

AL-ANON FAMILY GROUPS CAPE AREA ECHO

EDITION 7 – 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

LETTING GO AND RESTORING MY FAITH

I am a newcomer and a grateful member of Al-Anon. I spent decades in denial, shame, anger and self-pity. I felt as though I was the only person enduring such challenges. Imagine my surprise and somewhat relief when I learnt that there are so many others who feel exactly the same.

I am learning that alcoholism is a disease. Understanding this changed my entire perception of the situation. I can now feel compassion instead of just reacting negatively. I found the term "Let Go and Let God" most effective. I realised I've been praying but I was too impatient to wait and listen for answers. It reminded me of a poem by Helen Steiner Rice entitled Broken Dreams. Therein she relates how, as children give their broken toys to their father to fix, we give our broken dreams to God to fix. And then we get irritated when we have to wait for answers. So, we challenge God and plead "How can You be so slow?" To which God replies, "My child, what could I do? You never did let go." That spoke volumes to me. I am now trusting, letting go and restoring my faith.

I HAVE COME TO BELIEVE THAT
CARING FOR MYSELF IS NOT
SELF-INDULGENT. **CARING FOR
MYSELF IS AN ACT OF SURVIVAL.**

Robin Cook Your Long

I have also found such caring, fun, helpful, friends in my group. I feel so blessed, these total

strangers are so comforting and inspiring. They share so openly and honestly. I now call them my family. Thank you all.

By Ravi T ~ Courage to Change



SLOGANS

"One day at a time" and "Let Go and Let God" are two of my favourite Al-Anon slogans. I always hear the words and they roll off the tongue so easily. They even sound easy to do. But listening to words and living the action are two different things.

It took a long-standing AA member to alert me to the fact that my thoughts were running away with me as I described a million tasks I needed to complete. He said, "Where is the One day a time then?"

I was planning and organizing not only myself, but my family, my spouse and even down to the schedule to be followed. And of course, if something didn't go to plan, then I panicked and crumbled and felt like a failure.

I tried very hard in the early years to orchestrate my husband's sobriety, by phoning the priest and family contacts. As this was my will, I was trying to force and not my Higher Power's will, when these actions didn't bear the desired effect, it would also leave me feeling like a failure yet again.

I stopped.

... And that's where it all started.

This was physically and emotionally exhausting. At a rally I heard the slogan again "Let Go and Let God". It made sense to me and when I stepped back in my relationships, my Higher Power stepped in and brought sobriety into my home.

These slogans are little nuggets of gold. They are concise reminders and words of encouragement which are so crucial for everyday recovery.

By Liesel P, Delft

MOTION, INTENTION, PURPOSE.



Blah!

Elfie has been struggling with the rollercoaster called Covid-19. One day up and, for this week, about three days down. Three days that consisted of coffee, illegal cigarettes, TV and really bad comfort food.

The daily list, that helped me keep some sort of structure, was ignored and then, not even written. I felt powerless and paralysed.

My Higher Power decided it was time to intervene and

Help and hope for families and friends of alcoholics

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highlighted the following quote in a book I was reading “Healing requires motion, intention, purpose – the reassurance that life was still worth living.” Yes, life is still worth living, yes, I do have purpose in my life and so it was back to basics. I am powerless over this lockdown, but I am not helpless and if I get busy, life will get better!

I had Al-Anon work to do, I had masks to sew, I had some creative stuff I had promised myself... all sitting waiting for me to set in motion. Just for fun I took up the Shave for the Brave Challenge in my retirement village. Surprisingly, the saying is true – the more I did, the better I felt.



Admin Comm Zoom Meeting

“After feeling so powerless while living with alcoholism, I see now that I can make a difference. I’ve learned to let go of the things I cannot change and to work on changing the things I can. I’m letting it begin with me.” When I got Busy, I got Better, P-78, Pg.21

By Glenda W ~ Constantia

I found my answers in a fellowship of unconditional love.
~ Anonymous

THE BEGINNING OF MY SERENITY

I spent more nights than I can remember lying awake, tossing, and turning over past mistakes and the ever-growing fear of the future with an alcoholic. I would wake in the middle of the night and not be able to return to sleep. I agonised over the seemingly horrible decisions of my past,

which morphed into the blackness of despair for my hopeless future.

Each new fear replaced another as my nightmare scenarios increased exponentially. My Sponsor lovingly listened to my pitiful story. When I finally paused for a breath, she made two simple suggestions – say the Serenity Prayer and make a gratitude list.

I knew my decision to attend Al-Anon was a realisation that I needed help, and I was ready to listen. That night when I was still wrapped in a cloak of victimhood and couldn’t sleep, I tried repeating the Serenity Prayer over and over, each time focussing on every word and its meaning. Eventually, I began a gratitude list. I did not believe I had much to be grateful for, so I began with a remarkably simple list.

I was grateful for a warm, comfortable bed to sleep in, a roof over my head, the coolness of air on my skin, the soothing sound of the fan next to my bed, etc. Focussing on the many things for which I did feel gratitude, I fell soundly asleep and woke up refreshed the next morning.

Today, looking back, I realise this was the beginning of my recovery and the beginning of a whole new life of gratitude.

By Keith K ~ Florida

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AN ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE

Today is day 31 of our Nationwide Lockdown. I truly am grateful to my Higher Power for carrying me safely thus far. My family has remained healthy and so have I.

It has been really challenging staying homebound and restricted

and unable to leave the house for simple things such as a comforting chat and cup of coffee with a friend.

In these challenging times we are discovering a wisdom we needed all along—we are all connected. We are not separate.
—Brian McLaren

I am ever grateful for technology that has helped me to stay in contact with friends, family and of course my extended Al-Anon family all over the world, through Zoom meetings and face to face WhatsApp chats.

I have struggled with many things, some dealing directly with my Alcoholic's 'isms' and others dealing with normal frustrations, all linked to anxiety, resentments, and overthinking.

I have found that sticking to my program, breaking down my time into manageable chunks, allocating time for each task, all tend to make my day more manageable. Writing everything down clearly makes me feel less anxious and more productive. Journaling my thoughts, spending time in meditation, doing Al-Anon question and answers, reading uplifting Al-Anon literature, has all been so helpful during this time and has helped me grow so much in my journey.

Talking things through with my Al-Anon friends and still being involved in 'virtual' service, has all contributed to a calmer and more peaceful state of mind. We are not alone, and help is only a phone call or text away. What a wonderful fellowship to be part of.

These are strange and uncertain times but instead of being tossed about by endless worry we can reach to our Twelve Step program to keep us grounded. This program has helped me to 'Keep It Simple', have the courage to change and to lead a balanced life.

CAPE AREA ECHO

Stay safe and love and good wishes to all.

By Anita P ~ Courage to Change

WHEN THINGS CHANGE
INSIDE YOU,
THINGS CHANGE
AROUND YOU.

THE FACE MASK

It took a worldwide pandemic, Covid-19 to open my eyes to the fact that the Al-Anon programme is a lifestyle programme, not just guidelines for me to apply in my relationship with the alcoholic in my life.

A good friend of mine asked me to help her sew face masks, which all of us had to wear when we moved to Level 4 of our lockdown.

Soon the sewing became an all-consuming monster because like me my friend can also not say NO, and the orders kept on streaming in.

My world became unmanageable – Step 1 – We admitted we were powerless over alcohol – that our lives had become unmanageable. The unmanageability became rampant in my life, in my home. After having been in Al-Anon for four years I recognised the reason for the unmanageability. I was allowing my life to become unmanageable because I did not set any boundaries, I am still an active co-dependent a people pleaser.

On the morning of 1st of May, the new Level 4 regulations allowed us to walk outside between 5 and 9am. I am a keen walker and I had been looking forward to the day that we could walk outside again for a long time. The said morning dawned on us, a beautiful autumn morning, blue skies, and a lovely crispness in the air. Immediately my husband put on his walking attire and I the co-dependent, the people pleaser

moved in front of my sewing machine without even having had time for my meditation and stress release exercise, not for walking. During the day I received numerous phone messages with photos of my family and friends outside with their dogs, outside just enjoying nature. Resentment and self-pity set in.

That afternoon when I handed over my finished masks and got my new packet to sew, I said the long-prepared sentence “I cannot continue on this basis I will help you three days a week”. Her answer was “Please just help me with the backlog” and I heard myself saying “OK I will” knowing full well that there was always going to be a backlog – this is easy math we all have to have at least two masks and the client base is growing because we are delivering a good product at a very reasonable price. I drove home with tears streaming down my face, wetting my own self-made mask. I felt so disappointed in myself. Am I one of those unfortunates that will never recover from co-dependency, who will never be able to set boundaries, who will never recognise my own needs and wants and then always be resentful?

No, I am not! Everybody is talking about a new normal after Covid-19. The new normal for me will mean setting myself free of my own “kindness”. I am already working on the meaning of kindness without sacrificing myself.

Daring to set boundaries is about having the courage to love ourselves, even when we risk disappointing others.
BRENE BROWN

I phoned my friend and said that I would love to help her **but** on my own terms which will not

create unmanageability for me. She sounded extremely disappointed, but I felt free, a feeling I love and want to feel for the rest of my life. The worldwide pandemic, Covid-19 set me free.

By Vida ~ Bellville



I HAD TO BE THE ONE TO CHANGE

I came to Al-Anon several years ago. Someone suggested that I attend meetings because I was being affected by someone I loved. After the time, I thought when *he gets better, I'll be okay*. I went to my first meeting very scared because I didn't know what to expect. The Chairperson was extremely loving and supportive while I shared why I was there. She listened to me cry and gave me hope that, for the first time in years, change was possible. I felt that if I could keep the focus on myself, learn the tools of the program, and apply them to my life, things could be better.

Learning to share my feelings, be honest with myself and remain around like-minded people gave me the courage to implement new behaviours in my life. However, change took place. I had to adjust my attitudes and admit my powerlessness over my alcoholic loved one. I am happy to say that change has taken place for my children and me, and it has made all the difference in the world. I recognise now that it wasn't just the alcoholic who needed changing – I needed it as well.

By Eileen F ~ New York

Reprinted with permission of The Forum, Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc., Virginia Beach, VA, December 2018

CAPE AREA ECHO

I HAVE A CHOICE

I have choices, more choices than I let myself see.

I may feel trapped in my relationships, jobs, life. I may feel locked into behaviours such as caretaking or controlling.

Feeling trapped is a symptom of co-dependency. When I hear myself say, 'I have to take care of this person...'; 'I have to say yes...'; 'I have to try to control of that person...'; 'I have to behave this way, think this way, feel this way...' I can know I am choosing not to see choices.

No matter what
the situation,
remind yourself
"I HAVE
A CHOICE"
--Deepak Chopra

That sense of being trapped is an illusion. I am not controlled by circumstances, my past, the expectations of others, or unhealthy expectations for myself. I can choose what feels right for me, without guilt.

I HAVE OPTIONS!!!

Recovery is not about behaving perfectly or according to anyone else's rules. More than anything else, recovery is about knowing I have choices and giving myself the freedom to choose.

By Anonymous



RSS2020

The Cape Area is looking at new and exciting ways to present RSS2020. It is a period of thinking outside the box and adapting to the new normal. Watch this space for more information.

AVAILABLE RESOURCES

~AL-ANON FAMILY GROUPS SA

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

~AL-ANON WITHOUT BORDERS – MEETINGS/WORKSHOPS/OTHER

Meetings: Listen to shares from members around the world at the following link:

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

28 & 29 March – Topics: Steps

4&5April – Topics: Communication, intimacy, relationships

11 & 12 April – Topics: Service and commitment, Family recovery

25 & 26 April – Topics: Traditions

Workshops were held on 8, 10, 15 & 17, 29 April, 1 May and are available at

<http://msbrecording.com/al-anon-zoom-meetings/> Topics: Finances, relationships, principles, forgiveness and much more.

Workshops Round 2

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

Meeting ID 132501257

Password 949801

6 May – Topic: The Al-Anon Toolbox

8 May – Topic: Attitude Adjustment



MAKE THE ECHO YOUR OWN

We at Al-Anon are looking at continuing to publish the Echo on a regular basis.

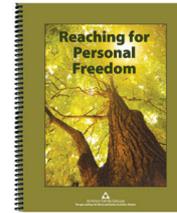
Please continue to share your experience, strength, and hope. We are looking forward to hearing from you. Send your articles marked "Echo" to alanonct@iafrica.com or afgc2c@gmail.com or WhatsApp to 082 342 2102.

LITERATURE AVAILABLE



Hope for Today
B-27ZA
Price R240

Daily sharings from Al-Anon's adult children members are for anyone who wants to grow in acceptance, compassion, and understanding. Indexed. 383 pages.



Reaching for Personal Freedom—
Living the Legacies
P-92ZA
R210

A workbook for using Al-Anon's Twelve Steps, Traditions, and Concepts of Service in one's personal life, it provides insightful examples from members and thought-provoking questions. Spiral bound and 8 ½ x 11. Three-hole punched. 176 pages.

Smiles and good humour are the seasonings that make everyday living taste better ~ Jane K, Ohio

TRADITION SEVEN DURING THE LOCKDOWN

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:



Snap here to pay

SnapScan

A REALLY BIG
THANK YOU