

AL-ANON FAMILY GROUPS

CAPE AREA ECHO

EDITION 1 - 2020

FIND A MEETING

Many of our Al-Anon groups are meeting electronically instead of face-to-face. Please contact our office or Helpline for more information: 021 595 4508 / email: alanongso@iafrica.com / Helpline 0861 252 666

See Updates from WSO on COVID-19 (Coronavirus) at this link:!

<https://al-anon.org/for-members/wso/news-from-the-wso/update-on-covid-19-coronavirus/>



INTRO:

When Margie asked me whether I would write something for today, I wondered if I could offer anything truly useful or hopeful - partly because I am mindful that my previous writings have left people a little low. After four years, and back at step 1, I am no poster boy for swift recovery.

I find recovery really, really difficult - perhaps because I want easy answers, but mostly because there is so much reading and wisdom around me in the rooms that I have a lot of trouble sifting through it to make decisions and stick to them. Indecision is still my middle name. Getting out of my head and into my heart is even harder.

This is probably what makes my life unmanageable. And makes it essential that I find a way to turn my will and my life over to a Higher Power. That part of the process I also find hard - and extremely exhausting. I am tired all the time. So, like I say, my recovery and I are still a work in progress. So here is what that feels like...

RECOVERY 2020 - STUMBLING FORWARD

I am not yet in love with my recovery

Nor yet with my so-called Higher Power

I am still a toddler before the Steps
Unsteady, way off balance,
Stuck at Step 1, I am still married
To my life unmanageable.

Only when I accept the turmoil
Accept my unmanageable life
Will I be able to move on
Step by fumbling step, one day at a time,
Embracing the long journey.

For now, serenity seems a distant dream
I feel as if I have no control at all
That life just happens to me, crisis after crisis,
Uncontrollable, relentless, spiralling.

They say acceptance is the key
To working steps one, two and three
But although I can slowly see
My role in my insanity
It takes a bit more work to find
The possibility in my mind
That I might be willing to unwind
My hectic life and hand it over.

Possibility has me flummoxed
I want to feel cast iron facts
Know which way to turn and act
But recovery calls for faith
Its answers are not rational.

If I am really to let go with God
Not a very British thing to do
Then I must be open to the gaps

The joys between the notes
The things that cannot be explained

By reasoning or common sense.

For this recovery thing demands

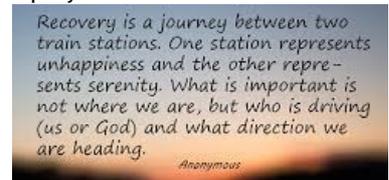
That I hand over my selfish will
Treat detachment like a bridge
And ignore the ease with which it makes a wall.

So when, still that toddler, step onto this jelly-path
It wobbles mightily: the alcoholic wind blows hard
Cunning, baffling and powerful
And in the face of desperate pleas and tears

I am asked to let go the rail and let God guide me

To live one unsteady, fearful day at a time

Which seems more madness than a prayer.



And so we meet the Power, brackets Higher,
Something other, bigger, maybe better

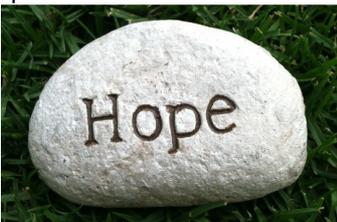
To whom we must hand over, so they say,
Not just our will but our entire lives

And He, the H in caps, will care over us.

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Perhaps we meet him (or her) on
the bridge
Guided by our balance-bringing
sponsor
And here we find a hand held out
Is taken by another
And in that unfurling of my hand
I find I can, so guided, let things go
Progress along the walkway, cross
the bridge
And find another way to be, to
live,
Another way to navigate life's
journey.
Along the way work is to be done
Be grateful, do service, get a
sponsor
And most off all, I must work the
steps,
Even though my writing training
Recoils in horror at such
grammatical torture.
In my world, work is a thing you
transitively do
You only work at something or
maybe with it
But never work it as an object
devoutly to be wished.

Of course it's more than that,
so much more than the message
Of that blue shoe that sailed in
Bob's direction one '50s day
When Lois realised life could be
lived another way
That alcoholics' loved ones also
wanted 'some of that'
The hope she'd seen in recovery's
eyes
The serenity and courage of a
different path
A set of steps, a blueprint to match
that shoe
A way to share their strength and
hope.



So the call is to live life another
way

To learn when love is not enough
To find the hope when
everything's despair
To change our view, not just of
ourselves,
But of other people, our Higher
Power, everyone!
All I can say is that detachment's
bridge looks very long
And that, as the cliché goes, the
longest journeys begin
With where I still seem to be, at
the very first step.

Thank you.

NOTES:

- * We admitted we
were powerless over alcohol—
that our lives had become
unmanageable.
- * Came to believe that a Power
greater than ourselves could
restore us to sanity.
- * Made a decision to turn our will
and our lives over to the care of
God as we understood Him.

Giles ~ Courage to Change Group**GROWING AGAIN AS AN ADULT
CHILD OF AN ALCOHOLIC**

I had been attending Al-Anon
for over a decade when my
relationship with my father
imploded. I started thinking of my
father as an alcoholic, even
though I never saw him drunk or
passed out. My recognition of his
evening and weekend drinking
patterns reminded me that it
doesn't matter when, what, or
how much the alcoholic drinks. As
a newcomer or as a member, I only
need to identify that someone's
drinking bothers me.

So, I added Al-Anon adult
children meetings to my usual
Al-Anon meetings. I went to a

therapist and to a family recovery
program at a treatment facility. I
read our Conference Approved
Literature about adult children of
alcoholics. My old approach
wasn't working. So, I relearned
the lesson that there are no short
cuts or fast tracks to recovery. It is
a process to walk through the
basics of the program again, and it
took courage to face the past and
additional defects within myself.

I thought I found a healing
comfort zone in my family history.
Then, I learned my deceased
father's deep secret—I have a
half-sister. I try to think of her and
her family as a gift from both my
father and my Higher Power. It has
led me to a refresher course in the
basics of Al-Anon. It isn't easy to
do more footwork, so I can
rediscover the positive feelings
and love I have for my father. I am
open about it at meetings. I share
my feelings about my new family
with my Sponsor and close
Al-Anon friends. I find renewed
comfort in two of our books—
*From Survival to Recovery: Growing
Up in an Alcoholic Home* (B-21)
and *Hope for Today* (B-27). I also
find comfort in discussions with
someone I sponsor. She, too, is an
adult child of an alcoholic. I can
share how the program works for
me, which helps me to help myself
and others to recover from the
impact of alcoholism on my life.

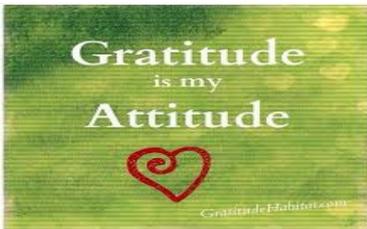
This month has a holiday
focused on love. There are many
teenagers and adult children of
alcoholics who feel unloved and
alone. I read many painful stories
that are posted on social media
pages. The very least I can do is
refer them to the Al-Anon website
meeting locator at al-anon.org
and to offer Al-Anon's message of
hope and healing to them.

**Claire R ~ Associate Director ~
Public Outreach Professionals
The Forum, February 2020**

CAPE AREA ECHO

ALATEEN

Hope for Children of Alcoholics



FIVE THINGS THAT I AM GRATEFUL

I am grateful for my family because they mean a lot to me. If all else fails, my family is there. I am also grateful because I have everything I need and even more. The third thing is my Alateen friends. I am grateful for them because I can always talk to them about my feelings. We laugh about a lot of things and always have a great time together. The fourth thing I am grateful is being healthy. I can do things, go to places, swim, listen to music, and dance. The last thing I am grateful is that I have been able to travel to many beautiful places and for all this I am grateful.

Andrea ~ Alateen Talks, excerpts from Volume 54 Numbers 3 and 4 al-anon.org



I CAME TO ALATEEN BECAUSE ...

The reason I came to Alateen in the first place is because my father knew I had a risk of becoming an alcoholic. I agreed reluctantly. The first time I went to a meeting I thought it was going to be a big pity party. In that first session, I

obtained comfort by listening to Alateen members share their experience, strength, and hope. I also learned that I was not the only one struggling. There were members with better, equal, or worse lives than me. I kept coming back because I needed to hear about our struggles and how to cope with them.

Anonymous ~ Alateen Talks, excerpts from Volume 54 Numbers 3 and 4 al-anon.org



TRADITION SEVEN & COVID-19

Every group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.

RESPONSIBILITY

starts with *me.*

As more and more groups go into recess, or find other ways to continue meeting, we must still sustain the Area Office each month.

We need ongoing group funds to meet these obligations.

We therefore appeal to all members please to continue their monthly contributions.

Members may do so via direct EFT into the Cape Area account, using a reference indicating group contributions.

Banking details:

Bank: ABSA
 Account Name: Al-Anon Family Group Cape Area
 Account No: 407 321 5579
 Branch No: 632005
 Type: Cheque

Ref: GC, Group Name, Member's Name (if necessary).

Snapscan:



Snap here to pay



Please help Al-Anon by continuing your giving, even without face-to-face meetings.

Together we can continue to support and sustain our fellowship and our recovery in new ways during this challenging time.

Stay safe.

MAKE THE ECHO YOUR OWN:

Please send articles, ideas, comments, marked "CAPE AREA ECHO" to alanonct@iafrica.com

PUBLIC OUTREACH RESOURCES:

<http://www.themightypen.co.za/doc/January%202020%20issue.pdf>

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