

Al-Anon Today

YOUR E-LINK TO AL-ANON UK & ÉIRE



*Learning
to Love*

Spring 2020

www.al-anonuk.org.uk



Letter From Your Editor

Thank you so much to the members who keep writing for *Al-Anon Today*.

I find writing can be a wonderful tool in my recovery. It helps clear my mind and I can find pleasure in trying to express myself.

When I was growing up it felt as if no-one had a voice or a right to an opinion, and no-one was able to listen or hear.

Part of my recovery has been finding that voice, whether that's sharing in meetings, or listening to other members expressing their feelings and ideas.

As I grapple with a topic in my mind or on paper, it gives me a growing self esteem. I'm learning it doesn't have to be perfect. It just has to be my truth.

Please keep writing your story.

GENERAL SERVICE OFFICE:
Al-Anon Family Groups UK and Éire
57B Great Suffolk Street
London SE1 0BB
Helpline:
0800 0086 811 from 10am to 10pm
Office: 020 7593 2070
email: enquiries@al-anonuk.org.uk
website: www.al-anonuk.org.uk

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ARE NOT TO BE ATTRIBUTED
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MEMBERS SHARE THEIR
PERSONAL EXPERIENCES
AND STORIES, AND INVITE
OTHER MEMBERS TO TAKE
WHAT YOU LIKE AND LEAVE
THE REST — THAT IS, TO
DETERMINE FOR THEMSELVES
WHAT LESSON THEY COULD
APPLY TO THEIR OWN LIVES.

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Before I found Al-Anon I had a secret. From the start of our marriage my husband was violent towards me.

There were long periods between episodes at first. He blamed me every time, I could not figure out what I had done to deserve this treatment. He got so frustrated and angry, and for him this was the way he lashed out.

This went on for the next ten years and as his drinking increased, so did the violence.

I blamed myself, I thought, if only I was clever, a better cook or pretty, my list was endless. I felt humiliated, stupid, frightened and could not tell anyone.

Then I found Al-Anon and I learned that I didn't have to stay a victim, and with the help of the programme, I gained the courage to put plans in place to ensure

my safety. I found it very hard to detach myself from the alcoholic, I was so afraid of what could happen to him if I wasn't there.

But over a period of months, I became stronger and knew that with the help of Al-Anon, I was doing the right thing. I started looking at my behaviour, which changed the atmosphere in our home for the

better. After a while the threat of abusive behaviour stopped, and with the help of Al-Anon, I have become more confident can love myself.

I am still married to the same man, but have a totally different life today. My husband eventually reached his rock bottom and with the help of AA is in recovery. I cannot say how grateful I am to this Fellowship for changing my life.

Diana

**"Progress,
not Perfection"**

My dad drinks when he's happy and drinks when he's sad, he also drinks when he's bored or angry. I've tried so hard to understand him, and Al-Anon meetings have been very helpful.

I work the Steps, find the Slogans to be true, and love the wisdom in the Traditions.

I have many friends in the Fellowship and we're all on the path to recovery. They understand as few others can that I am powerless over my dad. I still have slips so I have to remember to reach into my recovery tool box for the Serenity Prayer, and to find gratitude for our programme.

For me Al-Anon is for life, and that helps me face many challenges. I'll always be a work in progress, striving towards some serenity and peace.

Anon

A stylized illustration in black, white, and grey. At the top, a woman in a black dress stands on a broom, looking surprised. Below her, a black cat sits on a roof that is part of a larger, abstract shape. At the bottom, a man in a patterned shirt and dark pants looks up with a fearful expression. The background consists of various organic, cloud-like shapes.

Banishing my inner fears

I've been a member of Al-Anon since I was in my early 20's. The best way I can describe my journey is to say that Al-Anon has continued to save my life.

It's difficult to describe the misery, darkness and feeling of complete hopelessness when I arrived at Al-Anon. Now I have so much hope, an inner spirit and self worth. I've met beautiful people who have loved me unconditionally; I am being healed from the fear of being loved.

Growing up with an alcoholic mother and step dad was traumatic and damaging. I have grown to have compassion for my family because Al-Anon and Alcoholics Anonymous have shown me that my parents were unwell and couldn't give what they didn't have.

However, I'm left with a lot of negative thoughts and feelings about myself. I'm scared of love and feel unlovable. I describe the negativity in my head as my inner bully.

Al-Anon is helping me to challenge this bully who I used to believe was protecting me. I'm realising it's destroying me and stopping me from feeling anything.

Anon

After my first few meetings I went on a mission to enlighten people around me. I began preaching to them about alcoholism being an illness - I was trying to help those who had not even asked me for it. Thankfully I stayed in the Fellowship and I found a Sponsor to guide me through the Steps. I like Step Twelve, it simply tells me that I was sleeping, a kind of zombie unaware of what is important in my life. I am grateful to have an alcoholic in my life as without that relationship I'd probably still be a zombie. My desperation took me to the Fellowship. I wanted to get my husband sober but I have been given so much more - I needed the programme for myself.

In Step One I discover that trying to play God's part makes my life unmanageable. I'm not in charge and I'm powerless over people, places and things. Step Two teaches me that when my life is unmanageable I can either stay in self-pity or I can surrender and trust that I can get better with the help of my Higher Power. I work Step Three by making myself ready to accept life on life's terms. Serenity returns and no matter what happens I am not fighting anymore.

Step Four helps me to see myself as I really am. Step Five tells me how to order my focus; God, myself then others. Putting myself or others on a pedestal will make my life unmanageable again. In Step Six, I am now ready for God to do his job. In Step Seven I ask God to bury my pride before my pride buries me.

Step Eight shows me I wasn't a victim - I played a part in hurting others and I need to be willing to make amends. Time for action is in Step Nine when I am making amends. I see Step Ten as my guardian angel, helping me during the day to notice my behaviour and to correct it when it's not right.

Step Eleven gives me a relationship with God. I can speak to him using prayer and listen to him using meditation. Step Twelve shows how to use the Steps in all situations. My life is improving.

I am no longer alone. I have all the tools I need. My life is well. I am well. All is as it should be.

*How do you work
the Steps?*

al-anonuk.org.uk/share/

*How I
Work the
Steps*

Anon

- Finding the way to love -

My relationship with my mother has always been difficult. When I was a child I did not understand that it was her co-dependency and unrealistic expectations that made her relationships outside the family difficult.

I had no idea that it was her need for control that left me lacking in life skills and feeling inadequate. I never knew that it was her overbearing nature that made me unsure how to make my own decisions.

I thought it was normal to be told how to think and feel. Feelings were illegal in my birth family, inconvenient trivialities to be crushed, or at least hidden. They still are.

My mother would still rather gossip about some poor person than tell me about herself or ask how I am. I have really struggled to understand why she chooses to keep my middle aged, alcoholic brother at home and under her thumb, never letting him think for himself.

Recently I had a car accident. Mum came to pick me up and for some reason I asked to go back with her, seeking some sort of comfort. My dad discussed the situation for five minutes then repeatedly changed the subject. I realised that the feeling I had of being crushed after going for help was very familiar and I had felt it many times. My dad was honestly trying to help in the only way he knew. I also realised the way my parents cope with

things is by hiding them away.

In my recovery I have learnt to 'not go to the hardware store for bread'. I find the love and support I have always craved in the rooms of Al-Anon and the healthy relationships I have learnt to make there. My family cannot meet my needs because they suffer from an illness.

I am learning to accept that I cannot control their behaviour or their happiness. We have different ways of looking at the world, and sometimes it is not worth trying to explain my point of view. Sometimes it is much better to lose an argument and keep my serenity than to try and break through their denial and have a massive fight.

I have started to stick up for myself more in life in general. I am still not comfortable with it, but I am working on it.

I'm learning that when I point a finger at another person, three fingers point back at me. My family's behaviour is usually a good mirror for me, because I grew up with them and you can bet that if they do something I probably do it too. They show me new ways I need to work on myself.

However strange and cruel my family's behaviour, they have a disease and it is important that I try to understand that there is more to them than just the disease. No one is awful all the time. We all just need a bit of love.

Jackie, Sheffield

How do you keep your serenity with family members who are not in recovery? al-anonuk.org.uk/share/

NOW I HAVE A SAFETY NET

I have been living with my father's alcoholism since my teenage years. At first no-one in my family spoke of it. We were all in denial, partly because he was functioning well. He always got up the next morning and went to work, and his health never seemed to suffer.

When I was in my early twenties my mother left him (partly because of his alcoholism) and moved abroad. My brothers left home and so I was living on my own with my father and his drinking. I stopped living my life and self-care went out the window. I was 27 when I went to my first meeting and I cried all the way through. I was exhausted, my life had become unmanageable. I went to a few meetings but then stopped going. I think I was still in denial.

I started to detach with love, and moved out but my father carried on drinking and it remained a constant stress. Last year, following the death of his beloved mother, he hit rock bottom and ended up in hospital. He found the strength to consent to a detox programme and is now in recovery, thank goodness. I returned to Al-Anon meetings after the dust had settled. I felt a very strong compulsion to share my experience, strength and hope with others.

I am so very grateful I returned – it has been the therapy I needed to process the experience of living with an alcoholic for 20 years. Meetings represent a safe place where I find serenity and can express my fears and thoughts. Listening to others is also hugely humbling and helpful. The programme constantly brings me back to myself. It reminds me to work on myself and my attitudes, never anyone else's. I have become startlingly aware of my character defects as I heal.

My fellow Al-Anon members are truly inspirational, special people. Every week we share our positive and negative feelings, experiences and thoughts. I know I am never judged and it's OK not to be perfect. The daily readings and Slogans give me tools for dealing with the trials and tribulations of life.

I have learnt so much about the disease of alcoholism, which has helped me respect and love my alcoholic father. Al-Anon is a gentle programme but also an incredibly powerful and life-changing one. Every meeting provides further insight, revelations and learnings. If the alcoholic in my life ever relapses I have a safety net beneath me now, and I am enormously grateful.

Anon

An atheist's spiritual awakening

I came to Al-Anon desperate to find out how to get my daughter to stop drinking. Step One was easy enough – my life was completely unmanageable, although I clung to the belief that I may be powerless, but I am not helpless.

I am an atheist and I found the concept of a power greater than myself, or the God of my understanding really difficult to accept, so I decided to use the wisdom I heard in the rooms as my Higher Power – the strength and hope that I desperately needed.

I attended lots of meetings and read Al-Anon literature daily. I found the Serenity Prayer and the Slogans really useful just to get me through difficulties. Later I started to practise daily meditation and increased my positive outlook which helped me stop ruminating.

I started to think more about Steps Two and Three. I realised that in Step Two I only had to believe in the possibility that a power greater than myself could restore me to sanity. I acknowledged that my previous decision making had failed and I gave myself hope for making further improvements in my life.

With Step Three came the realisation that by turning my will and my life over to the care of God as I understood him, I had nothing to lose – I was simply asking for help. I realised that I was already 'acting as if' I believed in a power greater than myself, by attending meetings and opening myself up to the experience,

strength and hope shared in the rooms, where I could see the programme working in others.

One day I chose to share on the topic of faith, which I had defined as a strong belief in the doctrines of a religion or philosophy based on spiritual conviction rather than proof. During the process of preparing for the meeting I had a profound spiritual awakening. I realised that, very gradually, over the time that I had been going to Al-Anon meetings and working with the tools I had learned about, I was no longer living solely by my willpower – my determination, commitment and doggedness. By taking the risk to 'act as if' I had worked through a cycle of increasing spirituality, and had improved my understanding of a power greater than myself.

I realised that I had found faith – faith in the philosophy which underpins Al-Anon; faith in the open-heartedness and generosity of other members; faith in the importance of our fellowship and connectedness. I am demonstrating that faith daily by working the programme and engaging with others. I am no longer 'acting as if'.

As Aurelius Augustinus puts it, 'Faith is to believe what you do not yet see; the reward for this faith is to see what you believe.'

Anon

Can you share how you 'came to believe'
<https://www.al-anonuk.org.uk/share/>



When I started in Al-Anon I wasn't much for God, I hadn't had good experiences with religion as a child. But I built a relationship with a Higher Power with the help of lovely Al-Anon members, by doing the footwork and keeping my own side of the street clean until the programme seeped into me bit by bit.

I had to find a way to let go of my family and give them to something or someone I trusted. I started using my own phrase let go and let goodness, hoping that if I stopped over-caring for my sick family someone would kindly come along and pick up my 'duties'.

I had to learn to trust that my family members could be in charge of their own lives just like any other adult and that even if they got it wrong they could learn from the experience. After all, pencils have rubbers on one end, because humans make mistakes.

When I arrived in these rooms I wanted to be perfect and expected everyone with me

to be perfect too. I had an over-inflated idea of my responsibilities. That was a wonderful thing to let go of.

I felt better when I realised that we all have our own Higher Power and none of us are in charge of anyone else. The most important thing for me to understand about a Higher Power was that I wasn't it.

But I still had to find my own version of a Higher Power. I began to think of people I could trust. I decided upon my dead grandparents, the perfect people to take care of my family because they loved them too.

Then I added my meetings because something special happens when members share experience, strength and hope. Then I added nature, with its balance and beauty. Now I joke that I am run by committee. My Higher Powers and I have a real relationship and I talk to them every day, in my own way and my own time.

This has also helped relationships with my family members to grow. We still sometimes argue and they aren't always the easiest of people but I can always talk things over with Al-Anon members.

I am now able to believe that everything will be OK if I loosen my grip on their lives.

There's even a chance that everything might work out better than I could ever have imagined.

Anon



Growing up with alcoholism

I did not know I was growing up in an alcoholic home. I just knew that my dad drank too much and my mum shouted at him.

My first home was filled with a lot of love. It was busy, and manic at times, but I have happy memories of my five siblings.

Mum provided a semblance of order in that house, but when I was eleven the chaos started. My parents decided that we would move to Ireland, near to my mum's family. My two older siblings did not join us so the rest of us moved to a brand-new house, with Dad flying in each weekend.

I think that was my first experience of being ashamed of my dad's drinking. We did not have parties anymore, just Dad with his odd drunken behaviour and Mum scowling. She was either yelling or silent. That was when the shame and isolation of alcoholism began to affect me deeply.

Changes in my mother began to be noticeable. Her reaction to the drinking affected me most. She had been the stable and consistent one, but when she began showing erratic and emotional

behaviour, I began to adopt my own persona and behaviour.

I did everything in my power not to be a burden, but I was miserable. Starting a new school and speaking in a different accent was difficult for me. We were sent to different schools from our cousins whereas being with them might have helped us to integrate.

I now have compassion for my mother trying to hold together a family of six children aged three to eighteen. She had believed the promises and her own fantasy that things would get better.

I have a fragile child, teenager and younger self within me, all wanting to be heard. The God of my understanding is a loving and powerful source in my life that gives me the courage to listen to those damaged selves. My recovery has brought many reconciliations, as well as difficult decisions that have led to estrangement and loss.

My sense of over-responsibility is still my default setting but recovery brings gratitude. Dad did eventually find recovery which led some of our family to AA and Al-Anon.

Without Al-Anon I would not have been able to grow up emotionally and mentally and I am deeply grateful for that too. I know that the effects of the illness show up in my life daily. Recovery is an ongoing process and one I am very happy to embrace with a trusted and loving Higher Power.

D. Lancashire

Being raised in an alcoholic home is one of the most devastating things that can happen to a child, and I have lived with the trauma of that all of my life.

I was invisible, ignored, and neglected, and so became emotionally empty. I learned from a very young age to survive. Those survival skills masked the pain and devastation, but I was so damaged all my future relationships were affected.

I learned skills to cope and people-please and controlled my environment to the best of my ability, but I was vulnerable to abuse.

The care-givers who should have protected me as a child were in fact the ones who gave me the most pain. My dad was the drinker but my mother's behaviour was what affected me the most.

Being abandoned at the age of eleven was traumatic, my emotional growth stopped. All decisions after that, until I got into recovery, were made by the eleven year old me. I continued my suffering by choosing partners who were emotionally unavailable, drank or were abusive in some way.

Once I found recovery and started to work the Al-Anon programme, I learned to heal the wounded child inside. I learned to say no to unacceptable behaviour, and I started to grow up. I am still affected by my early years and my family is still fractured.

We can pass on the disease of alcoholism, and, if recovery isn't found, it will continue to ravage those who come after. All I can do is to live one day at a time, let others live their own lives, and ask my Higher Power for guidance.

Anon

A second chance at growing up



Area 5 Workshop on Sponsorship

At our Area Assembly at Ashford (Kent) on Saturday 16th November 2019, we held a workshop on Sponsorship in which 35 members participated including 13 Sponsors, three newcomers, three men and a baby. We didn't have time to cover Service Sponsorship or Alateen Group Sponsorship, but each table was asked a question. Here are some of the responses.

What is Sponsorship?

Intimate one to one sharing with plenty of time - an interpretation of the programme - developing emotional maturity - the art of listening - mutual trust, openness, discipline, commitment - personal support and encouragement - sustained regular contact between meetings - part of Al-Anon - a privilege.

Why Do We Need Sponsorship?

To help with working the Steps - to open up on Steps Four and Five - to point out where the programme can help - to strengthen commitment to the programme - to share uncomfortable details - to share stories too long for group meetings - to help with decision making - for problem solving - to recognise and combat isolation - to be affirmed - to improve perspective.

How does a Sponsor Help a Sponsee?

By keeping a focus on the programme - by gently sharing and guiding - by finding out who you are and what your real feelings are - in practical small steps - guidance about literature - recognising repetitive behaviour - with regular contact but not being available 24/7.

How should I choose a Sponsor?

If you feel empathy with the member - ideally someone who's been a member

for longer - someone with enough time - who has done the Steps - who has a Sponsor - someone who works the programme - by going to other Groups and Area or District meetings.

When should I choose a Sponsor?

When you are ready to progress and grow - when you wish to work the programme in depth and accept guidance - after overcoming the fear of rejection - HP shows when it's the right time.

What does my Sponsor expect of me?

To work the Steps - to address issues as they arise - to share the positive and the negative - honesty, openness, bravery to reach out - to continue to attend meetings - to show willingness - mutual trust - anonymity - curiosity.

What difficulties could arise if a Sponsor and a Sponsee are different genders?

That fatal attraction - either can be vulnerable - insecurity or jealousy.

What particular problems do men have with Sponsorship?

Bravado - lack of candidates - to be able to be emotional.

Service Brings Rewards

*At last year's UK and Eire Conference
I asked Delegates the question:
'How has service rewarded you?'*

❖ When I came to Al-Anon, I could only see the problems of alcohol abuse by my spouse persisting ad infinitum. The great thing that Al-Anon gave me at that time was hope. That however was only the beginning, participating in service has added steadily to my capacity to cope with all of life's challenges and problems, not just those associated with alcoholism.

❖ Twelfth Step work helped me to appreciate how relatively insignificant my difficulties were compared to many others. Chairing and sharing at Conventions and other events outside my home Group helped restore my self-confidence and gave me a feeling of usefulness and spiritual uplift.

❖ My latest challenge is my role as Area Delegate. The blessings from this new responsibility are, at the moment particularly 'well disguised'. However, I know in my heart that I will soon start to feel them.

What blessings does service bring you?
<https://www.al-anonuk.org.uk/share/>



Request from Shina, our Public Information Officer

Are you willing to share your experience of being affected by alcoholism, and become one of our 'case studies' for the website? It would involve talking with Shina on the phone and then writing a share. It would be also involve recording your share as a podcast for the website.

*Please call Shina 020 7593 2070 or email her pi@al-anonuk.org.uk
for more information*

Learning to keep the focus on me

When I first joined Al-Anon, I was at a very low point. I didn't just have a problem with someone else's drinking, I also had a real problem with focusing on other people.

I began to understand that I needed to detach from him and his drinking (that took me quite some time) but it took me a lot longer to understand that I needed to keep out of other people's business in general.

I see now that what I thought was caring was in fact interfering. I had no understanding of keeping the focus on me.

Slowly, in Al-Anon, I came to understand that I needed to keep out of others' business, including the drinker's.

I recognise now that all adults are entitled to find their own path and that I should only help when help is requested.

I don't do this perfectly but I do my best and I don't give myself a hard time if I fall back into those old behaviours. Thank you to all those in Al-Anon who

have shared their experience, strength and hope as a result of which I have learnt what I needed to change about myself.

Anon

Wisdom to know the difference

I first came to Al-Anon when my daughter's drinking had become completely out of control and I did not know what to do about it.

It was such a relief to hear that I could not prevent her drinking and was only making my own life unbearable by trying to. I was treating her like a child rather than an adult who needed to make her own decisions and become responsible for her actions.

Over the years the situation has greatly improved; my daughter has found sobriety in AA and I still attend my Al-Anon meetings, which help me to keep the focus on myself and my own behaviour and reactions.

The only person I can change is myself.

Anon



suggestions
for meeting
topics

- When Sponsorship becomes control
- Acceptance
- How to let go of resentment
- Participation
- Use of writing in recovery



I tried six meetings and kept coming back

My wife's drinking took me to Al-Anon a few years ago. I am so grateful for the inspiration that made me search the internet for some help.

I was oddly surprised, because at the meetings we hardly spoke about the alcoholic in our lives, we focused on ourselves. It was suggested not to make up my mind whether Al-Anon was for me straight away and instead to try six meetings.

After those six meetings I embraced the programme because I began to feel the first and unfamiliar signs of serenity in my mind and in my heart.

To add to my surprise, the dynamics in my home started to change. Not fast, but certainly a welcome change after years of progressive deterioration.

The anonymity helped me to relax and soon I started to feel understood. I realised how alone I had been for many years.

My denial mechanism made sure I strove to cover up what was happening at home. I decided to ask someone to be my Sponsor, a very unusual move on my part. He worked with me and the first thing we exposed was my denial. Soon after came the easing of my controlling behaviours, my shame, my over-responsibility and guilt.

I've never had an epiphany moment, where heavenly light surrounded me, or I started walking on water or performing miracles, but my wife has now been sober for two years. I believe I met her for a reason. I realise now I have other qualifiers, a brother, son, and probably a grandfather and great grandfather too.

Nowadays, I am more aware and my life is serene. Whenever I lose my way, I have tools to try and correct it.

For me Al-Anon is not a cure, but rather, a journey that is conducive to a happier and more fulfilling way of life.

Anon

I learned to love my alcoholic son **unconditionally**

I grew up in an alcoholic family, where the words “I love you” were never spoken. There were never any outward signs of affection, such as hugging. I loved my family deeply, but the love I knew was unhealthy: I took care of them and felt resentful afterwards for the emptiness I felt inside.

I didn’t experience healthy love until I entered the rooms of Al-Anon. I learned how to accept being hugged without feeling uncomfortable. I received unconditional love in Al-Anon; and in the embrace of this love, I was able to fully explore myself.

Only after I was able to accept that I was loveable was I able to begin to give love to another person freely, without motive or needing to be loved in return.

In a telephone call with my dad, before I hung up, I said, “I love you, Dad.” He replied by saying, “Thank you.” That was not what I expected him to say. I remember thinking that it was odd. Unfortunately, the disease of alcoholism has also affected him.

When my son was actively drinking and using drugs, I felt distraught when the weekend was coming. He would start a drinking binge on Friday night and would not return home until Sunday.

One weekend while I was visiting my friend, she asked me, “How’s our kid doing?” When I expressed my concerns to her, she replied, “You need to just ‘Let Go and Let God.’” I remember pondering those words, trying to think of how I could put her suggestion into action. I prayed for guidance.



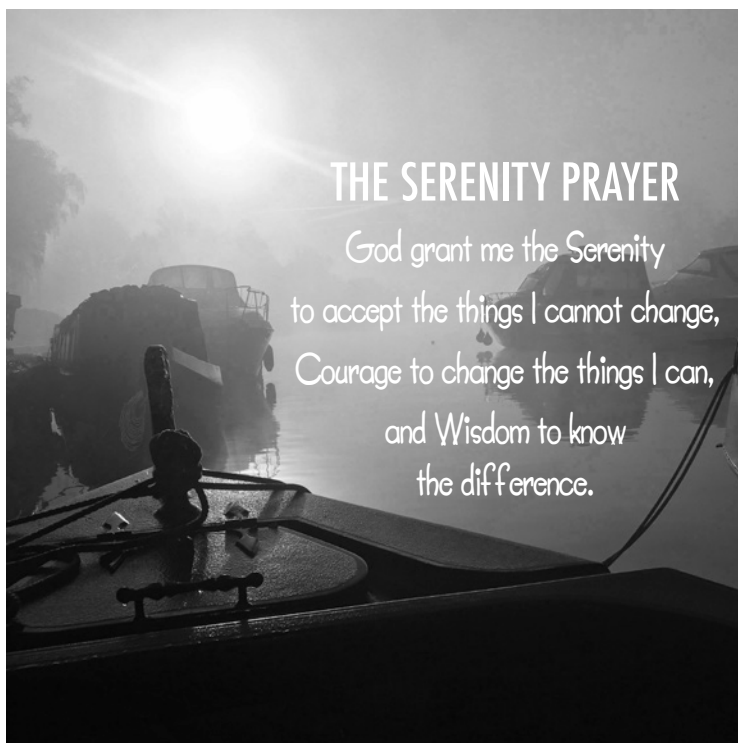
By Robin B.,
Pennsylvania

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Al-Anon Family Group
Headquarters, Inc.,
Virginia Beach VA

One Friday as my son was getting ready to leave the house for yet another weekend drinking binge I yelled, "Wait a minute." I jumped up and hugged him and, in his ear, said, "I love you and God bless you." In this act of true surrender, I understood how powerless I was over him and his actions.

I remember how comforted I felt after this act of love, because I knew that if something serious were to happen to him that night, I was able to tell him that I loved him and that I asked God to bless him. I also knew that the last thing he heard from his mother was her saying, "I love you" I had found a way to put the slogan "Let Go and Let God" into action.

It was only through the grace of God that my son heard these words. He has been sober for the past seven years and is an active member A A.



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.

Reflections from a District meeting

❖ I was mindful I don't have to be afraid of people.

❖ As my Group's Chair Finder I was able to invite lots of positive, kind and great members to come and share at my home meeting.

❖ I thought of the Slogan 'Progress not Perfection', I've been quite ill and have been isolating. I felt the humanity in the room, it was so warm and inviting.

❖ I need to look at why I find the indecision of meetings frustrating.

❖ I learned that it is safer for me emotionally to be honest about my true feelings.

❖ You can't have harmony without differences. I'm reminded of Tradition Twelve and 'principles above personalities'. Patience and tolerance are lovely virtues and need to be cultivated.

❖ I learned to be patient and allow each person to have their say, without prejudice.

❖ I'm reminded of the need for love and tolerance, and to check my motives before I speak or take action.

❖ 'No' can be a positive response.

❖ Recovery for me is sharing and listening and being honest and expressing my feelings from my heart and not my head.

_____ *Central London District Meeting*

What is your experience of your District Meetings?

Can you co-ordinate a share from your next District or Area meeting?

<https://www.al-anonuk.org.uk/share/>

*Unconditional Love ~
'love without conditions'*

Please visit www.al-anonuk.org.uk/share/
to submit your contribution or post to:
The Editor, at the General Service Office address (page 2).
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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SOME TOPIC IDEAS FOR WRITING FOR AL-ANON TODAY

- ★ When does Sponsorship become control?
- ★ How do you use writing as a tool for your recovery.
- ★ What Public Information service have you done? On your own or as a Group.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Al-Anon's Suggested Preamble to The Twelve Steps

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

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

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

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

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

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

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THE TWELVE STEPS

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

