

Experience, strength and hope from Al-Anon members for times when you can't get to an Al-Anon group

Dear Loners

June July 2020

In response to my request for members to share their experience, strength and hope during the lockdown I received this letter from Andrea

NEW NORMAL ... Life after Lockdown

Who would have thought this was what 2020 had planned for us all, overnight change, adapt to new life styles, adapt to new laws and regulations.

I think we've all realised that what was once normal won't be normal again and we can't predict the future. We live in a gap – between being vulnerably and fearful in days of craziness and confusion. Can't sit on 2 chairs or we would fall through ... have to decide on one thing or another and go with it.

Normal life... What is that, years ago I heard someone say I come from a normal dysfunctional family that probably sums up most of us?

'What if, at your very lowest, the bottom of everything you've ever known, we promised that if you just reached out, you would be found by someone who knows what it was like to be lost?'

(This was from the front cover of a notebook issued for Al-Anon's 60th birthday by WSO). How times goes. We have just celebrated Al-Anon's 69th birthday!

Today, I'm not alone because I joined Al-Anon. I need to use the Al-Anon programme – it's a shelter in the storm. I can mourn for the past or go forth using our programme. When I forgave and I came to know and love a very important person through the Twelve Steps – ME.

At the moment all we have is *Just for Today* and *Just for Tonight* so I'm going to talk about these cards. *Just for Today* [M 10] R3.00 and *Just for Tonight* [M81 ZA] R3.00 available from the office

A few things that stand out for me from *The Just for Today* card are:

- I will try and live through this day
- I will be happy.
- I will adjust myself to what is, and not try to adjust everything to my own desires
- I will do at least two things I don't want to do.
- I will be agreeable. Not criticise one bit. I won't find fault with anything.
- I will not be afraid to enjoy what is beautiful and to believe that as I give to the world, the world will give to me.
- I will have a quiet half hour and will try and get a better perspective of my life.

Just for Tonight (newish so I want to speak about this one)

- I can give thanks for the day and for all the days before that I've been in Al-Anon (about 13 197 days, give or take a few). Not all good as it took a while to get into the programme. Today for me it's a "living programme" and helps me in my daily life.

- Takes time to accept we're not going to be perfect even with the Al-Anon programme, so I don't try to be – just the best I can be for today.
- After doing Step Four and learning that I have shortcoming I've accepted that me and my Higher Power can do this together.
- This “old mind and body” is definitely better able to function when it's rested and refreshed. Then I'm best able to sort out my life today and tomorrow and accept guidance from my Higher Power.
- I try and take a few minutes to be grateful for what I have in my life today - even in bad times, there always something (*perhaps we need think harder!*) Remember things don't always happen in our time and we need to put some effort in, not just sit back and expect our Higher Power to do it all.
- I think we all know that we have to accept we can only change ourselves, stop taking time and effort to change someone else. This is Step Four– realising that all the negative thoughts can be changed to positive ones.
- We might not lie down and close our eyes here but we are in a safe place and tomorrow we can work with our Higher Power for a good day.

So living in the New Normal will be different, but the Al-Anon programme will remain the same ... except that online meetings might also become the new Normal as people don't always want to go out at night.

Living with the programme can give me a new view of my new world. We need to be a walking advert for Al-Anon, be an example of what Al-Anon can do, and spread the good news of Al-Anon - we want it to be around for a long time.

We would love to hear from everyone re how you doing. Articles can be sent to the office for consideration. The lockdown has forced many of us to find alternative meetings. We have started a newcomers meeting on a Sunday evening at 17:00. If you would like to attend an online meeting, please contact us through the office or the website. The national website www.alanon.org.za has a few WhatsApp numbers you can call for help or information.

Tradition Seven: Every group ought to be self-supporting, declining outside contributions. Although we are under lockdown our office expenses still need to be paid. If you are able to help our bank details are below.

Many thanks, Stay Safe, Juliet

ABSA Bank, Oakdene, branch code 632 005). Current account no 1118881482.....in the name of Al-Anon Information Service . Please put your name or group as a reference .

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