

The 'Yes, but...' of Tradition Four Is All about Love. *By - Tom C., Associate Director—Literature .*

When I first attended Al-Anon, it was quite a culture shock to hear that in the program “there are no rules.” Based on my alcoholic upbringing, I expected other members to tell me what to do and how to do it. Instead they said, “Follow your heart,” “take what you liked and leave the rest” and “our groups are autonomous.”

As I became familiar with our Twelve Traditions, I realized that there is a “yes, but...” attached to the group autonomy referred to in Tradition Four. (“Each group should be autonomous, except in matters affecting another group or Al-Anon or AA as a whole.”) Abiding by the Traditions has helped me follow this caveat that I not bring harm to the program that has helped me so much.

Al-Anon adapted these suggested guidelines from the hard-earned experiences of early A.A groups, so that we might avoid the same pitfalls they faced and assure that Al-Anon can continue to exist. While “there are no rules in Al-Anon,” there is a “yes, but...” to that statement too: “but we remain obedient to the unenforceable.”

Our cofounder, Lois W., first applied the term “obedience to the unenforceable” to the Traditions in 1966, when she included a chapter about them for a

revision of our first book. There she wrote:

“Al-Anon ... holds together by means of a loving understanding among its members. Al-Anon is united ... by its members' willingness to be obedient to the unenforceable. ... Willingly they apply the Twelve Traditions to the affairs of the groups. Nobody compels them. They are learning to overcome self-will, false pride, resentment and self-pity by recognizing that principles are more important than personalities and by accepting a program on which they know they can depend for help.” (The Al-Anon Family Groups—Classic Edition (B-5), pages 166-167)

In Lois Remembers (B-7), Lois described love as “a regenerating force,” and on page 196 stated, “I now realize loving is our supreme function.” I agree with her, and truly believe that love is what keeps our program alive. I feel compelled by my love of the program to follow the Traditions to the best of my abilities. Without the love that Al-Anon has provided me, there's no telling where or whether I would be.

Reprinted with permission of The Forum, Al-Anon Family Group Hdqts., Inc., Virginia Beach, VA. (Extracted from the Apr 2018 issue).

Mothering or Enabling?

By - Stephanie W., Ontario.

When I first came to Al-Anon, I spent a great deal of time wrestling with the term, “enabling.” I am a mother. Surely a mother’s role is to enable her children, is it not? It has been a struggle to understand, let alone accept, that the behavior I viewed as that of a good mother was actually unhealthy! All my life I have held the belief that a good mother encourages her children, fixes their problems, fights their battles and cooks and cleans for them. Surely a good mother is in service to her children.

With the help of Al-Anon, I have begun to learn that being a good mother means loving my children but also allowing them to live their lives. My children should have the right to learn life’s lessons in their time, their way. I owe them that. Doing everything for them, unintentionally or not, would do more harm than good! By placing my children’s lives ahead of my

own, I was doing everyone a disservice, especially myself.

What a phenomenal moment when I realized that what I was doing for my children was actually the opposite of why I was doing it. Wow - the freedom of that weight being removed from my shoulders! Not only could I stop the exhausting experience of doing it all for everyone, but it opened the door to self-exploration by allowing my children the freedom to live their lives. I found I now had the time and desire to look at myself, take care of myself, and define myself.

Reprinted with permission of The Forum, Al-Anon Family Group Hdqts., Inc., Virginia Beach, VA. (Extracted from the Oct 2017 issue).

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 i will be me . . .
- I'll focus on the positive . . .
- I'll remember the power of a smile and a kind word . . .
- I'll keep in mind that there's a larger plan, of which I'm a valuable part . . .

Compiled by:

CAPE AREA OFFICE

Postal Address	Residential Address
PO Box 727	Unit B5, N1 City Mews
Goodwood, 7459	Frans Conradie Drive
	Goodwood, 7460

Tel: 021 595 4517
Fax: 086 523 3030
E-Mail: alanonct@iafrica.com

Our expenses are met by voluntary contributions. If you would like to send a donation our bank details are:

ABSA Bank (Current account)
Account No: 407 321 5579
Branch Code: 632 005

Our 24 Hour Helpline - 0861 25 26 66