

Learning to Relate Rather than Compare

By - Tom C., Associate Director—Literature .

One Day at a Time in Al-Anon (B-6), affectionately referred to as “the ODAT,” was the only book my first home group ever read during meetings. As a young man concerned about my mother’s drinking, I struggled to relate to the book’s perspective—primarily that of the wife of an alcoholic. I refused to buy a copy, but, by “coincidence,” I won a copy in a raffle. Slowly, my heart and mind began to expand. By learning to focus on principles instead of personal details, I began to see commonalities rather than differences between myself and the wives around me, as well as those in the ODAT. I found I related to the feelings and could easily transpose their experiences into similar ones of my own. Years later, I continue to marvel at the absolute beauty and truth in so many of the book’s pages.

My experience was similar with The Dilemma of the Alcoholic Marriage (B-4). Why would I read that? I wasn’t married. By the time I did read it, I had learned how to “relate, not compare.” I realized how many relationship pitfalls I could have avoided had I only been willing to “Keep an Open Mind” and read the book earlier. The “Five Guides to Communication” section alone is priceless.

Many of the comments received these days by the Literature Committee about the ODAT and Dilemma express reactions similar to those I once had. Newer members find it difficult to relate to these books because they reflect outdated social conventions and lack the variety of relationships represented at many meetings today. The most common suggestions offered are to revise or discontinue printing the books.

From its beginning, Al-Anon has been intended for anyone affected by someone else’s drinking. But because our literature is written by our members, and most of our early members were wives, the sharings in Al-Anon’s earliest literature reflect that fact, as well as the times in which they were written. Through the years, the World Service Conference (WSC) and the Literature Committee have seen great value in keeping the experiences of our pioneer members readily available to us. So, rather than revise those early sharings and risk diminishing their value, the Literature Committee and WSC have recommended keeping the sharings in print as written, while developing newer pieces that reflect our current members. More recent books, like Discovering Choices—Recovery in Relationships (B-30) and Intimacy in Alcoholic Relationships (B-33), portray a wide variety of relationships and situations experienced by today’s members.

With these thoughts in mind, last year’s WSC voted to approve the development of new introductions for inclusion in the next printings of the ODAT and Dilemma that place them within the context of the times and circumstances in which they were written. May these new introductions help us to better hear and relate to the wisdom of all our members, including those who paved the way for our journeys today.

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

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

The Color of Hope.

By - Joan K., Illinois .

Looking out the window one frigid February day, the scene before me was dull and colorless. Snow was flying, the ground covered in white, and gray, naked trees blew forlornly in the wind. I had just ended a phone call with my alcoholic son because one of my comments sent him into a rage. I felt bewildered, but I used my Al-Anon tools to decide it was best not to engage. I know I don't have to participate in hurtful behavior. I received dozens of text messages and phone calls from him after we hung up, and I finally made the choice to silence my phone.

When I looked out the window again, I was reminded by my Higher Power that prayer, Al-Anon meetings, and literature could help me see that under the snow and dirt are flower bulbs that will soon break through with vibrant colors. "This

too shall pass." I can trust that green grass, leaves, and colorful blossoms will come.

Earlier that morning, I had attended an electronic Al-Anon meeting. One of the readings was from page 85 of *Courage to Change (B-16)*, which gave me a healthier perspective on my phone call with my son. It clarified who I am responsible to and what I am responsible for (myself) and who and what I am not (my alcoholic son). That one page was full of truths and fruitful wisdom that refreshed me in the midst of my loved one's insanity. I am grateful to Al-Anon for giving me the perspective to see a brighter color scheme for my life. Today, I will bloom where I am planted, knowing there's help and hope in Al-Anon .

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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 focus on appreciating those who contribute so much to my life . . .
- I'll remember that patience is important in life . . .
- I'll focus on appreciating those who contribute so much to my life . . .

Compiled by:

CAPE AREA OFFICE

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

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Al-Anon Family Groups

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Account No: 407 321 5579

Branch Code: 632 005