

# Al-Anon

## Family Groups

Cape Area  
Loner's Newsletter

July 2021

### Never Too Old to Learn New Ways of Thinking.

*By - Joyce, Washington*

I first heard about Al-Anon from a pizza restaurant owner I did not know. When I placed my order, he looked at me and said, "Who is this for?" Before I could answer, he spoke our foster son's name, L, and then asked, "Where is he?"

"In the hospital," I answered. We talked briefly, and I learned that L - in his 20s - was a regular customer, and the restaurant owner was a recovering alcoholic. I told him that I was getting over a serious needle infection, and my husband and I were helping him get back on his feet. As I walked out with the pizza, the last words I heard were, "You both need Al-Anon."

Before we had a chance to explore what that meant, however, L got kicked off a Greyhound bus for drinking and threatening behavior, then walked to a nearby casino where he continued to drink and was again told to leave. In trying to return to the bus stop/gas station in the dark, he got lost, fell into a water-filled ditch, and drowned. The following evening, two policemen came to our house to deliver the shocking news.

Fast forward 20 years to the day our 23-year-old grandson, after finding his way to A.A., asked his parents, and my husband and me, to go to Al-Anon. This time, there was no hesitation. And now, three years later, our grandson remains in recovery, and we continue to benefit from the knowledge we have gained and the support and friendships

we have found here.

Initially, we felt a little like fish out of water, since neither of us had grown up in nor married into alcoholic or drug-addicted environments. But we quickly learned about the far-reaching generational effects of addictive behaviors and began to realize that Al-Anon would help us focus on recovery from the dysfunction in our own extended families. For my husband, this has meant addressing physical and emotional abuse, and for myself, emotional detachment - behaviors we learned to live with and respond to for most of our lives.

Now we are being introduced to new ways of thinking, responding, and living. We are learning to set limits (with loving detachment). We are discovering our own personal meaning of a Higher Power - an entity we can turn to for love and guidance. And both of us are practicing the "novel" idea of asking for help, knowing we no longer have to deal with our problems alone.

In closing, I'd like to say thank you: to our grandson, who pointed us in the direction of Al-Anon, and to the many people who have been and are accompanying us on this journey of recovery. My husband and I, at 82 and 72 and in retirement, thought there wasn't much more for us to learn in this lifetime. We were wrong.

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**The Loners letters from all areas can be found on our website**

**<https://www.alanon.org.za/members-newsletters/>**

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## Feeling Better from the Start.

*By - Michelle V., California.*

I was nervous about going to my first Al-Anon meeting, but I felt I had nothing to lose. I had hit my emotional rock bottom and was losing my sanity. Being unhappy for most of my life, I carried around shame and suffered from low self-esteem stemming from my parents' alcoholism and drug abuse. I always felt that I was not good enough. As a child, I also felt like a financial burden. My grandmothers supported my mother and me, and they cared for me when my mother was unable.

Being too young to understand all of this, I blamed myself for my father's absence from my life. Why didn't he love me? Why didn't he send child support, I wondered. I felt innately unlovable. I carried these feelings of inadequacy and shame into adulthood and was unable to have positive relationships with men. I struggled with anxiety and depression from a very

young age. Although I ultimately married and had children, I never felt "whole" and was unable to be truly happy.

But from that very first Al-Anon meeting, I felt better. I found I wasn't the only one negatively affected by alcoholism. It was comforting to know I wasn't alone. In fact, many members had lives and/or upbringings far worse than mine. This awareness helped put my life into proper perspective. No therapist, church group, or relationship has ever been able to do what Al-Anon has done for me. I am grateful for the understanding and welcoming members who shared their stories and told me, "We are glad you are here," and "Keep Coming Back."

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### Literature

Please contact the office Mon - Fri between 9am and 1pm, and they will be happy to recommend Al-Anon books and pamphlets that meet your needs...

### Just for today . . .

- I'll make an effort to listen to those who speak to me . . .
- I'll be grateful for my life . . .
- I'll accept others for who they are . . .
- I'll remember that I'm a very special person . . .

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