

AL-ANON FAMILY GROUPS CAPE AREA ECHO

ISSUE NO. 10 OF 2022 (OCTOBER)

*** 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/newcomers/>)

Cape Town: Wednesdays 5pm
WhatsApp message: 082 895 6815

Gauteng: Sundays 5pm
WhatsApp message: 082 316 3673/082 626 0262

KwaZulu Natal: Thursdays 9pm
WhatsApp message: 083 411 6683

For information regarding 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 066 158 0234 / 082 212 1878 / 072 258 0986 / Telephone 021 595 4517 / Email: alanonct@iafrica.com

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

AFG Cape Area RSS (Regional Service Seminar), Saturday, 17 September 2022
Schoenstatt Retreat & Conference Centre, Constantia
Moving forward with Unity, Courage and Perseverance

Experiencing RSS

Yesterday four members from the Helderberg Morning Group travelled together to Constantia, to Schoenstatt, a 100-year-old Convent and breakaway Retreat Centre, via Baden Powell Drive, to attend the Regional Services Seminar (RSS).



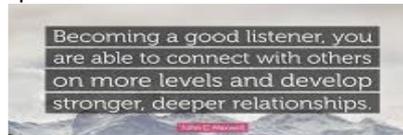
What an invigorating drive along the coastline. All laughing and chatting, commenting on the sky being fifty shades of grey. We only got home after 6pm.

It was one of the best Al-Anon seminars I have ever attended. This was due to the well-prepared workshops on Unity and Courage. Each person participated right through the day. About sixty members at tables of six plus, working as small groups. We also mixed the tables up twice so effectively working with three different groups.

Delicious early, mid-morning and afternoon teas. A mouth-watering lunch put on by the retreat centre with a delicious ice-cream and fruit salad to end off the meal.

The last session of the day was a Life Coach Counsellor speaking on perseverance. We did a six-minute active listening exercise, where we

sat in groups of two, with three minutes of uninterrupted sharing and three minutes of uninterrupted listening. I learned the most from practicing the discipline of uninterrupted listening also learning the tremendous gift it is to the speaker.



Thank you to each one on the service team that organised and made all of this happen so seamlessly for us. We don't take any of it for granted.

By Jean T., Helderberg Morning

**GROWTH HAPPENS
OUTSIDE YOUR
COMFORT ZONE**

RSS – Courage to Grow

The event hosted by the Cape Area was awesome. The venue was situated in leafy Constantia, and we were spoilt to have a delicious lunch and dessert.

One of the workshops hosted featured courage within the fellowship. This was an enlightening topic because even attending RSS as literature coordinator was such a daunting task. As I drove to venue, I almost got lost by turning off the main road too soon and travelling through Alphen Forest. This would have been an easy excuse for me to not show up and not man the literature table. But once I got to the venue, I got stuck in and members who saw me looking frazzled came to help and assist. I learnt that there is HELP in our fellowship. Courage is doing something outside of my comfort zone and each time expanding my comfort zone.

It was a day well spent. The workshops felt relaxed and there was chatter and laughter during discussions. It was great to see familiar faces and of course see faces which I would have only seen on zoom online meetings.

As I tallied up the sales the next day, I realized that I had survived and learnt a great deal by finding new ways of doing the literature sales.

Courage is used in my everyday life. I learn about courage in myself every day, the meetings help me to grow.

Heard at the workshop:

Courage is learning to say YES as when you say NO you don't GROW.

By Liesel C, Literature Coordinator

"Al-Anon showed me how to start putting the focus on myself (not others), feeling my feelings (not others'), and solving my problems (not others')." © Al-Anon, September 2021

Step 7 – Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings

The shortcoming I asked my Higher Power to remove is my reactivity when I get angry. It comes out at work and, recently with a particular friend.

I haven't always been overtly reactive. I used to show no reaction and then make sarcastic and down putting, witty comments behind the other person's back. So, it was a shock to me when I started behaving so badly to the person concerned. Recently, I got enraged with a friend and this disturbed me enough to prompt me to do some work on my temper and rudeness.

So, I did seven steps on it:

Step 1: I came to the conclusion that I am not only powerless over alcohol and the alcoholic but am clearly powerless over my reactivity, as I have failed to change it on my

Help and hope for families and friends of alcoholics.

own, and my life has become unmanageable. So, I had to accept two things: my reactivity, firstly and I also had to accept my powerlessness over it.

Step 2: I came to believe that something bigger than me could help me. This gave me hope and to strengthen my hope, I looked back over my recovery and remembered how parts of me had been restored to sanity previously and this strengthened my belief. Step 2 reminds me that support is the antidote to addiction, my addictions too (addiction to control, self-righteousness, etc.). So, I started looking for someone or something to help me – the program, my fellows and even a therapist.

Step 3: What did Step 3 mean in this context? Ja, it's about surrender but surrender of what, to what, specifically? I searched inside myself and finally came up with three points: → I needed to trust the person(s) I reached out to for help. And I needed to trust the process to unfold. I needed to start somewhere, for example do a Step 4 and Step 5 and trust that the process would unfold. The next steps would reveal themselves.

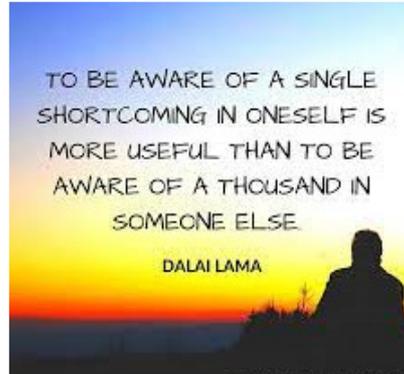
→ I also needed to question my beliefs and opinions – do I think I'm God and know everything? I often get irritated and impatient because I have set ideas of how others and life 'should be'. Can I surrender these ideas? Can I surrender the certainty that I am always right?

In my heart I often have an unexpressed NO to what life brings me. Even if initially, I behave outwardly as if I'm co-operating, eventually my NO comes out sideways as anger or self-pity. So, I meet life bracing myself against it. Can I say YES to life as it IS? In other words, accept what is happening and THEN choose how I will handle it. Can I surrender my resistance?

(Note: surrender doesn't mean that I accept abuse or don't stand up for myself.)

Step 4: Well, I didn't have to look far to find shortcomings related to my reactivity! My moral self-righteousness, my know-it-all-attitude, my superiority. But I also remembered my sensitivity, my

capacity for compassion and my passion for explaining things, to my customers, as well as others.



I discovered the 'stinking-thinking' I have, just before I act out "I don't have time for this" I say to myself. I notice this quicker now and when I notice it, it is a flag to me to change my thinking.

Step 5: I told others and myself about this wrong and I did at least one share on it at my meeting. I'm not sure that I told my Higher Power, though. By talking about it, I kept the awareness of this shortcoming alive so that I couldn't forget it or justify it.

Step 6: I have been talking about this shortcoming for ages but have not been able to stop doing it, in spite of promising myself I would.

"How Al-Anon Works" (B32) says "By now I was uncomfortable with this shortcoming. As I caught myself acting it out, I wanted to get rid of it as soon as possible, but my efforts failed." These failed efforts echo Step 1 – we are powerless over removing our defects – "our role is to ACCEPT ourselves as we are, flaws and all and to become willing to let go of all that stands in the way of our health and growth. The rest is up to a Power greater than ourselves." "From Survival to Recovery" (B-21). And of course, the more I accept myself, the less I judge myself, but ACCEPTANCE is also a process.

I worked Step 6 by looking at what my payoffs were; what was I getting out of this defect that might explain my holding onto it? This is what I came up with:

- I believed I was strong when I was angry, and all puffed up.
- I believed I had the moral high ground and so felt superior.
- I believed I was right, and the other person was wrong, so I got to judge others.

This one was a real eye-opener: I loved regaling my friends with funny stories of how I'd put customers 'in their place'. I consciously stopped turning my unhealthy interactions with customers into funny stories.

– I get to reduce the other person to just this one fault I see in them. I stripped them of their complex humanity.

But the real clincher was examining the costs of reacting with resentment, with anger, getting impatient, intolerant, and even abusive. This is what it costs me:

- It costs me my softness.
- It costs me my stillness of mind, my serenity.
- It costs me an open heart.
- It costs me my connection with others.
- It costs me connection with parts of myself.
- It costs me shame and self-hatred.
- It costs me my sense of humour.
- It costs me my ability to breathe smoothly. At Easter this year, I got myself into such a state that I was breathing the wrong way and I thought I was breathless, mostly due to a mixture of resentment and self-pity, I think. My self-pity didn't endear me to my colleagues, so I didn't even have their support! It was a terrifying experience and I had to miss work on Easter Sunday which didn't endear me to one of my bosses either!
- It costs me my physical health in other ways. I get spasms in my back which are very painful.
- It costs me emotional generosity.
- It costs me creative thinking and problem-solving.

After getting present to the costs, I said "No, this shortcoming is too expensive, I cannot afford it." This helped me in getting ready to have God remove this defect of character.

Step 7: I looked at the Members Blog on the internet on Step 7 and found the following from other Al-Anon members which helped me: Trudy C: "One thing I've learnt is that God will not remove my character defects until I've taken full responsibility for them. When I'm struggling with a defect that keeps coming back, often it's because I am

still blaming someone else for it on some level."

Johnny: "...I have to trust God's will for me. He knows what He's doing. If I take the time to listen, continue to do the work necessary, FOCUS ON MY ASSETS ... my defects of character will no longer need to be the focus of my life." (This was a revelation... it was the first time that assets came into Step 7 for me.)

The turning point for me in finding my humility came at a time when I was having trouble with my breathing and getting terrible muscle spasms in my back. I felt desperate and asked one of my bosses for some time off. He was so compassionate towards me – although I had not always been compassionate to his customers or even patient with him. I was so touched and shamed (in a healthy way) and had to ask myself "Who do I think I am?" I remember that moment so clearly. And that's when I truly "took responsibility for my behaviour" and it shifted something inside me which helped me change.

Thereafter, I concentrated on my assets; I set an intention to be kind and compassionate, to listen to others, to put myself in other people's shoes and to really enjoy explaining things to my customers.

I haven't been intolerant or impatient with my customers for many weeks now – God is removing this shortcoming. Yay! I can't say that I am no longer judging my friend and thinking I know how she should be, but I will continue doing the work and God will remove that too... in His time.

By Sabrina S., Constantia



Anonymity

Anonymity pronounced a · nuh · ni · muh · tee (I too could not pronounce this word in the beginning! Lol.) Meaning – the condition of being anonymous or protecting the privacy of others.

Anonymity is one of the spiritual foundations of Al-Anon. Every person

who steps into the rooms of Al-Anon, be it in-person or via Zoom, is protected by this clause. This means that whom you see here and what you hear here, please let it stay here. Every Al-Anon member and their family is protected by anonymity.

I grew up with very little privacy. My entire family and our friends could see what we were dealing with because of my dad's drunken behaviour, causing arguments and fights with people or with my mum. I did not feel safe at home or in society in general because I did not know whom to trust. I could not trust even the closest people around me because my secrets were often revealed and mocked even by my mum who was the non-drinker. This was painful to endure. I did not know about the impact that the drinking had on each member of our family.

As an adult I usually put my trust in people who were unworthy of it and who used my pain against me or as a tool to spread gossip. Most people would prefer to talk about the pain of others instead of looking at their own pain. I understand this behaviour now because some things are too heavy for most people to carry so they need to shed this weight onto others. I think all of us are guilty of this at one time or another. Alcoholism is a disease of relationships and the effects from one person's drinking affects the entire family structure and beyond and these effects reach far into our future, poisoning other relationships as well.

Al-Anon teaches me to strive for a healthier relationship with, firstly myself and then with others. Gossip is soul destroying, not only to me but to the person who is being subjected to it. It forms a vicious cycle of cause and effect.

We are protected from this in our rooms because that is the only way we can each feel safe, heal our fragile hearts, and grow emotionally and mentally. We each protect the other, by listening without giving advice or cross talking and we go away leaving the meeting in the room but carrying the message of hope in our hearts. In program I have found many trusted friends including my sponsor whom I

can go to and speak about the pain and sadness I carry in my soul.

I can take this very same tool of anonymity and its lessons and apply it to every situation in my own life and to every relationship I have. This makes me a trustworthy, respectful, and kind human being. I do not have to solve every person's problem for them, I can listen with love, understanding and respect and then learn to let it go. I love the wonderful lessons I am learning in the Al-Anon program, and I strive for progress everyday rather than perfection. I strive to be better than I was yesterday. It works if you work it because you are worth it.

Reflection for today – Do I give what I receive in program? Am I a trustworthy person? Do I trust myself?

Thanks for letting me share.

By Anita P., Courage to Change



The Illusion of Control

During Wednesday's wonderful Cape Area Newcomers meeting, someone showed a graph of a typical alcoholic's journey into and out of addiction. My first instinct was that I must get that graph, I need the information! Then I thought about it. Is it going to help MY recovery from the effects of this disease? Is it going to help the alcoholic in my life if I have, and maybe share this information? I don't know for sure, but I don't think I need that information right now.

I think my motivation for wanting it is still a misplaced belief that knowledge will help me control the disease and the person suffering from it.

So, until I feel I can personally benefit from the information, I don't want it. The realisation that I think knowing gives me control is a personal flaw. And I've thought a lot

about whether I am now saying my mind, my intelligence, isn't important. No, my intelligence is important – I'm just learning to apply it to areas where I really do have control, where I can make a difference – MYSELF! I regard this small step as a sign of progress for me. Thanks for letting me share, and I wish you all a day filled with serenity, or at the very least moments of serenity.

By: Anon, Newcomer, Cape Area

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

"It's great to be in Alateen. When life gets hard and I start thinking about the past, all it takes is one phone call to my Alateen friend and I know that it'll be okay, and I'll feel a little safer."
The Forum, January 2022

al-anon.org/for-alateen

"I always thought every name my father called me was true. Somehow it always seemed to fit me, until one day he called me a loser. I got real upset. I got so upset that I called my [Alateen] Sponsor. She said, 'If he called you a chair, would that make you a chair?' I said, 'No!' Things started to make sense to me after that. I started to realize that whatever name my dad called me didn't make it true."

Source: *Courage to Be Me-Living with Alcoholism (B-23) p.106*

Alateen's a safe place for me.

For the first time I feel accepted. I've learned to take the emphasis off the alcoholics and put it on me. I am changing old behavior patterns and learning new ways to resolve my problems. I can see now how everyone in the family is affected by the drinker.

al-anon.org/for-alateen

Many teens come to Alateen to find out how to cope with a loved one's drinking, but soon find out that the coping skills they learn can be applied to many situations.

Although you cannot stop anyone else from drinking, you can get support for yourself in Alateen meetings.

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

Alateen, part of the Al-Anon Family Groups is a fellowship of young people whose lives have been affected by alcoholism in a family member or close friend. We help each other by sharing our experience, strength, and hope.

When: Thursday
Time: 6 to 7pm
Where: Online
Contact 0845472804 for login details
Age Group: 12 to 17 years

Alateen can help
Al-Anon Helpline 086 125 2666*www.alanon.org.za



Literature Cape Area

Hello dear members. Hope that everyone is well and happily reading our CAL (Conference Approved Literature).

We are reminded, where possible, to purchase at least one piece of literature to help our fellowship post-Covid (World Service Office (WSO) appeal).

Pamphlets are great source of information and reading material at a fraction of the price.

Some Website recommendations and specials running

- ➔ Serenity bookmark A02ZA.
- ➔ Detachment S19.
- ➔ Just for today bookmark M12.
- ➔ Just for tonight bookmark M81ZA.
- ➔ Understanding Ourselves and Alcoholism P48.
- ➔ Wallet card: loving interchange to Resolve Conflict S-71.

While saving up for a daily reader, why not invest in our wide range of pamphlets, bookmarks, and wallet cards. Easy on the pocket and a wealth of Al-Anon insight and information.

By Liesel C., Literature Coordinator

al-anon.org

Cape Area Potjiekos Fundraiser
on Saturday, 8 October at Wynberg Military Base Braai Area from 9am. (Use manned entrance off St Johns Road. Braai area is behind the Military Police Station.)

It's a lovely outing for the entire family with scrumptious, yummy

food at the ridiculous price of only R30 a plate. Pre-ordered breakfast rolls will be available at R20 for the early birds. Please contact the office or Debbie on 082 510 8506 to order. Tea and coffee on tap. Cooldrinks on sale at R5 a cup. Pudding might be a yummy surprise too. Please support! Hope to see you there!

AL-ANON CAPE AREA FUNDRAISER

PLEASE JOIN US FOR A DAY OF POTJIEKOS
SATURDAY, 8TH OCTOBER 2022
WYNBERG MILITARY BASE BRAAI AREA
BEHIND THE MILITARY POLICE STATION

LUNCH WILL BE SERVED AT 13:00

POTJIEKOS R30 a plate

Venue available all day, come and relax!!!

IF YOU'RE AN EARLY RISER JOIN IN ON THE PREPARATIONS AND SOME FELLOWSHIP FROM 9AM...BREKKIE ROLLS CAN BE ARRANGED AT R20. PLEASE RSVP FOR CATERING PURPOSES

JUST A REMINDER TO BRING YOUR OWN UTENSILS AND CHAIR

WASHING UP FACILITIES AVAILABLE

WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT

COFFEE AND TEA ON TAP

COOL DRINKS ON SALE R5 a cup

2022 Alcoholics Anonymous Western Cape Presents

MINICON

Face to Face Meeting only ● R60 Registration Fee ●
Coffee on tap ● We kindly invite groups to sponsor a newcomer or consider making a donation towards Mini-Con.
Food and Tuckshop Available ● No one will be turned away ●

Sunday, 23rd October
Sans Souci Girls High School
Esme Road, Newlands

Registration from 8am
Face to Face Registration Only

THEME:
A DAILY REPRIEVE
Big Book Pg 84 & 85

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.

God, grant me the
Serenity to accept the things I cannot change,
Courage to change the things I can, and
Wisdom to know the difference.

NOTICEBOARD

FACE-TO-FACE MEETINGS & E-MEETINGS

Visit <https://www.alanon.org.za/meetings/> for up-to-date meeting information. Inform the Area office once your group returns to face-to-face meetings.

******NEW MEETINGS – Please support******
Contact the office for more information

*Triangle (Brackenfell) - Face to Face Meeting

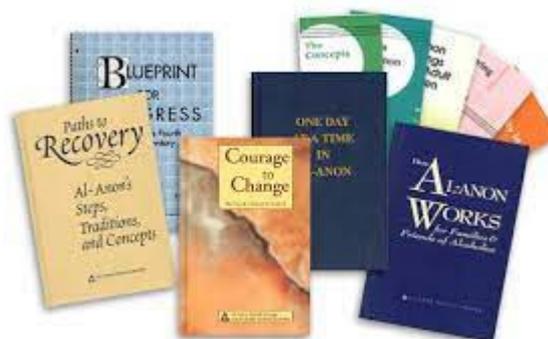
The Triangle group is a face to face meeting and meets on Thursdays at 7:30pm at 5 Dorrey Street (cnr of Dorrey and Stasie), Brackenfell.

*Kuilsvier – Face to Face Meeting

The Kuilsvier group is a face to face meeting, and meets on Wednesdays at 7.30pm at 51 Van Riebeeck Road, Kuilsvier.

WHERE DO I BUY CAL?

Order your literature by visiting the office, email alanonct@iafrica.com, telephonically on 021 595 4517 or 066 158 0234. Payment options are direct deposit, EFT, Snapscan, Payfast or cash.



UPCOMING FUNDRAISERS AND EVENTS

Fundraisers	Rallies/Conventions/Other
<p>*Potjiekos 8 October from 9am at the Wynberg Military Base braai area. Information on page 4.</p> <p>*T-shirt Limited stock available. Contact the office for more information.</p> <p>*Memorabilia Items for sale. Contact the office for more information.</p>	<p>-AA Mini Convention <u>Theme:</u> A Daily Reprieve <u>Date:</u> Sunday, 23 October from 9.30am <u>Venue:</u> San Souci Girls High School, Esme Road, Newlands <u>Registration Fee:</u> R60</p> <p>-AA Summer Rally <u>Date:</u> 2 to 4 December <u>Venue:</u> Melkbos Cultural Centre, Otto du Plessis Road, Melkbos. <u>Cost per person:</u> -Full Weekend R650 registration, meals and accommodation (bring own eating utensils & bedding). -Day Visitors R80 once off.</p>
Meetings	Group News
<p>*Service Assembly Saturday, 16 October.</p> <p>*Area Assembly/Year End Function Saturday, 19/26 November.</p>	<p>*Courage to Change Birthday Meeting More information to follow.</p>

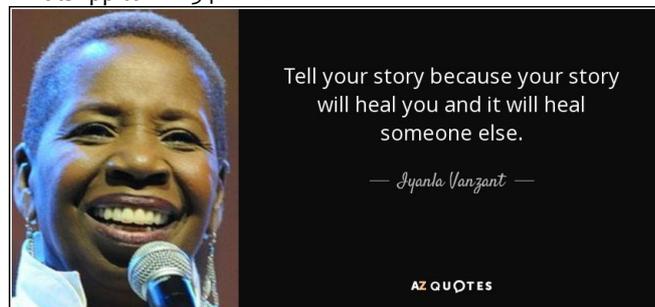
NEXT ISSUE

The topic/theme for the next issue is:

Step 10 *“Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.”*

Vigilance
Perseverance } **DAILY Recovery and Growth.**

Please share your experience, strength, and hope on this or any other topic, by sending your shares to alanonct@iafrica.com or WhatsApp to 082 342 2102.



Feedback from Members:

“Such a brilliant issue of Echo. Each story had deep meaning for me 😊.” Jean

We’d love to hear from you. Please send your feedback and/or suggestions of what you would like to see covered in the Echo to alanonct@iafrica.com or WhatsApp it to 082 342 2102.

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

A gentle reminder to all members to pay group contributions on a regular basis. The Area needs every member’s contribution to continue to keep its doors open. **Every member and group are part of the solution.**

Thank you to all who continue to pay their contributions and to the groups who fundraise among their members during these somewhat difficult times.

Bank: ABSA

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

Payfast link: Click on or copy and paste link and select the amount or manually enter the amount you want to contribute and follow the prompts.

<https://www.payfast.co.za/donate/go/alanonfamilygroupscapearea>

SnapScan:

