about Concept Four at a very basic level. I never considered that I could have harmony in my life if I participated in it. In UA, I heard that being of service was important. I had no idea why, but I did it anyway. By participating, I met people, and started developing a community of UA friends. I never had many loving friendships before coming to UA. I cherish my new friends, and find that these relationships have a harmony that I had never experienced before. By simply participating in the UA program, I am the one who reaps the benefits of harmony and serenity in my life.

**In what ways do my relationships benefit when I participate in all areas of my life?**

### **Teamwork**

Concept Four suggests the spirit of teamwork. The members of a team identify the common goal of the project. Specific responsibilities are assigned to each member, according to their

strengths or interests. Then the team members work together to achieve the identified goal. If the team is healthy, it works independently without strict supervision or oversight. The members feel comfortable asking for help or clarification when needed. They communicate their progress as the project moves forward. An unhealthy team, however, has members who look over each other's shoulders. They do not trust each other, and are frequently offering unsolicited "constructive criticism." Today, I participate with multiple teams. My family of origin is a team, and my husband and I are a team. My fellow co-workers and I are a team, and my home group is a team. If I interfere by giving unwanted criticism or suggestions, I'm demonstrating mistrust, cynicism, disrespect, and disapproval. Resentments are sure to follow. If I trust and respect each team member's efforts on behalf of the common goal, I demonstrate love, and respect. I use the principle of Concept Four as a way of achieving harmony in my everyday life.

**How does my participation vary, depending on the group with which I am involved?**

### **Letting others participate**

I recall times in my personal and professional life when I thought my well-meaning opinion would make another person better. In analyzing these situations, I found that my underlying motive was to control the outcome. As a result of working the UA program, I've found that when I let go of the outcome and let others participate as they are able, they have an increased self-respect. I am more productive as well. The other benefit I receive by letting go is learning from the other person's perspective. Often, I learn a completely different way of how to solve a problem, complete a process, or handle some issue. If I'm not truly participating, and only listening to my own voice, I can't grow through the experiences of others.

**How does allowing others to participate in a project, without my constant oversight, result in mutual respect for all of us?**

### **Everyone is important**

Each member of a basketball team, an orchestra, a family, or an World Service level committee has different skills and talents. A basketball game cannot be played successfully without each member of the team. If the bassoonist is missing from the orchestra, there is a hole in the overall sound. If someone doesn't set the table, dinner may be late. If the Treasurer is never at the a committee's meetings, the Committee's financial business cannot be carried out.

I have discovered that every member is important to any group, and that I need to participate. If I don't participate, I have no right to complain about decisions that are made. Participation does not mean that I force my opinion. It simply means that I have the opportunity to express myself, and then let the group as a whole decide the outcome. In this way, harmony within any group can be achieved.

**How does participating in the decision-making process allow me to detach when I don't agree with the outcome?**

**My opinion has value**

The application of Concept Four in my personal life is vital to the happiness and well-being of my family. All members have responsibilities, and the right to express their opinions. My opinion has value. If I don't participate by sharing my opinion, then I'm giving away my right, as well as my responsibility to my family. When major decisions are needed, my husband and I gather the information that we feel is necessary to make an informed decision. We have an open discussion, and then make our decision. Sometimes I agree with the ultimate decision, and sometimes I don't. What's important, however, is that I participated in the process. I did my research, shared my opinion, and listened with an open mind. As a result, I can support the decision, whatever it may be.

**How does withholding my opinion hurt my ability to support the decision-making process?**

## Concept 5

**The traditional Rights of Appeals and Petition protect the minority opinion and ensure the consideration of personal grievances.**

The traditional Rights of Appeals and Petition protect the minority opinion and ensure the consideration of personal grievances.

Concept Five contains the spiritual principle that all opinions must be heard in order to have an informed group conscience. It tells us that even though we might not have unanimity at all times, we agree to listen to everyone's opinion respectfully-especially when there is a minority of only one or a few. It assures us that we have a right to voice our opinions, even if it's the minority opinion. In return, members with a minority viewpoint agree that, having been heard respectfully, they agree to respectfully accept the decision of the group conscience and let go. Concept Five ensures harmony through full participation, building on the wisdom of Concept Four. It is not intended to justify bitter debate that never ends.

Discussion based on mutual respect might not come naturally to those of us who have been affected by underearning. We've seen how easily fear and hiding can turn a work, family or service discussion into an argument, and how all people involved can become increasingly intolerant of differing opinions. We can become incredibly unreasonable, taking control of the discussion and trying to force our point of view onto others. For others of us, our hiding makes us feel that our point of view is not valued or worth sharing. We shut down and refrain from participating in the discussion.

As we incorporate the principles of Concept Five into our relationships with family members, friends, or co-workers, we may find that we are able to express ourselves without fear of being judged by others. In addition, we may also find that we can open our minds to learn new things by being willing to listen to alternative ideas and opinions.

### **I have a voice**

Before coming to UA, I may have used my voice a lot. I complained about the injustice in my life, in the world. But I spoke only from fear. It was my hiding and biting. I hid my true voice and spoke from the perspective of what I thought were higher principles. I didn't know how to use my own voice. I had no problem agreeing or disagreeing but the ability to take those actions from what I truly felt was missing. I wanted to be able to lead my life, to follow others leadership gracefully. I wanted the freedom to make conscious choices about my earning, my life but I always found myself considering what I **SHOULD** be doing...what was the right thing to do,



what was the correct action to take as though it was a machine and my only way of finding success or avoiding pain was to put the right piece in the right place.

My profound underbeing was such that when I spoke up, I wasn't speaking up for me. I didn't know how to do that because I thought my own voice was insignificant and I needed other higher principles, authorities, institutions... to give my voice legitimacy. As a result, I seldom asked for what I really wanted for my reasons. When the reasons I had used which seemed so irrefutably strong, were rejected, I was left with anger and frustration within me. I believed that if the strong arguments were insufficient, my own reasoning, my own perspective and experience, were too small to even bother trying to share.

I found myself selecting weak or equally underearning job environments, clients, even friends and then would get angry because they acted fearfully or didn't respect the authority of my knowledge. I couldn't see that others somehow detected that I was hiding in others voices. I was like a small kid in dress-up, wearing rainboots up to my thighs and a raincoat whose sleeves and hem trailed on the floor behind me when I walked.

In UA I learn that I have the right to voice my opinion because speaking up is necessary for my prosperity. I can't find my own prosperity when acting as someone else. I also learned that it was okay if my opinion differed from someone else's opinion. In fact it is essential. Although it is important that I speak my mind quietly and respectfully, it does not guarantee that I will get my way. It only offers me the opportunity to be heard. Others can take what they like, and leave the rest. Conversely, my opinion does not necessarily have to be heard. It is mine to share or withhold. Sometimes keeping my opinion to myself is just as important as speaking up.

Practicing concept five doing service, I have learned that the more honestly I speak with my OWN voice, the easier it is for me to respect others speaking honestly with their voice.

Concept Five has taught me that, in addition to learning that I have a right to speak up, I have a duty to listen to others and "Keep an Open Mind." I don't always agree with someone else's opinion, but I do my best to consider it fairly and objectively.

**How can learning that I have a right to speak up change the way I feel about myself?**

**At what times is my decision to keep my opinion to myself just as important as sharing?**

**How can Concept Five with its focus on mutual respect change how I feel about people who disagree with me?**

### **Finding the courage to speak**

I first appreciated Concept Five as it applied to my business life. Many years ago, I was in a strategic planning meeting with other owners and managers of companies. As we talked, I thought of a way to solve the problem that we were discussing. I immediately reverted to my old way of criticizing my own ideas: "This will probably sound dumb or stupid. If it was a good idea, somebody else would have already brought it up." These thoughts were based in fear of looking

like an idiot, which was my old thinking. Then, Concept Five came to mind. I realized that I felt very alone, and very much a minority. I braced myself, stood up, and presented my proposal. The room became very quiet. Then, heads started nodding. As members affirmed that it was a great idea. I was amazed. At that moment, I knew that the principle of Concept Five really worked.

**How can the principles in Concept Five give me the courage to speak, even if I feel uncomfortable or awkward about voicing my opinion?**

**When can I use the principles of Concept Five?**

### **Learning to speak honestly**

Truly listening to someone who is expressing an opinion contrary to my own is one of the hardest things for me to do. Today, I understand that differing opinions weren't allowed in my family of origin. Although it was never explicit, it was quite clear – "Make up your own mind, as long as you agree with me." Recently, I heard some UA friends express opinions at a meeting that greatly distressed me. In fact, I had such a strong reaction that I knew there was a deeper meaning. After all, these were my UA friends, whom I knew well. I believed that they were speaking from a place of honesty and openness, with no intention of creating harm. And yet, there I was, in full reaction mode. Fortunately, I had enough awareness to simply share on the topic when it was my turn, and then talk with my Sponsor later.

After several days, I am still reacting, but my anger has stepped aside to reveal fear, which is not terribly surprising, but very enlightening. I'm not necessarily afraid of other people's opinions. I'm afraid that I will have to be more honest when expressing my own opinions, regardless of what I think other people would prefer to hear.

**What can I do when I react negatively to someone's opinion?**

**How does the fear of what others might think affect my being honest when expressing my opinion?**

### **Seeing from a different angle**

When I get stuck in the box of my own thinking and can't get out, I can easily get petty or impatient. I may be hungry, angry, lonely, or tired. That's when I am especially challenged by the voice of someone expressing a minority or differing opinion. I am likely to get defensive, petty and reactionary. In these times, it seems that God is challenging me to look at something. I grew up with two sisters, and now I have two roommates. It appears that I am never going to get away from varying opinions. When there is more than one person involved in a decision or needed to take an action, disagreement is more than likely. Yet, I can fool myself into expecting otherwise. When I don't keep my focus on my own Experience, Strength and Hope, my own primary purpose in an environment or situation I can be annoyed by someone else's opinion because I'm not on my side of the street. Hiding my own voice and not listening to others when there is disagreement blocks me from compassion and true service. It is the sacred right of

everyone to be able to speak honestly and to be given the respect of being humbly heard. I cannot deny that to anyone. After all, my point of view might be the minority opinion someday.

**How can listening to a minority viewpoint benefit me when I am stuck in my own thinking?**

**What can I learn about myself from my reaction to a point of view that differs from mine?**

### **Understanding another point of view**

Concept Five tests my ability to remain open-minded and willing to listen. My ability to listen has improved after surrendering certain character defects, such as defensiveness and the need to be right. Today, I try to be more informed on all sides of an issue. It doesn't really matter whether it's right or wrong. I recently asked in a discussion, "Is there anything else you would like to share on that perspective so we can better understand your point of view?" Because I was able to ask that question, I felt great. The other person responded in amazement. She went on to elaborate, and was not hostile or confrontational. Despite a different and somewhat negative point of view, the discussion was not uncomfortable. Concept Five leads me to a higher standard of communication. When I listen to people who don't share my attitudes or ideas, I learn so much.

**How can practicing the principles of Concept Five improve my communication skills?**

### **The right to be heard**

I was never asked for my opinion. Ideas and opinions were imposed upon me, whether I liked it or not. If, by chance, I said what I thought, one of three things might happen. I was ignored, a crisis was created, or others made fun of what I said. I learned that pattern of behavior very well, and carried it into my adult life. When I came to UA, I learned very quickly that if I wanted to improve my life, I had to change my patterns of behavior. Concept Five affirms that everyone has the right to be heard. When decisions are made with the complete understanding of what each party wants, there is real communication. To achieve this, I use several program tools including the slogan, "Keep an Open Mind," so I can hear without prejudice what others say. I also need courage to say what I think. Then I "Listen and Learn," so that I can benefit from the ideas of others. I remind myself that when I have imposed my way of thinking on others, it has always generated hard feelings. We all have the right to participate, even when there is a disagreement. I believe it is not only my right, but also my obligation to say what I think. Many times fear paralyzes me, and I prefer to do nothing. What if they make fun of me, get angry, or think I am foolish? Then I remember that if I exercise wisdom, what I fear will most likely not occur. Instead of trying to control the outcome of the situation, I can "Let Go and Let God."

**How does Concept Five help me understand that everyone has a right to be heard?**

**When has my trying to control the outcome of a decision hindered others from voicing their opinions?**

## **Concept 6**

**The Conference vests the responsibility for stewardship and administration, along with the authority to carry out these actions, in the Underearners Anonymous Trustees.**

Concept Six builds upon the principles of delegation, authority, and responsibility that are found in the earlier Concepts. For those of us who have been affected by underearning, these principles may be difficult to practice in everyday living. At first, we may feel uneasy about letting go of certain tasks. Perhaps in the past, we felt as if we had to do it all, because no one else could do the job as well.

In UA, we begin to learn that one person, one committee, or one management position cannot administer all things necessary for a relationship or entity to prosper and grow. It takes the commitment of each individual working together to achieve the desired goal. As we learn to work together, we develop some level of trust in others. Not only do we learn to appreciate the value and skills of those working with us, we also begin to identify those aspects within ourselves. After a while, we can more easily determine what job we can do effectively, and what jobs others can do.

We also learn to link the responsibility of the job with the authority to complete it. In this way, we are accountable for the outcome of our participation, but we are not accountable for the results of someone else's involvement. Concept Six helps to clarify the delegation of duties and responsibilities to those who are willing, knowledgeable, and experienced.

### **Assigning duties**

I have learned how to manage my time and accomplish my goals by practicing Concept Six. I can do anything I choose to do, but I cannot do everything because I am limited by time. In addition, I am limited physically by my inability to do multiple things at the same time. Earlier Concepts taught me that I am ultimately responsible for what work I do. Also, I can ask others to help me do things. This frees me to do other things that otherwise I would not have the time to do. I have given my wife the primary administrative responsibility of managing our checking account. She writes most of the checks, and balances the checkbook. While both of us are ultimately responsible for the checking account, it is more efficient for one person to manage the checkbook.

**How does the principle of Concept Six help me to manage my time and accomplish the tasks that I need to do?**

### **Sharing the workload**

When I try to do it all, either at work or at home, I get overwhelmed with all there is to do. Everything comes to a grinding halt, while I try to decide how to accomplish it all, and what to do next. I soon discover how inefficient it is to try to do everything myself.

Gratefully, my husband takes care of many tasks around the house, including doing the laundry, dishes, and cleaning as needed. Because both of us work outside the home, we share the housework. Consequently, neither of us is overwhelmed, and both of us are happier.

At work, I can complete my own duties, and not take on my co-workers' responsibilities. The managers delegate all work, and everyone is accountable for their share. All of us know our own responsibilities.

In UA service, I learned quickly to share tasks, and ask for help from others. There was much to do, and I would have been quickly overwhelmed trying to do it all. With the help of others, all tasks were accomplished, and no one person was overwhelmed. Many members were willing to help, knowing that they were not expected to do it all.

- **In what ways has the principle of Concept Six helped me to be more efficient in completing my responsibilities?**
- **How has Concept Six helped me at home, at work, and in UA service?**

### **Communication is essential**

I became frustrated when others didn't understand what I wanted, or what needed to be done. I also thought that others could not do a task as well as I could, or as I wanted it done. Therefore, I had to be the one taking care of it. I found myself overwhelmed at times, because I was trying to do too much. Concept Six helps me to understand that I need to improve the way I communicate to others what is required to accomplish a particular task. It also helps me to see that I can't do everything myself. I can seek out those whose knowledge or experience is far greater than mine to do a particular job. Then, I have more time to do the things that are best for me, while others are able to participate and grow as well.

### **How does concept six help me to free up my time?**

### **The solution she needed**

A friend of mine mentioned that she was fed up with the messiness and disorganization of her home office. She had good intentions to sort it all out, but just couldn't motivate herself to do the task. Then one day, she had a brilliant idea of hiring someone to help her. As she said, "There are people who do this for a living! She realized that she could also hire someone to help with other things that needed to be done around her house. In a short amount of time, not only was her home in good order, but she also provided the opportunity of work for others.

When I have people work in my home, I determine if they are neat, if they have charged appropriately, and if they have satisfied my criteria. If so, I'm willing to call them again when needed, and refer them to my friends. I am not trained to file corporate taxes, to ensure compliance with state and federal laws, or fix a broken pipe. However, I have other gifts. I can develop ideas, communicate, and organize. I can also delegate the jobs that require more expertise to those who are more qualified than me.

**What skills do I have that are relevant to the tasks I choose for myself?**

### Trusting others

With the practice of Concept Six, I have freed myself of many things that weighed me down. I wanted to know everything, and do everything. I did not trust in the abilities of others. At times, due to my pettiness, I didn't ask for help. When things didn't turn out the way that I thought they should, I was frustrated. I have learned to recognize my abilities, as well as my limitations. More importantly, I am learning to delegate.

Today, I admire the abilities of others, and can trust them to complete their job. I now understand the phrase "fill your own shoes." We all have our own responsibilities. I can take care of mine, and allow others to take care of their own.

**How does applying the principle of Concept Six motivate me to ask for help when I am frustrated and overwhelmed with responsibilities?**

## Concept 7

**The World Service Conference recognizes that the Charter of the Underearners Anonymous World Service Conference and secondly, the Bylaws of UA serve as governing documents. The Trustees have legal rights, insofar as they abide by the voice of the Conference. The rights of the Conference are spiritual, guided by the Twelve Traditions. Since the Concepts are included in the Bylaws, they shall be the guiding factor in all Trustee decisions.**

Concept Seven addresses the balance between legal and traditional authority, and encourages us to seek clarity in our roles and responsibilities. In the past, our roles and responsibilities may have been distorted, because we are affected by underearning and underbeing. We, also, may have been confused about the difference between legal rights and responsibilities and traditional authority.

Today, we know there are matters that can only be resolved through the laws that govern us. For example, we may be given certain authority within the framework of a specific job description, or may be responsible for personal contracts. If there are disputes within these situations, the rules that govern the workplace, or the stipulations of the contract, are binding. Through these measures, we can find agreement in an equitable manner for those involved.

However, the legal system is not the only authority that can help us. When we consider traditional authority in UA, we turn to the spiritual principles of the Legacies. In our personal lives, we seek guidance from a Power greater than ourselves. When we find ourselves in the middle of a disagreement or conflict, we may discover that a solution is found through calm reasoning and the wisdom of the spiritual principles of the UA program.

### **Legal and traditional authority**

Concept Seven helps me to recognize the legal and traditional authority in my personal life. I own a home, and live alone. Within the home, I can decorate it in a way that I find pleasing. I can entertain the guests that I choose, and also enjoy activities and hobbies. Outside the home, I have property to maintain, taxes to pay, and maintenance requirements. Because this home is part of a community, being disrespectful to the legal parameters of living within this community would interfere with the serenity that I enjoy.

Concept Seven helped me to make a decision concerning my son. My son had a difficult adolescence and as his difficulties increased and he became violent to me. I understood that I had a parental obligation as long as he was under the legal age to be able to live on his own. After he became of legal age, he did not choose to abide by reasonable household rules, and continued to participate in illegal activities. I asked him to leave. The community then took on the responsibility to do what it could within its rights to keep him legally responsible for his actions. As a result, he experienced time in jail.

### **How do I determine the difference between legal and traditional rights in my personal life?**

### **Defining my responsibilities**

A place where I worked, there was a manager who used to talk about what a *good* person would be like as an employee in the company. This included working extra hours, covering his mistakes and covering his absences when the owner showed up. In looking at our traditional and legal role in this workplace, we can choose what is best for all of us, instead of assuming that this person's theory is correct.

As a Sponsor, Concept Seven helps me remember to never put myself between 2 people. For example, a sponsee had an issue with someone they were doing service with and had told the other person a lie about what was going on. When the other person called me, not knowing she was my sponsee, to ask me where she was on a project, I suggested that she reach out directly to my sponsee. My sponsee was annoyed that I had "told" this person (with whom she was having issues) to call her. She also understood that my responsibility was to the common good of everyone in the group, not in protecting her lie. Because of practicing Concept Seven, I can actually be of service to others without "fixing" them or their situations.

**How can clearly defining my responsibilities keep me from trying to "fix" the lives of others?**

**Respecting my legal responsibility**

I don't live in a traditional household. I have two roommates, and we share the responsibility for chores, for bill paying, and for communicating with each other. I am the only one on the lease, because no one else had money for the security deposit.

In the past, roommates had damaged the apartment while drinking. I had to remind them of my legal obligation to the landlord. Traditionally, we work as equals, but in this instance I had to protect the integrity of the home as a whole. I spoke to my Sponsor about the situation. Because I was responsible for the lease, I needed to advise my landlord of the property damage. I expressed my frustration to the landlord, but I did not criticize my roommate. It took time to settle the situation. I partially paid for the damage, and my roommate paid some as well. Everyone learned something, and we are all on speaking terms. It is fun and challenging to live with friends, honor those relationships, and not entangle ourselves in legal disagreements.

**How does Concept Seven help me clarify my role in difficult situations?**

**Cooperative respect**

In my family, we make decisions together, participate in getting things done, and help each other when needed. But only one of us at a time can do such things as sign checks or drive the car. The family has confidence that if the person entrusted with authority deems a detour is necessary, the alternate route will be in the family's best interest.

I can apply Concept Seven to a situation as simple as riding a city bus. All of the riders contribute to the cost of running the bus by paying their fares. They also abide by the city laws and rules of the bus company to make it easier for the bus driver to operate the bus. The bus company is involved in setting the specific routes, as well as the timing on those routes. The bus driver is responsible for getting the bus safely to each stop on the route. When everyone cooperates, all passengers arrive at their destinations. If I don't recognize the rights and responsibilities of others, my life is inefficient and ineffective. However, when I apply the principle of cooperative respect found in Concept Seven, my life can run smoothly.

**How does understanding the rights and responsibilities of each person in a situation help me?**

**Finding balance**

When my son was a teenager, I accepted the traditional role of a mother. I was a nurturer, a guidance counselor, and an enforcer of the rules. I also had legal responsibility for him because he was a minor. Today, he is 23 years old, and any legal parental responsibilities are behind me. Yet, I still have a traditional role-to love unconditionally, and to give guidance, if asked. I enforce rules that affect my home. Concept Seven teaches me about the balance between recognizing my rights and respecting the rights of others.



**How can I apply Concept 7 when it's my role to hold others accountable to guidelines we have agreed to abide by and also maintain my humanity, humility and respect others.**

## Concept 8

**The Underearners Anonymous Trustees and the WSC Approved Committees (interdependent and autonomous service bodies) assume shared primary leadership for matters of overall policy, finance, and custodial oversight. The Trustees delegate authority for routine management to the General Service Office..**

Building on the principles of trust and cooperation emphasized earlier in the Concepts, Concept Eight reminds us to focus on our priorities, keep our eyes on the bigger picture, and invest our efforts in activities that will bring the greatest results. To do that, we depend upon the help that others provide on more routine matters. We don't have to cling to every detail of every job. We can let go, and hand some matters over to others who are better suited to those tasks. In doing so, we are able to move forward in significant ways. Many of us who have been deeply affected by underearning find it difficult to give up control over even the most trivial things. We seized hold over what little we could control, and were fearful of turning over some of that control to someone else. We felt that we had to do everything ourselves because we wanted everything done exactly our way. Our exaggerated sense of responsibility only brought stress and anxiety.

With Concept Eight, we are reminded that we have options. We don't have to take on every responsibility, or attend to every detail personally. We can ask for help. As we become more comfortable with letting go of our fears, we may find that we can, indeed, trust in the abilities of others. In the spirit of trust and cooperation, the necessary tasks are accomplished, and we share the opportunity for growth with everyone involved.

### **Distorted responsibilities**

I learned about putting the Concepts into action by getting involved in UA service, where more experienced members showed me ways to apply the Concepts in my personal life. My underearning, underbeing and need to constantly reprove my worth and value distorted my sense of responsibility. I felt that I was the person responsible in every situation. Because I was so quick to step up to do tasks or solve problems, others didn't have the chance to participate. Consequently, I became overburdened, and didn't have time for other things.

I also thought that I was the authority. Because I was doing more than others, I thought I also knew more than others. This meant that even when a job was delegated to someone else, I would interfere with how that person did the job. I thought I was being a good and helpful person, but others saw me as domineering and bossy. Concept Eight helps me remember that I am just one among many. I am not responsible for everything, nor am I the authority on everything. I practice Concept Eight by keeping my mouth shut. I'm always tempted to interfere with the way family members do chores, or to redo them myself. UA has taught me to keep my hands off of someone else's delegated responsibility. I use the question "How Important Is It?" to help me determine if I really need to speak up. If our safety is in danger, then I can interfere (but I must be clear that it's not only my personal sense of safety that's threatened) Otherwise, I step back, and let others do their jobs. When I stop trying to control by taking over all of the jobs, our family unity is increased.

**How can I practice the principle of Concept Eight in my personal life?**

**What responsibilities have I delegated to others, so that I have time to complete other necessary tasks?**

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**Asking for help is not a character defect**

Before I came to UA, I tried to do everything myself. I was terrified of asking for help. I also thought that people were judging me for what I could do, and expected me to do everything perfectly. After attending UA meetings, I discovered that no one expected me to do anything more than what I could do. In addition, I realized that asking for help is not a character defect. Concept Eight tells me I don't have to do anything alone. These discoveries helped me in my profession to gain more self-confidence and self-knowledge.

I also use this Concept in my personal life. People do things differently. I have learned that I can allow others to do things their own way, and I can do things my way. As a result, I can celebrate our differences.

**In what ways has the fear of asking for help limited my ability to focus my efforts on the priorities in my life?**

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**I needed help**

Concept Eight teaches me humility and respect, as well as how to delegate responsibilities, establish limits, and take responsibility for myself. To recognize these values and assume them allows me to become practical, efficient, and productive with the tasks that are mine to do. When I moved into a new place a few years ago, I had to admit, one more time, that I am not good at all with my hands. I feel as if I need an instruction manual to hammer a nail. I had to face this fact, and laugh at myself. I delegated certain tasks to people who were capable of accomplishing them. I chose the places where I wanted things to be, and clearly established what I wanted. However, I didn't have to supervise their slightest movements, and watch them like a hawk. Detachment and good judgment were my most valuable assets under the circumstances.

I've found much wisdom in this Concept, and many of my frustrations and worries have been lessened as a result of applying it. Sharing responsibilities through balanced and appropriate delegation can ensure that a task is done well, and give us all the opportunity to find pleasure and satisfaction in the result.

**How can practicing Concept Eight help me to become more productive?**

**How does the principle of Concept Eight help me to detach from the outcome of a particular task?**

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**I don't have to do it all**

Concept Eight helps me to remember that delegation is a tool that I can use in any group situation. It reminds me that I don't have to do it all. More importantly, I have learned that when I do attempt to manage all aspects of any task without asking for help, the task is never accomplished as well as it would have been with input from others. I also end up harboring resentments, never feeling appreciated enough.

When I use Concept Eight, I release myself from managing and controlling how others carry out their assigned tasks. When I am in a leadership position, I can set forth a vision and long-range goal. I can encourage others' ideas and problem-solving approaches, as well as provide resources without micromanaging their actions. Then they can try out their ideas, and learn from their results.

I trust, "Let Go and Let God," and encourage without manipulating. When I have trusted others to carry out a task in the way they feel works best for them, I am amazed at the results. When everyone offers emotional support to each other and commits to doing their best, we all grow in the process.

**How does Concept Eight help me to distinguish between setting a goal and micromanaging others?**

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**The opportunity to learn**

By using the principles of UA, I have been able to focus my life and energy on living better without the exhausting efforts I employed before finding this marvelous program. As a professional, I didn't know how to delegate. I felt as if I was carrying an enormous burden when the project should have been pleasant and enjoyable. As a homemaker, I began to feel overwhelmed with all the chores that had to be done. Moreover, I wanted them done my way, so that all would be what I wanted.

It was a relief to be freed from the burden of having to do it all by myself. I began delegating small chores to my children, such as allowing them to fix themselves something to eat when they were hungry. Little by little, the idea that only I knew how to do things began to change, and I could extend that thinking to my group and community. I began by respecting myself, and considering my need for rest and free time. Thanks to this Concept, I can delegate responsibilities. I consider the capabilities of those around me, and do not force anyone to do something that they are not capable of doing.

**How can delegating certain tasks help me to have a more fulfilling life?**

## Concept 9

**Good leaders, together with appropriate methods for choosing them at all levels, are necessary. At the World Service level, the World Service Conference (comprised of the representatives of the groups and the Trustees) holds primary leadership for UA as a whole by setting guidelines for WSC-Approved Committees and by directly selecting, ratifying or removing the Trustees**

Concept Nine reminds us that while not everyone has a leadership role at the highest level, all members have a personal responsibility for leadership at whatever level they may be. The Concept encourages us to participate proactively, to the fullest extent of our abilities. To do otherwise would be to neglect an important opportunity for personal growth. In living or having lived as underearners and underbeers, we may have experienced a style of authoritarian leadership that demanded unquestioning obedience and discouraged thoughtful participation that engaged our best thinking. This experience convinced many of us that we were not capable of leadership. But just as some of us suffered under leadership that was too rigid, others often found themselves floundering, without any direction or guidance at all. In either case, many of us had no personal experience with an example of healthy leadership.

In UA we have the opportunity to see healthy leadership in action. Every member of UA has the potential to be a leader. At all levels of service, members have the opportunity to serve in some leadership role. We don't have to do it alone. There are more experienced members to help us and guide us. As we experience healthy leadership within our fellowship, we may find that our relationships and personal lives will benefit from having vision and being more tolerant, responsible, and flexible. As a result, we have the opportunity to assume leadership of our own lives.

### **Being of service**

I was not familiar with the idea of being of service before attending UA. As a result of attending meetings, reading Conference Approved Literature, and talking with my Sponsor, I began to understand the meaning of personal leadership and service levels. I saw people in UA who carried a message through their behavior. To me, they were leaders, because they exemplified the principles of the program. Some of these people were involved in UA service, and some were not.

At first, I saw leaders as people who were somehow better than the rest of us. This attitude kept me from feeling like I belonged, and reflected my personal problems with self-acceptance and security. Being involved in UA service changed my understanding of leadership. I began to experience unity, rather than separation. When I looked out from the podium, I could see how everyone participating needed the qualities of leadership. I did well at my assigned tasks when other members also demonstrated leadership qualities. Then we experienced unity. When we were less responsible, less stable, and less tolerant, we struggled to accomplish our goals.

As a trusted servant, I was advised by experienced members to study the chapter on Concept Nine in the Service Manual. This chapter explained how to deal with criticism, and how to make decisions – two things I had difficulty with. Because of studying Concept Nine, I was able to learn to deal with criticism without becoming disheartened. Good personal leadership is based on spiritual principles. I can practice these principles every day, whether or not I am involved in an official leadership role. By practicing the Concepts, I am more able to demonstrate the qualities of good leadership – responsibility, stability, tolerance, flexibility, judgment, and vision. My relationships are stronger, and my self-acceptance is better.

**In what ways does Concept Nine encourage me to face my fear of failure or success when I take on a leadership role?**

### **Essay on leadership**

I really didn't think Concept Nine had anything to do with recovering from Underearning and Underbeing. Consequently, I ignored it. Then, one day while reading literature from another program, I stumbled on Bill W's essay on leadership that is a part of his writing on Concept Nine. I experienced three spiritual awakenings.

First of all, this Concept is about tolerance, flexibility, responsibility, and vision. It has nothing to do with perfection. Second, after reading about good leadership, I realized that I needed to examine why I look up to some people who clearly are not good leaders. Finally, in business school I was taught that good leadership is a tool to achieve a positive result for the business. However, Concept Nine expresses the idea that good leadership is motivated by the desire to fulfill my Higher Power's will for me. This different perspective is making a huge difference in my life, both personally and professionally.

**What expectations do I have of a good leader?**

### **Practicing tolerance**

When I came to UA, I found the joy of service. In the process, I also learned tolerance. I learned that tolerating abuse wasn't tolerance, but low self-esteem. As I grew in the program, so did my self-esteem. I went back to school. I started a career, and was given leadership roles in my profession. I based many of my decisions on the UA principles that I was learning through service work.

When I learned not to be so critical of myself, I was less critical of others. Sometimes in a business meeting, I will feel like a member is trying to control a project. I try to practice tolerance, because I have heard that same person share about all the pain he or she is experiencing. Not judging others helps me to promote unity. UA has helped me become the loving and kind person that I want to be. I don't achieve that every day. However, when I practice tolerance, take care of my responsibilities, and remain flexible with an open heart and open mind, I feel love toward myself and others. Vision for the future must include my Higher Power and other members. Maintaining unity promotes leadership skills in me, as well as those around me.

**How can putting the focus on myself help me to take on a positive leadership role with others?**

**Modeling healthy behaviors**

When I first came to UA, I asked myself who assumed the primary leadership in my home? I believed that it was supposed to be me, yet I found myself in power struggles and conflict with my spouse. There was no good personal leadership at any level in our home. I never had healthy relationships modeled for me. I did not know how to create a healthy personal relationship, and I did not know how to resolve the power struggles and conflict. Coming to UA was not enough to save my marriage, but I did learn about healthy relationships.

Concept Nine was modeled for me at all service levels. I saw conflicts resolved in group conscience meetings. People were allowed to share their feelings and opinions without being demeaned when they disagreed. Observing these behaviors and attitudes gave me the opportunity to grow emotionally and spiritually. I began to experience healthy relationships within the group and my personal life. Today, I assume the primary leadership within my home, but I do not demand compliance. I welcome open and honest sharing of feelings, thoughts, and beliefs. In this way, I benefit when my wife shares her experience, strength, and hope with me.

**How can I practice Concept Nine in all parts of my life?**



## Concept 10

**Every service responsibility should be matched by an equal service authority, with the scope of such authority well defined.**

Those of us affected by underearning are familiar with chaos and confusion. Lack of clarity in assigned tasks further contributes to the larger problem. In our past, we may have been given the responsibility for a specific task, but not the authority to actually accomplish the task. In other situations, responsibility for a particular task was not clearly defined, and no one was accountable for the results. Also, there may have been situations when no one was willing to take on any responsibilities. Some of the symptoms like needing to re-prove our worth and value, working alone, exertion/exhaustion, giving away our time, etc... further confuse our understanding of what is our responsibility.

Double-headed management more frequently occurs when responsibility and authority are not clearly defined, and more than one person or group is given the same task or job to complete. When we are given a specific responsibility or delegate a task to someone else, it is important that everyone understands their responsibilities, and that their responsibilities do not overlap. When we communicate and are able to draw clear lines between responsibility and authority, there is defined accountability and conflicts can be minimized.

If we want to work with others effectively, it is important to write clear job descriptions. But this is not enough. It is equally important to take time to discuss each task so that everyone involved has a clear understanding of the purpose of the work, what is expected, as well as what will constitute successful completion of the task. Concept Ten states that responsibility and authority should be balanced. The principle within this Concept can be used in our homes, workplaces, or personal relationships. We become empowered when we are given the responsibility to do a job, as well as the authority needed to complete it.

### **Keeping it simple**

Before I found UA, I would appoint myself the second head of management. I inappropriately took charge whenever I could not see clearly defined authority. If there was a vacuum in leadership in the workplace, I felt compelled to fill it. This seemed to relieve my anxiety, because I knew who was in charge. On the other hand, it added to my anxiety, because I was held responsible for the authority I had assumed.

I realized that this pattern came from my childhood, where I took on certain responsibilities in the family, even though I had older brothers and sisters. Whenever I became a part of double-headed management, my ego benefited. My sense of stress, however, increased greatly. I set up expectations that I could not reasonably meet, and felt anxious and frustrated when I failed to meet them.

UA teaches me to "Keep It Simple." I carry this slogan into my work life. I select work positions that are clearly delineated, and report to one boss. I voice my feelings whenever I am unsure of what is expected of me. While the work I do is complex, I feel my work life is simplified by clarity. Expectations are clear and reasonable, and provide a comfortable atmosphere for me.

**When have I assumed responsibilities that are not mine?**

**How can I use Concept Ten to understand my role and responsibility?**

### **Working together**

With Concept Ten, I learn to respectfully provide instructions, authority, and clarity along the way, if needed. Otherwise, I get out of the way. I also learn to respect the efforts of others, even when they do things differently than I do. I am mindful not to manipulate coworkers, friends family, or any person to get them to do things my way. Years ago, I put bricks around all my flowerbeds. I had very specific instructions for my husband as to how to edge the grass next to these beds. I gave him the responsibility and authority to do so. After the first time, I critiqued his efforts, because they weren't as I imagined. He offered to let me edge the flowerbeds in the future. I respectfully declined. I have never again attempted to micromanage his edging of the flowerbeds.

**How can I encourage balanced responsibility?**

### **I simply did my job**

I worked for an educational cooperative that sent special education teachers out to surrounding schools. Who was my boss? Authority lines were unclear. Was my boss the administrator of the cooperative, or the principal at each school where I worked? The answer to those questions was "Yes." I worked for many years under double-headed management. I never quite knew who would tell me what to do.

Fortunately, I had my UA program. I learned to take action. At the beginning of each school year, I sat down with each principal, and asked what my duties were. I explained what the cooperative administrators needed me to do. Sometimes, those two objectives were far apart. I then had to arrange for the cooperative administrators and the school administrators to work things out. Oftentimes that worked, but sometimes it didn't. There were times when a principal would resent the fact that although I was working at the school, I did not report to him or her. I knew that my job was to teach the students. My Higher Power was, and is, in charge of my life, not all those people who were telling me what to do. I let go of the double-headed management struggle going on around me, and simply did my job.

**When has double-headed management impeded my work?**

**How can I detach from others' attempts at double-headed management?**

### **The two-headed person**

In thinking about how I can apply this Concept to my marriage and in my home, I couldn't help but think of a two-headed person-my husband's head and mine attached. It was pretty ugly. This image helped me to see very clearly how frustrating it must be for him when I try to manage and control what is obviously not mine to do. He is solely responsible for himself, including his feelings, actions, and behavior. If I stay out of his head, as well as his business, I will be better able to manage my own life.

**What images help me let go when I may be trying to manage someone else's life?**

**How can Concept Ten help me to better manage my own life?**

### **Unrealistic Expectations**

Double-headed management isn't something I learned in business school. I learned it from my sibling. If one parent said no, then I'd ask the other one. In return, our parents would often reply, "I would let you, but your Dad says no," and vice versa. It's no wonder we were frustrated so often. Today, I can recognize some of this harmful dynamic in my reaction to what I saw as a problem in UA within our Area. Often when a meeting was struggling, I focused my attention on the person doing service, expecting that person to resolve the challenges.

Recently, I read the job description for the trusted servant. The job description of that service position states that the person is a resource to our groups. Nowhere does it say that the person in that position is responsible for meetings. It also doesn't say that that person must provide solutions. I certainly had unrealistic expectations for that trusted servant.

- **When can lack of defined authority lead to frustration?**
- **How can a written job description help me to set more realistic expectations of the responsibilities of others?**

### **I was only trying to help**

Before I came to UA, I was told to quit trying to play God. At the time, I was insulted. After all, I had only been trying to help. I thought I knew the path that the dysfunctional person in my life should follow, and tried my best to make him follow it. I thought my struggle was with the dysfunctional person. However, I came to realize that by trying to do for the dysfunctional person what only his Higher Power could do, I really was playing God. When I try to manage someone else's affairs, I quickly find myself right in the middle of the chaos brought about by double-headed management. I am thankful that the God of my understanding, as well as the other person, can manage just fine without me.

**What are examples of my attempts at double-headed management?**

## Concept 11

**The trustees have authority and oversight of the administration of UA world service through the authority granted by the Conference, which is the recognized group conscience of UA. Serious attention and consideration shall always be given to compensation, selection, induction into service, rotation, and assignment of special rights and duties for all personnel, with an appropriate basis for determining financial compensation. This ensures sober consideration with respect to all aspects of corporate and volunteer participation..**

Concept Eleven reminds us that there are enough people-with a diverse range of viewpoints and an abundance of skills and talents-to share the burden of the most difficult tasks. It would be short-sighted for us to work alone, when working with others would be both easier and more effective.

The successful cooperation envisioned in Concept Eleven is based on the wisdom of previous Concepts, which suggest an appropriate balance between delegation and accountability, shared authority and responsibility, and avoidance of double-headed management. Not only are there enough people to get the job done, but this approach gives more people the opportunity to experience these UA principles in action. By incorporating Concept Eleven into our daily activities, we can be organized without being inflexible. We can plan without controlling every detail. We can treat others with respect and dignity, and reap the benefits of working together to accomplish a common goal.

### **A lesson in making bread**

The ingredients used in making bread are flour, yeast, butter, sugar, salt, and water. Every ingredient is important, and has a different job in the making of a loaf of bread. Similarly, at the workplace, every person is important. Each has a job to do. No one person is more important than another in making a good finished product. Just as I can't make bread with only a package of yeast, no organization can be viable if it only has executive positions.

Concept Eleven helps to increase my understanding of how to delegate without micromanaging. Each of us brings different talents and gifts to an organization. One person may be a computer wizard, while another may be able to locate the resources necessary for planned projects. Each person's talents and gifts are necessary to the organization as a whole.

In our families the same ideas hold true. While the parents may act as the executives, everyone in the family must help keep the family functioning. If one member sits watching television while the others work overtime, resentment and anger undermine the family structure. Each person has a role to fill in the family unit. Even the youngest member can learn to put toys away after playtime.

**In what ways does putting Concept Eleven into action depend on the wisdom of the previous Concepts?**

**How do I see my role in respect to that of others in my workplace, community groups or family?**

**I was not in charge**

Sometimes I have a difficult time knowing "who" I am, the executive who is in charge, the committee member who is part of the group, or the staff member who has been given a specific job. For example, recently things started to go askew while I was helping serve the buffet at a large family dinner. I immediately wanted to control it. But UA has taught me to think before I do anything. Concept Eleven helped me to avoid taking a bad situation and making it worse. I realized that I was not in charge of the buffet. I had not made any of the decisions on how it was set up, and was only there to do a job. Therefore, I went back to serving the potatoes. In those times when I'm in charge, I know that the authority and final responsibility are mine. When I'm part of a family committee, I remember that I am only part of the decision. When I'm a staff member, I can use my voice to share my opinion. However, I may not have the right to make the decisions, or to be in charge. Regardless of the situation, I am responsible for treating everyone fairly. UA has helped me learn to trust others, while giving them the respect that I would want to receive.

**How can I use Concept Eleven to identify my role in a particular situation?**

**What principles in Concept Eleven help me to pause and assess a situation before I react?**

**Being aware of my purpose**

Studying program literature has helped me understand Concept Eleven, and how I can apply it to my life. I can keep spiritual principles front and center, even when taking care of the ordinary business of life. In UA I am learning to be aware of my purpose in every situation whether at business or at home. That's why my husband and I wrote out our family purpose, which includes being of service and taking care of ourselves. The document acts as our possession consciousness goals pages around how we relate to our time, energy and resources.

In service, this Concept tells me to carry out my authority without partiality. Being a trusted servant of a meeting made me grapple with this idea, because it was necessary to learn to treat everyone the same, without bias. I had to detach from my opinions. A simple way for me to remember this principle is to think of sharing a piece of cake. If I am cutting and serving the cake, I could easily favor myself with a larger piece. Instead, I cut the cake, and let the other person choose the piece he wants. If it's difficult for me to be impartial, I remind myself, "Let Go and HP."

**How can defining my responsibility in any situation help me?**

**Finding harmony**

Concept Eleven reminds me that each of us has different skills and abilities. Without mutual trust of those involved in the work at hand, our skills and abilities cannot be utilized.

Furthermore, Concept Eleven reiterates the idea that "No man is an island." I live, work, and interact with other people. Consequently if I wish to live in harmony, I can do my part, and let others do theirs. I can concentrate on my role, instead of focusing on the role of others.

### **How does Concept Eleven help me to focus on my job?**

#### **The opportunity to grow**

At first glance, Concept Eleven sounds like a very dry, factual statement. However, after reading about this Concept, I find that it is rich in valuable principles. I have learned that Concept Eleven is about shared responsibility. All of the business of UA is not handled by one group of people. It is delegated to various committees and individuals who utilize their expertise and experience to keep World Service working effectively in service to the members of UA.

In the UA groups I attend, all of the service positions are rotated among the members, allowing our members to be of help in the group without one person dominating. When problems arise, we use the group conscience to come to an agreeable solution. This Concept allows each person the opportunity to grow, which adds to our self-esteem. We are all trusted servants, and we learn from each other.

Concept Eleven can be applied in my business as well. There are many tasks that need to be accomplished, but one person is not usually capable of effectively doing all the work. Dividing responsibilities based on skill set and available time is a fair way to get the work done without burdening any one person. We each have our own strengths and weaknesses. When we each take on tasks that we enjoy or are experienced in doing, the workload is lightened.

When I started hiring employees for my business, I felt some resentment towards the employees I was paying to help me. They were collecting half of the income for work we had done together. I, however, continued to work into the night on invoicing, talking to clients, taking care of the back end of the business. It wasn't until I arrived at UA that I realized that I was the source of this imbalance and my resentment. I made a list of all the jobs that needed to be done, separating the ones only I could do from the ones we could do together. Slowly, that gave me the clarity I needed to start charging what I needed for the work my business does and also pay my employees with gratitude rather than being in fear and resentment on every payday.

### **How can I use shared responsibility to create better balance?**

## Concept 12

**The World Service Conference of Underearners Anonymous, the General Service Board and the GSR Committee and other World Service Conference Approved Committees shall observe the spirit of the Traditions. These service bodies are careful not to become powerful and wealthy; to have sufficient operating funds with a prudent reserve; not to have authority over any other member; to make important decisions by discussing and voting on matters whenever possible by substantial unanimity; not to act in a punitive manner; not to incite public controversy; never to engage in acts of government; and finally, like the fellowship of Underearners Anonymous, to remain always democratic in thought and action.**

Careful consideration of the General Warranties found in Concept Twelve reveals a wisdom and balance that can be carried into our personal lives, our work environments, and our relationships. Through exercising the spiritual principles of prudence, humility, substantial unanimity, personal responsibility, avoidance of controversy, mutual respect, and equality, we find that indeed our lives can attain a healthy outlook that may have seemed unattainable in the past.

We learn to strike a balance in our lives, contrary to the extremes underearning taught us. Concept Twelve again reinforces the strength of the UA program. Through a Power greater than ourselves, we find the courage to make the changes necessary to live differently today. By practicing the principles outlined in the General Warranties, we have the opportunity not only to change our lives, but also to offer our experience, strength, and hope to those around us.

**In what ways do the concepts in the general warranties give me ways to take better care of myself?**

### **The wisdom of the General Warranties**

Although the spiritual foundation contained in the General Warranties is for UA world service, I feel the General Warranties represent the basic tenets for living a spiritual life. Not only do the General Warranties tell me that I need to respect others, but they also encourage me to truly respect myself.

Warranty One helped me realize that it was okay for me to have sufficient operating funds. Being frugal is good, but spending most of my resources on trying to fix something that feels critical at the moment left little operating resources for me. My Sponsor suggested that I spend some of what I earned on myself. I stopped living in fear.

Warranty Two helped me understand that where I had let stability boredom create conflict with my boss, it wasn't because the other person had official authority over me but because I feared that person, and my visibility to him, more than I should have. Instead of being equals in a partnership (I bring my skills, time and experience to the tasks I am given and receive pay in return), I was subservient-because I chose to be.

Warranty Three helped me comprehend that I, too, could contribute ideas and make decisions about financial matters of importance in our family. I recall the day that I saw a new truck in our yard. I had no idea where it came from. On another day, I discovered second hand that my husband had purchased some land. I had no part in either arrangement. Today, I know that if I am in a relationship, I am entitled to participate in any major decisions that will affect my life.

Warranty Four and Five are about my behavior and reactions to the behaviors of others. I learned not to argue in public, not to start a fight or riot, or to punish someone for hurting or embarrassing me. My behavior must reflect a life lived on sound spiritual principles. Today, *I strive to think well*, not just behave well. I want to be democratic in action, but also in thought. I want my body and mind operating from the same loving perspective.

**How does achieving balance with the General Warranties help me to not only respect myself, but also to respect others?**

### **The principle of humility**

For me, humility is the basis for the spiritual principles of the Legacies. Warranty One refers to an ample reserve. This means to me that I am enough, and that I have enough. I am not less than anyone else. Being prudent sets boundaries for me, keeping me balanced and humbled. I can avoid the extremes of hoarding my money, my time, my talents, or my love. I can also avoid giving it all away, leaving me depleted with nothing left to give. A prudent balance exists between caring for myself, and carrying the UA message to others.

Warranty Two suggests humility in that neither I nor anyone else, is an authority. We are equal members in the fellowship, as well as in our families. In Warranty Four, I experience humility by not judging others, or attempting to impose my will in ways that create discord or controversy. Spiritual awakenings can occur even when it appears there will be no possible agreement. When I humbly let go of my will, a solution is revealed. It may not be the answer I was looking for, but it becomes clear that it is the one chosen by a Higher Power.

**How does the idea of an "ample reserve" apply to me?**

### **Getting off the "merry-go-round"**

Warranty Two helps me remember that I am not in charge of anyone, nor is anyone in charge of me. I live in a democratic society, and we are all equals. When my emotions get stirred up, they steer me to craziness, and I think that I have authority over others. Today, I know that this is only part of my insanity, and I can quickly get off the "merry-go-round"

Warranty Three helps me to include others in decision-making. Before coming to UA, I made decisions based on my own authority. When my children were considering attending college, I didn't even ask them what university they wanted to attend. I made the decision, told my husband, and that was the end of the discussion. When my husband died, I was already



attending UA. Everything that was decided was discussed within the family. It generated harmony. One of my children said, "It's the first time I feel like a part of something"

### **How does applying the General Warranties in my personal life help me?**

#### **The value of good living**

In the past, I was the guy who made it a point to be the one noticed when I entered a room. I was the one who was first to help. I often gave of myself to the point of going without. I would hear my wife say, "Tom always does everything for others! What about your family! That was our money you gave away!" I didn't know how to be a friend. I felt that I needed to buy friendship, or be the one who would do those things nobody else would do. I thought that I wasn't good enough. Therefore, I had to work extra hard to gain the approval of others so that I could be accepted into their circles.

When I first read the Concepts and General Warranties, I wondered why the 12 step founders found it necessary to include the inner workings of the fellowship in our recovery. But, as I began to read and study them, they came alive. I found them thought provoking. Concept Twelve speaks to the values of good living as addressed in the General Warranties. This is exactly what I had lacked before UA.

Now, I am no longer the guy who pushes his way through the waiting crowd, waving an upheld arm, and shouting out, "Me! Oh, pick me!" I am the one who steps aside, and lets that guy go by. I've discovered that often I didn't even want what I fought so hard to get. Today, when making decisions, I can take the time to consider my own welfare. As a result, I can feel whole, knowing that I did the right thing for myself and my family.

### **In what ways can practicing the principles found in Concept Twelve help me to become the person I strive to be?**