

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

Dear Loners

July 2020

At our meeting this last Thursday we discussed boundaries.

We have all experienced 1 month or longer of total isolation during level 5. And many of us found it really difficult to readjust to these strict solid boundaries and reduced ability to be with friends and family. But solid walls are different to flexible healthy boundaries.

Emotionally at some time or other we have all experienced not wanting to be with people. Just to be alone and barking or whimpering at anyone who tried to reach out to us or on the other hand to be available to help everyone at the expense of our precious resources of time, ability, energy and finance. Both of these extremes are not healthy for us.

The *Detachment* pamphlet S [19] gives us guidelines on how to detach with love; to put our hands on our shoulders and take care of ourselves. Detachment is neither cruel nor unkind just a way for us to *Let go and Let God* and not interfere in everybody's business.

Setting my own boundaries allows me to distinguish between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. From me to you and you to me, in other words we need to show each other mutual respect. Steps Four and Five allowed me to find out who I am and honestly analyse and admit the situations I got into. Today I can choose different paths so as not to repeat past mistakes. My boundaries are unique for me. My boundaries need to be effective and suit my lifestyle. I need to accept my limitations and ask for help. Maybe from a sponsor or reading CAL literature. I can't afford the luxury of being immobilised by FEAR. Setting my boundaries helps me make healthy decisions for my recovery. Talking to my sponsor helps me decide whether the threats I perceive are real or imagined.

Instant messaging Apps like Messenger, Facetime and WhatsApp are wonderful tools but I can easily get myself into trouble. The words seem to be at the end of my fingers and not in my brain or heart. It is easy to forget that the post I am responding or reacting to involves all the other silent people in the group. I can easily offend or hurt someone without even realising it.

My 24hour email rule is in conflict with a boundary I set many years ago to resolve today's issues today so I can sleep peacefully and wake up tomorrow to a new and beautiful day. I often need to speak to my sponsor to resolve this internal conflict!

Boundaries that we set when my daughter was small about not sleeping over at other people's houses and that no matter what, we would transport her where ever she needed to go. Worked well for all of us and today I get a warm feeling seeing that she has set the same boundaries for her children.

I have found that boundaries are good for me but every now and then I need to reevaluate them to ensure that they don't trap me. I am a creature of habit and don't welcome change readily. Sadly this often excludes me from events that would be of great fun and benefit to me.

For example during this lockdown I have had to re-evaluate my boundaries and stick to a strict routine and plan my day. The danger of the days just merging together and losing my focus and identity are real. I had to embrace the idea that zoom meetings are really fun and the best way at the moment to interact with group members. In fact with all sorts of services online via zoom. At the moment it is an asset if you are comfortable on a zoom mtg.

Boundaries are a necessity and a great tool to help me recover. It's about respect for self and respect for others. There is a super workshop on page 86 in the book *Intimacy in Alcoholic Relationships* [B33] a must for anyone serious about setting personal boundaries.

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 and we will send you the zoom invites to our meetings. 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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