

# AL-ANON FAMILY GROUPS CAPE AREA ECHO

ISSUE NO. 02 OF 2021 (February)

IMPORTANT

Due to Covid-19, 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

(Welcome to Newcomers - <https://www.alanon.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Introduction-to-Newcomers-Meetings-Website.pdf>)

Cape Town: Wednesdays 5pm

WhatsApp message: 082 895 6815

Gauteng: Sundays 5pm

WhatsApp message: 082 316 3673/082 626 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 082 212 1878/072 258 0986 / Telephone 021 595 4517 / Email: [alanonct@iafrica.com](mailto:alanonct@iafrica.com)

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

**You can't pour from an empty cup.  
Take care of yourself.**



## FIGHTING DEPLETION

*a poem by Giles G., Courage to Change*

Life seems relentless  
We take pills to sleep longer  
To rest from the pain.

The next night it's back  
New kinds of decay dog us  
Despite the puppies.

New irritations  
Constant battles with comfort  
Surge my neurosis.

Depletion deepens  
Fighting back gets harder and  
Exhaustion rises.

Finding a way through  
Seems like climbing a mountain  
Summitting in fog.

Gratitude and hope  
Are they just words or are they  
Key to survival?

How to keep going  
When the signs are so murky  
The outlook so dire?

Not sure but maybe  
One answer is outside us  
The other inside.

Balancing nature  
Its wonders and endurance  
With innovation.

That's not just science  
Also positive thinking  
And constant self-care.

And maybe some faith  
In something bigger than us

Possibly higher.

What we make of that  
Is our choice to choose wisdom  
And serenity.

The things we can't change  
We must accept, find courage  
To change what we can.

Finding which is which  
Is recovery's end-game  
Best we start learning.

Constant vigilance  
Balance, attention, service  
Will make us stronger.

Centring self-care  
Makes decisions easier  
Meditation too.

So many layers  
But, in the end, just one prayer  
For serenity.

Higher power focus  
Seek the calmness within  
From the prayer without.

The key to it all?  
Call serenity in to  
Bolster acceptance.

Avoiding madness  
Curb the unmanageable  
One day at a time.

**SELF**  
*care*

Alcoholism in a family tends to promote neglect of self. In Al-Anon I've had a chance to discover a different way to take care of myself.

Courage to Change has ten readings related to Taking Care of Yourselves. This clearly indicates just how important self-care is.

As Women, way too often we put everyone else before ourselves,

because it's viewed as the "right thing" to do – and that it's selfish to put ourselves first. We ensure that the needs of EVERYONE else is met before our own needs – that our partners, our families, our jobs, our homes – are all ok before we are ok. We are so busy anticipating the needs of others, that we don't listen to our own bodies.

Many of us struggle with the idea of putting ourselves first and acknowledging that we are the most important person in our lives. Life is all about Balance and when you constantly put others before yourself, you become unbalanced. Self-care is important – as we are no use to anyone if we feel depleted.

As a grateful member of Al-Anon, attending group meetings regularly has been food for my soul, and restored my balance and sense of self-worth.

Courage to Change B-16ZA p.51, relates to Self-care – "I realized that until I started treating myself like a valued friend, I would be standing in the way of my own recovery."

Today's Reminder and quote from Courage to Change B-16ZA p.56 "... it is crucial to be diligent about taking care of ourselves, especially during stressful periods." In All Our Affairs

"Be there for others, but never leave yourself behind." - Dodinsky  
**By Pearl N., Rondebosch & Public Outreach Coordinator**



*Help and hope for families and friends of alcoholics.*

### NOTE TO SELF: DON'T ASK A QUESTION THAT YOU DON'T WANT THE ANSWER TO

Something that I regularly do is to overextend myself.

Shortly after attending a recent Al-Anon meeting, I asked my Airbnb guest if I could clean the apartment at 6:50am the following morning.

We do not have domestic service because of Covid-19; therefore, I do the weekly cleaning.

I offered to clean because I realised that the apartment had not been serviced yet in the first two weeks. Although the concept of Airbnb is built on trust, I felt an obligation to only enter the suite when she was there. It is a long-term rental. The Airbnb guest agreed to it as she would be dressed for work by then.

At 5am that morning I went to run with a friend. When I got to her house, her gate remote would not work. Runners have their own kind of affinity to having to run when we say we are going to. NOT going to run is not an option.

She got onto the braai counter and started climbing over the wall. I walked along the wall, hugging against it, and waved at the passing security van. He stopped and reversed, asking if everything was ok. I explained breathlessly what we were doing, then remembered that security vans have little ladders. He graciously got it out and helped her escape.

When we returned to her house after our run, the gate remote was still not working. She was in so much agony to decide whether she should wake her brother or his wife at 6am to open the gate for her. After twenty minutes she decided on waking her sister-in-law. When her phone started ringing, my friend realised that her brother would have to come to the gate anyway, so we quickly cut the call and called her brother instead. That indecisiveness took twenty minutes, so I left her house too late to keep my commitment of cleaning the Airbnb at 6:50am.

That was a God incidence and a miracle, because on the way home I came to my senses and realised that I quite happily was sacrificing my own self-care again.

Part of my new self-care is to keep a healthy morning routine so that I am ready for the day by eight o'clock in the morning.

Trying to fit in a run and clean, vacuum and clear the Airbnb before seven o'clock in the morning was unrealistic of me. It negated the contract that I had with myself for a routine and self-care.

Luckily my Airbnb guest is doing her master's in psychology and therefore when I explained to her that I was pushing my own boundaries and the reason why I would postpone the cleaning; she was very understanding.

The conclusion is that I should not have asked her if I could clean the apartment at 6:50am in the morning before she leaves for work. I did not want the answer to that question hahaha.

By Octavia B., *Courage to Change*



### THE GROUP INVENTORY – “HOW IMPORTANT IS IT?”

When I think of the word “inventory,” the image of an old-time general store comes to mind, complete with a shopkeeper using a paper list and pencil. The shopkeeper assesses the inventory on the shelves – a good quantity of cleaning solutions but no cleaning tools, a handful of outdated calendars, and a few dented soup cans. The shopkeeper takes an honest look and notes what to keep, what to throw out, and what to add to keep the store welcoming and properly stocked so customers will “Keep Coming Back.”

When I participate in my group's inventory, I am able to practice using the tools I've learned in the Al-Anon program that help me communicate clearly, and not shrink away from my responsibility as a group member. I am encouraged to share my ideas, even if they're not the most popular. I am able to feel like a part of, rather than apart from, the group. Knowing my group takes an inventory at regular intervals assures me we are able to welcome

newcomers to a healthy, growing group, and “Together We Can Make It.”

How each Al-Anon Family Group conducts an inventory is as varied as the groups. Some follow the *Taking a Group Inventory Guidelines* (G-8a, G-8b) from start to finish, while other groups “Keep It Simple” and use only a portion of the Guidelines or “Think” of their own questions to be answered by every member. By taking the time to conduct the inventory, the group is putting “First Things First.”

What do we hope to discover in our group inventory? We may want to know whether we are welcoming to newcomers. Rather than ask if we are welcoming, we may ask instead, “How are we welcoming?” We may want to know that we are self-supporting, through financial contributions as well as through service opportunities. We may want to know that we apply the spiritual principles of the three Legacies in all group actions to keep the message of help and hope clear and consistent for us all. We want to “Let It Begin with Me.”

How do we address the results of the inventory? It may have revealed outdated aspects of our group's practices or processes that are no longer functional? If we “Keep an Open Mind”, we can “Listen and Learn” from each member's ideas to keep our groups healthy and invigorating. Applying the wisdom of Al-Anon's Twelve Traditions to each idea, we are able to arrive at an informed group conscience. Seeking “Progress Not Perfection,” we might attempt new ideas on a trial basis. Although we might not all agree with the group conscience every time, we can “Live and Let Live,” “One Day at a Time.”

By Christa A., *Senior Group Services Specialist – Members, The Forum, December 2020*

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



Hope and Help for Young People who are the relatives and Friends of a Problem Drinker

### I LEARNED HOW TO TAKE CARE OF MYSELF

I cannot express how much Alateen has helped me. Growing up, I was all alone. My parents were always fighting. Whether it was about what to have for dinner or getting a divorce, they were always at each other's throat. I would try to solve the issue and make things

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better, but I quickly learned that it made things worse. As a seven- or eight-year-old, I didn't know how not to be in the middle. Until Alateen, I didn't learn how not to get upset when they were fighting and to focus on myself.

Alateen has not only taught me how to detach with love from my parents' fighting, but it has also brought so many friendships and opportunities in my life.



When I was younger, not only did I have to deal with emotional, physical, and sexual abuse from my alcoholic father, I also had to watch my life fall apart day by day. Although my life was extremely hard and sometimes unbearable, I put on a smiling face and showed everyone that I was the happy kid in school, and that I loved life. This was hard to do, but I certainly did not want people asking questions and finding out that I really was a sad and lonely girl who had messed up parents.

I kept everything quiet until about sixth grade, when my parents got divorced. The divorce was so hard on me. I needed someone to talk to, so I told a few of my friends what was wrong. Being in sixth grade, drama and secrets spread fast. By the end of the day, my whole school knew that I was going through a hard time and that my perfect family had fallen apart. This was very hard to deal with, but looking back on it, I realized that this is what brought me to talk to people. I wanted to be popular and have friends so badly that I just poured most of my life out to them.

With everything being so bad both at school and at home, my mom suggested Alateen. I wanted to give it a try, however my sister didn't want to go. I found the courage to go alone. My first meeting was horrible. There was only one other kid and one of the Group Sponsors. Although I had hated that meeting, I decided to give it another shot, and I am so glad I did.

Slowly, everything started to make sense. I realized that I can't control my father, and that it really is not my fault he is drinking. I learned how to find a Higher Power, and most importantly, I learned how to take care of myself.



Alateen has brought so many people into my life, and I don't know what I would do without them. I am so thankful that I was able to bring four other people into the rooms of Alateen. Not only does Alateen help me deal with the alcoholic in my life, I use my program every single day. Words cannot describe how much Alateen has helped me. Although having an alcoholic in my life is extremely hard, I wouldn't change it for anything because it brought me to Alateen.

**By Julie, Connecticut, The Forum, August 2016**

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



Alateen is for teens who have been affected by the family disease of alcoholism. Most Alateen groups are for teens from age 13-18. Information about Alateen is available at [goo.gl/dcbDu4](http://goo.gl/dcbDu4).

One thing that teens soon find after coming to Alateen is that they are not the only ones dealing with an alcoholic loved one. They realize they are not alone after all. In Alateen, they can meet with other kids their age and find healthy ways to deal with their family problems.

Find out more about how Alateen helps teens affected by someone else's drinking. Contact the Cape Area office for more information.



**GETTING INVOLVED IN PUBLIC OUTREACH**

**Who can participate?**

\*Any willing and active Al-Anon or Alateen member with an understanding

of the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions can participate in Public Outreach.

**Al-Anon members attract others by sharing:**

- \*Why we came to Al-Anon or Alateen.
- \*What our lives were like before joining the fellowship, and what our lives are like since.
- \*Sharing information with those affected by alcoholism.
- \*Generating goodwill.
- \*Communicating with linked professionals at Rehab facilities, Social Workers, Counselling Groups.
- \*Identifying opportunities to share via media platforms.

**Why is it important to share your Experience, Strength and Hope?**

\*When we describe what works for us, others can envision how it might work for them.

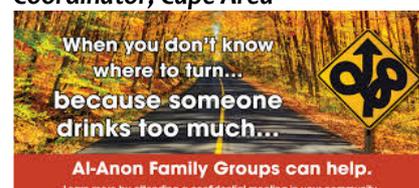
\*When we share information with the general public, we need to know that some people in the audience are families and friends of alcoholics, and others are not.

\*Al-Anon's primary purpose is reaching out to those who are affected by alcoholism. However, even those not affected may know someone who needs our program. The greater the awareness in the general public, the more likely those who need us will find us.

If you are interested in making a difference in Al-Anon Public Outreach, please contact me via WhatsApp on 082 4900 163, or via Gail at the Al-Anon Cape Area Office at 021 595 4517, email [alanonct@iafrica.co](mailto:alanonct@iafrica.co)

*"Anyone can start something, but it takes many others to carry it out." Lois W - Al-Anon Co-founder*

**By Pearl N, Public Outreach Coordinator, Cape Area**



**FEBRUARY - 'OPEN' PUBLIC OUTREACH MEETINGS**

*"How far you go in life depends on your being tender with the young, compassionate with the aged, sympathetic with the striving, and tolerant of the weak and strong,*

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**because someday in your life, you will have been all of these."**

\*The target for this month is your entire local community: near where you live and near where you hold your group meetings. See Al-Anon Guideline G-27 – The Open Al-Anon Meeting; G10 – Outreach to the Public/Media.

\*Plan and set a date and venue for an open Public Outreach meeting in your Area.

\*Introduce yourself and your committee to your counterparts in AA and offer Public Outreach co-operation throughout the year.

\*Invite AA speakers to join you in the outreach. See Al-Anon guidelines G-3.

Advise your local AA groups to invite their family members and friends to the open meeting.

\*Ask the Area Public Outreach Coordinator to assist you with guidelines, procedures, speakers, and suggested literature. Involve group reps and district reps in each Area and/or District.

\*Advertise the event in regional paper, notice boards, local libraries, churches, schools, doctor's rooms, pharmacies, clinics, and hospitals.

\*Attract interest in the meeting by calling a local radio station and telling them about Al-Anon and the work being done in the community. Media kits are available from the GSO office.

\*Under the current Covid-19 restrictions, face-to-face meetings may not be suitable, however electronic meetings may be a viable option.

\*Prepare for events during National Drug and Alcohol Awareness Day in June.

\*Make available the Al-Anon website, email addresses and phone numbers:

Helpline no.: 0861 425 2666  
 Area email: [alanonct@gmail.com](mailto:alanonct@gmail.com)  
 Website: [www.alanon.org.za](http://www.alanon.org.za)  
 Members' website:

[www.alanon.org.za/members/](http://www.alanon.org.za/members/)

## SUGGESTED CAL FOR FEBRUARY

**"I change myself, I change the world"**  
**Gloria Anzaldua.**

GPO – Guidelines for Public Open Meetings.

Posters – A5 size

J-1E/A – Tell me about Al-Anon/Vertel my van Al-Anon.

M-76L – Outreach and crying house bookmarks.

P-1 – Al-Anon is for men.

P-9 – How can I help my children?

P-14 – So you love an alcoholic.

P-16 – To the mother and father of an alcoholic.

P-19 – What do you do about the alcoholic's drinking?

P-45 – The Al-Anon Focus.

P-48 – Understanding ourselves and alcoholism.

S-17 – Al-Anon is for you! 20 Questions.

S-20 – Alateen is for you! 20 Questions.

S-25 – Did you grow up with a problem drinker? 20 Questions.

S-37 – Fact sheet for professionals

S-69 – Al-Anon Family Groups Welcome Adult Children of Alcoholics

AV-31 – Show DVD

Make available the Al-Anon website, email addresses and phone numbers:

Helpline no.: 0861 425 2666  
 Area email: [alanonct@gmail.com](mailto:alanonct@gmail.com)  
 Website: [www.alanon.org.za](http://www.alanon.org.za)  
 Members' website:

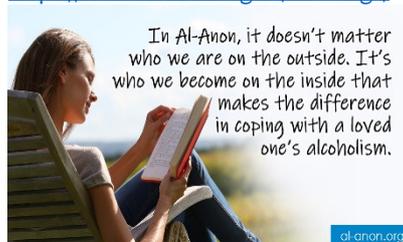
<https://www.alanon.org.za/members/>



## CAPE AREA FACE-TO-FACE MEETINGS & E-MEETINGS

With the country continuing at level 3 lockdown, face to face meetings have been placed on hold until further notice. Zoom meetings continue, and details can be found at

<https://www.alanon.org.za/meetings/>



## CONFERENCE APPROVED LITERATURE WHAT IS CAL?

\*CAL is written by and for Al-Anon members.

\*CAL has passed a rigorous review process.

\*CAL is identified by this logo



Literature may be ordered telephonically or by email from the office. Payment options are direct deposit, EFT, Snapscan or cash. A pricelist is available from the office. CAL pamphlet combos are available. Contact the office for more information.



\*Policy & Planning/Service Committee Meeting 27 February 2021

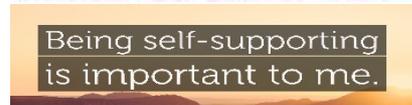
\*Lois's Birthday 7 March 2021

\*Area Assembly 20 March 2021

\*Service Committee 17 April 2021



The topic/theme for the March issue will be **SLOGANS**. Please share your favourite slogan and how it's helped you in your recovery. Write a sentence, a paragraph, or a page, it's up to you, but we would like to hear from all our members. Please send these to [alanonct@iafrica.com](mailto:alanonct@iafrica.com) or WhatsApp to 0823422102.



## GRATITUDE AND TRADITION SEVEN

Every group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.

Please continue paying your group contributions electronically by direct deposit, EFT or SnapScan.

### Banking details:

Bank: ABISA  
 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  
 SnapScan



## Al-Anon Declaration

### Let It Begin with Me

When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, let the hand of Al-Anon and Alateen always be there, and—*Let It Begin with Me.*