

When I Took the Risk.

*By - 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 modelled 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/>

The Only One I Could Change.

By - Julie P., Illinois .

Before Al-Anon I was so sure I could fix both my marriage and my husband. I tried self-help books, couples counseling, and women's shelters. I thought about Al-Anon, but I denied that alcoholism was the whole problem. I was ashamed of our marriage, but we put on an act for family and made it look like all was happy. I blamed my husband for all our problems. I thought I knew so much because I hadn't come from an alcoholic family, whereas he had. Eventually, I couldn't take his abuse anymore.

When I was facing major surgery, I thought he should stop drinking, but he continued. In desperation, I went to my first Al-Anon meeting. I saw it online and thought of going for years. When I finally arrived, smiling faces welcomed me. Tears rolled down my cheeks once I sat down. I

thought to myself - I finally did it - and couldn't wait to ask people how to fix this mess. Instead, they listened to me cry and vent. They hugged me and told me that they understood. They were so comforting and told me to come back. I did come back.

Since then, my life and marriage have gotten so much better. I have new friends that get me, so I no longer complain to people who don't understand this disease. My self-worth has improved because now I understand alcoholism. Furthermore, my relationships have improved because I know that I can't change anyone but myself. I have hope and serenity now. Our family is happy again.

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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 practice patience with those who make me impatient. . . .
- I'll remember that the attitude i show to the world is my choice. . . .
- I'll live in each moment as it comes. . . .

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