

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

Dear Loners

February 2021

We live in extraordinary times and it's hard to recall what 'normal' is. I am very grateful that I am a member of Al-Anon. I choose every day to practice these principles of recovery in all my affairs.

During the first wave and our hard lockdown I knew of just person who had contracted and died of Covid 19. These last few weeks, during the 2nd wave, I know of multiple people who are sick or have loved ones who have died. I am overwhelmed by the loss of so many friends and family. I started once again to read the book *Opening Our Hearts and Transforming our Losses* [B29.]. It is available from our office.

From Page 1: *".....This book is an exploration of issues that concern everyone who has struggled with someone else's alcoholism. We experience loss fromthe disappointments of other personal relationships that did not meet our expectations.....with each loss, we felt more alone and isolated. This book helps us acknowledge the painful reality of loss and grief. It encourages us to acknowledge sometimes hidden thoughts and fears, to recognise the truth of our feelings and to seek solutions that ease our pain and lead to inner peace."*

I think this is an excellent book to examine our fears and feeling of past losses.

I was reminded of the mixed feelings I felt when my husband died 29 years ago. One moment I was immobilised by fear. How was I going to cope and then the relief that I no longer had to worry about whether he would have another heart attack and be hospitalised.

The night the hospital called me at 3am in the morning to come and see him. I immediately phoned my sponsor. She and her husband met me at the hospital. I was immediately surrounded by a loving couple who helped and supported me for the following few weeks until I was able to cope on my own. She encouraged me to talk and feel the feelings. In between bouts of anger and despair I cried. When I burst into tears, she encouraged me to cry and not feel embarrassed. I soon found that these tears were healing. When the anger and tension built up and I was at my wits end I made a gratitude list. This brought the tears and I immediately felt better.

After 2 weeks I went back to my regular Al-Anon meeting. My fellow group members welcomed me with loving hugs and slowly I started to feel better. They encouraged me to continue doing what I would have been doing if my husband was still alive. It was difficult but every time I accomplished

something I felt better. Those first few months were hard but I don't think I would have coped without the love and care from my Al-Anon friends.

Today as we attend our beautiful meetings online, I am sad that I can't reach out to members and give them a physical hug. But I am grateful that Al-Anon meetings are online and that I can interact with members all over the country. It is a true blessing and gift to be able to be able to continue to share with so many friends. Thank you to everyone who helped me recover. Together we can make. We do care

I received this short note from Anni:

I've found working my own programme is usually the best way to support my alcoholic. If I manage my anxiety, I feel less need to manage, manipulate or mother my son. And I don't feel like a martyr in my failed attempts to manipulate him. At times, I've had to say to myself "step back, give him space, step back, give him space" as a mantra to manage my anxiety. When I trust him and his Higher Power to figure things out, it usually goes much better than what I think he needs, or what I think he should do. I hope this helps. ♥

We would love to be able to share your experience, strength and hope with other members. Please send your articles to the office for consideration.

Members who receive these letters via post please consider receiving them digitally on your mobile phone via email or WhatsApp.

If you would like to attend an online meeting, please go to our websites www.alanongauteng.co.za or www.alanon.org.za to find contact details for online meetings. 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.

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**.

P.S. If you do not want to receive these letters send email to alanontvl@absamail.co.za with the word **unsubscribe** in the subject and we will remove your name from the distribution lists. If you know of new members who would like to receive our newsletter please let the office have the details