

Al-Anon Today

YOUR E-LINK TO AL-ANON UK & ÉIRE

**we are stronger
together!**



www.al-anonuk.org.uk

Summer 2021

Letter From Your Editor

The Editorial Committee have so enjoyed reading your shares, and we hope you enjoy this edition of **Al-Anon Today**.

The adversity we have all gone through this year seems to have made us all stronger somehow, but then that's not a surprise, after all, we're in Al-Anon!

My programme and the members have been a crucial anchor as I navigate the rough seas of everyday life. Reading your stories helps me understand my story. Reading about how you use the tools of the programme reminds me about those tools.

We are fully self supporting, no-one is the expert or the teacher, we are all equal, unique and worthy of love. We are stronger together and I'm so grateful I found a home and family in Al-Anon. Keep writing, we love and need your words, we need to hear your story.



OPINIONS EXPRESSED HEREIN
ARE NOT TO BE ATTRIBUTED
TO AL-ANON AS A WHOLE.
MEMBERS SHARE THEIR
PERSONAL EXPERIENCES
AND STORIES, AND INVITE
OTHER MEMBERS TO 'TAKE
WHAT YOU LIKED AND LEAVE
THE REST' — THAT IS, TO
DETERMINE FOR THEMSELVES
WHAT LESSON THEY COULD
APPLY TO THEIR OWN LIVES.

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THE HIDDEN EFFECTS OF ALCOHOLISM

I am the adult child of an alcoholic and the wife of one. My father's drinking affected me. A particular incident springs to my mind when I was ten and he arrived home from the pub. Over the open range fire, he stretched to put something on the mantelpiece and lost his balance, crashing face down onto the brass fender. To me he looked dead. I asked my mother if she was going to help him. She said, "with a bit of luck he might not get up again". I was told to go to bed and forget about it.

Another time when I was twelve, he had been drinking all day and my sister came in from her Saturday job wearing a green and white dress. He rose quickly in anger to grab my sister, but I pushed her down the hall into our bedroom. She cried hysterically and I pushed a huge chest of drawers in front of the door. He was outside trying to climb in through the sash window saying he would kill her - very typical west of Scotland behaviour with regards to football, alcohol and the domestic violence it creates.

I was diagnosed with an auto-immune disease, which I think was caused by the upset I experienced in my childhood, as well as the trauma of losing my mother. I was very resentful about the way my father had treated her.

Alcoholism has affected me a lot, in my childhood my father did not financially provide for his family, I witnessed domestic abuse, I have physical disabilities and emotional anguish that has stayed with me.

For ten years or so my husband has been an alcoholic. I hit crisis point after a period of lockdown with his drinking. I

contacted the Al-Anon Helpline. I am now a very grateful member. The programme has helped me to understand the disease of alcoholism in my father and husband.

I am fortunate to be free from financial worries but the emotional and physical scars will always be with me because of the disease of alcoholism.

Catherine Lingfield

Can you share your experience on the hidden effects of alcoholism?

[Click Here to Share](#)

THE KEY TO SURRENDER

When I first came to Al-Anon, I had no peace of mind and I was furious. Furious that I needed to start a Twelve Step programme and furious that nothing I could do would change the situation at home.

Blaming the alcoholic in my life only increased the sense of discomfort I had with myself. A dark shadow had taken hold of my soul and I was going around in circles; insanity is, as they say, doing the same thing time and time again and getting the same results. No matter how hard I worked, or put on a brave face for friends and family to hide the truth, our home life was falling apart.

By the time we had been together for nine years and married for six, my ability to maintain a rational approach in my relationship with my husband was wafer thin. Money was in short supply, my husband's hangovers meant he didn't get out of bed to go to work, and his lies became more elaborate.

I was so scared and angry, and lived my life in fear of losing everything I cherished.

Deep down I loved my husband and really did not want the marriage to end, but the longer I stayed in recovery, the more I realised that the situation was deeply harmful to my frame of mind and my self-esteem.

Our son was in the middle of all this chaos and I still feel some guilt that I neglected him emotionally during this time. It was all I could do to look after myself. The atmosphere at home could be cut with a knife, and I know our son sensed this; children are excellent at knowing what is going on, even if they haven't been given the details.

Step Two in Al-Anon was key to my surrender and regaining some sanity. It took quite a while, but I finally understood

that the more I had expectations of my husband to stop drinking, the more insanity would keep its hold on me. It was time to ask for help, stop controlling, stop trying to cure and change my husband.

In one of my first meetings, I was given the 'Detachment with Love' pamphlet and this taught me that I could still love the alcoholic in my life, but not his behaviour. I was free to make whatever decision I wanted about my marriage, and no one in Al-Anon was going to judge me.

My Higher Power started with the Group; believing that I could find some peace of mind, just as other fellows were in my meetings. The power of the Group meant that I could ask for feedback and advice and act on it if I wanted to; I have since learned that the most loving thing I can do for myself is to follow the suggestions of my Al-Anon Sponsor and also any suggestions from my Al-Anon friends.

My Sponsor was amazing. She was endlessly there, patient and listening to me sort out my internal dilemma of whether to stay in my marriage or leave. It took five years for me to make the decision. I used to judge myself for staying stuck for so long, but I now realise that I made the right decision at the right time, for me. That was eight years ago, and I can honestly say that Al-Anon is key to my spiritual and emotional health.

There is a gentleness in the meetings that makes me feel held, and encourages me to stand up for myself, and live a life that has integrity to it.

So from someone who didn't want to turn up at meetings, I now look forward to them. I'm very grateful to Al-Anon online for me is usually as good as it can get in a live meeting.

Anon

Having come back to Al-Anon, I have got a better understanding of alcoholism and all that goes with it. Being a part of this wonderful fellowship has given me strength and hope to move forward with my life, accepting my powerlessness over the disease that affects my husband.

seeing the truth

I am learning to grow and change having looked at myself through working the Steps with my amazing Sponsor, whom I have learnt so much from.

Seeing my part in all that went on before I came to Al-Anon certainly made me realise that I too have defects of character, I had thought I was doing nothing wrong, that everything was all his fault and I needed to exercise control to have life the way I wanted it to be.

But, no matter what I said or did, I could not change or help my husband. Now I am working on my programme 'One Day at a Time' to become the person I am meant to be. I do have bad days and slip up on my responses and control, even though my husband is a few months into his sobriety.

Working on my inventory daily, speaking to my Sponsor, having a Higher Power in my life, attending meetings, being of service, reading literature and applying the Slogans and Serenity Prayer, keeps me moving forward making progress not achieving perfection.

If I didn't have Al-Anon in my life, I would still be in that dark place of denial and the cycle would continue. I am truly grateful to this fellowship and the life I am living with it.

Anon

Keeping the Focus on Ourselves



I often felt that I didn't know where I ended and my partner began.

I thought all the time about how I could solve their problems and I didn't spend any time or have any energy left to think about solving my own.

I thought their issues were mine, but they weren't. It got to the point where I could order what they would like at a restaurant, but had no idea what I might like to eat myself!

Eventually I realised that I would have to leave them to sort out their issues themselves, or not, but that I would not be able to do it for them. I had tried and that approach hadn't worked.

The very best thing I could do was to focus on myself and stick to the things I do have control over, which is my own life.

Al-Anon Family Groups has helped me to do that and not only has my own life improved immeasurably, but so has my relationship.

Anon

The Family Disease

I have been coming to Al-Anon for about a year and a half, and it has revolutionised the way I feel about my life and my husband's alcoholism. I understand so much more about what was happening when he drank, and how I enabled it.

The idea that I am allowed to 'Let Go and Let God', to stand back and not get involved in trying to save everyone, has been a real eye opener and brought me great relief.

My husband drank secretly, he would come home appearing to be drunk, but denying it. His erratic behaviour fluctuated and he slowly, over the years, became a Jekyll and Hyde character. I questioned him repeatedly, asked if he was drunk, and offered to help him. He constantly denied it

I believed him. It seems crazy now, but that's how we lived.

One example of the family disease happened shortly after we moved to a new home. He built a dangerously high bonfire consisting of our children's furniture, which he thought wouldn't fit into the new house. The kids were upset that he was burning their stuff, and I was trying to keep calm and minimize the effect on our children.

He was angry with our son in particular, and began to yell and say hurtful things to him.

I was torn between wanting to keep our younger daughter out of earshot, protecting my son, and watching the fire to keep it safe. My husband then stormed into the house, and locked the door - with me and the children outside. He went to bed and passed out.

The kids were afraid, asking "what's wrong with Daddy?"

Luckily, my son found a spare key in the garage and we were able to get into the house. I put the children to bed and laid awake the entire night feeling desperate.

The next day, my husband could remember little of what happened.

I hope my story helps someone.

Anon

['Let Go
and Let God'...
... brought me
great relief]



Gratitude

At this very challenging and uncertain time I try to appreciate all the little miracles of life.

Hands to grow a flower from a seed and a wonder at its aroma and hue. Eyes to watch birds in flight and stars twinkling brightly. Saying something kind in a special way and a comfy bed to retire to at the end of the day. Music to inspire and evoke emotions, a warm fire. A head full of ideas and notions, heights to aspire to. Crying, laughing, feeling the sun on my face. Humour in adversity, and giggling at silly jokes and situations.

Appreciating my family, but choosing my own path and direction. The ability to admit when I make a mistake. Tender moments and friends who support me and genuinely care.

Trudi Area 12

Share your gratitude list
[Click Here to Share](#)

Easy Does It

In Al-Anon I have heard thousands of shares and I identify with almost all of them.

I am so grateful for the strength and hope I have gained in Al-Anon and try to share my experience, strength and hope with others.

I am glad that in Al-Anon the only requirement for membership is that there be a problem of alcoholism in a relative or friend.

It is wonderful that the new Public Information is all about the hidden effect of alcoholism on friends and families. I am male and my qualifier is female. I am very grateful to Al-Anon for the support it has given me.

Since the lockdown I have heard shares from all over the world. It is wonderful to join a meeting and hear that I share common problems and common solutions with so many other people.

Anon

*Experiences from Oxford
Monday Al-Anon members*

'HANDS OFF' gets results

My husband's drinking brought me to Al-Anon Family Groups the year we were married, because I desperately wanted him to get sober so we could start our life together.

I was sure I could convince him to quit, either with loving words, with logical words, or with threatening words – but none of them worked. With the help of the Al-Anon fellowship I gradually learned to stop trying to control his behaviour and expecting him to change.

I learned instead to focus on taking care of myself. In the process of taking responsibility for my own actions, my husband chose sobriety through AA, and we both continue to benefit immensely from the wisdom of our Twelve Step programmes.

Robin



OPENING OUR HEARTS

As a child and into my teens I was troubled by heavy burdens, although my life from the outside looked very privileged.

I wanted to feel lighter but at the same time revelled in the angst my issues brought me. They justified my self-pity. My actions and choices through my early life reflected the torment I put myself through, yet I blamed others.

I always knew I needed some kind of therapy so I tried them all but none ever seemed to scratch the surface. It wasn't until I was introduced to Al-Anon that I felt supported enough to fall apart.

Here, finally I could pour my unedited contents out and there was no guilt, judgement or shame. I have said things in meetings I hadn't even admitted to myself before they started pouring out of my mouth in front of strangers.

The relief of finding my safe space is immense and the ongoing support of this fellowship is invaluable. I will forever be a grateful member of Al-Anon.

V

As a child of an alcoholic, I learnt from a young age to put others' needs before my own. I grew up thinking I had the power to control another person's behaviour, that I could stop my mum's drinking. No matter

**NOW I AM
FREE**

what I did, or what I said, my mum did not stop drinking. The more I tried to stop her, the more I dived into this state of insanity. I was doing the same things over and over again and expecting different results.

Since attending Al-Anon Family Groups, I have learnt that I am powerless over others, I cannot stop my mum from drinking.

My life had become unmanageable because I was so busy taking care of everyone else I had no time for me.

I have discovered that I am not powerless over myself. With the help of Al-Anon, slowly the burden and the fight to constantly control someone else's disease has been removed, and I can work on myself. For the first time in a long time, I feel more like me, I feel free.

I'll forever be grateful for Al-Anon, it provides me with a safe space to share my feelings, I feel relief to know that I am not alone.

Experiences from Oxford Monday Al-Anon members

Anon.

suggestions for meeting topics

- Black and white thinking
- Happiness
- Honesty
- Living in the day
- Anger, its uses and problems

I am so grateful I found Al-Anon almost 23 years ago. I was introduced by an ex-partner whom I had broken up with; I was still very much in love with him and very confused. He had gone into a treatment centre for three months and then joined AA. He became a different person, had time for chats on the phone with my friends, was considerate, attentive and wanted to make the relationship work. I ran away. He was working on his issues and getting to know himself and it scared the hell out of me.

I was taken to an Al-Anon meeting and never looked back. I did five meetings a week for the first two years. Meetings were where I managed to relax and switch off, so much so that I usually slept through them.

I have had a few Sponsors and worked the Steps with them. Recently I completed the ***Blueprint for Progress*** Al-Anon's Fourth Step Inventory, which I found so useful in allowing me to see my progress and where I still have some work to do.

I did service, very happily, whether it was putting chairs out, greeting, making tea, or chairing the meeting. I have been Group Chair Finder and Group Representative. Service allowed me to feel included and connected.

It is only through attending meetings, sharing with others in the Fellowship, working the Steps with my Sponsor, have I 'come to believe' that I am a loving child of God, worthy of love, of loving and self-love. I now understand what self-respect and self-esteem are. I thought I was honest until I realised that having a good work ethic was not the same as honesty. My thinking was truly distorted.

What I have come to understand is that the problems

and issues I have are mine. I no longer blame my upbringing or my parents. They did the best they could with the tools they had. It was my reaction to my upbringing that caused me problems.

I have not found it easy to work the Steps. It was a slog, painful and hard work. Sometimes I did not understand any of it.

Every day there is work to do, but the difference now is that I am kinder to myself and therefore kinder to others. The anger, fear and shame have dissipated.

I spent a number of years with my sister caring for elderly parents and a dear aunt who have now all passed on.

I never thought the pain would pass, of losing my parents, having to go through their belongings, sell homes and leave memories behind. Now I can focus on the good times, the happy times, the younger pictures of them.

Working the Programme has given me a better relationship with my sister too. I am able to stay on my side of the street and be kind and gentle with her. I can still become triggered but I try not to react because today I have tools to help me.

My friendships are honest and better. It doesn't mean I don't have self-doubt or concerns, but I try to take these to my Higher Power in prayer and meditation and ask for clarity and guidance.

Over the holidays whilst watching TV I found myself laughing, and even laughing out loud. I don't know when I last did that.

Many thanks for reading this.

The Power of the Programme

Anon London

The day I discovered my husband was an alcoholic

I was still not totally sure that my husband had a drink problem until this particular day when we were out at a family village fete. He went off, leaving me and our two children, to go and buy some food for lunch. When I next saw him, he was slumped under a tree on the village green where the fete was held, unable to walk and slurring so badly he made little sense. I asked him what was wrong and he said he had come over all funny at the supermarket.

I spoke to a friend of mine and asked her to come and see him, and if she had any ideas about what was wrong with him. She went over and chatted to him and some

time later found me and

said "He is an alco-

holic, Charlotte". I denied it saying I had asked him over and over again and he said he didn't drink, and then my dear friend looked me in the eye and said "I know he is an alcoholic, I recognise it. I am an alcoholic myself; I go to AA".

I did not know this about my friend, and I so admired her courage in telling me this about herself. At this point I realised that he had lied to me for years, and what she was telling me was the truth. She also said he had turned up at their house on occasion to collect our children from playdates, and she knew he was drunk, but had been unable to say anything to me about it.

My world collapsed that day, but it was also the beginning of a change in our lives.

My husband carried on drinking that afternoon, but I kept quiet, watching, and said nothing, until the next day, when we woke up in bed and I turned to him and asked him if he was an alcoholic. I told him a friend had told me they thought he was drunk. He didn't say a word. He got up and went to work. That was the point I knew, for sure, that he was an alcoholic.

He chose to stop drinking. I asked him to attend AA to help himself, rather than me be involved, and I discovered Al-Anon for myself - all thanks to the kindness of my friend in AA.

My husband has been sober for two years now, but the battles are far from over. He no longer goes to AA, but he is still dry – as far as I know.

The damage inflicted on our children and myself is still painful. I have lost all trust in the man I once thought was my rock, and I struggle each day to carry on and to try and find serenity. I'm a long way from getting there, but at least I now have some hope. And I have found my own faith in a Higher Power.

Even if my husband does not want to grow, I can. I want to be a better person, a stronger, wiser and kinder woman. The gift of the Twelve Steps and Al-Anon literature all support and guide me through these tough times.

Anon

Al-Anon Medicine

I need to keep checking my needs and ask myself if I am Hungry Angry Lonely or Tired, then I may need to take my Al-Anon medicine which involves:

- Keeping in touch with Al-Anon members
- Thinking about and applying the tools of the programme
- Keeping healthy company - which sometimes means actively avoiding unhealthy company
- Learning something new in Al-Anon
- Attending meetings also in the good times
- Being aware of my thinking
- Being aware of my attitudes
- Changing the things I can
- Keeping in touch with my Higher Power

Anon - Area 27

What does recovery mean to you?

[Click Here to Share](#)

IMPORTANT WORDS

My Sponsor once asked me which word in Step Ten was the important word for me. So, as a wee exercise and a reflection on all the Steps I looked at the wording of each Step and picked out which words were important for me on that day. Here's what I chose

- | | |
|------------------|--------------|
| 1. Powerless | 7. Humbly |
| 2. Power | 8. Willing |
| 3. Turn our will | 9. Amends |
| 4. Fearless | 10. Promptly |
| 5. Admitted | 11. Contact |
| 6. Ready | 12. Practise |

This list for me shows my development in Al-Anon: I am powerless, but I find a power, I turn my will over and can be fearless to admit my mistakes. I work towards being ready, humble and willing. *Anon*

Lessening my GP's Workload

I had spent two years with my alcoholic partner, trying to control the drinking, before I found Al-Anon Family Groups. In those years my own health suffered and I was constantly in my GP's surgery with anxiety related symptoms, from sleeplessness to muscular aches to severe headaches. I also had a huge sense of isolation; that nobody was going through what I was suffering, and there was nowhere I could reach out for help.

The relief I felt in my first Al-Anon meeting, where everybody seemed to know what I was feeling, was enormous. From hearing about other members' experiences I realised I was not alone. The more I went, the more I was able to try some of the techniques that had worked for them, and gradually I worked out a better way for me to live my life whether the alcoholic was drinking or not. And, crucially, I became an infrequent visitor to my GP's surgery!

Angela

Have you thought of gathering shares from your Group for Al-Anon Today [Click Here to Share](#)

HOW AL-ANON HELPS DEAL WITH THE HIDDEN EFFECTS OF ALCOHOLISM –

Experience, strength and hope from an Area 11 Assembly Public Information Workshop

In Al Anon I learned that the message of Tradition Seven, we are fully self-supporting, applied to myself also. The anxiety of money worries eventually lessened. I was able to overcome my financial insecurities with the help of Al-Anon. I'm now debt free which has given me great peace.

* * *

I came to Al-Anon feeling lost, confused, hopeless, angry, guilty and overwhelmed. I stayed and remained open to learning how to improve my life 'One Day at a Time'. This in turn improves my relationship with those around me. My life has changed beyond my wildest dreams and today I am living my life, not just surviving and I have peace and serenity.

* * *

I have been affected by the disease of alcoholism due to my parents' drinking, I did not know this at the time of going to my first Al-Anon meeting but I learned very quickly that my life was unmanageable as I was so focused on my mother's drinking and trying to fix it, that I had lost the ability to live in the day, being always anxious and fearful. My relationship with my husband and children suffered, as I was very angry and did not understand what was wrong with me. Al-Anon helped me identify my feelings as I heard other members share my story and I was so relieved that I was not alone. I had very low self confidence and self worth, I people-pleased and became resentful. Al-Anon helped me care for myself too and get balance in my life. I learned to recover, recuperate and recreate a new and healthy life for myself.

* * *

I was broken when I came into Al-Anon, mentally, emotionally and financially bankrupt. I felt there was nobody who understood my situation. But at the meetings nobody told

me what to do. People just accepted me and gave me hugs and gave me the time and space to work things out for myself. I learned that I was not alone and that people understood me and where I was coming from. I think I learned that my time had come. I didn't need to take care of the whole world. I got permission to keep the focus on myself, take care of myself first, because if I am not okay, nobody else will be. I learned I could be good to myself and slowly I started to heal. I learned the principles of the Al-Anon programme and when I put them into practice my thinking, attitudes and behaviour changed and so did my life. I am no longer with the alcoholic and I am well and have a very good life 'One Day at a Time', with the help of my Higher Power and the Al-Anon programme and the people in it.

* * *

Nowadays I have self-love, self-worth, self-awareness. Self care is a priority and I am loved by a power greater than myself. No human power could have helped me, but the love and kindness of members and the identification with others, broke down the walls and allowed me to start the process of healing myself.

* * *

I came into Al-Anon having grown up as an adoptive child in a very unhappy dysfunctional home. I thought I had escaped when I married but soon realised that I had married an alcoholic. By the time I reached Al-Anon I was an emotional wreck but at my first meeting I felt a sense of belonging that I had never felt before. It was my first experience of a spiritual awakening. At last I belonged. Al-Anon changed my life forever. My gratitude is enormous. Everything I have today I owe to this wonderful fellowship.

* * *

Al-Anon has helped me to recover by firstly understanding my own emotional illness as an adult child of alcoholics and then learning to accept that it was my parents' illness that caused the dysfunctional relationship. It has been an amazing lifelong journey of recovery and healing in Al-Anon.

* * *

When my daughter's drinking got completely out of control, I felt frightened, helpless and alone; until I walked through the door of my first Al-Anon meeting. There I found hope. Strangers became like family; I could share my fears and anxieties with people who knew exactly how I was feeling and could offer light at the end of the dark tunnel I was living in.

* * *

I am a mother and wife of someone who has a drink problem. Al-Anon has taken me from a place of fear, anger and despair to a place of peace and self-knowledge.

* * *

In my first meeting I was disappointed when I heard that I couldn't do much to solve my wife's drinking. But I sat next to an older guy who told me of his wife's drinking and he seemed at peace with himself. Over time Al-Anon has helped me emotionally. I am more open and accepting of others, and, I am more accepting of myself. I now feel at ease within my own skin. My wife's drinking still affects me mentally, but so does Al-Anon. Slowly but surely it has changed my way of thinking to always see the positive side of things and to appreciate everything in my life, including my wife.

* * *

I was desperate for help when I went to my first meeting and have never stopped going 30 years on. Al-Anon gave me a wonderful relationship with God, and my family back. I love Al-Anon, it saved my life and is making me the person God wants me to be. I'm a work in progress and I will never be able to pay back Al-Anon.

* * *

I learned in Al-Anon to 'Listen and Learn'. I struggled in the beginning to 'Let Go and Let God', and to learn self care after so many years of being a carer for everyone else. I had become physically and emotionally drained. I learned compassion and patience for the alcoholic in my life. I have learned the difference between caring and enabling. Al-Anon members have been kind and the encouragement we give one another is a gift. Awareness and the acceptance of myself first and the alcoholics in my life, past and present, shows me I am no longer a victim of alcoholism but a survivor.

* * *

I came to Al-Anon, a very distressed person, not knowing why I was feeling and hurting the way I was. My first meeting gave me hope and led me to a journey of discovery about me, I was supported and loved, and came to understand that I was no longer alone. I learned to love me, that I was a worthwhile person, and accept that alcoholism is a disease which gave me compassion for the drinker in my life. Today, after many years, I am still learning about myself, and live very much 'One Day at a Time'. I am so grateful to have found my second family.

* * *

My life living with the alcoholic wasn't all bad, most of the bad behaviour in my own family home came from me, and I didn't even know it; fear and anxiety ruled my life. Two years ago, I fell in the doors of Al-Anon and I knew at my first meeting that I was going to stay. Through Al-Anon I got a peaceful loving six months with my husband before his death from the disease. My home is peaceful, my relationship with my children is amazing, and I'm so grateful to Al-Anon that it saved my life.

* * *

Did your Area Assembly hold a Public Information workshop on #TheHiddenEffects?

[Click Here to Share](#)

An unexpected benefit of Lockdown

The pandemic has affected me enormously. My home Group meeting stopped in April 2020 and I have been unable to attend any online meetings.

My circumstances are difficult. I work from home as my office has been closed, my husband is at home and my kids have been home-schooled, or on their school holidays for the majority of the year. I have sorely missed seeing my fellow members, but online meetings were not possible as my family members could overhear my share.

I am grateful the restrictions have kept us fit and well, but my programme has taken a back seat and over the year I became very resentful. I thought I was losing out, until I looked back over the year. This year has given me the opportunity to do Step Four work.

My literature, guidance from my Sponsor and my Higher Power have been available to me, even if meetings haven't. I always thought a Fourth Step had to be completed in a particular way, but my Higher Power has shown me this doesn't need to be the case, I can do it my way.

I am grateful for my Higher Power showing me that Al-Anon is always there and helping me in ways I didn't expect.

Claire

What unexpected gifts did you receive during the lockdown?

[Click Here to Share](#)

What can Alateen offer to teenage relatives and friends of alcoholics?

The Alateen Co-ordinator in my Area asked Alateen Sponsors to share their ideas on what they think Alateen can offer.

Alateen can offer identification with others who live in similar situations.

Alateen can offer understanding of your experiences.

Alateen can offer you an opportunity to share.

Alateen can offer non-judgemental acceptance.

Alateen can offer a simple 'programme for living'.

Alateen can offer help with naming feelings, and suggest useful actions to maintain serenity.

Alateen can offer a spiritual life and fellowship.

Alateen can offer a manageable life.

Alateen can offer friendship and sanity.

Alateen can offer freedom from fear.

Sue, Area 28

Are you an Alateen Sponsor? Perhaps the teens would like to share their experiences with us.

[Click Here to Share](#)





FROM OUR
AL-ANON
FAMILY
WORLDWIDE

‘His daily drinking and personality changes mystified me and left me feeling that there must be something I had done to cause them!’



By **Arla P., Wisconsin**
Reprinted with
permission of **The Forum**,
Al-Anon Family Group
Headquarters, Inc.,
Virginia Beach VA

A Second Chance at My Marriage

I found myself sinking further and further into depression as I tried to make sense of and control what was happening in my marriage and in our home. Over time, I was able to break my childhood definition of what an alcoholic was – a jobless derelict who lacks good hygiene, living a solitary life without friends, family or money. I realised that it was also the man I loved and married. He was a good provider who was personable, well educated, good-looking and much loved by family and friends. However, his daily drinking and personality changes mystified me and left me feeling that there must be something I had done to cause them or that I could do to control or cure them.

I went to Al-Anon at the suggestion of a counsellor and found others who had my thoughts, felt my feelings, and experienced what was happening in my relationship. After I had been in the program for a year and a half, alcoholism ended our marriage of 23 years. Al-Anon members lovingly shared slogans, Conference Approved Literature, sponsorship, the three Legacies and a Higher Power who cared for me and was always available.

I consistently worked my recovery for the next several years. The fellowship provided a means for me to uncover, discover and recover, so I could be the person my Higher Power wanted me to be. As my life blossomed and my children and I thrived, the life of my former husband seem to grow smaller, and his relationships with the children became strained. He watched the improvements the kids and I made over time and finally found his way to AA – without any help from me – and stayed to work his own recovery.

After we had been in our programs for several years, we recognised the love and personal health we had regained. With a commitment to continue with our own recoveries, we learned and used skills that made us able to have a healthy, rewarding relationship and we chose to remarry.

I have been remarried now for almost 12 years. Our relationship is based upon love, honesty, spirituality and recovery. The Twelve Steps and Traditions have been particularly helpful to me. Recovery has reunited us as a couple, but it has also reinstalled trust, respect and serenity for our children.

Today our family thrives. I love who my first and second husband is, but more importantly, I love who I am with the help of the ongoing support of Al-Anon and the guidance of my Higher Power. Wow!

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THE SERENITY PRAYER

God grant me the Serenity
to accept the things I cannot change,
Courage to change the things I can,
and Wisdom to know the difference.



STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Al-Anon's Suggested Preamble to the Twelve Steps

The Al-Anon Family Groups are a fellowship of relatives and friends of alcoholics who share their experience, strength and hope in order to solve their common problems.

We believe alcoholism is a family illness, and that changed attitudes can aid recovery.

Al-Anon is not allied with any sect, denomination, political entity, organisation, or institution; does not engage in any controversy; neither endorses nor opposes any cause. There are no dues for membership.

Al-Anon is self-supporting through its own voluntary contributions.

Al-Anon has but one purpose: to help families of alcoholics.

We do this by practising the Twelve Steps, by welcoming and giving comfort to families of alcoholics, and by giving understanding and encouragement to the alcoholic.

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THE TWELVE STEPS

1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol – that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God *as we understood Him*.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God *as we understood Him*, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these Steps, we tried to carry this message to others, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

