

The Ten Commandments of Group Think by Joseph Cincotta, MD

One of the most difficult issues small or solo practitioners must face in joining a group practice is the reality that their individual self interests and control are now secondary to that of the group.

In an evening of reflection and contemplation (and during a rerun of the movie "The Ten Commandments"), Dr. Joseph Cincotta -- a family practitioner participating in a group practice formation feasibility study in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania -- came to the following realizations.

- 1.** I am your group. You shall have no other business allegiances or obligations before me. Remember that other groups are false gods of "groupdom," particularly those whose representatives come clothed in the garments of insurance company or hospital emissary.
- 2.** You shall not speak poorly or badly of the group or any of its members in the presence of others, as they will use this to divide the group.
- 3.** Remember that any worthwhile endeavor takes time, energy and thought to evolve. Take time to rest and reflect on what you are doing and where you are going as a group. Do not lose sight of your vision and mission. There is no decision which must be made immediately, but there is also no decision which should be delayed endlessly.
- 4.** Honor and respect the officers and board members of your group. They are working hard to make the group successful. Theirs is a thankless and difficult job.
- 5.** You shall not act in any way ethically or professionally detrimental to the group or in any manner that would "kill" the group.
- 6.** You shall not be seduced by other offers and prostitute yourself so as to harm the integrity of the group.
- 7.** You shall put forth your best effort in all that you do professionally and carry your "fair share" of the load in working for the group, so as to not "steal" from the work of others.
- 8.** You shall never gossip outside the group and unwittingly or purposefully undermine the efforts of the group, even if those efforts are counter to your personal opinion.
- 9.** You shall work for the betterment of the entire group, forgoing any personal desires for "payback" or improvement of your personal standing at the expense of other members of the group.
- 10.** You shall always show respect for the other members of the group, and never try to embarrass, "outdo," or "show up" some other member of the group. It is only by your strong and faithful commitment to these ends that you will be successful and achieve the true essence of the "group."

May you remember and practice these tenets as you move forward, and MAY THE FORCE BE WITH YOU AND IN YOU.