



Knowledge-Based Decision-Making *Background and Rationale*



Summary: Knowledge-Based Decision-Making means information gathering and discussion *before* a possible solution is crafted and a decision is made.

The essential elements of the KBDM process are:

- Open communication between all members.
- All decision-makers have common access to full information.
- The idea that everyone participates is a spiritual principle. The KBDM process models this principle.
- Dialogue *before* deliberation and decision.
- Opinions are backed up by experience, principles, or knowledge.
- We are all equal and everyone is valuable. We respect all ideas and do not tolerate domination.
- We exist in a culture of trust and good will.

Why it is a good model (from *Conference Summary*, 2006):

- It allows thorough examination of issues without an end in mind.
- It is not necessary to choose sides or develop evidence with an end in mind.
- It allows those who make the decision to become far less important than the fact that a good decision is made.
- The outcome is not as important as the way we got there (discussion and an environment that encourages healthy thinking).
- It provides for open dialogue, so everyone's needs are heard, expectations and preferences are acknowledged, and ethical dimensions are considered.
- How we talk and listen to each other is more important than the decision we come to. Our Higher Power is present in the process of speaking and listening.

KBDM alignment with Al-Anon Principles

- Tradition #1: Our common welfare comes first; personal progress for the greatest number depends upon unity.
- Concept #4: Participation is the key to harmony
- Concept #5: The rights of appeal and petition protect minorities and ensure that they be heard.
- General Warranty #3: All decisions be reached by discussion, vote, and whenever possible, by unanimity.

The benefits for our groups

- Group members are more likely to support the decision made.
- Group effort is more likely to yield better results.

- Participants become part of the process, more voices are heard, and more solutions are generated.
- There is recognition that responsibility for action rests on everyone.
- Actions tend to lean toward the greater good for the organization.
- Negativity is diffused.

How is KBDM different than Robert's Rules of Order?

- Robert's Rules is rarely followed as written. The *Newly Revised 11th Edition* is 669 pages long. *(the following quotes are from that edition or "In Brief, 2nd edition)*
- In RR, a motion is *necessary* for any discussion to begin. *"To begin the process of making any decision, a member offers a proposal by making a motion. . . . Strictly speaking, there should be no debate on a matter before a motion regarding it has been made."* (In Brief, p. 19)
- A motion describes a specific action to be taken; there is an end in mind from the outset. *"It is very important to say precisely what the words of the motion are to be. The group votes on exactly language, not on a vague idea."* (p. 20)
- The RR process is geared toward efficiency and toward getting the decision made in a timely manner. *"A prime value of parliamentary procedure is that it provides processes through which an organization, large or small, can work out satisfactory solutions to the greatest number of questions in the least amount of time."* (p. 7)
- The process of refining and defining alternate possibilities or solutions—or putting off a decision until a later meeting—is cumbersome and requires a series of votes:
 - *If the main motion doesn't address the issue at hand, it has to be voted on or amended before a new motion can be discussed.* (p. 53)
 - *If more information is needed, another motion must be made and voted on, allowing that to happen.* (p. 53)
- Debate (not conversation or dialogue) is the style of communication presumed by RR. *"Debate means discussion on the merits of the action—that is, whether the proposed action should or should not be taken."* (p. 23)