

AL-ANON FAMILY GROUPS

CAPE AREA ECHO

ISSUE NO. 24–2020–OCTOBER 2020

IMPORTANT

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

LATEST NEWS: NEWCOMERS ZOOM MEETINGS

NEW GROUPS - for newcomers, newer Al-Anon members or those struggling with active alcoholism.

Cape Town: Wednesdays 5pm

WhatsApp message: 081 036 7587

Gauteng: Sundays 5pm

WhatsApp message: 082 316 3673 / 0824552977/082 626 0262

KwaZulu Natal: Thursdays 7pm

WhatsApp message: 083 411 6683

For information regarding online meetings please contact one of the numbers below or refer to the 'List of Meetings' at <http://www.alanon.org.za/meetings/>.

CAPE AREA OFFICE: WhatsApp message 082 212 1878/ 072 258 0986/ Tel: +27 21 595 4517 / Email: alanonct@iafrica.com

The opinions expressed here are strictly those of the person who gave them. Take what you liked and leave the rest.



SERVICE OUTSIDE THE BOX

When I first arrived at Al-Anon I was so weighed down by the problems in my family that I had no capacity or foresight to see how I could possibly add any value to this incredible organisation. My mind was closed and focused on all the drinkers in my life.

I listened and learned. I focused on finding a home group and allowed the program to wash over me. I needed time to heal and grow. After about three months a member asked if I could arrive a few minutes early to open the doors and put on the kettle. I thought; "Wow! That seems easy. I could do that" so I did. Not long after I put my hand up to be Secretary (and Treasurer after that!).

I realised that service work would keep me consistently coming back. This small act of showing up, helped my group to keep the doors open and allowed my self-esteem to grow. It felt good to be an integral part of something bigger.

So, when opportunities came up, I put my hand up to volunteer for other things. Local PI events to hand out flyers, dropping off literature to my local library, and helping the AGSO office with a stocktake. I even proofread an Austra-Link once or twice.

Seeing how Al-Anon worked on a wider level sparked an idea. Could I potentially have skills that this

organisation needed? I am good with technology and I know social media. I also have small pockets of free time. I reached out and asked... "I have these skills; could you use my help?"

The answer was yes! A year ago, I started managing Al-Anon Australia's social media channels. You'll find us on Facebook, Instagram and YouTube offering CAL inspired posts and video content four to five times a week for members and the general public to read and share.

Al-Anon has been a blessing in my life. Spreading the word and helping Al-Anon to be seen online in this digital age is how I give back to this incredible fellowship that has given me so much strength and hope. There is no downside to service work. Everyone benefits!

By Janel B, Victoria, Australia

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PLEASE NOTE

CAPE AREA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING & ELECTIONS

Saturday, 17 October 2020 at 1pm

Attendance required from all portfolio holders and group representatives. Meeting details to follow.

RE-IGNITING AND RE-CONNECTING IN THE FELLOWSHIP

During this unprecedented time, while we are all trying to cope with the Pandemic and Lockdown, and whilst many of our members have found so much solace, courage, strength and hope in the Zoom or Virtual sessions, we are to be mindful of those members within

our groups, who have not been able to connect remotely at all over these past six months, due to various reasons.

Many of these members are coping in silence, and many are not coping at all. This makes one feel so sad and we are reminded to reach out always, to do our bit and connect to a fellow member, especially those who may not have a Sponsor.

So, the question is – how do we help? And to those members who have not been able to connect, I found this reading in *Courage to Change* p.224 quite insightful – "When I feel I just can't face the world and want nothing more than bury my head under the covers and hide, I know I need an Al-Anon meeting. I may have to push myself out the door, but I always feel better – and saner – when I break the isolation and reach out for help. Even if it's a meeting I've never attended before, I find a healing, comforting power in these rooms. And because my Higher Power speaks through other people, I often hear exactly what I need. We all go through periods of sadness, lethargy, and grief – that's part of life. But depression can become a habit that perpetuates itself unless I intercede by acting on my own behalf. Today's reminder In All our Affairs – There are times when I have to hurt through a situation and when this happens, the choice is not whether to hurt or not to hurt, but what to do while I am hurting."

If you, or any member in your group, attending the virtual meetings, or not attending these meetings, has an idea on how we re-

Help and hope for families and friends of alcoholics

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over a year, but this particular reading identified my feelings precisely. I thought, ‘This is exactly what I feel mostly toward my alcoholic, my brother’. Grief for what should have been. Grief for what could have been. Grief for what isn’t. Just a deep, deep sadness, a sense of loss, although he is still very much alive.

Through Al Anon, I have learned to understand some of the trauma my mother suffered as a child, growing up in an alcoholic home. Sometimes her father drank up the food money, so there was nothing to eat. They kept having to move house because they couldn’t pay the rent. My mother was sent out to work at the age of 12 or 13 to try to put food on the table. I grieve for what she suffered. Al Anon has helped me to understand her much better: why she tried to control us, why she was afraid to spend anything.

And then came my brother: abusing drugs in his teens and a confirmed alcoholic in his early twenties. I have mostly looked at his alcoholism from my own point of view, but for my mother it must have been a case of *Deja-vu*. Memories of her childhood must have come flooding back. Would he turn out to be like his grandfather? In fact, he was worse, much worse.

For me, I mourn the fact that my brother’s drinking and substance abuse have affected those who love him the most: his ex-wife (ex-because of the drinking), his children to whom he was an absent father, my parents who were heart-broken over his drinking and all that went along with it, and me. I mourn that I can’t have the relationship with him that I would love to have. I mourn that I can’t be myself with him, but always have to mind my p’s and q’s in case I upset him and release another tirade of abuse, belligerence and hostility. I am sad for him, just sad.

This brings me to the Steps in the programme. The first time I came to an Al-Anon meeting and the Steps were read, I smiled to myself when Step 1 was read: ‘We admitted

we were powerless over alcohol, that our lives had become unmanageable.’ How well I knew that to be true!

Recently, a member shared on Step 9 in which we make amends to people we have harmed. I realised that in trying to smooth over things with my brother in order to avoid another ugly diatribe from him, I was in fact harming myself.

I am slowly learning in Al-Anon that it is true that I cannot control my brother’s drinking, but only I can take care of myself. Yes, I grieve for what could have been, what should have been, what isn’t. But the reality is: I need to take care of myself and learn how to detach from him with love. It is not easy.

By Karen G, Constantia

First Steps to Al-Anon Recovery » Keeping the focus on myself

MY EXPERIENCE WITH AN ALCOHOLIC WHO RELAPSED

A couple of weeks ago the alcoholic in my life relapsed after four years of sobriety! Up to this stage I had always wondered what I would do or how I’d react if ever this were to happen.

While my initial reaction was one of fear and angst, I remembered my program. The slogan “Let Go and Let God” and the Serenity Prayer came to mind and as I put this into practice, I was able to experience a sense of calmness and clarity of mind.

If it hadn’t been for the knowledge I’ve gained through the program and being in Al-Anon for the past three years, I certainly would not have handled the situation the way I did. Yes, I felt the fear and anxiety initially, but not half as bad as in the past. The disappointment, anger, and resentment I would normally have carried indefinitely was not there, the chaos in my mind of all the “what ifs” was diminished to gratitude.

So, where I’m at currently, is just remembering to keep the focus on myself, which I realise is key for my recovery.

Yes, I spoke to the alcoholic about what I thought of his behaviour from my perspective, but I did it in a cordial manner, not as angrily as I would normally have done. It was important for me to share with him what I thought and how I felt.

I’d like to end by saying, “Fear came knocking on my door, Courage opened, Faith and Hope stepped in” and that’s what the program has offered me!

By Anonymous



The Al-Anon calendar for Public Outreach for the month of October suggests reaching out to Law institutions, viz. local police stations and correctional institutions – to drop off literature for their trauma and counselling rooms and to set up speaking opportunities at correctional facilities. October also suggests speaking at educational facilities, viz. high schools, universities, however, even under Level 1 of Covid-19 Lockdown, we are still very limited and restricted to visiting and spending time at facilities, for obvious safety or precautionary reasons.

From a reading in *Courage to Change* p.137 – Tradition Eight states that “Al-Anon Twelfth Step work should remain forever non-professional... where no-one is an expert. Every member can contribute to the healing power of our program simply by sharing his or her personal story of experience, strength, and hope. No special training or qualification other than membership is necessary.”

From Al-Anon’s Twelve Steps & Twelve Traditions – “...we meet as equals and help one another, not because some are experts and others are learners, but because we all have needs and strengths.”

To me, this means that we as members, can all contribute to

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Public Outreach service, just by reaching out to someone else in need. Our Declaration reminds us – “Let it begin with me.”



By Pearl N, Public Outreach Coordinator



The West Coast or Saldanha Rally as it is known, has been a much-anticipated event on both fellowships’ calendars since 1999. This year was no different, apart from being a one-day event and held virtually, the Rally went ahead. A special thanks to the organisers for putting this event together and allowing us to reminisce about Rallies gone by.

An Al-Anon meeting started at 2pm on 19 September, followed by an AA meeting. The theme for 2020 was “Willingness to Grow”.

Part of the Al-Anon meeting was a walk down memory lane of the themes of bygone years, hand painted or crafted by local members, which I am sure roused many a memory. May we be back to enjoying each other’s company, face-to-face, soon.

The inaugural rally’s theme in 1999 was “Courage to Change”; celebrating its first decade ten years later was “Divine Intervention” and in 2019 its coming of age theme was “Key to Growth”.



***CONFERENCE APPROVED LITERATURE (CAL)**

Literature may be ordered telephonically or by email from the Office. Payment options available

are direct deposit, EFT, Snapscan or cash. A pricelist is available from the office administrator.



Hope for Today
B-27ZA
R240

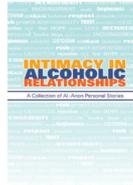
Daily sharings from Al-Anon’s adult children members are for anyone who wants to grow in acceptance, compassion, and understanding. Indexed. 383 pages.

From Hope for Today B27ZA p.12 “Alcoholism is a thief. It robs us of our loved ones. It pickpockets job opportunities, close relationships, and physical safety. In my mother’s case, it eventually stole her life. Alcoholism robbed my childhood of trust and security. I grew up feeling like a counterfeit adult – well-adjusted on the outside but lost and frightened on the inside.

“In Al-Anon I’ve learned that even without ever taking a drink, I struggle with the effects of the disease of alcoholism. They can rob my life of the joy each day holds. Denial steals from me the ability to see my situation clearly and honestly... Resentment erodes love and goodwill in my relationships with others. Obsessive worrying raids my willingness to accept and enjoy life as it is... I am not promised that my loved ones will find sobriety. What I am offered, however, is the gift waiting for me in the form of the Al-Anon program, which fills the void carved into my mind and heart by the disease of alcoholism.”



KZN CAL Book Club meets on Sundays at 2pm on Zoom (Meeting ID 5356775411, Password 127700). The books for the month of October are “Intimacy in Alcoholic Relationships” and “Discovering Choices”.



Intimacy in Alcoholic Relationships – A Collection of Al-Anon Personal Stories
B-33
R150

Members share their challenges with all aspects of intimacy – physical,

emotional, and spiritual – In all relationships affected by the family illness of alcoholism. Indexed, softcover. 144 pages.



Discovering Choices – Recovery in Relationships
B-30
R420

Members share how they have improved a wide variety of relationships affected by alcoholism by using the program’s tools. Indexed, softcover. 335 pages.

***SHARE YOUR STORY**

Please continue to share your experience, strength, and hope. Send your articles marked Echo to alanonct@iafrica.com or WhatsApp to 082 342 2102.

***AL-ANON FAMILY GROUPS SA & WORLD SERVICE OFFICE (WSO)**

Details on local Zoom meetings are available at <http://www.alanon.org.za/meetings> <https://al-anon.org> <https://al-anon.org/for-members/>

GRATITUDE AND TRADITION SEVEN
~ Every group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.

Please continue paying your group contributions electronically. Payments may be done via direct deposit, EFT or 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:



God grant me the Serenity to accept the things I cannot change, Courage to change the things I can, and Wisdom to know the difference.

