

### Working My Problem or Working My Program?

*By - Golda C., Oregon .*

I was attending a meeting where the group was studying How Al-Anon Works for Families and Friends of Alcoholics (B-32). The person reading the text aloud misread the line “I continued to work my program” as “I continued to work my problem.” I was glad we were meeting online and my microphone was muted so I didn’t disrupt the meeting when I laughed out loud.

As I thought about the difference between working the Al-Anon program and “working my problem,” I remembered when I first attended Al-Anon and didn’t understand how the tools of the program could help me. In those early days, I “worked my problem” by: obsessing about the alcoholic’s drinking, drug use, and destructive behaviors; waking in the middle of the night with my mind racing; waiting for the dreaded phone calls; fretting and trying to force him to get to school or work on time; and feeling knots in my stomach whenever it was time to discuss anything with him.

Gradually, as I continued to attend meetings, I learned that the Serenity

Prayer can be useful to slow my racing mind so I can go back to sleep. I learned that sometimes I may need to read Al-Anon literature or something spiritual to help me meditate and stop the obsessive thinking. I learned I don’t have to answer those calls; I can call back when I am ready to hear about and respond to whatever is happening in his life. His problem does not have to become my problem. Getting him to school or work is not my job. Natural consequences are more appropriate and effective than my nagging. Discussions go better when I can calmly say what I mean without saying it in a mean way. These are a few of the Al-Anon tools I have learned to use. They help me work through a problem by working my Al-Anon program.

I’m glad that I can laugh about occasionally still “working my problem.” Now, however, I have a good grasp of the Al-Anon tools and can more quickly get back to working the program! I can live a happier, more balanced life.

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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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# A Saner, More Serene Life

By - Jodi K., Wisconsin .

After 28 years of marriage to my alcoholic husband, I finally reached the point of being so emotionally unhealthy that I went to my first Al-Anon meeting. I sobbed for three months straight, but I didn't miss a meeting, as I was committed to getting help for myself. I had tried everything to get my husband to stop binging on alcohol, to no avail. I was desperate to stop feeling the pain and chaos that had become my life.

During those first few months, I feared I might be too broken inside to achieve what I saw in the bright, smiling, calm faces at my meetings. I often asked, "What if I'm that one person this won't work for?" The other people at the meetings treated me with kindness and dignity. They offered an attentive ear and gave me only one piece of advice: "Keep Coming Back."

I started really listening to the sharings and realized that others' stories mirrored my own. So I dove into the program, read the Conference Approved Literature, adopted the slogans, and kept coming back. Reflecting on the past five months, I can see how much my life has changed for the better, thanks to Al-Anon.

I recently had the opportunity to speak at a meeting and shared a poem I had written for those in attendance who have helped me realize a saner, more serene life. The poem was a success, and I am so grateful to those men and women in my meetings who held me up when I couldn't do it for myself.

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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 learn all that I can . . .
- I'll try to reach my potential for this day only . . .
- I'll I'll turn off the television . . .

## Compiled by:

CAPE AREA OFFICE

Postal Address

PO Box 727

Goodwood, 7459

Residential Address

Unit B5, N1 City Mews

Manus Gerber St.

Goodwood, 7460

Tel: 021 595 4517

Fax: 086 523 3030

E-Mail: [alanonct@iafrica.com](mailto:alanonct@iafrica.com)

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Al-Anon Family Groups

ABSA Bank (Current account)

Account No: 407 321 5579

Branch Code: 632 005

Our 24 Hour Helpline - 0861 25 26 66