

Al-Anon Today

YOUR E-LINK TO AL-ANON UK & ÉIRE

gratitude
- giving back to
AL-ANON

Other words in the word cloud include: seek, spirit, create, give, family, GUIDANCE, PEACE, LOVE, HOPE, faith, ASK, laugh, health, HEALING, oneness, TRUTH, purpose, forgive, NOW, kindness, believe, thank you, abundance, soul, divine, receive, CHANGE, growth, JOURNEY, community.



www.al-anonuk.org.uk

Autumn 2021

Letter From Your Editor

We are deeply honoured and fortunate, I feel, to be able to read many Alateen shares in this issue of *Al-Anon Today*. Alateens along with our Al-Anon writers, have taken the courageous step of committing their ideas to paper, and we the readers are the richer for it.

The Alateens say it how it is, and beautifully and honestly share their relief at finding the gifts of recovery. Much of the writing from the Al-Anon members reflects the rewards of recovery in Al-Anon, and the opportunities to serve.

I am so grateful that recovery in Al-Anon has given me a life and that I am learning how to participate in that life. I don't have to hide myself away or be overly shy or judgemental or cynical.

Serving Al-Anon allows me to take risks and to be brave, knowing I won't be judged or laughed at. Through service I found myself, and in Al-Anon I found a home and a new family.

Thanks for reading, thanks for writing, thanks for thinking about writing.

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.



In this issue ... page

Letter From Your Editor	2
Filling Up With Hope / What Does Sanity Mean to Me?	3
Sweet Imperfection	4
Roots	5
Alateen Members Share	6
Alateen Sponsors' Perspective / Suggestions for Meeting Topics	9
From Alateen to Al-Anon / Kinder to Myself	10
Service - Something Wonderful and Unexpected ...	11
Just For Today / Fears Resurfacing	12
Safety in Al-Anon meetings / Life is for Living	13
Being Asked to Put Out the Slogans	14
Face to Face	15
Growing into Myself through Service	16
Please Share Your Thoughts With Us / Serenity Prayer	17
Statement of Purpose / The Twelve Steps	18



FILLING UP WITH HOPE

For me Al-Anon, our programme, our literature and especially my friends in the fellowship, are like a petrol station to which I can go, when I am running low on courage, hope, ideas or positive company.

It's good to know that I also help to fill the 'hope petrol station' for others too.

Area 27

WHAT DOES SANITY MEAN TO ME?

- This question appears in Step Two in 'Paths to Recovery' -

- Feeling mentally calm and at peace.
- Having a healthy perspective on life.
- Knowing that I am powerless over people, places and things.
- Knowing it is not my responsibility to organise and interfere in others' lives.
- Accepting that I am human and have human needs and limitations.
- Being able to laugh and not take life too seriously.
- Being realistic about what I can do in a day.
- Knowing it is OK to make mistakes or not know the answer to something.

Anon

How did you work Step Two? What were the rewards or difficulties?

[Click here](#) to Share

Sweet Imperfection

This morning, looking at a bouquet of roses that I had bought a few days earlier, I noticed that one of the flower heads had begun to droop. As I trimmed the stems and refreshed the water, I saw that one orange flower had brown rot where the bud connects with the stem. It could no longer drink the water it needed.

I removed the beautiful little bud and thought about how it had never had the chance to open. Stunted mid-growth, its beauty trapped forever in a tight little bud, I couldn't help but feel a bit like that flower. I rolled it gently in the palm of my hand and though a few of the now-dead petals fell away, the ugly brown core remained.

Growing up in the chaos and struggle of an alcoholic home, my parents didn't know how to give me the unconditional love and support that I needed as a child.

My siblings and I were judged on what we accomplished, how well-behaved we were, who we dated and what we looked like.

I never felt good enough. It's taken many years in Al-Anon to recognise that my interior life is what really matters.

I have a Higher Power that loves me and my flaws. I have learned through doing the Fourth Step that not everything I thought about myself is true.

Some of my flaws have been false perceptions, ideas thrust upon me by people who themselves were affected by the disease of alcoholism.

Some of my flaws needed to be reasoned out with someone steeped in the programme before I could decide what to do with them.

The love and support of my Sponsor and the love of my Al-Anon family help me to 'Let Go and Let God' - let go of my ideas of perfection and to let God work His way into my life as it was intended.

I picked up the rose and inhaled it deeply. It was wonderfully sweet. I closed my eyes and brushed it against my cheek, lips, eyes and couldn't believe how soft it was. I smiled. Separated from the bouquet, and freed from a dead and thorny stem, I could feel my Higher Power speaking to me through this sweet imperfect flower.

Just like the little bud in front of me whose only purpose was to share its colour and scent, my only purpose is to acknowledge these quiet moments of understanding - moments I recognise as serenity - and accept the peace and love that my Higher Power has prepared for me.

Lynda, Leyland



ROOTS



How do the lessons of nature enhance your recovery? [Click here](#) to Share

One Bank Holiday I was in the garden with my daughter and her 20 month old son. For a while now I had wanted to move a tree over to the other side of the garden but knew I most certainly couldn't do it on my own. It was blocking a sweet little cherry tree which had just come into leaf.

So, we began moving the stones and digging a deep hole ready for the transfer of the tree. My Grandson was fascinated and slipped into the hole! After the second slip he was placed in his buggy for safety. Then came the hard part, actually digging the tree up to move it across. Oh my gosh, we laughed out loud and fell about as we dug deeply but carefully to avoid damaging the roots. We wriggled and jiggled it and then some... at times we were balanced precariously on the edge of the sleepers.

It was at this point I was reminded of how many times I have stubbornly been like those roots, refusing to budge on an opinion, refusing to 'Let Go and Let God', believing I was right and I knew best.

I stabbed at the roots, like I did the alcoholic, and I jiggled the trunk round and round in circles, like I persistently did with the alcoholic, hoping that everything would change, and it never did. I heaved and grunted at the alcoholic, I begged and pleaded, just as we did, pulling up the tree.

Nothing did ever change in my life until I recognised that I was powerless over people, places and things, and I needed a power greater than me to restore my sanity.

Al-Anon reminded me to laugh and pray during troubled times. We sure did that day, in fact we called out to God several times. Eventually two cups of tea later and lots of exceptional digging from my daughter, the roots came free and the tree now stands proudly in its new home.

I am grateful today that my attitude has changed enough for me to embrace the Twelve Steps, to 'Live and Let Live', to love fiercely and not ever give up on the people I love and hold dearly in my heart.

My daughter was lost to this family disease, but now she is found. Today we can laugh and enjoy the simplest of things and she has her own miraculous story of recovery. For all this I am grateful, and who would have thought that moving a tree on a wild and windy May Bank holiday Monday would give me this awakening.

Annie

ALATEEN MEMBERS SHARE

Alateen is for teenage relatives and friends of alcoholics. Alateen is part of Al-Anon Family Groups. For information about Alateen meetings in England, email the General Service Office at enquiries@al-anonuk.org.uk

The Gifts of Recovery in Alateen

I've been in the programme for three years now, but only used to go to Alateen once a month or at Conventions. It takes one and a half hours to drive to my nearest Alateen meeting. The drive is longer than the meeting. Plus, it is difficult to juggle with my other activities.

I used to go to Al-Anon meetings with my mum. I love her to bits, but there are some things I don't want to share in front of her, even though Mum encourages me to share.

Thanks to online meetings I can now attend my meetings independently. The online Alateen meetings have been great and it is wonderful to attend a regular meeting. People in my online meeting know more about me than others who have known me for years. It's so nice to realise that I am a 'regular' person who can be quite bonkers at times.

Alateen has helped me to accept myself and given me courage to let go of toxic friendships. It helps me to move on and I can now do things which others think are selfish, but which I know are good for me.

Alateen has also taught me that if someone is upset, I don't have to fix it for them, and that crying is good and therapeutic. Crying also helps take off my makeup!

I'd be very sad and lonely if I didn't have this meeting.

_____ MB

FINDING ALATEEN IN LOCKDOWN

Online meetings have really helped me as there is no Alateen in Scotland.

I've met my closest friends in Alateen and we video call each other most nights. I've only known them for eight months and though we've not yet met in person, we hope to meet up in the summer.

Alateens understand me and my problems and they are all so nice.

I did feel alone for a long part of my life, but now I realise that there are thousands out there with the same problems as me. I've changed so much since coming into Alateen and it's great to see others changing too.

Some of my friends have seen a drastic change in me and can see I am in a different headspace now. I'm learning not to rant about my dad, knowing that I can call any of my Alateen friends to talk about it.

I just love this programme and being online means I don't need to go on a long drive to get to a meeting.

Alateen Member

Alateens Share the Joy

I've been coming to Alateen for a while. I am surprised I ever joined in the first place as meeting new people is hard for me. I feel really lucky I've got this and feel sorry for others who have not. I'm glad Mum insisted that I come, because I keep coming back.

MC

It was hard for me to make the first call as no one else in my family is in recovery and I had never reached out to anyone for help before. I think being online was less intimidating to join than a face to face meeting. It's so lovely that I can join a meeting on a Saturday morning in my pyjamas!

IN

This is only my second meeting. It's so nice that I can find people I relate to as no-one else would understand. I have told others about Mum's drinking and they have either used this against me or become scared. I found I was not able to confide in anyone.

The online meeting was recommended to me and it was lovely to have people that understand me. Being online is great as I do not have to rely on either of my parents to drive me to a meeting.

L

I joined Alateen aged eleven at a monthly face to face open meeting with my mum. I came to this online meeting when I was twelve. I was so glad to be here, as I was having such a difficult time recently with my sister. I chat to other members about this and they don't tell me I am stupid. Thank you for all you've done for me as you have really saved my life.

MK

Alateen giving me the help I need

Before joining Alateen in January I felt very lost, isolated, confused, angry, disappointed and had very low self-esteem, due to the things I had experienced and the constant worrying.

It was then I was told about Alateen by my mum and her friends in AA. They told me that even though there are no meetings in my area, I could still attend an online meeting, like they do in AA meetings at the moment.

Without a doubt, the past few months of attending Alateen online meetings has helped. It's crazy to think that I have met people from all over the UK who have been through similar experiences as myself. If Alateen was not online, I'm not sure where my feelings would be right now - most likely still comparing myself to others.

Alateen has allowed me to seek the help I need and make friends who do not judge me for the things I've been through, and for that I am hugely thankful, as now I know it's ok to not be ok, and to admit that I'm powerless over my mum's drinking and that it's not my fault.

I know now that I don't have to be alone anymore, hiding my problems. I can speak to Alateen members and the adult Sponsors. And for that I'm 100% thankful for my Alateen family.

A



Shares from Alateens in Area 18

Alateen online is a huge help considering there are no face to face meetings in my Area. If not online, I would have to travel for ages to get to one. It has been a massive help to find other teenagers. We are so lovely. I never thought it possible to meet a massive group of amazing people. If people ask who my best friends are, they are from Alateen and can be far away. Such an amazing thing.

I video call Alateens almost every night. It's absolutely changed my life in only nine months. It's massive in my life. I've never missed an Alateen meeting and I'm so happy to have met you.

N

I'm really thankful for Alateen online. I was not able to attend a meeting and I had no resource apart from Mum. I have benefited from the lockdown. I would not have my group of mates without it. I have been in Alateen for six months. It's made such a difference in my life, it's hard to believe. Thank you.

L

So sweet. I can clearly tell from the way you all spoke, how much it affects you by being part of this meeting. So far, I am really grateful to be here. Just hearing you talk, there are actually some people I can relate to, even though you are far away. Thank you so much for allowing me to be here. So great to listen to you.

Newcomer

Alateen has helped me a lot. I have been coming since the end of November. I find the Slogans have helped me

the most and if I am stressed out at school, they help me straight away. I am really grateful for Alateen.

Z

I have been a part of Al-Anon and Alateen for about three years now, it feels really weird to say that. Before everything went online, I managed to get to face to face Alateen meetings or Conventions. There was an Alateen meeting one and a half hours away from me that I went to twice. I could only go if I had nothing else on during the weekend as I spent more time in the car than in the meeting. So the move to online meetings has been good for me.

For face to face meetings I go to Al-Anon meetings with my mum. However, there are things I don't want to share in front of her and everyone is at least 20 years older than me. This makes me feel a bit weird because they are not experiencing what I do.

Now that meetings are online it's really nice to be able to have an Alateen meeting I can attend regularly without having to plan other things around it. I can do it from my bedroom and wear what I want. Before, I got to a point where I wasn't really feeling the effect of Alateen. I was really struggling.

When I found the online Alateen meetings, they really helped me by being around people of a similar age. It's nice to have people I understand and it's given me a new bunch of friends which is really cool because I am not good at socialising.

M

In Alateen I've found that I can make friends. I don't really have friends in school but there are people in Alateen that I can just talk to whenever. They will get back to you as fast as possible if they're not free at the exact time.

R

ALATEEN SPONSORS' PERSPECTIVE

I feel so privileged to watch the Alateens grow, finding their recovery and learning that the future is hopeful for them during our online meetings.

Our Area started Alateen meetings just before lockdown when we had just one member. I am hopeful that the success of online meetings will give us the confidence to restart our meeting again.

S

It's been wonderful to see Alateens come to their first online meeting, a little apprehensive about what is going to happen, and what the meeting will be like. When they 'keep coming back', I am privileged to watch them grow and flourish.

L

I have seen first-hand that online Alateen meetings are a wonderful lifeline for Alateen members. Alateens from all over the country join us, and we have seen a steady increase in numbers over the last year. They also have

the opportunity to join other Area's Alateen meetings, so we can now go to more than one meeting a week. We are blessed that many Alateen Sponsors from different Areas are volunteering to support our weekly meeting.

We used to meet face to face weekly, and for the last couple of years, before lockdown, we often had no Alateens at all or only one or two. Face to face meetings are a big commitment for Sponsors, parents, and Alateens, as many travel miles to support their Alateen meetings.

Online meetings are safe and secure, with three screened Alateen Sponsors (in case one loses connection) and we make sure settings like private chat are disabled. No direct messages can be sent between members, but Alateens can chat to the host if they find anything concerning.

The Alateens can swap numbers at the end of the meeting, and we see very strong, trusting relationships forming between them.

We realise that some twelve to seventeen year olds cannot attend online meetings and hopefully we can restart a face to face Alateen meeting to support those teenagers who live nearby.

C

*Are you interested in becoming an Alateen Screened Group Sponsor?
Contact GSO for an application form at enquiries@al-anonuk.org.uk*

suggestions
for meeting
topics

- Feeling safe in meetings
- The riches of Alateen
- The rewards of service
- The lessons in nature
- What does sanity mean to me?

Today
I am GRATEFUL
for all the
people that are
loving and
Kind to Me

from ALATEEN to AL-ANON

I was a member of Alateen at 13 years old.
My dad was an alcoholic.

I was a very damaged and troubled child. My dad was a very emotional drunk and I was the sponge. I soaked in every bit of his disease: the hurt, the tears and the anger. My self-esteem had hit the floor. I was powerless over my dad.

I felt so empty and that no one would understand my situation until I found the wonderful fellowship. I went on to be a member of Al-Anon. Thank God I did.

My behaviour was totally out of control. I was angry at my dad, resentful of what the disease had taken from me, I was a victim, I was very controlling.

Al-Anon gave me the wonderful gift of tools, Slogans, and most importantly peace and serenity.

Today my dad is ten years sober and I no longer live in the hurt of the past. I live for 'One Day at a Time', I keep things simple and keep the focus on me.

Anon

Since joining Al-Anon, many things have changed in my life. My father is the drinker in my life and when I first started coming to meetings, my primary emotion was rage.

Kinder to Myself

After nine years in the programme, I'd started to 'simmer down' and I could even talk to him without reacting. But life is always changing and since I had a small child, things became hard again.

During the lockdown, I found my emotions getting the better of me; or the worst of me, I should say! I felt full of rage again and I found myself crying a lot. I didn't want to be this angry, especially around my beautiful two-year-old.

Thank God for Al-Anon. I kept coming every week, logging on and sharing honestly with my second family. No one judged me. As I listened and shared, I realised that I needed to be much kinder to myself. I have been working on relationships with others for many years, but the one that I still need to work on is the relationship that I have with myself.

If I didn't have Al-Anon, it's probable that I'd still be that angry, broken person. Today, I am a work in progress and I can accept that. Thank you, Al-Anon, for always being there and for accepting me as I am. It sometimes feels like I've gone backwards, but my recovery is still there and some days are much better than others.

It feels odd to still be grappling with that same character defect, but if I'm honest, it's nowhere near as bad as it was when I first came and I will be forever grateful for that.

Anon

Please share how you deal with rage and anger. [Click here](#)

Perhaps the butterfly is proof that you can go through a great deal of darkness yet become something beautiful



SERVICE - *Something Wonderful and Unexpected*

My life is totally different now than when I first walked into the rooms. I was a single 21-year-old back then. I started attending meetings largely to help me with my relationship with my Mum who was not an alcoholic but our relationship had been severely impacted by the effects of alcoholism. She has since passed away.

This, along with physical health problems and a change of location, led me to not attending meetings for a couple of years. I returned to meetings in my early 30s and now have a young family and a career to juggle.

I also struggle with boundaries and sometimes say 'yes' when I mean 'no'. With all of this in mind, committing to service has been a tricky situation for me recently. However, my Higher Power's imagination is not limited by my understanding.

I attended an online meeting last Christmas and heard about a Convention that was happening in January. A member had said to contact her if we would like a flyer. Very timidly, and with my heart in my mouth, I sent her a message after the meeting to ask if I could have a flyer.

Because of the break I had had from Al-Anon, I felt like a brand new member again! The person who had mentioned the Convention offering her number responded to my message with kindness and sent the leaflet to me straight away.

Not very long afterwards I received a message from the same member asking me if I would do a share at the Convention! She encouraged me and said it would be a good opportunity to do something out of my comfort zone. I laughed and told her that just asking for the flyer had been out of my comfort zone!

As a result of going to that Convention, someone asked me to sponsor them and I found out about the Editorial Committee for this e-zine.

I cannot commit to being a Group Rep or anything at District or Area level at this current time because of my young family and my husband's work commitments. But I can commit to being a member of the Editorial Committee, a totally different type of service that I never thought possible before going to that January Convention.

‘ I am so grateful to this programme for the many surprises and opportunities for growth it gives me. ’

I have had many moments of doubt along the way, especially after my Mum's death and my related physical health problems. But my Higher Power always steps in and shows me He has been with me all along. It says in *Courage to Change* on 12th May "I think of how someone guided me to Al-Anon when my life was at its darkest....And I doubt my doubts."

A grateful member



What form of Service could be out there waiting for you?

If you feel you may be interested in joining the Editorial Committee, please email editor@al-anonuk.org.uk.

Vacancies arise regularly due to our rotation of Service.

No editing experience is necessary, just a love of Al-Anon literature.

JUST FOR TODAY

I have been a member of Al-Anon for many years but struggle with some of the suggestions in the programme. Over the years I have, eventually, understood most of them.

However, I still struggle with completing one of the suggestions in the Just for Today card. That is; "Just for today I will exercise my soul in three ways: I will do somebody a good turn, and not get found out: if anybody knows of it, it will not count".

The nearest I have come to meeting this challenge is to wash up the mugs at work and leave the tea point clean and tidy. Not very imaginative. However, a few days ago an Al-Anon friend found a wonderfully imaginative way of achieving this goal.

The postman delivered a package of flowers. I love flowers so I was excited to find out who had been kind enough to send me some so unexpectedly. The card simply said "Just for today I will do someone a good turn and not be found out" and underneath it said "with love in Fellowship". Genius! The flowers were on my desk for a week and made me smile every time I looked at them.

If the person who was kind enough to send them is reading this - thank you so much, you made my week. If anyone else is wondering just how to carry out that particular - 'Just For Today' suggestion, I think this is a wonderful way of doing it.

Lynne, Area 20

Do you have a favourite suggestion from the Just For Today card? Is there a particular suggestion that you find more difficult to undertake?

[Click here](#) to share

The Al-Anon Just For Today card can be bought online: [shop](#)

I first came to Al-Anon many years ago when I lived in London. I was estranged from God and my friends. I came in desperation. I was angry, frightened, lonely and tired.

I learned that anger was not a sin and that behind anger lay fear.

Fears Resurfacing

When I first moved to a new town, I was lonely. I phoned three members of the fellowship and I was told that we are never alone.

It seems strange to me that after so many years of living the programme, those fears have resurfaced. We had a problem in a local meeting and Al-Anon, which had always been a safe place for me, didn't feel so safe anymore.

I know how beautiful our programme is and all the happy times I have had. I know I need to hand this over, say my prayers, read the readings and call others in the programme.

I need to speak my truth and to bear witness to the fact it doesn't matter how long you have been around; only constant practice of the programme leads to serenity.

All my love to long term members and newcomers alike.

Rachel, St Albans

Safety in Al-Anon meetings

I recently read the Guidelines on Safety in Al-Anon Meetings (UKG22). These Guidelines illustrate how we use the Al-Anon Traditions to maintain individual and Group safety.

It caused me to reflect upon how, growing up in a family affected by alcoholism, I behaved exactly contrary to the suggestions contained within the Guidelines.

Communication is a theme that runs throughout the Safety in Al-Anon Guidelines. It suggests that we could discuss safety at our Groups, Districts and Areas. We may also include 'Safety in Al-Anon' in our Group Inventory, and we could develop plans for addressing disruptive behaviour, through our Group Consciences.

Communication is something that I necessarily shied away from pre Al-Anon, especially when I felt that it would result in conflict. A disruptive family member would compromise the safety of the whole family, but no one would communicate with them, or each other, for fear of making the situation worse. In fact, acting as if everything was ok, inevitably worsened the situation.

Responsibility also pervades these Guidelines. Growing up in an alcoholic home, with both parents being children of alcoholics, meant that no one took responsibility for anything. I didn't learn that I am only responsible for myself and not for everyone else. Having clear, suggested Al-Anon Guidelines, encourages me to be responsible for myself and my Group, and to participate in making my Group safe.

I have learned in Al-Anon, that I have the right to feel safe wherever I am, and the responsibility to ensure my own safety.

In Al-Anon, we only have one requirement for membership, "that there be a problem of alcoholism in a relative or friend". I am grateful that we don't have endless rules and regulations to abide by. Instead, we have suggestions and Guidelines.

However, as stated on pages 21 and 22 of the Al-Anon

Family Groups UK & Éire Service Manual, "we, too, can become ill". It goes on to discuss, "our obsession, our anxiety, our anger, our denial, and our feelings of guilt. There are even those of us who are arrogant, smug, self righteous and dominating". So, it is not surprising to me that our Groups do occasionally experience conflict, chaos, disruption rather than focussing on our primary purpose.

Unlike my alcoholic family though, Al-Anon encourages unity, respect and safety in Al-Anon meetings by following suggested Guidelines.

AJ

Al-Anon Guidelines can be found on the Al-Anon UK website: [Click Here](#)

Life is For Living

This is my story, forgive me for any mistakes, I am new to Al-Anon.

For me, life has been one mighty battle. I could either go down or I could fight and get stronger by the day. Being down is no way to live, thankfully I am stronger now as I got help when I needed it most.

I have a twin sister who is an alcoholic in denial. She likes to be in control and likes to get her own way in life. She thinks only of money and doesn't care who she hurts. I find her behaviour unbelievable. As for myself, I have struggled with being bullied throughout my life. I feel I've worked hard and got no reward for it. I am dyslexic but it wasn't picked up on when I was at school.

I see now that I have only one life and it may seem that some people can sail through life easily. But, life is for living. I need hope and wisdom.

My message is that it has been possible for me to turn life around, I just need to believe in myself.

Anon

Being asked to put out the Slogans

In a meeting recently, we were discussing how to encourage newcomers into Service. Someone shared about how, when meetings were running face to face, newcomers were asked to hand out the Slogans around the room.

This simple image brought me to tears as I remembered that this was exactly how I had been encouraged into service 13 years ago, before I even really understood what this meant.

The beautiful, spiritual and loving member who asked me to hand out the Slogans is no longer with us. But her essence lives on today and as I recalled that moment from my early recovery, it was like she was waving me a heavenly "Hello!"

I reflected on the conversation about service after the meeting, and I felt I had a spiritual awakening. I suddenly realised, on a much deeper level than ever before, how incredibly important it is that members pass the message of our wonderful fellowship 'in all our affairs'.

In this instance, the long term member included me as a newcomer in one of my early meetings and boosted my fragile self-worth.

‘Even though it was only my second or third time in the rooms of Al-Anon, I felt included, and worthwhile, and part of something bigger than myself.’

I think that when I act out of love and kindness towards newcomers and share about how my life has changed through attending meetings and participating in service, it has a twofold impact.

It not only gives newcomers the love and kindness that they desperately need, but also invites those newer members to want some of that recovery for themselves. With the love and encouragement of members, and their Higher Power's help, they keep coming back.

Now that I have covered a lot more ground on my journey in the fellowship, I feel like it is a blessing that I can pass on the message – the same message that was handed at that magical moment when I was asked to put those simple words around that humble meeting room.

Colleen



Firstly, I'd like to thank all members who have been doing Service, whatever role, during the Covid pandemic. Our courage to change has inspired us in the new ways needed to keep the fellowship alive and well.

At the start of 2020 my Al-Anon journey was stumbling along. My home Group was made up of the few regular members we relied on to cover the rent, plus a few infrequent ones. There were occasional newcomers but it seemed we weren't offering what they were looking for at that particular time.

We had been notified that the venue would be closing before long, and we were in the process of looking for a new one, and having a Group Conscience about moving or closing. Then lockdown came and everywhere closed, taking the decision out of our hands.

I am very grateful my husband has been sober for twelve years and that my 20 or so years of Al-Anon fellowship have helped me survive without meetings.

The Covid lockdowns highlighted all the blessings in my life; a peaceful seaside home, a dog to walk, a level promenade to walk with friends or cycle along, a garden so family and friends can visit. Do I really need to return to meetings? I wondered.

Yesterday I attended the Bexhill-on-Sea Al-Anon Convention with AA and Alateen participation, and got my answer. It was so nice to be in the rooms again with so many people. It was lovely to catch up with members whom I'd not seen in ages, and was delighted to see a

couple of people who I knew had been missing from the fellowship for some years. There were some good shares in the meetings too. So, thank you to the Convention Committee for all their Service beforehand, and on the day, to make it so successful.

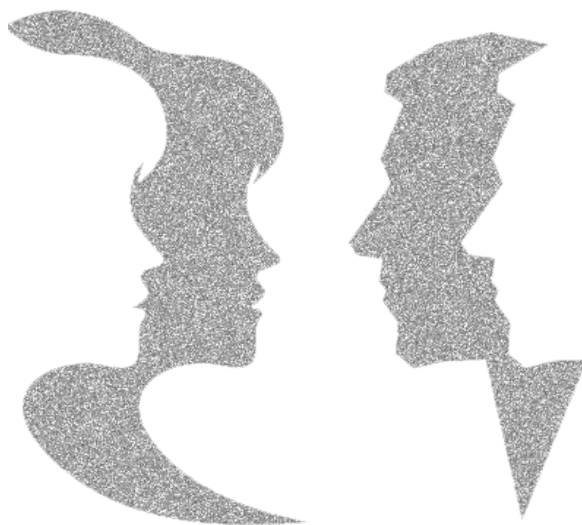
When I first came into the rooms I was puzzled by Service being so simple at Group level. People seemed to get the room ready as they arrived, we all seemed to muck in with the clearing away. Obviously, I knew someone had the key, and one lady was always there to make the tea. I had been determined not to get too involved in the beginning, but found that helping a bit made me feel part of the Group.

Over the years I have gained and learned so much in the various roles I held and I felt part of the wider fellowship. Being in the age group that got their Covid vaccinations early on, I now plan to leave Service chairs vacant for newer members to sit in, and be willing to offer my experience as a Service Sponsor from a comfy armchair.

My hope is that people who have found the fellowship via the online meetings will be able to join us face to face for the tea and hugs.

Elspeth

Can you share your experience of Service Sponsorship?



FACE ^{TO} FACE



FROM OUR
AL-ANON
FAMILY
WORLDWIDE

‘I have come to see that if several people do a little bit, a whole lot of work gets done effortlessly and efficiently.’



By Suzanne M., Nevada

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

Growing into Myself through Service

In the beginning of my Al-Anon experience, I wouldn't try new things because I was afraid to make mistakes. I used to think I was stupid or mentally challenged because I couldn't remember things. However, today I recognise that as fear. That is why service has been very important to me throughout my entire recovery process. I've held service positions over the years for my group, for the Al-Anon Information Service, and now for my Area.

Each service commitment has taught me different things about myself, including my strengths and my shortcomings. More importantly, each has helped me grow into the person I am today.

Because I am more confident in my abilities, I can let go of the façade I used to put on so that people would like me. I can also admit my weaknesses more readily without fear of being ridiculed or shamed, because I know that I am surrounded by loving friends in Al-Anon who always support and encourage me, no matter what. They are willing to help me when I get stuck or don't know how to do something. My Service Sponsors have been wonderful because they have always been so generous with their experience, strength and hope, especially if they have held that particular service position. What a gift!

I've always been someone who can multi-task, but the problem is that my energies tended to get scattered at times and I would miss many of the details. My people-pleasing fears would get in the way, especially when I was surrounded by too many people.

Furthermore, I would start projects enthusiastically, but I had trouble following through and finishing them. Somehow, though, service work allows my Higher Power to walk me through all of that and be of value anyway.

For instance, my latest position as Area Secretary has helped me learn how to focus more and pay attention to details. I've learned to listen more closely so that I can record our Area Assembly minutes and Area conference calls more efficiently for others to review.

I've learned how to work better as part of a team, and I have been able to let go of the need to be perfect or in control, more heads really are better than one! Also, I have come to see that if several people do a little bit, a whole lot of work gets done effortlessly and efficiently.

No job has been more important to me than making sure Al-Anon is available for newcomers who still suffer.

Please [Click Here to Share](#)
and submit your contribution or post to:
The Editor, at the General Service Office address (below).

Please help us make this e-zine a vital, rich and diverse
expression of the Al-Anon programme of recovery.

please share your thoughts with us

*You don't have to be a professional writer. The Editorial Committee
will take care of the spelling, grammar and punctuation – these are
not as important as heartfelt experiences.*

The length can be anything from a single sentence to 450-500 words.
Anything longer we may have to edit. Whatever you decide, sharing in
Al-Anon Today can be another step along the road to recovery for both
the reader and the writer, helping you and other members to grow.

You may choose how you sign your article: with your own name,
anonymously, or with a pseudonym, but please note that for legal
purposes your full name and address are required with your submission.

Your anonymity will be fully respected.

All shares become the property of Al-Anon Family Groups UK & Éire, who
retain full editing rights, and may be used in whole or part – in print,
on the internet or any other media – to develop Al-Anon and
Alateen material.

GENERAL SERVICE OFFICE:

Al-Anon Family Groups UK and Éire
57B Great Suffolk Street
London SE1 0BB

Office: 020 7593 2070

email: enquiries@al-anonuk.org.uk

website: www.al-anonuk.org.uk

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.

UK & Éire Service Manual 2016, page 10

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.

