

### Family Groups

October 2019

**My life was unmanageable and insane,  
only I didn't know it.** *By - Anonymous .*

When I came into Al-Anon, I did so not for the reason often heard at meetings - an alcoholic spouse or partner whose drinking negatively affected me. Instead, I came because I knew I was the problem. I recognized that I had grown up in an alcoholic home and that I had lost hope. So, when I looked into our meeting's small box of literature to buy my first piece of Conference Approved Literature, I was attracted not to One Day at a Time in Al-Anon (ODAT) (B-6), but instead to Hope for Today (B-28), with its gentler tone and broader appeal. Because I loved the literature and was too afraid to ask someone to be my Sponsor, I bought many books over the next year, including One Day at a Time, in an effort to absorb everything I could about this lifesaving program. Yet when I tried to read the ODAT, which this year celebrates its 50th anniversary, I found it old-fashioned, and I could not identify with it. In fact, it is fair to say that I truly disliked the book. At that stage of my recovery, I believed, rather I knew, that the ODAT had nothing to offer me.

So, this profound little book sat gathering dust on my bookshelf. Today I can imagine the ODAT, like the God of my understanding, patiently waiting for me to become ready to hear its wisdom, just as we as members wait for the newcomer to become desperate so they can be willing to walk through the doors of their first Al-Anon meeting. After I had worked my Steps and the Traditions, I had occasion to pick up this powerful daily reader off the bookshelf and to make it part of my morning routine of reading, meditation and prayer. As I have experienced with all our

literature, gems of wisdom suddenly jumped off the pages at me, where a few years earlier, nothing had applied. What I had once taken as irrelevant because I was focused on the differences suddenly became incredibly relevant. The simple, but profound guidance of our Al-Anon program appeared to me in plain language, as found on page 28, which reads, "I know I am powerless to deal with my problem by myself. The more I struggle to work it out, the more difficult it becomes. I know that Divine Power can deal with matters which are beyond me. I will try to empty my mind of all fear." I also discovered the true potential of having faith in the God of my understanding through passages such as those found on page 131, which reads, "What we are meant to know will come to our knowledge without any action on our part."

I have found over the years that the God of my understanding has a sense of humor, and I imagine She is chuckling as She watches me writing this announcement of availability of One Day at a Time in Al-Anon 50th Anniversary (B6-50), with its beautiful design and bookmark. As Staff, we can only hope that we have done justice in capturing the beauty and the power of the words within and sufficiently honored the incredible gift One Day at a Time in Al-Anon has been for the thousands of members who have found solace, wisdom and hope on the pages of this profound little book.

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

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

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# Upright and balanced - on the trail and in life.

By - Mary Jo H

This past summer, my daughter and I planned to hike a section of the Appalachian Trail. Although we both loved the outdoors and were frequent day hikers, neither of us had attempted an overnight backpacking experience. After watching numerous on-line videos for advice, studying trail maps, and loading our packs, we set off for adventure, compass in hand and a smile on our faces.

Seasoned backpackers will tell you that “newbies” on the trail are easily recognized by the size of their packs, carrying everything but the kitchen sink. We were no exception. Our packs were easily half our body weight and towered over our heads. After the first mile, we got the hang of balancing our loads and conquered one steep ascent after another.

All was well until I had the misfortune to misstep and “roll” on a stick. I was thrown off balance, my feet went out from under me, and I found myself looking up at the sky, my fall cushioned by my pack. My daughter ran to my aid but was quickly overcome with fits of laughter at the sight of me attempting to get back on my feet.

Every effort to stand up was negated by the

heavy pack. No matter how I tried, I was stuck, much like an overturned turtle. After valiant efforts to right myself, I lay exhausted by the situation, needing some kind of helping hand to stand. Once I gave up fighting the pack weight, a thought came to me. If I just unclipped my pack, I would be able to stand. I did. Now free from the weight of my burden, I stood upright.

My experience on the trail holds many lessons for me when compared to Al-Anon. Many of us carried a burden from the effects of alcoholism, causing us to lose our balance and get stuck. Our best efforts were ineffective in “righting” ourselves in our relationships and lives. For me, the experience, strength, and hope provided by the program are the freeing solutions to the family disease of alcoholism. The Steps and Traditions help me unclip the burden of the effects of growing up with alcoholism, allowing me to proceed down the trail of life upright and balanced.

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## Literature

Please contact Tania Jacquelin 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 avoid negative thoughts. . . .
- I'll practice my listening skills. . .
- I'll be careful with what I eat. . . .
- I'll be grateful for all of the people in my life. . . .

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

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