

Al-Anon Today

YOUR E-LINK TO AL-ANON UK & ÉIRE

Belonging and Unity



Spring 2026
al-anonuk.org.uk

Letter From Your Editor

A warm welcome to this Spring Edition of *Al-Anon Today*. In this issue, we explore two cornerstones that often provide the very first breath of relief to a newcomer: **Belonging and Unity**. When many of us first walked through the doors of Al-Anon, we felt deeply isolated, convinced that no one could truly understand the chaos and despair of living with alcoholism. Yet, through sharing our stories, we discover that we are not alone.

As we listen, and learn from one another, we begin to realise a sense of belonging: that we are all 'equally loved, accepted, and treasured' by our Higher Power and our fellowship, and that our 'personal progress depends upon unity'. Unity is the spiritual principle that binds us together, ensuring that whenever any of us reaches out, the hand of Al-Anon is always there.

Throughout these pages, you will read how members have moved from the isolation of "I" to the strength of "we". A heartfelt thank you to everyone who shared their experience, strength, and hope in this edition. Your vulnerability is the bridge that allows another member to finally feel they belong.

In fellowship and unity, we learn together, we grow together, and we recover together.

Annie S

AL-ANON DECLARATION

Let It Begin With Me

When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help,
let the hand of Al-Anon and Alateen
always be there, and -

Let It Begin With Me

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.

Gratitude

I am so very grateful for what Al-Anon has done for me.

I've learnt to live and let live. Accept the things I can't change. Keep it in the day and not jump to worrying about what's going to happen next. I accept that I am powerless over people, places, and things.

I am human, I am not perfect. I know when I feel sad about what's happening around me, that I am not in control of anyone but myself. I look to my Higher Power and put my trust in him.

Thanks to my friends in Al-Anon who have shown me a better way to live a day at a time.

Anon

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thanks



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YOUR AL-ANON TODAY

Spring Reflections

'Every day is another chance to become the best version of You'

Toolkit Tips for
Belonging
and Unity
'Take what you need today'

1 Approach your day patiently, gently, and kindly	2 Find three things to look forward to	3 Do a kind act for someone else to help to brighten their day	4 Write a list of things you feel grateful for and why	5 Look for the good in others and notice their strengths
6 Take five minutes to sit still and just breathe	7 Learn something new and share it with others	8 Say positive things to the people you meet today	9 Make time today to do something kind for yourself	10 Thank someone you're grateful to and tell them why
11 Set aside time just for you	12 Connect with someone near you - share a smile or chat	13 Take a different route today and see what you notice	14 Eat healthy food which really nourishes you today	15 Notice five things that are beautiful
16 Recognise your strengths and be proud	17 Be gentle with yourself when you make mistakes	18 Call an Al-Anon friend	19 Focus on what's good, even if today feels tough	20 Rest your mind and body, allow yourself to recharge
21 Try out something new to get out of your comfort zone	22 Plan something fun and invite others to join you	23 Focus on being in the moment	24 Take a small step towards an important goal	25 Decide to lift people up rather than put them down
26 Choose one of your strengths and find a way to use it today	27 Challenge your negative thoughts and look for the upside	28 Ask other people about things they've enjoyed recently	29 Share your gifts of recovery	30 See how many people you can smile at today
31 Share your story with Al-Anon Today	<i>Take what you liked and leave the rest</i> <i>Al-Anon-Today</i>			

Changing my perspective

I used to be a big-time complainer. Almost daily, I would find something that wasn't to my liking, and let anyone within earshot know. I'd complain about all the things I had to do. Like having to do chores, having to go to work, having to look after the children etc.

Since attending Al-Anon meetings, reading Conference Approved Literature, and giving as much Service as I can, I've found that my attitude is changing. It's like these things aren't really 'have' to do's - they're actually gifts and privileges. It's just a matter of changing my perspective.

Today, I am on a train journey with my pre-teen grandson. He is sniffing instead of blowing his nose - something which would previously have irritated me until I would 'need' to comment on it. Instead, I am keeping the focus on myself and doing some Service in the form of writing this share, knowing he's old enough to know when to blow his own nose, and remembering: how important is it?

Marla B

What helps you
change perspective?

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CARING FOR MYSELF

Before coming into Al-Anon the actual thought of putting myself first felt alien. Coming from a long line of chronic people pleasers and rescuers, I didn't know any difference. When somebody asked me to do something, my default answer was always 'yes'

even if I didn't want to. By the time I came to Al-Anon I was actually exhausted from constantly saying yes! It was then mentioned in a Group meeting that "No" is a complete sentence!

This was an actual awakening for me, so much so that the hair stood up on my arms and the back of my neck. I always thought that I had to give a reason for saying no, despite the fact that when we say yes, we never have to give a reason. It would be like me saying 'of course I will help to clean out the gutters for you', despite the fact I have a fear of heights!

The change in my thinking was not an overnight success and it took me several years to master this new skill in its entirety! For example, someone would ask me if I could help them on a certain day and I would begrudgingly say no, only to double back and say, but I can help you on another day. WHY? This only meant I was saying yes but with a delay! I have to remember progress, not perfection, as I take the programme one day at a time.

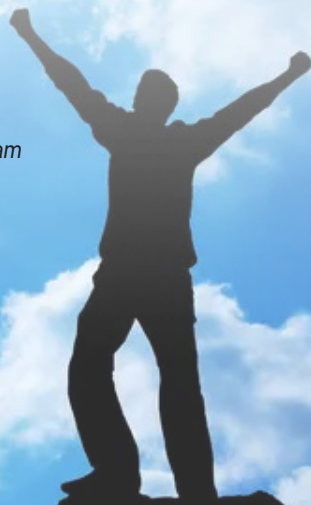
Now I can confidently say no to things, even when I ask myself or plan to do things. Reminding myself of the acronym HALT am I Hungry, Angry, Lonely or Tired.

I have learnt the ability to look after and put myself first for a change.

Alastair - Grantham

*Can you share how
you care for yourself?*

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What I have learnt

I came into the fellowship having known about the existence of Al-Anon for about 10 years previously and went along to a few meetings in Germany in 2015. Just after Easter 2021, my husband and childhood sweetheart attempted to take his own life. I also lost a family cat the same weekend and was on my knees.

I came looking for answers on how to fix my husband and didn't believe anyone could possibly have a situation as bad as my own. I grew up with the disease, but I learnt slowly that we can share similar pain and grief; we struggle with similar things; looking for ways to fix our alcoholic loved ones.

My mother, who died last November, struggled her whole adult life with alcoholism. My father, aged 93, has what we understand now to be a high functioning spectrum disorder. Neurodiversity is widespread in my family. We aren't good at emotions and rarely tell each other we love one another.

We all walked on eggshells around my mother to avoid distressing emotional outbreaks and no one ever talked about her drinking. Our upbringing was privileged on the outside, chaotic, inconsistent, and confusing on the inside. I knew little about boundaries and not a lot about unconditional love. In fact, I grew up with the



seed of unworthiness and the notion that I was difficult to love. I knew that my family was not like everyone else's, and as I grew older, I avoided bringing friends home, out of a sense of shame.

From the seeds of unworthiness, grew the desire to do everything perfectly, but however many achievements, exams passed or awards gained, the continued success never satisfied the inner impact. It's exhausting wearing a mask to satisfy the outside world that everything is ok on the inside. I've suffered from stress, burnout and cycles of depression and anxiety.

But in Al-Anon I've learnt that there is no unhappiness too great to be lessened. I learnt that it's ok to ask for help and that I can trust people in the rooms. I learnt that it's ok to take up the space in our allotted time to speak openly about anything that is troubling me and not be judged. I learnt to listen and that it's ok to make mistakes, to trust myself and to trust other people. I learnt I am good enough and to accept my shortcomings and how to show compassion to myself and others.

I find the Al-Anon literature, including the daily readers, the Slogans, Just For Today and Just For Tonight cards to be invaluable tools of support. My Sponsor supported me through my darkest nights and others in the Group gave, and continue to give me invaluable support when I need it.

Maria

Can you write about what you have learnt?

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

Here are some ideas...

- **How I use my Al-Anon tool kit**
- **Changing my attitude**
- **Keeping the focus on me**

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.

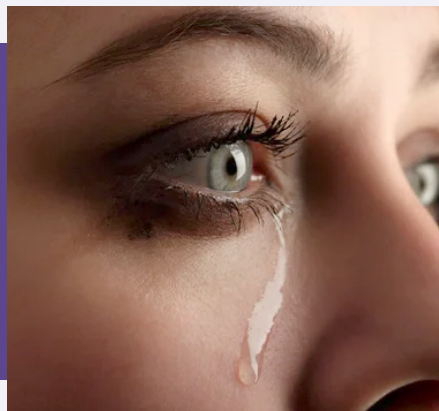
You could relate a personal experience based on a programme principle such as detachment or acceptance, a Step, Tradition or Concept.

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 importance of my feelings and crying



I grew up in a dysfunctional family: my parents were traumatised in their childhood and had never faced their feelings. Instead, they acted them out on their five children, teaching us to do the same: suppress and deny our feelings. As a result, I grew up fearful and lonely, unable to trust my parents or myself. When I was going through something intense, I had no one to talk things through with, so I couldn't label my feelings, let alone understand them.

My dad was a violent alcoholic who sexually abused me and my mum had her addictions, too. Both neglected us. They were the only ones in the family who were allowed to express their feelings, the rest of us learnt to keep quiet, and learnt to care for our parents who were immature and emotionally overwhelmed most of the time. It was very hard.

My parents did not take responsibility for anything. Instead, they would make us responsible for meeting their needs, rather than the other way around.

So, as children we had no choice but to survive by suppressing and denying our feelings and lying our way out of things like our parents had done.

There was no safe space anywhere, just chaos and endless pain. So, when I left home, I had no sense of self at all. I neither knew myself nor loved myself and I was terrified of my feelings and of expressing them: I thought I would be punished. I had no idea how to have healthy relationships. I attracted people who needed looking after, thus repeating the patterns of my childhood, caring for others, and neglecting myself.

As the years went by, I was filling myself up with more and more pain, never understanding why. It took being sexually assaulted on the street by a gang of boys to break my denial and then all my trauma came up and I went into a very deep depression.

It was an unbelievably painful time because for the first time in my life, I had to express myself and all my

feelings to recover. I did recover, but sadly my parents never did. They went on to kill themselves through their addictions. Such experiences are hard to face and I realised I needed more help than just therapy.

So, I came into Al-Anon and began the programme of recovery learning through the Steps to truly know myself and feel my feelings. I understood that to receive the gift of serenity I needed to be totally honest about my feelings and to let people go.

By far, the thing that has changed me the most has been crying my heart out many times, because alcoholism is a disease of many losses for me.

Everyday life was so painful, it was so different from the loving family life I longed for. I lost my childhood and the safety and security that comes with having loving, healthy parents. I lost my trust in others, and along the way I also lost my dignity and self-respect trying in every way to fix my family. I even lost faith in life itself and felt suicidal many times.

So many losses have meant a lot of tears. At the beginning of recovery, I was too scared to cry on my own, the pain I was in was too deep to bear. Then I couldn't stop crying.

Al-Anon gave me a safe space to cry, and to be with people who didn't judge me and who understood and identified with me, as I did them.

In that way, I am healing from all the losses and damage along the way and am learning to truly be myself, honour myself and love and respect others, too.

Tears are a part of my life today; I don't fear them anymore. Instead, I embrace them and all the things they teach me. I feel a sense of relief and peace now when I cry, it's a priceless gift from God: my Higher Power.

The more I cry and grieve, the more I move out of the grip of this disease and can build a new and better life for myself.

Feeling is Healing.

Debbie, Buckinghamshire Sunday

How has embracing your feelings helped you? [Share | Al-Anon UK](#)

KEEP IT SIMPLE
ONE DAY AT A TIME
LISTEN AND LEARN
Progress Not Perfection
LET GO AND LET GOD
detach with love
LIVE AND LET LIVE
KEEP COMING BACK
TOGETHER WE CAN MAKE IT
FIRST THINGS FIRST
THINK
JUST FOR TODAY
EASY DOES IT

When I came to my first meeting about eight months ago, I couldn't stop crying. My eldest son was just three months sober after 26 years of heavy drinking, numerous broken relationships, and many embarrassing moments especially at family get-togethers like Christmas. Thanks to AA he's now 11 months sober and working through the Twelve Steps.

Days before that first meeting I was in A & E with my youngest son. He was suffering from acute alcohol withdrawal, shaking uncontrollably, and looking like an old man. Weeks before this, he was the manager of a big company and seemingly doing very well. But unbeknownst to me, the pressure was too much and he had been on anti-anxiety medication whilst also drinking very heavily. It was heart-breaking. He was also £10,000 in debt, had a house full of bailiff letters and empty vodka bottles. I wondered what sort of father I was to have not one, but two alcoholic sons.

Hope

I often blamed myself, but could never really think of anything significant that I would have done differently. We were always very close as a family, not rich but we had enough and always went on lovely family holidays.

During that first meeting I was completely broken. I also thought there may be some magic cure for my boy's problems, a series of helpful hints to stop them drinking. At that stage, I didn't realise that Al-Anon was for me. I had already decided to do at least six meetings to give it a fair chance, and I'm so glad I did.

I realised they were both suffering from this terrible disease, the addiction of alcoholism. I was helpless and whatever I tried always failed. I wondered if my very negative thoughts of them on



occasions would be very different if they were suffering from another disease, cancer, for example.

I completely misunderstood this illness and was very judgemental at times. I found it very challenging to accept that it was so difficult for them to just stop drinking, stop this destructive behaviour and stop wrecking our family.

I now realise that this is a very powerful addiction, and genetics can play a significant role, with some people more likely to develop an alcohol dependency than others.

As the weeks went by, I began to put myself and my wife first, concentrating on our happiness. I also lowered my expectations of the boys; this was fundamental for me.

My dream of them both having very good jobs, married to lovely daughter-in-law's who would invite me up for Sunday lunch was delusional.

Why should I have any expectations of another human being, expectations that would almost inevitably lead to disappointment and resentment?

I replaced this with hope, which is a much gentler and loving concept.

I stopped interfering in their lives and allowed them to make their own decisions whilst I supported them both quietly in the background. I still love them and hope they remain safe and happy. I'll always be there for them, but will no longer enable them.

I don't think there was a single eureka moment for me, but there were many small steps along the path to peace and serenity. I'm sure this was achieved by the numerous shares and all the love and kindness from the people in the rooms of Al-Anon. I thank you all so much. It was so comforting to know that I wasn't alone.

Prior to Al-Anon there was no one I could share my feelings with. At last I could now do this without feeling ashamed, I could also take what I wanted and leave the rest.

I know I'm incredibly lucky that both my boys are doing OK at the moment; it's still very early days and they'll both always be vulnerable to starting drinking again. Thanks to Al-Anon, I am far more optimistic about the future.

Anon

What gives you a reason to hope? [Share | Al-Anon UK](#)

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

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SUGGESTIONS FOR MEETING TOPICS

Overcoming fears

Using the tools of the programme

Meditation and the Eleventh Step

Welcoming newcomers

I no longer feel isolated

Service makes me feel that I belong – I no longer feel isolated. Service has always been rewarding beyond anything I could imagine. I feel privileged and know I have to give it away to get it.

As an Adult Child I thought I didn't count, was wrong, an imposter and everyone else could do things better. Now I realise, when my head says I am unsafe, that this is my fear: False Evidence Appearing Real. Members in Al-Anon make me feel safe. Today, I made a mistake, but everyone was so forgiving and I felt very safe.

Al-Anon has given me the tools and the confidence to do things I thought I couldn't and I am able to take this can-do attitude into my professional life.

Anon

Can you share your
experience of Service?
[Share I Al-Anon UK](#)

Belonging

Belonging is very important to me. Growing up with alcoholism, I never felt I fitted in anywhere. I recognise there's a belief in me that I need to prove myself, so I feel the need to do things to earn my place. Although I've been in Al-Anon for many years, this belief is still there, but I recognise it today and can (sometimes) stand back.

I appreciate the warmth and love of the members and the fact that they accept me just as I am on any particular day. I now know I have a right to be here, that I will do my current Service role to the best of my ability – and that's all I'm asked to do.

Al-Anon tells me I am valuable just as I am.

Celia



Focusing on myself was a start to building a new life



I first discovered Al-Anon many years ago when my husband made the decision to stop drinking and found AA. For too long, I'd scolded, shouted, begged, hid, or poured away alcohol trying to force my husband to give up. The old saying, "There's no such thing as can't" I took to mean I could control my husband's behaviour. Of course, I didn't succeed!

When I began going to Al-Anon meetings, I was at first trying to help my husband maintain sobriety. Angry and confused, it took me a while to learn that alcoholism is a real disease. It wasn't my disease though. I couldn't control someone else's behaviour, hadn't I learnt that already?

Focusing on myself was a start to building a new life. I'd thought that everything would be rosy once my husband had stopped drinking, but of course, life is full of ups and downs, joys, and sorrows.

There was much for me to learn. My favourite Slogans, the wonderful Serenity Prayer, and meetings where I could share with others who understood started to change my thinking. Sometimes I just needed to 'Listen and Learn'.

I'm so grateful for the wisdom held in the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. Al-Anon truly is a programme for life. It has comforted me in bereavement, helped me as I try to understand my grown-up children's challenges; even though they all live so far from the UK. Sadly, my oldest son has the family disease but I try very hard to love with detachment.

In the last part of my life, I can feel lonely, but I'm never alone. I have Al-Anon friends, a programme to sort out my thinking, and at last I can admit my Higher Power has been there all along. I was just too arrogant, faithless, and too ready to doubt in the past. There is much to be grateful for and for me, love is the key.

Anon

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

My Serenity Prayer made real

I have come to loathe the smell of the mouthwash my wife uses when she's drinking, as much as the stench of the wine itself. When she's drunk, I become distant from her, disconnected. My heart sinks every time I see her entering this altered state. I see it in her glazed eyes and hear it in her slurred, slow speech. I suffer when she's in that state. But she is my wife, underneath all the booze.

I've had a roller coaster of emotions. Feelings of being mentally battered, bruised and beaten. My hope is that she won't drink; just this once.

There is anger, frustration, and disappointment that my emotional needs have again been cast aside. Confusion too: why does she have to get drunk when we have time together? What's so awful in our lives that she needs to run away into alcohol to escape it? What have I done wrong? Have I created this chaos?

The horrible repeated realisation: that I don't want anything to do with this version of my wife. The grief that the wonderful woman I love so much and married has walked out, and only the drunken shell remains. The flat acceptance that I'm going to have to put



up with her like this is draining and depressing. I feel utterly joyless. I feel guilty. Have I over-reacted? Has she really had that much to drink? She works so hard; she deserves a rest. This isn't her fault, I should be more accepting, more accommodating? I feel that strong sense of loss, like the woman I love, who's there, right there in front of me, is gone and I'll never get her back. How do I get out of this, how do I break this cycle? Then, the cold realisation that this is what our life is now.

As I write this, I'm having a cup of tea in our garden. There's a flock of small birds chirping and busying themselves in the trees. It's beautiful. Our two kittens are patrolling, preening, sleepily enjoying the fresh air, peace, and companionship. My flowers are looking nice and I can see new buds on the roses. The sun has just started to illuminate the day. It's serene.

This is my Serenity Prayer made real.

My wife is asleep. I will be kind to her when she wakes; I love her with all my heart. I know that the booze is a poison slowly killing her from the inside and it breaks my heart, it's a foul disease that is eating her alive before my eyes.

I wish she could be with me, in the garden with the cats, a bright day ahead of us. Reflecting on a reading from *Courage to Change* page 83 on acceptance, I'll take this little slice of quiet, make a fresh cuppa and share this moment with my fellowship. In doing so I'm acknowledging it. Trying to break the power of the negative in me that her drinking has created. And I'll keep the tiny door of hope in my heart open, that this isn't forever.

Anon

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I've thought about my relationship with my Higher Power and my relationship with my son. Here's what I think my Higher Power would say to me....

A LETTER FROM MY HIGHER POWER

"You want to hear from me about letting your son go. You are not abandoning him, as much as it may feel like it. You are simply transferring his wellbeing from your care to mine."

"It was never my intention for you to direct, guide, and control his life. That is my role. Yours in the beginning was to love him, protect him, and teach him. You've done that. He was never yours to keep.

"To have peace, you must let him go. Your stubborn self-will only gets in the way of the plans I have for him.

"I know it is not your intention to interfere, but you are. You are not all-wise and all-powerful. You cannot remove his disease. You cannot love him to wellness. Only I can do that.

"You must trust that I care for your son's wellbeing. You must trust that I love him more than your human love. My thoughts, my ways, my plans are bigger than you can comprehend. Your lives are so short, yet you waste so much in worry and fear.

"Yes, your son may cut his life short. That is not my intention, but it is his choice. He must trust me also, and seek to have a relationship with me. Only then can I work in his life. I will not force myself on him or you. I am more than willing to be involved in your lives, but only to the degree you let me. We both know what a struggle trusting me has been for you.

"You can't make it any easier for your son to trust me. He has to find me on his own, and he's doing that to the best of his ability. Let him do that. Get out of the way. Love him as my child, the way I love you. But let him go so that he can be himself, whoever that may be.

"We're in this together. You can come to me anytime to tell me your worries and concerns. I'll listen. I always have. But I may choose to be silent. That's my way of stretching you and growing you.

"I know you love your son, and I love you for that. But ultimately, he is my child, and I know what's best for him. Entrust him to me and you will grow. You will find the peace you want. You have so much in your own life to focus on. Focus on growing yourself and let me worry about your son.

"Loving you always, Your Higher Power"

Anon

Using the Twelve Concepts to practice these principles in all my affairs

Concept One helps me to trust the decisions of the Group with the understanding that our focus is always on providing help and hope to the newcomer when they finally reach our meeting. I can likewise trust the decisions made as a family because we talk to each other and reason things out. I have even been successful using Concept One in work situations to help focus on departmental priorities instead of pointing fingers at what others do or don't do.

Focusing on **Concept Two** helps me to trust the process, whatever it is. I am not in charge of the process, and I did not create it, but I am responsible for doing my part by sharing my experience, strength, and hope. I do not need to be concerned about the outcome, because that is not my responsibility.

Concept Three is about listening to and respecting the ideas of others in order to make informed decisions. Some decisions may not be well received, but when I consider the greatest good for the greatest number, the focus of the responsibility shifts from "me" to "we".

The ability to share, listen, and hear everyone's voice as part of a discussion is key in **Concept Four**. This makes me equal to everyone else; I trust that I will be heard even as I commit to listen to others. I need to take on this risk to share in that process.

Concept Five is about flexibility and respecting the dissenting voice, especially when it's mine. Voicing a different opinion about a situation does not necessarily mean anything will change, but I need to be true to myself and share my perspective, then trust the greater Group conscience regardless of the outcome.

The words "acknowledge" and "responsibility" in **Concept Six** help me to figure out who is the decision-maker in a given situation. Concept Six reminds me that it is not always me; in fact, most times it isn't me!

Concept Seven is about shared leadership so that each of us know what our duties are, and **Concept Eight** encourages me to be trustworthy and helps me trust those to whom I delegate specific tasks. My responsibility is to ensure they have the information and tools they need to be successful.

Concept Nine helps me to focus on how I relate to those around me at home, at work, and in Service. Sometimes, roles can be rotated so that others have an opportunity to learn new skills!

Minding my own business comes to mind when practicing **Concept Ten**. I know how much I dislike it when someone watches over my shoulder, criticising my every move. Letting others follow their path in their own way is an opportunity to practice loving detachment.

Concept Eleven reminds me that “many hands make light work”. As we serve, we choose for various positions those who have the skill sets needed to be successful. Creating an environment of respect and trust while remaining flexible can lead to positive outcomes.

Finally, when I presume goodwill, show mutual respect, participate fully, and treat others as equals, **Concept Twelve** comes alive. By staying connected to a Higher Power, I can think, act, and live by these spiritual principles in all my affairs.

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Gratitude in Service

Where would I be today without Al-Anon? What would my life look like? Who would I be and how would I feel? These thoughts remind me how fortunate I am to have found this recovery programme and a wonderful way of life.

I know now, that this recovery is only mine, if I am willing to give it away. Coming into Al-Anon in my early thirties I was naïve, with little knowledge of who I was or where I was going. ‘Lost’ is a small word that may begin to describe my confusion and lack of direction. How much more so; is the confusion of teens living with alcoholism?

My weekly Al-Anon Group had an opportunity to address recovery for teens by starting an Alateen meeting. Some years later, I am privileged as an Alateen Screened Group Sponsor, (ASGS) to experience how amazing our young teens are, how they absorb, adapt, and grow through this nurturing experience.

To hear these young people being honest, open, and free to share deep felt emotion, to see them begin to accept and change their lives, build more positive relationships with their families, and find direction is truly amazing. Today, I am very grateful to be an ASGS.

Anon

Can you share your gratitude in Service?

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Living in the Present

Thinking about living in the present made me realise how much time I can spend thinking about the past, unpleasant events.

The times as a child, teenager and young adult living with the secrecy of an alcoholic father and living in fear of the violence and shouting towards my mother which had become part of my everyday life.

Wind on a few years later to my teenage son, heavily into smoking weed and drinking alcohol which eventually led to him being admitted to a psychiatric hospital with psychosis. The events leading up to this were extremely painful.

My sister is also an alcoholic and last year was arrested for drink-driving for the third time. I was constantly being called by her, ranting about the unfairness of it all. She had been sober at some point but had been lying to us about her continued sobriety.

Thanks to a friend I found Al-Anon. There had been so many times when my sister had caused me and my children great distress with her drunken behaviour at various family and public events.

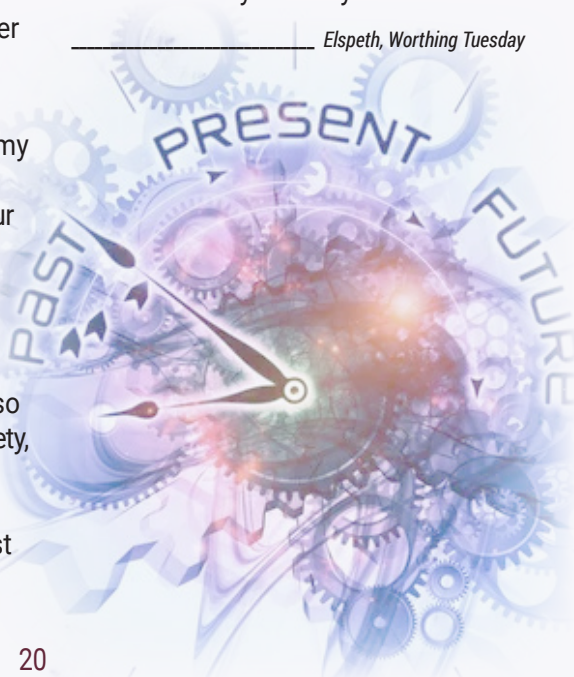
Before I joined Al-Anon I spent far too much time dwelling on these past events, finding it difficult to put them aside and move on. I realised that I also spent a lot of time in a state of high anxiety, worrying about what might happen in the future, for example how my sister would behave at my son's wedding last summer or how she would be if she came over at Christmas.

Looking at the various readings in *Courage to Change* and *Hope for Today* was so helpful in taking a new perspective on things and to realise that all this time looking back and worrying about the future meant that I was never really enjoying 'today'.

Sharing this in a meeting gave me such insight into what was happening to me and since then I have had the time and ability to stop each day to appreciate all the good things that are happening in my life. Not least of all being so proud that my son has been sober and drug free for 23 years now and wherever he is in the world always finds an AA meeting to keep him strong and resolute.

My sister has now been sober for eight months and the wedding and Christmas were fine. One of my mum's favourite sayings was "Today is the tomorrow I worried about yesterday".

Elspeth, Worthing Tuesday



When I came into the programme, I kept hearing and reading about Sponsorship, but it was quite some time before I approached a long-time member and asked her to be my Sponsor. I am extremely grateful for the time she gave to me as we worked through the Twelve Steps. The insights she shared with me helped me through many challenges on a daily basis. But there was one aspect of my personal inventory which I felt inhibited sharing with her.

I handed it over to my Higher Power and then at a meeting another long-time member shared about that aspect. After the meeting I asked her if we could meet to do my Step Five on it. I am very grateful to that Al-Anon member for agreeing and giving me her time.

I moved areas and managed to find a meeting which I attend regularly. I now find myself as a long-time member and recently was asked to be a Sponsor. What an honour and privilege it is to spend time one-on-one with another Al-Anon member as we explore the Twelve Steps.

I am learning so much and can see how the power of the programme is having a positive effect on both our lives. We chat for a set amount of time, usually once a week and have covered the first three Steps. Whilst working on Step Four and a personal inventory, we have been focusing on acceptance and awareness. I am learning through being a Sponsor and being sponsored how it frees me from being judged and stops me from being judgemental.

SPONSORSHIP AND SERVICE

Just over five years ago I ventured beyond my weekly meeting to attend a District Meeting. The Committee was looking for a Treasurer and I found myself offering to take on the Service role.

Once again Sponsorship was a valuable aspect helping me to take up the role. The outgoing Treasurer became my Service Sponsor for a few months as the formalities with the bank were completed and I was guided on how to complete the tasks required. What had seemed onerous became manageable for me.

Sponsorship and Service have made my Al-Anon journey manageable and through Sponsorship I have been connected to wonderfully supportive and helpful people.

Alison, Area 2

How has
Sponsorship
supported your recovery?
[Share | Al-Anon UK](#)



FROM OUR
AL-ANON
FAMILY
WORLDWIDE

Margo
Amsterdam,
The Netherlands



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

A deep gratitude for fellowship

When I came to Al-Anon five and a half years ago I felt so much shame, defeat, anger, and grief. It was my son who was struck down by the illness. How could this beautiful child of mine, whom I raised by myself for about ten years, have become this wreck of a human being? I used to think, 'how could this have happened under my watch?' As I was such a good 'General' in my family, ruling him and his little brother.

I came to Al-Anon so lonely, deeply sad, and alone. Members of Al-Anon reached out their hand to me straight away. They didn't give advice; there was no criticism. There was no scolding me for having been a bad mother. Instead, the love and peace of the programme enveloped me, one day at a time.

Still, to this day, when I feel I am becoming unwell or stuck in spiralling thinking, all I have to do is reach out and one of my fellows is right there, with love, encouragement, and honesty always.

My fellows are in the UK, Scotland, the US, South Africa, and all over the world. I know people now who bring me such joy, and the love I have from, and towards my Sponsor is invaluable. We are oceans apart, me on the Amsterdam canals and she in the valleys of Los Angeles. But her guidance and voice are with me all days of the week.

Did you know, adding the link to **[Al-Anon Today](#)** onto a phone's home screen allows quick and easy access to Al-Anon's free online magazine?

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.

