

Al-Anon Today

YOUR E-LINK TO AL-ANON UK & ÉIRE

*Together
we can
make it!*



Winter 2024/5
al-anonuk.org.uk

Letter From Your Editor

Around this time of year, I often like to take long leafy walks through nature. I enjoy the sense of ease and calm they bring, and with my Higher Power alongside me, these peaceful moments of togetherness nurture a healing process of connection.

The theme for this winter edition embodies ways in which we can heal together, and is filled with wonderful stories of growth.

Sharing your story with Al-Anon Today [Share | Al-Anon UK](#) can help members recover from the effects of someone else's drinking and can be another step toward recovery for both you and for those who read your share. There is strength in unity, we support each other by reaching out ourselves.

We all have something to share about the Al-Anon programme, we are granted the freedom to say what is in our minds and hearts and as we fill our pockets with recovery and embrace the healing powers of connection, each of us can make a difference. Sharing our experiences, strength, and hope with others, we learn together, we grow together, and we recover together.

The Editorial Committee would like to express gratitude to everyone for sending in their heart felt shares to [Al-Anon Today](#). We enjoy reading your inspirational stories of recovery and had fun collaborating our toolkit tips to create Al-Anon Today's festive calendar.

Wishing you all a Christmas filled with many moments of healing and growth in recovery.

Annie S



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.

No longer alone

When I found Al-Anon I realised I was no longer alone. I could talk to everybody in that room without feeling any judgement. Judgements are something that I had faced, but here I could just say exactly how I felt.

Even though alcohol is not part of my life anymore, I find Al-Anon a big help. I find it helps me in different situations: in my personal life, friendships, relationships and work. I am very honoured that I still have Al-Anon in my life.

The Slogans have helped me a lot, mainly the ones when I've had difficulty dealing with things one step at a time. 'This Too Shall Pass' has always been a very good one for me, as I know that at any given moment when I'm feeling any given emotion, it's not going to last very long.

When I came to Al-Anon, I noticed that people were willing to help me and I keep coming back to share my experiences and strength in the hope that I may help others.

Al-Anon is a very important part of my life, I can use the principles and my daily readers whenever I feel anxiety or difficulty in making a decision. Al-Anon is an absolute godsend to my life and I now feel a different and calmer person for having a programme of recovery.

Lorna

What is your favourite Slogan?
[Share | Al-Anon UK](#)

In This Issue ...

	page
Letter From Your Editor	2
No Longer Alone	3
Festive Calendar	4
The Voice at the End of the Phone	5
Slogans	6
Let Go and Let God	7
A New Way of Life	8
The Gifts of Al-Anon	9
Courage to Change	10
Anger, What is Anger?	11
Acceptance	12
The Merry Go Round	13
Self-acceptance / Writing Tips	14
The Love and the Light	15
The Miracle of Recovery	16
From Alateen to Al-Anon, Naturally	17
From Despair to Hope	18
A Journey Together in Fellowship	19
Christmas Presence	20
Suggestions for Meeting Topics	21
God as I Understand Him	22
Please Share Your Thoughts With Us / Serenity Prayer	23
Statement of Purpose / The Twelve Steps	24

YOUR AL-ANON TODAY

Festive Calendar

'Recipe for Recovery'

Toolkit Tips 'for
Healing through
the Holidays'

Gallons
of Gratitude



1

2



Dollops of
Detachment
'with love'



3

Generous
amounts
of
Gentleness

4



Huge handfuls
of
Higher
Power

5

A wealth of
Willingness



6

Pocketfuls
of
Powerlessness



7



Tremendous amounts of Trust

11

8 Multitude
of
Meetings!



9



Lashings
of Literature

10 Large
Litres
of Love



Plenty
of
Prayer



12 Ample
amounts of
Awareness



15

Countless Cups
of Calm and
Compassion



16

Heaps of
Hope, Hugs,
Healing,
& Humility



13 Scoops
of Strength



14 Several
Splashes
of Selfcare



Piles
of
Patience

17



18
Abundance
of Acceptance



Countless
amounts of
Courage



19

Spoonfuls of
Steps

20



21

Oodles
of Honesty



Bundles of
Belief



Plenty of pinches of
Peace

23



Sumptuous
amounts
of Serenity

Wishing
everyone a
*Peaceful
Christmas*
filled with warmth
and recovery'

24



When I rang the Al-Anon helpline, I was frightened, confused and in despair. I didn't have the courage to leave my alcoholic husband, it had taken my adult daughters to point out to me that enough was enough and I deserved better in life. They helped me to pack and leave. Having taken that first step in realising that I was powerless over my active alcoholic, I felt bereft.

I knew I needed help from somewhere, but didn't know where. I had never heard of Al-Anon so I searched the number for Alcoholics Anonymous and rang them. They were kind and listened patiently. They didn't judge me and gave me the contact number of my local Al-Anon Group. It was Christmas Eve and I was convinced I would get an answer machine. Instead I got a friendly, caring and compassionate voice who listened as I sobbed and begged for help.

They didn't judge me. They talked about boundaries and detachment, my duty towards my own recovery, my self-worth, and the 3Cs: I didn't cause it; I can't control it and I can't cure it.

A year on in my recovery, I have discovered that there is hope. After a period of reflection and finding Al-Anon, I chose to go back home. My husband found AA and we are now both in recovery doing Service roles.

My share is to say a huge thank you to those people who volunteer to answer phone calls on the Al-Anon Helpline: you saved my sanity, gave me hope and set me on the path to recovery. You helped me find a new perspective and most importantly you helped me find Al-Anon!

Ann

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

The voice at the end of the phone



SLOGANS

One Day
at a time

Let Go
and
Let God

Live
and Let
Live

Take what
you liked and
leave the rest

Keep an
open mind

Detach
with Love

First
things first

Progress
not
Perfection

Let it
begin with
me

Keep
it simple

Listen
and
Learn

Just for
Today

Think
Think
Think

This too
shall pass

Easy
does it

LET GO AND LET GOD

I've been coming to Al-Anon for over eight months now and I have always seen the laminated Slogans placed on the table at the start of every meeting. I can't say I'd taken much notice of them, preferring to use the words of the Serenity Prayer and Step One as my mantras, which have helped me enormously when times have been tricky.

The Slogans hadn't really registered, even though they are referred to by many members in shares and in my daily readings. I'd been seeing them, hearing them but not appreciating the power they have, or so I thought.

My current alcoholic is my best friend. An alcoholic for over 30 years. He got sober around seven years ago but unfortunately relapsed in the most dramatic fashion around eighteen months ago. He lost everything and the effects of this relapse were far reaching to work colleagues, family and friends. The past two months, where he has been waiting for a funded place in a detox and then a rehab centre, have seen him spiral out of control.

After a challenging festive period, I received a call from his mum. Not my worst fear of hospitalisation, but news that he'd been arrested for being drunk and disorderly. He was brought back to his elderly parent's house for his own safety and I think his mum just needed to vent. As I listened, processed the news and tried to ignore the worst-case scenarios freewheeling around in my head, I remember feeling so helpless. My mind raced as to how I could help and support my alcoholic friend and make

things better for him. I remember putting the phone down and just breathing in. As I breathed out the words Let Go and Let God escaped from my mouth. This Slogan had embedded itself into my subconscious to be used when it was needed most, without me even realising it. To be honest, as I heard my words, I wasn't even sure they were an Al-Anon Slogan but I knew they helped me. Later, I looked up the Slogans and recognised most of them from the lovely display on our table, including the one I had just used to settle my racing thoughts. I discovered that the Al-Anon Slogans offer a range of support for dealing with a variety of circumstances.

I found a list of Slogans, with a short description of each and as I read them all properly for the first time, I found that some were more meaningful to me. Some really resonated with my current situation and I wanted to investigate these further; to give them proper headspace with room to grow.

Using the index in Courage for Change, I found there were daily readings which focussed on all the Slogans. Some people may understand and use these Slogans in slightly different ways. My own interpretation of the Slogans has supported me and I hope they will support me in the future. I guess the beauty of the Slogans are, they can mean what you need them to mean at any given point in your life.

Deb

How have the Slogans helped you?

[Share | Al-Anon UK](#)

Before finding Al-Anon I always knew my life wasn't 'normal' and that something within me just 'wasn't right.' I knew I was slowly starting to crumble under the pressure of 32 years of living with, and being around alcoholism on a daily basis. I could feel myself finding life extremely unmanageable. I not only couldn't, but also didn't want to carry on anymore. My children were only four and six. It was a very dark time.

Luckily, my son's Dad had found sobriety a few years before and we reconnected at the exact same time that I was crumbling. He told me about Al-Anon and oh boy did it save my life!!! What a relief to know I wasn't alone in my insanity anymore, to hear other people's stories that I could massively relate to; to hear other people's lives were the same kind of 'not normal' as mine was. I finally felt the pressure of three decades of living with the disease of alcoholism slowly lift.

Things didn't change overnight for me of course, but just knowing that there was help and support for me that was so loving and so importantly consistent: it really was the start of a new way of living.

Each meeting, each connection with members, all the knowledge and literature, being of service as much as I could, carrying the message, it really felt like home for me and I just knew this was the life I wanted to live now. This was the life I wanted for my children, to know a better way to be, and to bring them up.

I am recovering from a lifetime of the effects of alcoholism. It's been six years now and I work my Al-Anon programme well. In return, my life and the lives of my kids have improved massively and continue to do so with the ever loving and consistent support of this fellowship.

I am truly one grateful member of Al-Anon.

A new way of life



Lois

[Share | Al-Anon UK](#)

The Gifts of Al-Anon

Our group had a mini workshop where we all shared the gifts Al-Anon had brought to us.

"Al-Anon has given me; friendship, a fellowship of people who understand and a sense of belonging."

"I came to Al-Anon, sad, broken and lost. I found support, love, friendship and a set of tools that has helped me discover who I am, what I like, and how to deal with my trauma. Today, using this simple programme of recovery, I am happy and living life to the full, whatever my troubles. I am never lonely and have many connections with other members wherever I go. Family addiction brought me to Al-Anon but I stay for me to live this wonderful way of life".

"Al-Anon has taught me acceptance of the reality of my situation, to detach with love and compassion, self-care; to take care of myself without being selfish or self-centred. That I have a Higher Power whom I choose to call God, who loves me unconditionally, no matter what. Although I am not perfect, and never will be, I am excellent. And finally, I am on a lifelong spiritual journey, and I am forever growing."

"I was in search of answers to the problems of my adult son's alcoholism. By taking part in my Al-Anon Group, I have been given wisdom, knowledge and new friends who understand, because they have lived through similar pain and agony. I am so grateful."

"When I came to Al-Anon, I felt helpless, alone and full of shame. The people I met at these meetings listened and understood my feelings and showed me ways of looking after myself and building self-confidence. I now have a more peaceful way of living and wonderful friends who I can turn to at any time for love and acceptance."

"I've only been to three meetings so far, so it's all very new to me, but everyone has made me feel so welcome. Just being with others who have been through similar situations has made me feel I can share my feelings and not be judged in any way."

"Al-Anon showed me I am not alone and that others also live with alcoholism and that there is a better way to live, by attending meetings and following the Al-Anon programme and sharing openly."

Monday St. Albans

Can you share the gifts of Al-Anon?

[Share | Al-Anon UK](#)



COURAGE TO CHANGE

My husband was the alcoholic. He always liked his drink; our social life was centred around drinking. It was probably when I had my son that I realised that one of us had to be sober to look after the baby and that became me. He had a responsible, high pressure job at the time, and then there were redundancies. He changed jobs and went onto shift work, two days, two nights and four days off.

One morning, I came home from walking the dog to find him drinking wine instead of a cup of tea. It shook me, but hearing the reasoning that after a night's work it was just the same as doing a day's work, I accepted it. Gradually, the drinking increased and I accepted that too. I loved him and the glimpses of that man I loved was worth waiting for.

Over the years, the drinking became the be all and end all and as things came to a head, I hit my rock bottom. I thought it would be him, not me. On a visit to the doctors with an infected bite, my blood pressure was taken: it was high. I broke down in the surgery and ended up crying my eyes out. The doctor told me about Al-Anon.

I went to my first in-person Al-Anon meeting and bawled my eyes out again. There were thirty other people, who all knew what I was going through. People who I could talk to without being told "you should do this" and "you should

do that". When Covid came and meetings went online, I attended meetings worldwide.... Wow. My own family just didn't understand, but all these people did, and they became my family.

The words from the Serenity Prayer "Courage to change the things I can" started to make sense. I found the courage to divorce my husband of 40 years and to move across the country to be near my son. My family thought I was abandoning him.

I attended both in-person and online meetings and I learnt how to stay off "the pity pot". I took on Service roles, making the tea at my in-person meeting and Chairperson at my online meeting. This helps me give back what I am so grateful to have received, and helps me to carry on living, not just existing.

Learning to listen at meetings has helped me to be there for my friends, instead of butting in, or giving my opinion. Allowing others to talk without interruption usually helps others to work things out for themselves.

My son and I are honest and truthful with each other, we both know that if he needs Al-Anon, it will always be there for him.

My husband died two years after we split up. I still call him my husband, as it was the alcoholic I divorced. I still love the lovely man that I married and I can now remember the good times. My son calls me "a tough old bird" for all that I have been through, and I suppose I am. I take each day as it comes and I try to find the joy in all that life throws at me.

Anon

[Share | Al-Anon UK](#)

Anger, what is anger?

I grew up in an alcoholic family. Anger was the main way we communicated and everything manifested into violence in an irrational way. To survive, I closed my mind to any kind of understanding, so that I no longer felt the anxiety, pain, and fear. The thing is, I just didn't know what to do or why any of this was happening. I didn't want to be like them, I found such behaviour unnatural. Unfortunately, no one knew what to do with the anger that flowed. God was also called into question in an overbearing way.

I told everyone that I didn't know what anger was, I thought it was always being excited, while in reality, I didn't know how to manage my anger. I was very touchy and didn't accept rules in general. I always felt like I was the victim and took everything out on others, 'in silence of course' and then, I exploded, destroying

[Share | Al-Anon UK](#)

everything I had tried to build. It was a slow, continuous ordeal of failures and pain and I ended up feeling terribly guilty and constantly waiting for judgement. God was simply something that existed and at the time, had little to do with me.

Finally, I attended my first Al-Anon meeting, a miracle in itself, and with the help of my Sponsor I decided to undertake the long journey of studying the Twelve Steps. One day at a time, I began to feel my true emotions and my feelings. I began recognising the various sick parts that limited my life and moved me away from serenity, joy and true love.

The disease of alcoholism leaves nothing unscathed and recognising its dynamics and its effects has made me more aware and has given me the freedom to make my own choices every day. Of course, the problems have not vanished into thin air, but today when anger rises, I listen, I recognise it and I welcome it. Or, I can choose to put it aside and wait, and remind myself who I am. It's better for me if I wait and give myself time to understand what's happening and to work out which attitudes to adopt.

In doing this, and asking to find a faith that was unknown to me, I discovered my Higher Power. Even if I don't know what or where it is, I'm always given the opportunity to grow and be the person I deserve and want to be. All I need to do is listen and do my part in accepting all those feelings, including my anger.

For me, anger can be a healthy feeling; like any other feeling, it's part of me, and God has a reason for me to feel it and to discover if I want to choose serenity instead.

Carlo



ACCEPTANCE

‘The 3 A’s are an essential tool to wake me up when I am not working my programme.’

Before I came into Al-Anon there were only two A’s in my world: Awareness and Action. Taking time to pause and accept would not have occurred to me. ‘If it’s bust, fix it.’

It was this stinking thinking and its disastrous consequences that led me through the doors of Al-Anon. It was my two A’s mentality that was making my life and the life of the alcoholic at that time, unbearable.

In Al-Anon, I began to learn to keep the focus on me; and that true change was a process that couldn’t be hurried. Before Al-Anon I considered acceptance to be a weakness or a cop out, but as I experienced the gradual change in me, I began to realise that I need that third A - acceptance. Without acceptance the process simply didn’t work and I got sicker.

I no longer live with an alcoholic but I still need Al-Anon and I still need to work my programme, I always will, even though I forget to sometimes.

The 3 A’s are an essential tool to wake me up when I am not working my programme. How does this happen? Well for me it’s when I start to feel unsettled, to feel dissatisfied or to feel angry for no good reason. Even when I’m not driving.

I know that feelings aren’t facts but for me they can be a symptom of some deep disquiet within me. Before I had this programme, I would have blamed all these feelings on someone or something external. I would never have looked at myself.

Now, I recognise that the surfacing of my dis-ease and defects is usually a good indicator that I am not working my programme.

When I was asked to do this share, I was going through just such a programme slip with all its attendant feelings of sickness and discomfort. Preparing this share was just what I needed to re-focus and reset. I think it was my Higher Power’s way of saying ‘wake up John’.

John

How does acceptance help your recovery?

[Share | Al-Anon UK](#)

The Merry Go Round

Six years ago, in desperation, I found the number of Al-Anon on the internet and I have been a member ever since. I didn't think it was for me at first, a group of people all happily chatting and laughing!

When I was given the Merry Go Round leaflet, I thought it had been written for me!

I played every part in the play and although I thought Al-Anon was not for me, something kept me coming back and I am so grateful for that leaflet. Then I heard the Slogans, Easy Does It and First Things First. I felt a sense of calming slowly begin. It took me a long time to realise that I was controlling and that I was trying to take care of everyone.

Now, I try to meditate daily with a simple meditation, I read my daily readers to help me prepare for each day and accept that sometimes, I need to take it an hour at a time.

As I work through my programme, I accept my powerlessness over my family situation and by taking care of myself this has improved.

I have accepted that I am an adult child because of the past but now I live my life daily.

I never thought I would have this lightness in my chest that my fellow members spoke about and called serenity. I am now never alone and I have regained control of my own thoughts and feelings. I know that this is an inside job and I work with my Higher Power, as I understand Him. Al-Anon has given me my life back and I am so grateful.

Anon

What is your favourite
piece of Al-Anon literature?
[Share | Al-Anon UK](#)



Self-acceptance

It was a wonderful experience to be around Al-Anon fellows and to spend time with my Al-Anon family at a recent Al-Anon Convention in Corfu.

The main message that I received was self-acceptance. Acceptance of myself and an understanding of what my needs are. I didn't have these before I came into Al-Anon and started working the Twelve Steps with a Sponsor.

Through working the programme and understanding myself more, I can work my day around what I want to do rather than go along with someone else's plan. This, to me, is freedom and is where I am happiest. Freedom is one of the biggest gifts Al-Anon has given to me. Freedom to make choices that are right for me, to know myself and to be happy. What a wonderful fellowship to be part of. Al-Anon is a gift to myself and I could not live without it.

Claire O



Can you share your gifts of freedom?

[Share I Al-Anon UK](#)

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

Here are some ideas...

- Experience of working Step one
- Being gentle with myself
- Living in the moment
- Learning to love myself

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.

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.

THE LOVE AND THE LIGHT

– without experience of the dark pain, I wouldn't have found the love and the light that Al-Anon has brought –

I was a child of a heavy drinker and a violent home. As a young adult I married an alcoholic.

Today, I am a human being who can find inner peace because of my learning in Al-Anon.

Before Al-Anon, I was convinced that love meant helping to fix other people's problems and obsessing about them. It was this version of love that I had witnessed growing up.

Ultimately, I was in fear of how the mess would impact me. Fear can often show itself in my body as anxiety, distorted thoughts and the need to control. Control was my old way to feel safe. If everything was neat and tidy on the outside, I could just about cope with the mess inside of me. This was the way I lived and still can be if I choose not to work my programme.

The problem with living this old way was that anything could throw me over the edge, one little thing and I could be in fear, experiencing heightened anxiety.

Today when fear pops in, I use my Al-Anon tools to love and accept myself every day. The critical stick I once beat myself up with is now brought out less often and is no longer a comfort to me. Using the

tools of the programme have helped me to grow and blossom into the beautiful person I am today. I can barely recognise the old version of myself, although I do hold a deep love for that version of me; for without her experience of the dark pain, I wouldn't have found the love and the light that Al-Anon has brought me.

I have grown in love from members who show no judgement and from my Sponsor who gently guided me through the Twelve Steps. The Steps help me to examine and balance my beliefs around love. For me, fear is the opposite of love. So, when I feel fear, it's a reminder for me to rebalance using the tools of the programme and to return to love.

Today, I am grateful to have Al-Anon in my life. I am grateful for the Twelve Steps and to have a loving Sponsor. All of which help me to look at the messy distortion inside and to learn a new balanced version of love.

I love myself more each day, I am worthy, I have likes and dislikes, I am me and I am perfect just as I am. We are all perfect just as we are. And, as my Sponsor says, good enough is good enough.

Louise D

How have you grown in love? [Share | Al-Anon UK](#)

I started my journey in Al-Anon eight years ago when my husband went into rehab. I was full of resentment and had a victim attitude. Why me? After all, it was him with the problem!

I attended meetings and thankfully saw enough recovery in the rooms to keep coming back. I soon got a Sponsor and as I began working through the Steps, I discovered my manipulative, controlling behaviour. It was hard to swallow but as I learnt that I was very sick from living with the effects of alcoholism, I found forgiveness. I took on Service roles, Let go and Let God and I began to heal.

My relationship with my alcoholic has changed so much for the better in the last eight years with us both working a programme. I have learnt to be grateful for what I have got, instead of mourning for what he is not able to give me.

It has been an incredible journey so far and I am very grateful for the miracle of recovery. I need Al-Anon in my everyday life to give me balance and serenity and my strong faith in my Higher Power keeps growing. One day at a time, I know I have all I need.

EL

the miracle of recovery

Can you share your
journey of healing?
[Share | Al-Anon UK](#)

From Alateen to Al-Anon, naturally

Before I came to Alateen, I could barely see beyond the problems and resentments that alcoholism brought into my life. My dad was sober in Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) and my mam was in Al-Anon. They were working on their recovery, and it was obvious. I however was still unhappy, fearful, and resentful. I even resented my parents' happiness and serenity.

During the drinking years, I was afraid and ashamed to bring friends home, I became lonely and isolated.

Then, I was introduced to Alateen at a convention. Here I met people who understood me, and I felt I belonged. A few of us who were children of members of AA and Al-Anon started an Alateen group in my hometown. I no longer felt isolated, and I made friends in the fellowship. I am very grateful that I was introduced to the programme at an early age.

The fellowship, having become such an important part of my life, I naturally moved from Alateen to Al-Anon when the time came. After leaving College and starting work in a town far from home where I knew no one, I joined an Al-Anon Group and soon felt at home.

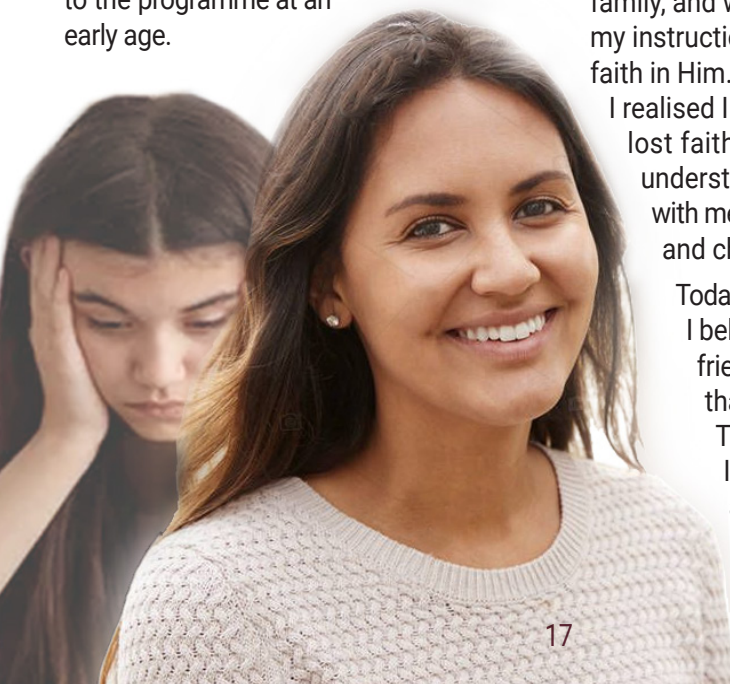
Al-Anon gave me the tools to grow as a person. I am blessed to have a Sponsor who shares my joys and challenges. When I stumble and slip, she listens without judgement and guides me back to the programme and serenity. In my early days in the fellowship, I would never volunteer for Service; I didn't have the confidence. Today, I am willing. I learn new things and make new friends, and it's fun.

Most importantly, I have developed a deep personal relationship with my Higher Power. As a child, I asked God to help my family, and when he did not respond to my instructions on my timetable, I lost faith in Him. As I grew in the programme, I realised I had to let go of the God I'd lost faith in to find the God of my understanding. My Higher Power is with me through all the joys, sorrows, and challenges of my daily life.

Today, I am grateful to the Groups I belong to, my loving Al-Anon friends, and the programme that is the bedrock of my life. These are the priceless gifts I have received in Alateen and Al-Anon.

Miriam M - Ireland

[Share | Al-Anon UK](#)



From Despair TO Hope

**My story doesn't have a happy ending ... yet!
However, it is my story of hope.**

My daughter came to use alcohol as a crutch in her late teens. She had put her father on a pedestal and sadly he'd come crashing down - leaving us for another woman after living a double life for about 18 months. She sank into anorexia and then eventually found alcohol. I do not have a good relationship with alcohol, as my father (a wonderful Irish father) used to get hammered occasionally and make our lives miserable, but he would NEVER drink at home.

When I realised my beautiful, only daughter was using alcohol to counteract her misery, I was in total panic. Over lockdown, I feared for my future, her future and for my son's future as she sank into a total pit of despair.

I have no recollection of how I found Al-Anon and initially it was confusing for me: was I to blame? Yes, I had done and said all the wrong things and had controlled and cajoled her, trying to change her behaviour. I felt a failure as a parent, a wife and generally as a human being.

What sweet relief when I realised that I no longer had to hold her by the reins and try to tell her which way to go. Learning that I was not to blame was also an enormous relief.

Al-Anon was like a dose of good medicine. At meetings, I shared and I listened, I cried and I shouted outwardly and inwardly. I feel privileged to have met people who are the most precious, brave, resilient people I know. They have given me hope that I will survive, I will get by, and that my best is good enough. I now put my trust in the God I have always trusted, but I no longer ask him to create miracles. When I hand everything over to my Higher Power, miraculous things do happen.

My daughter has been close to being destroyed so many times, she still binges but seems more settled and I am just glad that she is still here. My despair has now been replaced by hope and this is what Al-Anon has given to me.

Anon

Can you share
your hope?

[Share | Al-Anon UK](#)

A journey together in fellowship

FROM OUR AL-ANON FAMILY WORLDWIDE - Reprinted with permission of The Forum, Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc., Virginia Beach VA

On the beautiful island of Corfu, I met about sixty members from across the world and bound together by our wonderful Twelve Step programme and a desire to connect in fellowship.

We were all attending the Al-Anon convention and were welcomed by the volunteers whose dedicated work made it all possible.

My heart was opened by the experience, strength and hope shared by members at a series of meetings based on the theme of 'Getting off the Merry-Go-Round'. I learnt a lot from listening to the sharings. I heard how sharing from the heart is healing, that we never know what message our sharings can bring to others. How recovery comes with honesty and asking for help shows humility. That courage and focusing on changing myself brings rewards to boost recovery. How our Higher Power works in mysterious ways and sends us lessons to learn from and remembering that God doesn't need my help today. To listen for the answer when praying. I can listen and follow His will for me. And that the person who is the most annoying to me, is the person to learn the most from.

I met friends old and new and realised that there is a special connection between people in Al-Anon that time and distance does not break. Our fellowship stretches across distance, language, religions and cultures. It is a fellowship of Love. I am grateful for the gifts I have been given, the Twelve Steps, Traditions and Concepts. True fellowship brings great joy and keeps me coming back.

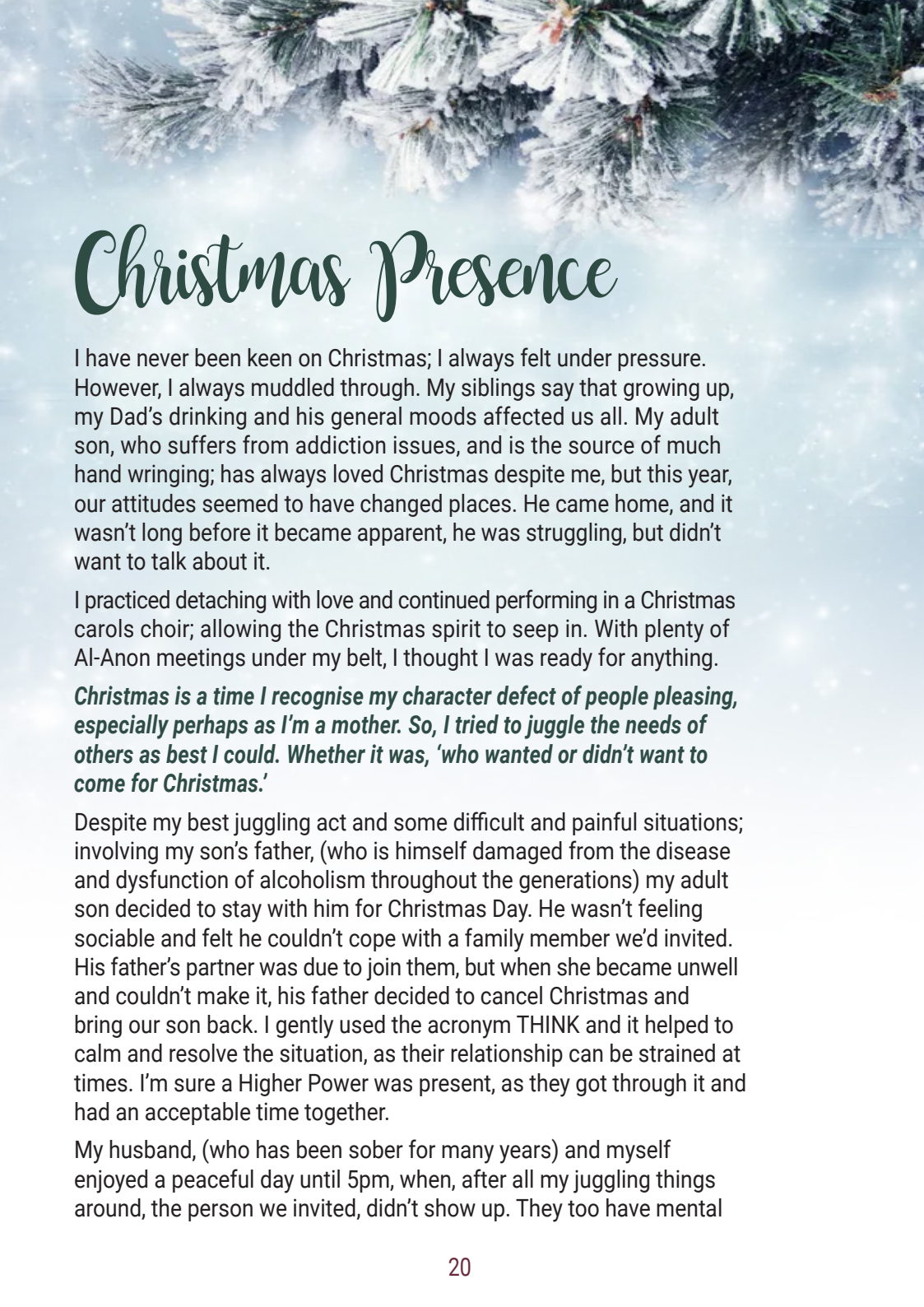
In service: co-operation and friendship enabled us to make decisions which were best for all involved. Following the Traditions and Concepts; asking members for their thoughts and feelings; giving the little voice a platform; helped us to reassess decisions having listened to the minority. We practised patience and kindness when dealing with staff in an unusual situation, adapting to what is.

I am very grateful to all who served and all who attended. It was a very memorable time for me with unique people and the God of my understanding. The welcome we received from the Corfu Al-Anon Groups was so warm and special. We are all on a journey together, we are all miracles and God is on our side.

Moirá M - Sheldon Friday

[Share | Al-Anon UK](#)





Christmas Presence

I have never been keen on Christmas; I always felt under pressure. However, I always muddled through. My siblings say that growing up, my Dad's drinking and his general moods affected us all. My adult son, who suffers from addiction issues, and is the source of much hand wringing; has always loved Christmas despite me, but this year, our attitudes seemed to have changed places. He came home, and it wasn't long before it became apparent, he was struggling, but didn't want to talk about it.

I practiced detaching with love and continued performing in a Christmas carols choir; allowing the Christmas spirit to seep in. With plenty of Al-Anon meetings under my belt, I thought I was ready for anything.

Christmas is a time I recognise my character defect of people pleasing, especially perhaps as I'm a mother. So, I tried to juggle the needs of others as best I could. Whether it was, 'who wanted or didn't want to come for Christmas.'

Despite my best juggling act and some difficult and painful situations; involving my son's father, (who is himself damaged from the disease and dysfunction of alcoholism throughout the generations) my adult son decided to stay with him for Christmas Day. He wasn't feeling sociable and felt he couldn't cope with a family member we'd invited. His father's partner was due to join them, but when she became unwell and couldn't make it, his father decided to cancel Christmas and bring our son back. I gently used the acronym THINK and it helped to calm and resolve the situation, as their relationship can be strained at times. I'm sure a Higher Power was present, as they got through it and had an acceptable time together.

My husband, (who has been sober for many years) and myself enjoyed a peaceful day until 5pm, when, after all my juggling things around, the person we invited, didn't show up. They too have mental

health and substance issues and were texting throughout the day, unsure about being able to make it. When exasperation set in; we decided to take dinner to them and found they were in fact quite unwell and not hungover as we had feared.

At the end of it all I realised I had managed 'mostly' to convey what I wanted to say and do with kindness. "Progress not Perfection".

I still went to the Church service, even though my husband chose not to. I let go of trying to make it all better for my son, it's his life and his struggle and I tried to give him the space to work things through himself. I chose to go, guilt free to another event and to have people around without feeling guilt or shame. I didn't feel the need to explain how my son was, or why he wasn't with us. This Christmas wasn't an easy one, but it was certainly better.

When a last-minute twist came, from a flurry of very difficult texts from my son, I prayed to my Higher Power for God's will and had the Serenity Prayer on speed dial. I knew there was nothing I could do. I went back to Step One, I was powerless over people, places and things. The Slogan, This Too Shall Pass helped too and One Day at a Time, I am focusing on myself and practising detachment with love. This last one is always the hardest for me but I find it the most helpful. Meetings, the ability to share with my home Group and communicate with other people in a more honest way has got me through.

A Christmas present of a keyboard I received is very absorbing when I find myself obsessing on things I can't change, but my best Christmas present this year was the presence of a Higher Power. Al-Anon and working my programme during this tricky time of year has helped no end.

Anon

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

Spiritual Experiences

Prayer and Meditation

Detachment

Using the Slogans

God, as I understand Him

As a newcomer to Al-Anon, I felt surprisingly comfortable with the idea of a Higher Power. I could accept, theoretically at least, that I was powerless over alcohol, my life had become unmanageable and that a power greater than myself was ultimately in charge. It seemed obvious to me that if things were out of control; if chaos reigned, and if I was powerless over addiction, then I must be at the mercy of something, some power, beyond myself. In the very beginning, this was my Higher Power, or God, as I understood Him.

"Higher Power" was the assigned topic for the third Al-Anon meeting I attended. I listened with interest and approval while other members bravely shared their understanding of their Higher Powers: "we can't control everything", "we don't always know best" "we can't predict the future" "we shouldn't judge others". But then I heard something that gave me pause, I faltered: some people shared that it is possible to ask their Higher Powers, to ask God, for help. And sometimes He answers. He helps them. God was not just an agent of chaos, but a potentially benevolent force.

I was not at all comfortable with this idea. It seemed wrong to me. I shared about it at the meeting. And as I talked, I started to realise something: I struggle with the idea of benevolence, not only as it relates to God, but in general. I struggle to ask for, and to accept when offered, help and care from others. I struggle to believe that I will be looked upon with kindness and compassion, rather than judged harshly. I struggle to believe that things could possibly work out well. Instead I constantly plot and scheme and manipulate as a means of defending myself against an always impending chaos and crisis.

Perhaps it is just as wrongheaded to believe, firmly and exclusively, that God is purely an agent of chaos and crisis, as it is to believe He is purely an agent of benevolence and care. Of course, terrible and tragic things, over which we have no control, can happen. But good things can also happen: life can get better, help is available. To see only one side of this, either side, is surely wrongheaded. It is a failure to accept reality. And perhaps my problems, the various difficulties in my life, might improve if I learned to sometimes ask for help, and to accept the care available to me, rather than continuing with my futile and irrational attempts to control the uncontrollable. To give up control, rather than resulting in inevitable disaster, might instead produce opportunities for new and better things to happen.

In seeking, through the initial stages of the Al-Anon programme, to better understand my Higher Power, I was astonished and excited to find that the spiritual path to an improved relationship with God could also be the path to an improved relationship with myself and others.

Laura

How have your relationships improved?

Share | Al-Anon UK

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.

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 **OfficeTel:** 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 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.

