

AL-ANON FAMILY GROUPS CAPE AREA ECHO

EDITION 4 – 2020

FIND A MEETING

Due to Covid-19 and the National lockdown, our Al-Anon groups are meeting electronically instead of face-to-face.

All details for electronic meetings can be viewed at <http://www.alanon.org.za/meetings/>

If you require further information, please contact our office or Helpline: 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/>

Important



KEEPING IN FIT SPIRITUAL CONDITION

There is a saying, in the fellowship: “IT WORKS IF YOU WORK IT, SO WORK IT, YOU’RE WORTH IT.”

So that is what spiritually fit means, working your spiritual muscles.

And since this is a spiritual disease and a spiritual programme, spiritual exercise means doing the recommended things over and over, to keep those muscles strong and in good condition.

So, often with a share, we look at how we use THEN AND NOW. How we were before the programme and how we are after entering the programme.

Unfortunately, I am very spiritually unfit at the moment ... muscles soft from underuse ... so I will be speaking about how it was for me when I WAS fit because I need to remember what I had.

I understood early in my recovery that my disease was energetic – It was either asleep or awake – and it was my job to keep it dormant. And I could do this by keeping my spirituality alive.

Also, I want to say that for me, all my recovery is spiritually based, even taking care of my body is spiritual as my body is the house for my spirit. I suppose as my disease is energetic, so is my recovery. I need to keep the spirit of recovery alive. So, the

spirituality underpinning my recovery is a grounded spirituality.

The other thing I want to say is that I use the word disease a lot in my share. It is shorthand for our self-defeating and pain-causing beliefs and ways. It is sometimes called co-dependence – three types of co-dependence are caring, compliant, and controlling. I am the controlling kind.

When I was spiritually fit, I was clear that I was powerless, and I could not help myself.

When I was spiritually fit, I never forgot the desperation which gave me this clarity

When I as spiritually fit, I knew that with this disease, I could never stand still, I either moved back into relapse or forward into recovery.

When I was spiritually fit, I knew, with my whole being not just my head, that recovery was my number one priority, that whatever I put in front of my recovery, would be the first thing that I would lose.

When I was spiritually fit, I knew it was critical for me to stay in the moment and to experience my feelings, not act them out but feel them, express them, and let them go. This is because my disease is an attempt not to feel my feelings.

When I was spiritually fit, I valued my serenity so much that I paused often during the day to check inside to see if serenity still lived in my heart.

When I was spiritually fit, I did not make so many lists, knowing

my serenity did not come from ticking off the items on my lists.

When I was spiritually fit, I knew what serenity felt like and did not confuse it with numbness.

When I was spiritually fit, I was quick to ask for help, knowing that this disease would make mincemeat of me if I did not get support.

When I was spiritually fit, I knew I could not afford to be complacent because this disease is powerful, cunning, and baffling.

When I was spiritually fit, I knew that I could not change things through sheer self-will, not even myself, just like the alcoholic cannot stop drinking through self-will. I needed the help of something bigger than my little mind.

The key to success is to keep growing in all areas of life - mental, emotional, spiritual, as well as physical
- Julius Eving



When I was spiritually fit, I felt I was co-operating with my Higher Power to become who I was meant to become. I knew I could trust the Process, if I did the next right thing and got support from the right people, just as an acorn can trust the process of becoming an oak. I could trust there was a part of me that wanted so much to be whole and would respond.

When I was spiritually fit, I prayed for help when I obsessed to stop the incessant circle of thoughts and the pain.

When I was spiritually fit, I liked myself because I was honest, open, and willing.

Help and hope for families and friends of alcoholics

CAPE AREA ECHO

When I was spiritually fit, I did not hesitate to shine the light of truthfulness on something that was bothering me.

When I was spiritually fit, I was quick to look at my part in it, pride was no longer my friend.

When I was spiritually fit, I knew that my humility kept me teachable.

When I was spiritually fit, I had strong inner-boundaries, boundaries to keep me safe from MYSELF.

When I was spiritually fit, I started to know my shortcomings intuitively.

When I was spiritually fit, I did not walk in fear as I trusted the process, but I had a healthy fear of my DISEASE.

When I was spiritually fit, I was addicted to ‘coping’, a way of appearing in control and hiding my vulnerability.

When I was spiritually fit, I did not need to hide my vulnerability as a human being, knowing that I would be held by the support of the people around me and my Higher Power.

When I was spiritually fit, I tolerated discomfort if it served my recovery (e.g. the discomfort of doing things differently).

When I was spiritually fit, I did not brace my body to be strong; I cried if I needed to and my body stayed soft and my shoulders loose and my recovery stayed strong.

When I was spiritually fit, my vulnerability kept me connected to others.

When I was spiritually fit, I did not need to be smug and self-righteous which is a very lonely place.

When I was spiritually fit, I understood that my opinions and judgements were like chains that stopped me from being free.

When I was spiritually fit, I knew that I needed to leave my

comfort zone and take risks if I wanted to grow.

Thanks for listening, I needed to tell someone.

By Sabrina S, Constantia



I THOUGHT I WAS HELPING

I came to Al-Anon because I had an alcoholic child. I felt miserable because my child was in trouble and frustrated because I could not seem to do anything about it. I also felt angry that he lied and took advantage of me. As a father I saw myself as the fixer. I provided wisdom, guidance, and advice – lots and lots of advice. I minimised problems with humour, provided money, and showed disapproval. The effect of my actions put roadblocks in his path to recovery because they gave him no room to breathe, no opportunity to help himself and rebuild his self-esteem. Every time he turned around, I was there to help, or so I thought, by offering what I felt was a better way. We always had long phone chats, which used to consist of him telling me his problems and me giving him advice because I knew that, if he would just listen, all would be well. In truth, my advice, money, and disapproval did nothing but injure him. In effect, I was telling him that he did not have the skills necessary to make his own decisions. I was demeaning him, not helping him.

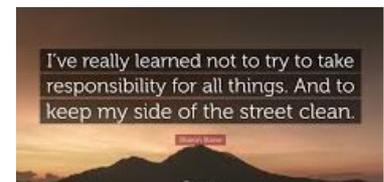
However, by using the tools I learned at Al-Anon meetings, I changed the nature of our conversations. Instead of giving advice, I gave empathy. Instead of

telling him what to do, I told him I was sorry to hear about his latest problem and let him solve it for himself. Then a remarkable thing happened. After several weeks of these conversations, he said to me “You know, I really enjoy these talks we’ve been having lately; they mean a lot to me.” At around the same time, he began his own program of recovery.

My new approach did not cause him to recover or even help him to recover, but it did remove some obstacles that I had been putting in his way. In essence, my script had changed, and therefore, our relationship changed. Through this program, I learned that, if I take care of myself and treat myself with respect, then I will be in a better position to help my son in a way that acknowledges that there is a real person, a loving person, inside my alcoholic son. I finally realised that he is an adult and, therefore, has the right to solve his own problems and to live his own life. As a result, in addition to being my son, he once again became a very close and dear friend.

By Frank V, New York

Reprinted with permission of The Forum, Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc., Virginia Beach, VA, March 2019



al-anon.org/for-alateen

CAPE AREA ECHO

I AM A WORTHWHILE COMPANION



Elfie chatting to the neighbour's parrot

Being alone during this lockdown has not been as difficult as I thought. I realised I have felt alone for most of my life. Growing up in a fragmented alcoholic home and then married for 38 years to an alcoholic, I always had to rely on myself for my own emotional nurturing.

Coming into Al-Anon, I have learnt to do this in a far healthier way. I can rely on the comfort and support of a Higher Power. I have a fellowship where I belong. I like myself.

"Today, when I'm by myself, I will know that I am in good company ..."

Today I will spend some time exploring the most intimate human relationship I will ever have – my relationship with myself." From Courage to Change B-16, Pg. 132



So glad the Easter Bunny found me!!

By Glenda W ~ Constantia



Most of the time we go out of our way to be kind to others but forget to be kind to ourselves. Take a minute to think about something loving you can say to or about yourself and share it with us.



AVAILABLE RESOURCES

South African Al-Anon Family Groups – All details for local electronic meetings can be viewed at <http://www.alanon.org.za/meetings/>

Al-Anon Without Borders

In need of a meeting, reach out to the worldwide fellowship of Al-Anon at the following link:

<http://msbrecording.com/al-anon-zoom-meetings/>

28 & 29 March 2020

Topics: Step 1 to Step 12

4 & 5 April 2020

Topics: Communication, Intimacy, Relationships, and much more

11 & 12 April 2020

Topics: Service and commitment, Family recovery, and much more

18 & 19 April 2020

Same schedule, ID, password. New topics and speakers.

Al-Anon Without Borders

WORKSHOPS

Workshops were held on 8 & 10 April, and are available at <http://msbrecording.com/al-anon-zoom-meetings/>

8 April – Speaker/s: Angie B (Al-Anon) & Chip B (AA) – **Finances, romances, and circumstances: The family afterwards.**

10 April – Speaker/s: Rick J (Canada)

Principles versus Values!

Autonomy versus Dependency!

The workshops will continue this week on 15 & 17 April, 9am to 1pm PST (Pacific Standard Time) (SA time approx. 6pm).

The workshops are listed below and can be accessed via the following link <https://zoom.us/j/132501257>

Meeting Id: 132 50 1257

Password: 949801

15 April (PST 9am)

Speaker/s: Juanita U (Mexico)
"Forgiveness"

17 April (PST 9am)

Speaker/s: Larcine G (California)
Choices (Discovering Choices)

MAKE THE ECHO YOUR OWN:

We at Al-Anon are looking at publishing a weekly edition of the Echo for the next few weeks.

Please share your thoughts on how you are getting through – one day at a time – during the lockdown. Send your articles marked "Echo" to alanonct@iafrica.com or afgc2c@gmail.com or WhatsApp to 082 342 2102.

TRADITION SEVEN & COVID-19

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



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

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

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:

