

Keeping Calm with the “Conflict Resolution Kit”.

By - Claire R., Associate Director - Public Outreach Professionals.

I once thought of Al-Anon as a perfect, safe, and happy place - one big happy family. I naively believed that our admission of powerlessness in Step One meant that we relinquished control or domination over others. It shocked me to learn that there are times when it is necessary to apply the principles of our program to other Al-Anon members, as well as to my family of origin. For example, I noticed that some members would stop attending the group when a member was disruptive at a meeting. They went to other meetings instead. I also heard members say, “I can stay at home if I want to argue,” rather than attending a group business meeting or volunteer to be a trusted servant. I learned to share in “I” statements and to lower my voice so that I speak calmly during a discussion with a sensitive topic.

Al-Anon helped me to listen to my voice and improve my choice of words. Group conscience works well when the Chairperson facilitates the meeting by letting each member contribute and be heard in a recovery or business meeting. The same is true for Al-Anon service arms. Members can come to great ideas and better solutions when we feel free to speak and listen to others. Sometimes, it is necessary to agree to disagree, table the discussion for another time, or to make a change on a trial basis for a specified period

of time.

I know Al-Anon helped me to develop the communication skills that I did not have before I came to the program. When I became willing and open minded, my tone of voice and choice of words changed. The outcome was that my anxiety and pain decreased, and my serenity increased. Al-Anon’s Conflict Resolution Kit (S-73) is a tool for my interactions at group and service arm meetings. The “my way or the highway” attitude is not reflective of the person I want to be. I now state the facts and my views and listen to others in a respectful manner. I am doing my part to keep Al-Anon a safe and loving place. There are three items in the Conflict Resolution Kit for personal, group, and service arm discussions:

- ◇ Loving Interchange to Resolve Conflict wallet card (S-71)
- ◇ Conflict Resolution Using Our Twelve Traditions (S-72)
- ◇ Talk to Each Other - Resolving Conflicts within Al-Anon (S-73)

It is never too late for me to learn new skills using Al-Anon’s principles within or outside of the fellowship. I simply have to be willing to do my part.

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

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

Finding My Way in Al-Anon. By - Gina B., Arkansas.

Over the course of a few years, my family's life seemed to spiral out of control. Solutions I thought should work didn't. I was worn out, and I was out of ideas. I finally took a friend's advice and came to an Al-Anon meeting. With grandchildren now in the mix, I somehow sensed that I might be facing some life-long challenges. At meetings, I couldn't believe anyone was going through anything as bad as I was. That's because the others seemed happy. They were smiling and making jokes. I wrongly concluded that their problems were solved and that the main reason they attended meetings was because they were so grateful to Al-Anon for what it had done for them.

In time, I learned that other members were going through serious problems, too, but unlike me, they took better care of themselves. I also saw other newcomers improving. I could see how I had been stuck in a rut - emotionally

reacting to every new crisis and spending time examining and regretting the past. I needed help to recognize my feelings, accept reality, and move forward. My load lightened up a bit when I made a friend in the program to talk with. I'd already received plenty of advice from family and friends, but hearing my new friend's experiences in detail gave me a new and different perspective.

She let me make my own decisions. But even today, when I need to make a decision, I often think of some of the experiences she had and how she handled them. Looking back, my first decisions early in the Al-Anon program seemed so big, and they were. I am thankful to Al-Anon for pointing the way towards a happier and healthier way for me to live.

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Literature

Please contact Gail 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 make a small difference, somewhere somehow . . .
- I'll focus on possibilities, not on setbacks . . .
- I'll rejoice that people share this world with me . . .

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