

GAUTENG & DISTRICT OFFICE
24-Hour helpline 0861 25 26 66

Dear Loners

September 2018

Resource material used: *Paths to Recovery* [B24] pages 193-203
Reaching for Personal Recovery [P92] pages 95-98

Tradition Seven: “Every Group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.”

The Al-Anon Family Groups do not accept outside contributions. We are self-supporting in that way the members can decide how to spend the money collected. The contributions collected are used to keep our office open, pay for the rent, phone, internet, photocopier, literature for newcomers, and literature for members to purchase and to cover the costs of our loner letters. If you would like to contribute our banking details are at the end of the letter.

But Tradition Seven is more than just being financially self-supporting, it is about giving back to the fellowship in terms of time and service. It’s about passing our message of hope to other families suffering from the effects of alcoholism; helping with Alateen; helping with public outreach; supporting group activities and having the courage to start new groups to name but a few.

Reaching for Personal Freedom Page 95 “.....Many affected by the disease of alcoholism have been financially, emotionally, physically and spiritually dependent on others. This dependence may have contributed to our low self-esteem, distrust in decision making, or fear of abandonment. Becoming self-supporting gives us the opportunity to gain freedom from unhealthy dependence on others by establishing our own boundaries and goals for our lives...”

We confined most of our discussion to becoming emotionally self-supporting. Well worthwhile to use these two books in your recovery or as a meeting discussion topic in your own group.

.... ‘How can we empower ourselves as members of the family? First, the important person in your life needs to be you. How can you give yourself help? Here are some thoughts from our group:

.... ‘When I am stressed or feeling overworked or overwhelmed, first I need to breathe. I need to eat, exercise, speak, phone an Al-Anon buddy, talk to someone I trust. I actually have to ‘Ask my Higher Power for help’.

.... ‘My anger was out of control. I realised I needed to be responsible for my own happiness and my own anger. I went to anger management and found this program.’

.... ‘When I am stressed I get busy to take my mind off the issue. Then I started writing a journal. Every day I write how I’m feeling. It’s making an enormous difference to me. It’s a way of letting it go, moving along, but having it to go back to later if I want.’

.... ‘Yesterday a member phoned me in crisis. They talked about the problem and thanked me. I didn’t do anything. This program is about taking it easy and using the *Serenity Prayer*.’

..... ‘What you did was listen. So few people take half an hour out of their day to listen.’

..... ‘In my life I’m a very practical person in a crisis. I can keep cool, take the reins and do what needs to be done. Often people don’t love me for fixing their stuff. My urge is to just step in and do it. But I don’t always get that back. I need to look at this and find a way that supports me as well.’

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..... 'I'm a Black Belt enabler I have difficulty setting boundaries. My daughter is disrespectful, rude and controlling. I say to my Higher Spirit 'Guide me!' And I had to get here today for this meeting!'

... 'I am reminded by that old saying: "He who has the Gold makes the Rule" So I need to get myself financially independent and earn my own money. As parents so many of us have given that power to someone else. We forget to set healthy boundaries for our children and give in to their needs. Peace at any price! We ride the guilt trip like a pro and enable our children to get away with totally unacceptable behaviour...'

..... 'It's quite hard to do that detachment on family matters. My sibling, the 'baby' has put my family at a disadvantage, acting like a little child, 'failing to launch'. It's quite hard to take my hands off and keep my opinions to myself. He needs to learn his own consequences and so do my parents.'

..... 'In the old movies there were guys in white hats and black hats. I always thought I was the guy in the white hat. I had to learn to undo that and learn who I actually was.'

..... 'For children, how do we illustrate Tradition 7? Sometimes in active alcoholism, the other parent lies about what's going on. We feel shame and want to protect our children from the drinking. Our children sleeping in another room, hear the shouts and blows, and mom tells them everything's all right. It's not. They are fearful. They learn that violence is all right so later in life when in danger, you feel fear and you say 'that's fine'. It's not. How we can harm our children! It's so important that we tell our children the truth. We are as sick as our secrets.'

.... 'As an adult child I find it hard to let go of that old stuff. I forget everything. I screamed at my daughter. When you've been part of those things as children they are with you always. But I have learned to pray and let God and come to meetings. It's sometimes the only power I have.'

.... 'Our capacity to suppress is unbelievable. It determines how we move into adulthood. We don't learn to cope with our situations, we keep suppressing. My lack of self-esteem is so intense I become the grape that got squashed.'

..... 'I realise where my fear of authority comes from... when a mother shouts at a father. I resonate with everything that was said today. I went through an abusive background. I became completely dependent on my alcoholic partner. His money controlled me. My entire sense of self was taken away from me. When I came here I didn't know who I was. But I'm finding it hard to earn my own income. It's one day at a time I guess.'

We hope you found these comments helpful. We would love to share your experience strength and hope with other loners in the programme. Our website, www.alanongauteng.co.za is updated regularly with new shares, blogs and book reviews. Remember help is a phone call away.

Our banking details are: ABSA Bank, Oakdene, branch code 632 005). Current account no 1118881482.....in the name of **Al-Anon Information Service**. Please put your **name or group as a reference**.

With love in Al-Anon, Juliet

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