

When I Took the Risk.

By - Sue P. Associate Director—Group Services .

The three-sided triangle that symbolizes our fellowship is a reminder that the Steps are for my personal recovery, the Traditions are for my use in my relationships with others, and the Concepts guide me as I perform service. My recovering from the family disease of alcoholism didn't take off until I started dipping my feet into service. In the same way that I test the ocean water before diving in, I tested the waters of service. I had to start simply by showing up faithfully to my meeting each week. I knew that if I wanted this Al-Anon stuff to work, I needed to be consistent. I kept hearing how what was shared in meetings was like medicine—if I wanted it to work, I needed to take it regularly.

Before Al-Anon, I was never invited to join in activities—I was always the last person selected for the team in gym. However, my program friends invited me to participate in many activities. In my group, these included setting up and cleaning up, preparing refreshments, taking notes at business meetings, being responsible for the weekly basket collection, taking an inventory of our group's literature, and chairing a meeting. At each step, members of my group paved the way. In this way, they were all like my original Service Sponsors. They modeled the behavior I wanted for myself.

When it was time to elect a new Group

Representative, someone nominated me. I did not think I was worthy. What do I know?? What if I do something wrong? I thought, what if I do something that breaks Al-Anon? I was gently reminded that this is a we program and that there are people to help who have done it before. So, I took the risk and dove in with both feet. As I continued to apply the spiritual principles of the Al-Anon program, I grew more confident. This seeped into my relationships at home and at work. I was able to talk to my family and colleagues the way I spoke to my fellow Al-Anon members in service - with respect and love.

My program Sponsor guides me through the Steps and the Traditions to help me recover from the family disease of alcoholism so that I become aware of my reactions in any situation. When that person is not available, I also have an Al-Anon family that I can lean on that can offer support and love. My Service Sponsor shows me how to apply the Concepts as I perform service. Neither Sponsor is placed on a pedestal. Instead, they share of themselves and help me when I need it. Al-Anon service is something I surely cannot do alone!

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The Loners letters from all areas can be found on our website

<https://www.alanon.org.za/members-newsletters/>

Letting Go of My Shame.

By - *Melissa H., Tennessee . .*

I finally came into Al-Anon after my second divorce was finalized. I had lost myself in trying to be who I thought my husband wanted me to be, and I was not sure what was wrong with me. Someone suggested that I try Al-Anon because it might help me learn how to find myself, take care of myself, and stop the cycle of unhealthy behavior. I shared during a meeting that I felt a lot of shame about being divorced twice. After the meeting, people embraced me and let me know I was not the only one who had experienced divorce—even multiple divorces.

Before Al-Anon, I didn't know how to avoid obsessive thinking and how to be myself in relationships. Many of my friends in Al-Anon said that they had

experienced the same struggles. More importantly, though, they had overcome those struggles and were living happy and free. I have grown to understand some of my behavior and have begun to change. All of us have one thing in common - we have been affected by another person's drinking. In my case, it was passed down the line from grandparents to aunts, uncles, and cousins. I am right where I am supposed to be now - at home with a loving family and growing through the fellowship of Al-Anon.

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Literature

Please contact Annalise at the office Mon - Fri between 9am and 1pm, and she will be happy to recommend Al-Anon books and pamphlets that meet your needs...

Just for today . . .

- I'll accept the kind words and encouragement that others have to offer. . . .
- I'll pay attention to the lessons that others have to teach me. . . .
- I remember that there are plenty of people who are willing to help me when i need it. . . .

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