

Al-Anon Today

YOUR E-LINK TO AL-ANON UK & ÉIRE

*Finding Solutions
that lead to
Serenity*



Autumn 2024

Letter From Your Editor

I am deeply touched when I hear the words from the suggested Al-Anon welcome being read out at meetings. We are encouraged to use the tools of the programme in our lives and we are invited to find solutions that lead to serenity.

Sometimes, when opportunities arise for me to learn something new, I need to fully immerse myself in the experience before I can truly understand its benefits. When I put the Al-Anon programme into practice, refocus my perspective and change my attitude, unexpected solutions can emerge.

Our programme guides us to accept the things we cannot change, and as we apply the Al-Anon principles to our lives we are offered the rewards of serenity.

In this issue, members share their meaningful expressions and experiences of finding solutions that lead to serenity.

Reading inspirational words on a page can have such a powerful effect, it can completely turn our thinking around and leave us feeling more spiritually connected and calmer.

Writing our stories and experiences gives us the opportunity to look inward, to translate our deepest emotions, to help change how we think and to reflect on what we've learned. It can waken our courage and cultivate serenity.

Sharing our unique stories in *Al-Anon Today* enrich us all, we not only find healing for ourselves but also provide hope and help to those who may be struggling.

I do hope you enjoy reading and continue to send your shares as we each follow our spiritual journey of recovery.

Annie S

From the Suggested Al-Anon Welcome

***"We urge you to try our programme.
It has helped many of us find solutions
that lead to serenity. So much depends
on our own attitudes, and as we learn to
place our problem in its true perspective,
we find it loses its power to dominate
our thoughts and our lives."***

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.

A POWER GREATER THAN ME

I arrived in Al-Anon a number of years ago a shy, confused man unsure of what I was living with and unsure of what I was getting myself into. When I look back to that time; I know it was a power greater than myself which got me to that first meeting.

All my instincts were telling me that things will settle down at home and maybe I am overreacting again. I came because of my wife’s drinking but I stayed because I found a way of living that helped me to understand that alcoholism is a disease, not willfulness.

To recover from the effects of this disease, I needed a programme and the support from people who have been down this road before. Weekly meetings, daily reading of Conference Approved Literature and staying in contact with members between meetings helped me to grow and mature.

Al-Anon was the first place I learnt what it means to be a father and a husband, what my responsibilities were and what things were none of my business.

----- Anon

Can you share your recovery and growth?
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In This Issue ...

	page
Letter From Your Editor	2
A Power Greater Than Me	3
Mind The Gap	4
Al-Anon Worked When I Wasn't Looking ...	5
Daily Contemplations	6
Step Two / Suggestions for Meeting Topics	7
Recognising my Triggers	8
Awareness	9
Acceptance	10
Action	11
I Stopped Taking It Personally	12
Detach With Love	13
Finding Courage	14
My Al-Anon Journey	15
How I Use The Slogans	16
The Three Cs	17
Step Six	18
I Can Now Get Out of The Pool	19
Better Living Through Self Maintenance / <i>Al-Anon Today</i> Writing Themes and Tips	20
Step Seven	21
Please Share Your Thoughts With Us / Serenity Prayer	22
Statement of Purpose / The Twelve Steps	23



On the 8th November 1996 I attended my first Al-Anon meeting. I was actually overseas and my husband, an American, had been battling alcoholism for what felt like his entire life, certainly since his early teens which was when we met.

A whirlwind high school romance led to marriage after I finished university. All the signs were there but a combination of denial and control made me refuse to acknowledge them or at least believe that I couldn't 'fix' them. A phone call to Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) to 'sort this out' led to a referral to Al-Anon.

The helpful lady on the other end of the phone laughed when I asked her to tell me how to stop my husband's drinking and gently encouraged me to attend an Al-Anon meeting. Full of pride and fear I attended and hated it! They didn't give me advice or solutions - what a waste of time! However, I continued to take part, challenged by the offer of attending six meetings and then deciding.

My husband's affair ended our marriage four years later and then a few years after that I received a phone call that he

had sadly died due to his drinking, we were both only 33.

I continued to attend Al-Anon for several years afterwards and took great comfort and wisdom from those in the room. However, a move and meeting my present husband, who isn't a drinker, made me lapse from the programme.

I decided I really didn't need to keep 'revisiting the past' and with a new partner, new home, living back in the UK and a new job I believed I didn't really have the time.

Becoming a stepmum to adult children and grandchildren had its own challenges. After all, they didn't parent the way I thought they should. Slowly the disease of controlling, nagging and manipulating crept its way back into my mind. I didn't recognise it because alcohol wasn't involved. However, a young grandchild showing up at a party drunk and their increasingly erratic behaviour pushed me over the edge. I was hurt, angry and frustrated. Yes, all the old feelings and behaviour were well and truly back.

After a 10 year gap of no meetings I had to acknowledge the problem wasn't my

grandchild, her parents, my partner or anyone else.



My problem was that there was a gap, a gap which I hadn't minded. And while life was going along swimmingly that wasn't a problem. However, the moment there was an issue I had stumbled back into old behaviours without realising it.

Humbly I sought out a group which is online and actually nowhere near where I live, that old embarrassment of someone seeing me which I thought was resolved, was still partially there. I acknowledged my 'gap' and that I now needed the programme once again.

I've been back now for less than a year and the greatest compliment I've received since returning was from my partner. We had a particularly sticky situation to handle. I controlled the things I could and let go of the things that I couldn't, with a lot of Serenity Prayer reciting in-between.

My partner looked at me when it was over and said 'You handled that well'. High praise indeed but all the credit goes back to the programme. I will be forever grateful that it's still here and will take care the next time I think I'm 'fixed' to mind the gap!

Sarah

Has a family member noticed a change in you?
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Al-Anon worked when I wasn't looking

I am a long-time member of Al-Anon and at times; I can be impatient with the speed of my recovery. As a new-comer, I was encouraged to keep coming back, and today I continue to pass this message on at my meetings.

Recovery came to me, when I wasn't looking. Like the sun coming out on a cloudy day; my Higher Power was giving me what I didn't even know I needed. Working through the Steps and particularly Step Four has shown me who I am. I now feel comfortable in my own skin, and I have found more serenity than I have ever had in my long life.

We have long-time sobriety in our home, with my wife and I each following our own individual programme of recovery as we continue to grow one day at a time. My story is one of hope and that long-term sobriety and recovery is possible. In August this year, we celebrated 48 years of marriage and I am very grateful to still have Al-Anon in my life today.

Jon (Area 4)

What helps you find Serenity?
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YOUR AL-ANON TODAY

DAILY CONTEMPLATIONS

(Take time to reflect, love and nurture yourself)



1

Be yourself truthfully,
accept yourself
gratefully

2

Keep an open mind.
Put your needs first

3

Choose faith over
fear. Allow yourself
to gently heal

4

Value yourself joyfully.
Love yourself
wholeheartedly

5

Smile, breathe,
go slowly.
Be gentle with yourself

6

Give yourself
the same kindness,
care and attention you
give to others

7

Treat yourself the
way you want others
to treat you

8

Keep coming back,
you are on the
right path

9

Forgive yourself
completely, treat
yourself generously

10

Let go of the things you
cannot change. Change
the things you can

11

It's okay - not be okay,
to ask for help, to rest,
to start again

12

Empower yourself
creatively, Express
yourself radiantly

13

Every day may not be
good but there is good
in every day

14

Remember... I didn't
cause it, I can't control it,
I can't cure it

15

Talk to yourself
like you would talk to
someone you love

16

The smallest
step in the right direction
could be the biggest
step of your life

17

HALT,
Are you hungry,
angry,
lonely or tired?

18

Give yourself permission
to set boundaries
and space to grow

19

Accept what is, let go
of what was, have faith
in what will be

20

Let go of shame,
blame or guilt, allow
your light to shine

21

It's okay
to make mistakes,
to have bad days,
to be less than perfect

22

Snuggle up in a cosy
warm blanket filled with
love and compassion

23

Your thoughts are just
'your thoughts',
they are not facts

24

Small steps
every day add up to
big things, Progress
is still progress

25

Place your
future in the care of
a loving God of your
own understanding

26

Give yourself time,
give yourself praise,
give yourself rest

27

Nourish yourself
in a way that helps
you blossom

28

One day at
a time, One Step at
a time - One breath at
a time, all will be well

29

Feel the love
that surrounds you,
YOU are worth it

30

Keep the focus
on you, look how far
you've come!

31

Have faith,
trust, open your
heart to love

Step Two...

'Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.'

The concept of a Higher Power was not new to me when I first came into the fellowship, although there was a tendency for me to believe in a religious God, not a spiritual God.

Insanity ruled my life during the drinking years because I tended to repeat the same behaviours over and over again while expecting a different result. In reading the first part of Step Two, all I needed to do was be open to the fact that there was a power greater than myself. First, I came, then I came to, then I came to believe.

Today, I have a spiritual Higher Power in my life who supports me in every decision I make on a daily basis, be it good or bad. I don't necessarily always get what I want when I Let Go and Let God, but I always do get what I need. I also use a "God Box" as part of my programme of recovery, which allows me to hand a particular problem over to my Higher Power while I continue to pray and keep an open mind. This allows me a window of opportunity to be patient with myself and choose the appropriate time to take action or not whilst keeping my eyes and ears open as God speaks to me through others.

I feel truly blessed to be a member of this wonderful worldwide fellowship. My journey is still ongoing, but one day at a time. I am turning most of my negative thinking into positive thinking.

Anon

What Al-Anon recovery tools do you use?

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Sharing the joys and gifts of recovery, all have power to reach into our hearts and minds.

Al-Anon Today is free to share with all members.

Its pages are filled with expressions of courage and recovery in Al-Anon.

SUGGESTIONS FOR MEETING TOPICS

Serenity and humility

Overcoming fears

Using the tools of the programme

Detaching with love

Recognising my Triggers

I have worked my Al-Anon programme throughout some difficult times, but the last few weeks have been really hard; the worst ones yet. My partner has been doing really well and we have now come through the other side into the AA 'pink cloud'. He is sober, sprightly, bright eyed and bushy tailed!

Then yesterday, I thought he'd had a slip. He had a stressful day and I tried my best to be gently supportive and not to put on any pressure but to point out that he could talk to me if he needed to; then I left him to it. This morning he was showing his old traits, petulant, aggressive, self-pitying. When I mentioned that something needed fixing in the house, he told me to stop 'having go at him'. I told him I'm not having a go, that there are some things that need to be done and I just wanted to have an adult conversation. Then, again I left him to it and went to do some yoga.

During my stretch, a compulsion built in me to ask him if he had had a slip yesterday. Scenarios played out in my mind rationalising my motivation. Yes, that small voice inside reminded me of the programme. Would it help? What would it achieve? How important is it?

"Really important!!" My mind screamed. How are we to rebuild trust if I don't know where I stand with him?

I ignored the voices and breathed into the end of my session resolving to call my Sponsor and speak to her first. At the end of the session I was distracted by a message from a friend. We had a quick, unrelated chat that made me giggle and my sanity returned.

The other side of this trigger is; I am glad I didn't ask him. He may have had a slip and there's a possibility he did not. Either way, heaping shame on him wasn't going to help. He just came into the room to give me a cuddle and 'show some affection' before going out on a job. The atmosphere has improved; and what changed? I did.

Anon

Have you noticed a change in attitude? [Share | Al-Anon UK](#)

AWARENESS

Living with active alcoholism, I'd become vigilant to all the signs that my partner was secretly drinking. It had become a full-time job constantly trying to catch her out. I was fully aware of her behaviour, but completely oblivious to the way I felt or was behaving.

When she found sobriety in Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) her behaviour changed, but mine stayed the same. I could go from zero to a hundred without any thought, I was constantly on edge, putting all my attention and energy into trying to change anyone but myself. I was stuck in a pattern of obsessive thinking and our relationship was suffering.

Soon after I started attending Al-Anon meetings, I began to recognise how I reacted when difficult situations arose. I read the literature and used the Slogans and the Serenity Prayer every day. I listened at meetings; how other members were using the tools of the programme in their lives,

and gradually, as I became aware of my feelings and learned new ways to respond, I started to notice positive changes in my own patterns of behaviour and my reactions to situations.

Today, I have become more aware of my attitude and ways in which I can change them. I try to direct my awareness inwards and keep the focus on me, and what is in my power to change. I can give myself time to pause before responding rather than reacting and I can grow in understanding and compassion. My relationship with my partner has improved massively and we are getting married this year.

Awareness continues to be a vital part of my recovery, and as I receive new ways to improve my awareness from my Higher Power, I can continue to grow.

I can glance back today, at how far I have come, and it all started with Al-Anon and the gift of awareness.

Anon

Can you describe how awareness helps your recovery? [Share | Al-Anon UK](#)



ACCEPTANCE

Acceptance was not an option for me, not until I read Step One. "We admitted we were powerless over alcohol – that our lives had become unmanageable". With that admission came a freedom of spirit that made acceptance a strength, something that I desired to have in my life. Acceptance doesn't mean capitulation, it's a place where I can be honest with myself. Loving myself and accepting myself and those around me.

I looked in How Al-Anon Works to see what it said about acceptance. Reading the last paragraph of Step Six, on page 56 I found something I could reflect on. When I accept how I feel or how someone or something has made me feel I can use my programme to defuse those feelings or events. No one has the power to make me feel or do anything unless I give it to them.

Recently, I had to accept that two people can perceive the same action in two entirely different ways. I thought I had

been caring and compassionate towards a friend in bereavement, but the recipient of my good intentions perceived my action to be invasive and sent me a stern message to say so.

They did, however, acknowledge that it was well meant in the final line, but I was hurt and indignant that what, to me, was clearly an act of gentleness, could be interpreted as anything else. I paused and didn't reply, although I strongly wanted to.

My ego and self-justification were running riot. I was putting my feelings, my need to be right above the feelings of someone who had recently lost a loved one. My ego was having a field day but I didn't react.

I used my programme to do nothing, which for me and many of us is the hardest thing to do. It took me two days and phone calls to fellows to finally let go and let God. To accept.

John

What is your experience of acceptance? [Share | Al-Anon UK](#)



ACTION

I grew up thinking that no action was wrong and that any action was better than inaction.

In Al-Anon I have learnt that no action can be a valid action. It is the action of not reacting with a knee jerk response. It is the action of maturity over petulance.

For me, it can be excruciating but if I hold to it, I grow stronger and it gets easier. I can apply this to many situations in life.

First, I talk to my Higher Power who I call God. I ask for His guidance. Opening my heart to the God of my understanding and giving my problems to Him always has a calming effect and it helps to restore my serenity. My next action is to talk to my Sponsor and get the gremlins out of my head.

Talking to someone can really help take the power out of a problem and help right size it.

I can also call a trusted fellow; not for them to give me direct advice, but to

give me alternative perspectives, different lenses to look through and tools to stop it from living in my head rent free. It has taken restraint and effort in working my programme, but it means I have no resentment or need to justify my actions. It is what it is and always was. It just takes some time and help for me to get there.

We are blessed with a fellowship, who between them have enough experience strength and hope to help with any problem we may encounter. All we have to do is talk to them. I know that for some of us it is easier said than done.

My default is to isolate in any situation that takes me out of my comfort zone but I know from experience that doesn't work and makes things worse.

So, whatever my problem, I share it and give someone the opportunity to support me.

John

How have you used action from the 3 As? [Share | Al-Anon UK](#)



I STOPPED TAKING IT PERSONALLY

‘I was taking personally something that was less to do with me than I thought’



I have found that lying is one of the hardest parts of living with an alcoholic. The erosion of trust, the perceived, wilful destruction of a dreamed reality trampling on my happily ever after. The affront to my ego and my intelligence.

I kept finding myself saying in my head, “he must think I’m stupid”. “How could he look me in the eye and lie inches away from my face”? It infuriated me and made me sad.

Then, I started to realise I was taking personally something that was less to do with me than I thought. I had my part to play, asking questions, like, “have you been drinking? How much have you drunk? And that sort of thing. At first, I soothed myself by saying, “he lied inches from your face because you put your face that close”, it made me giggle a little, there was some healing afoot.

Slowly but surely, little by little I stopped taking it so personally. I was not stupid, in fact, it helped me to trust my intuition more. Rather than arguing about the truth, or my idea of the facts, I just told myself, “if you think it’s a lie”, it probably is. So, I adjusted; to giving a knowing look and not responding. I find it also helps to remind myself that lying is a part of the disease of alcoholism.

Recently, I have been trying to use the phrase “Is that so?” This helps me to detach with love and allows me to retain my serenity. It also makes it easier for me to let it go and get back to the business of my own recovery in Al-Anon.

Living with the disease of alcoholism is difficult, but one day at a time, I am trying to find areas in my life that I can add a little lightness to.

As I continue to work my Al-Anon programme of recovery, I have made a deal with myself, to take myself a little less seriously and to add more light-heartedness to my life.

Michele

What helps you detach with love?

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When my wife left our daughter and me over thirty years ago, I was determined to be the best single parent I could be. Until a few years ago, I thought I'd done a pretty good job for an old guy.

Always an anxious person, my daughter learned in her teens to calm her fears with alcohol. By her thirties she was unable to function without a drink. Now she is largely unable to function at all as the alcohol has steadily increased her anxiety to the point where she is too fearful to leave our house.

Her friends distanced themselves, then abandoned her. Apart from a cousin in another country, other family members also reduced their contact.

We tried rehab, AA, home detoxes, inclusion programmes, counselling, hypnotherapy and anything the GP could provide. Nothing really helped.

Unusually, she was willing to accept that she was an alcoholic and that most of her troubles stemmed from alcohol, but when her distress and anger needed to come out, there was only me to receive it. My own anger and fear came into play and we fought. Visits from the Police and to the Emergency Department brought us closer to ruin.

In Al Anon I learnt the three Cs. I didn't cause the disease, I can't control it and I can't cure it.

I heard the phrase 'detach with love' and didn't understand what it meant, but I kept attending meetings and gradually the atmosphere in the house began to improve. As long as I followed the Al-Anon guidance, life improved for both of us.

Now, over a year on from my first Al-Anon meeting, I have got my head around the fact that I'm not to blame for her disease. Perhaps more importantly, nor is she. Without blame there can be respect, there can be courtesy and consideration. The love that was buried under resentment and failed treatments has re-emerged.

Have I detached with love? Maybe I can draw an analogy with a canoe going down a river towards the rapids. I'm no longer panicking in the canoe with my daughter, but running along the bank calling out to her. I've accepted that I cannot save her. But I can cherish the remaining good times with her one day at a time. Today has been a good day.

Anon

DETACH WITH LOVE DETACH

Can you share on detachment?

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Finding Courage

It took me many years in Al-Anon before I found the courage to reach out and ask for help from someone I greatly admired. With the help of my Higher Power, I found the courage to ask this person to be my Sponsor. I have so much gratitude to them having said yes while offering me their love and support as I work my way through the Steps.

Having reached Step Seven, I find myself reflecting over so many things that have occurred throughout my Al-Anon journey and completing Steps One to Six. Step Seven reminds me to have God remove all my defects of character, of which there are many. I have to be patient, I cannot will, or force my characteristics to magically disappear overnight, but I can put my faith in my Higher Power and trust the process by having patience that such character defects will be removed in my Higher Power's time and not necessarily in mine.

During Covid, I started a "God Box" - a simple tool which has proved to be extremely effective. I can simply write down my problems on a piece of paper, put them in my "God Box" and close the lid. This action does not absolve me of any responsibility to deal with my problems, but it does take away some of the immediate pressure I may feel to "fix things" instead of waiting, praying, thinking, using the slogans and perhaps reaching out to my Sponsor for help.

This action also allows me to tap into an ongoing conscious contact with my Higher Power daily, while keeping my eyes and ears open to the answers I may be given, remembering that my Higher Power often speaks through other people, places and things that may occur throughout my day.

I just need to be willing to listen and learn. If I supply the willing, God supplies the power.

Anon



How has
Sponsorship
helped you?

[Share | Al-Anon UK](#)

My Al-Anon Journey

My life was unmanageable for many years before coming to Al-Anon. Trying to manage the lives of those around me with problems of alcoholism and addiction built resentment, self-pity, despair, and negative emotions. It had ripped my life apart and I had difficulty letting go of my anger and resentment. My head felt like a washing machine and I was clouded with confusion. It not only made me sick, but harmed the people around me.

Four years ago, I somehow found the courage to go to my first Al-Anon meeting.

I heard that I couldn't save anyone and that the most loving thing I could do was to take care of myself.

I kept coming back and I knew I was in the right place, these people knew what I was going through. I listened to the shares of the people in the room and I shed many tears. I read the Al-Anon literature and I learned not to react, to mind my own business and to detach with love. I learned that I could choose to start my day again at any time.

Going to meetings, listening to the Al-Anon message and working the programme

brought peace and serenity into my life. I put my trust in my Sponsor and started working through the Steps. I was told I didn't need to do it all on my own, I didn't need to know all the answers or understand everything all at once. I found a Higher Power, a loving God of my own understanding, and one day at a time I placed my will and my life into his hands.

I began to feel calmer, at peace with myself and a more rational human being. I started to feel emotionally stable and spiritually whole, I could find serenity in the simplest of things.

I was able to let go and release my loved ones into the care of a Higher Power and allow them to heal on their own path whilst loving them and myself through the process. I now hand my loved ones over on a daily basis. I continue to practice self-care and keep the focus on myself.

Today, my journey of recovery is ongoing. One day at a time, I have found my wings and begun to fly. Working the Al-Anon programme gives me the tools to live, The Twelve Steps, The Traditions, and the Concepts of Service. I am full of gratitude for the opportunity of growth offered by my Higher Power and my Al-Anon family.

Anon

Can you share your
Al-Anon Journey?
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The Slogan 'Keep it Simple' reminds me that the simple solutions are often the most effective ones and more importantly to a catastrophizer like me, helps me to look at what is really happening, rather than what I imagine may happen. It helps me to take a reasonable step by step approach rather than act out of fear and panic. This Slogan spoke to me, because I always leap to the worst case scenario, not only with my alcoholic but in every aspect of my life. It helps me learn to look at the facts, not draw crazy conclusions, not to act on these thoughts, second guess what is happening or what people are thinking or doing, to only focus on the facts and to Keep it Simple.

HOW I USE THE SLOGANS

The second one that speaks to me is 'Just for Today' This Slogan tells me that things are more manageable when I deal with, and live in the present. Things that seem way too difficult to manage long term, may seem more manageable if I deal with them just for today. I can move forward in small steps rather than be overwhelmed by trying to change everything at one time.

I found this interesting. I have been attending Al-Anon for over eight months and I have been very critical of my inability to grasp all the Concepts immediately. They seem so simple but almost impossible to incorporate into my daily life and more importantly my thoughts. I interpreted this Slogan to mean that it's ok to do something just for today and if tomorrow I can't do it; then that's ok, I can start again when I'm ready. The example I can give is that I became so codependent on my alcoholic. I was obsessed, and some days I still am, about if he'd been active online or not. If he'd not been online, I would immediately assume the worst and would usually phone him, text his parents and basically spiral out of control. Recently, I have taken steps to rein this in. I started to say "just for today I will not check". If I surrendered to my need to check; I tried not to beat myself up. Just for Today gives me small targets to resist the urge to call my alcoholic to offer my opinions. In other words, to try and control his actions to ease my ridiculously guilty conscience that I'm a rubbish friend.

Deb

How do you use the Slogans? [Share | Al-Anon UK](#)

The Three Cs

I was pleasantly surprised at my first Al-Anon meeting to find such a warm welcome and to feel that somehow, I could trust everyone in that room.

I told the members that I had been married for 49 and a half years and "had wasted my life on that man"! I was so cross that I forgot to mention our two wonderful adult children at that point.

All I wanted to do about our upcoming Golden Wedding Anniversary was to completely ignore it. Unbeknown to me, our children were planning a surprise meal for 40 people, at the posh hotel where we had spent our weekend honeymoon.

Fortunately, my Higher Power in the form of a friend, had suggested that I accompany her to that meeting. Long story short – my husband and I had a wonderful day with friends and family.

In six months, I had learnt the basics of the programme and was able to change my mindset and my perspective on our relationship.

Five years on, I am still on my Al-Anon journey and while there is no sobriety, there are far fewer problems and generally we are happy now that I have changed. Boundaries have been set, challenged and mostly resolved with the help of the literature, kind members and the Slogans. The one that produced a huge feeling of relief was the 3 Cs - I didn't cause it, I can't control it, I can't cure it.

Another valuable lesson is that there is nothing to be gained by constantly regretting. I did my best at the time with the information that I had so now I focus on looking forward.

The 3 Cs

**"I didn't cause it.
I can't control it.
I can't cure it."**

*What is your
experience of your
first meeting?*

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Kate



Step Six...

'Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.'

Step Six has had a great impact on me. I have come to realise that although I am not impacted by active alcoholism in my day to day life, I am still in recovery and it has shown me how many people would benefit from the Al-Anon programme. I came to see my defects as survival skills that no longer served me.

Recently, I sat silently in a meeting at work, observing and taking a very different approach. Normally, I would use my survival skills to lighten, brighten, entertain and create happiness to please everyone, except myself.

That, like many of my other survival skills, were creating an exhausting loop that I no longer needed.

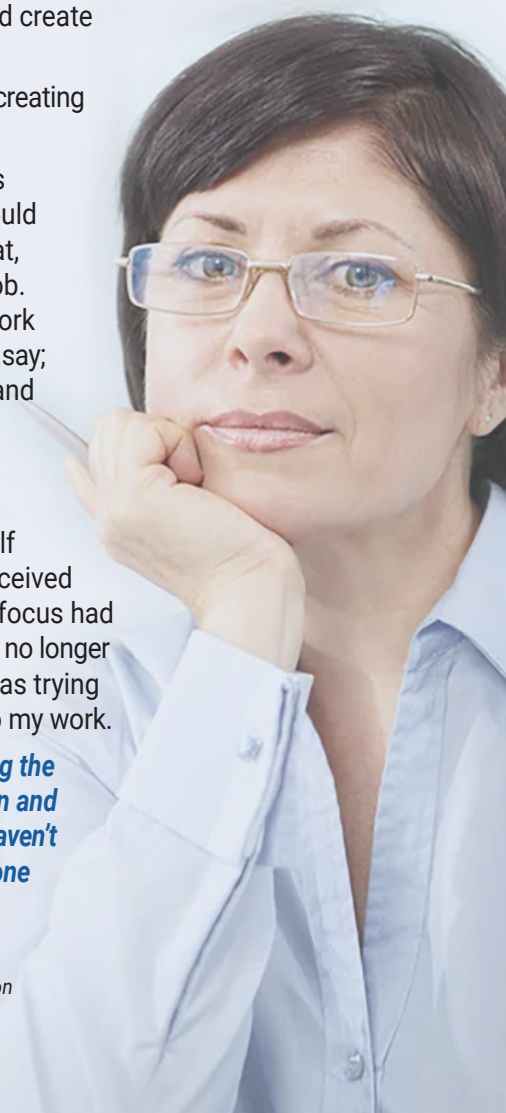
So, this time, I sat back and watched as things imploded. I realised that I did not cause it, I could not cure it, nor could I control it. More than that, it had started long before I even started this job. That day, I did not enable this dysfunctional work family situation. Instead, I said what I needed to say; which came from the heart. It was clear, true and with compassion. What I saw before me were other people's patterns of behaviour, and their survival skills coming out.

It began to dawn on me, how thin I'd left myself attending to the needs of others, or what I perceived their needs to be. I saw where my energy and focus had moved; first from the alcoholic, and then, when I no longer had him, to my family; and when I realised, I was trying to fix my family, my energy and focus moved to my work.

I am now working on my own recovery. Accepting the things I cannot change, changing the things I can and finding the wisdom to know the difference. I still haven't figured it all out yet. But I am hoping, by taking one step at a time and keeping it simple, that I'll get there. It's already made a difference.

Anon

Can you share on a Step? [Share | Al-Anon UK](#)



I CAN NOW GET OUT OF THE POOL!



When I first came to Al-Anon 15 years ago, I felt that my life was one of endlessly swimming around the deep end of a swimming pool, holding all my loved ones' heads above water. I was a rescuer in every sense of the word and had totally lost any sense of caring for myself.

Worse, my act of "swimming around to save everyone" meant that they had not learned to swim. Why would they? I had effectively stopped them from learning how to swim for themselves. And on days when I was exhausted and couldn't support them fully, I got the blame. "I'm drowning, and you won't help me!" was a constant refrain. I would get resentful about how much I was being leaned on and how little of myself there was left for me.

In Al-Anon I learned that I had created much of the problem. I didn't trust those I cared about enough to let them learn to swim. I was so afraid that they would drown that I made them believe that they couldn't swim without me. I created a self-fulfilling prophecy. I had made everyone dependent on me.

Letting go of my fear that they would drown without me was tough. I had to ease off my control, support them in learning to swim and give the people I loved the belief that they could do it! Then I had to work on what my own life should look like. If I wasn't saving everyone else, what would I do? If I wasn't a rescuer, who was I?

My Sponsor was beyond brilliant. She challenged my thinking and my broken logic. She shined a light on what a wonderful life I could have if I just let go of my control. And she painted a picture of what might be possible if all my loved ones started swimming for themselves. It gave me confidence.

Today, I not only feel free to leave the deep end to go and swim some lengths, I can even get out of the pool completely! I have a life of my own, and have finally recognised that my loved ones have their own lives too. No one has drowned. They might not swim as well as I would like, but everyone is managing and all of us have developed confidence in our own abilities.

Jackie, Cheltenham Monday Group

Can you share what you have learnt in Al-Anon? [Share | Al-Anon UK](#)



FROM OUR AL-ANON FAMILY WORLDWIDE



by Connor M Georgia

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permission of *The Forum*,
Al-Anon Family Group
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Virginia Beach VA

Better living through **self maintenance**

I am a graphic designer, and recently I had a major project requiring the use of my printer. The output was terrible, with faded images and grainy colours. After a day and a half of printing the same faded images, I took the problem to my Higher Power.

Then I realised it had been a while since I had performed any maintenance. So, I lifted the hood of the printer and began removing layers of caked on ink. I also noticed that it had been years since I had upgraded the printer systems. After I completed them, I found I had several options I did not have before, and then it hit me that this was exactly what I've learned in my Al-Anon programme.

I have learned that, if I use the tools of the programme and take care of myself, my quality of life is substantially better. By working the steps, I was afraid of layers of resentment and anger that I had been holding onto for years.

My programme has helped me identify what is mine and what is not. It has also shown me I have options today I did not recognise before I came to Al-Anon. If I immersed myself in my programme and perform maintenance on myself, my life improves, and I am a happier person.

NEED A THEME TO WRITE SOMETHING FOR AL-ANON TODAY?

Here are some ideas...

- The rewards of Service
- Meditation and Step Eleven
- How working the Steps enhanced recovery
- Service Sponsorship

WRITING TIPS...

Share your experience from the heart, with the focus on you. Allow your creative spirit to express what you feel... like when you share in a meeting.

You could relate a personal experience based on a programme principle such as detachment or acceptance, a Step, Tradition or Concept. Remember, grammar and spelling are not as important as heartfelt experiences. The Editorial Committee will take care of the spelling, grammar and punctuation.

Step Seven... *'Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.'*

I was sceptical at first in how my Higher Power would remove my shortcomings. I had tried for years to remove them myself after identifying them in my Step Four inventory.

I then tried praying and meditating on my dog walks to have specific shortcomings removed. Again, not much progress on the removal in my timeframe. I then recalled hearing in meetings that God works to his own timetable and I need to be patient; after all my defects of character have manifested over years, so removal or reducing them is a lifelong programme.

One of my shortcomings is related to Tradition Seven. I am not fully self-supporting in financial matters. I have moved away from obsessing about my alcoholic and replaced this with a spending obsession. I asked my Higher Power to help remove this obsessive behaviour.

When the time was right my Higher Power delivered the solution. Due to a decline in my health I took early retirement from work. This brought a large reduction in available income and has made me value money and the things I purchase in a much healthier way. I recognised this change of circumstances as my Higher Power answering my prayers. I am grateful for this programme, bringing me to a much happier place, with healthier attitudes.

Vanessa

How has your Higher Power guided you?

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Please visit [Al-Anon UK/Share](#)

to 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.

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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.

UK & Éire Service Manual 2024, 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.

