

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

March 2022

Dear Loners

When I walked into my first Al-Anon meeting I was tired and exhausted after years of trying to help my loved one. I had finally found her the right kind of help and she had agreed to being helped. I remember walking into the hall and hearing the tinkling laughter of Al-Anon members setting up. It was a happy sound and I knew that I wanted to feel like that again.

At the meeting I was welcomed and handed the newcomer pack. I can't remember what was spoken about at my first Al-Anon meeting but I remember being advised to attend six meetings and to see how I felt. I was also given a newcomer pack. In it was a pamphlet called *Just for Today* (M10).

I read it when I got home.

❖ *JUST FOR TODAY I will try to live through this day only, and not tackle all my problems at once. I can do something for twelve hours that would appall me if I felt that I had to keep it up for a lifetime.*

No problem, I thought. I'm already dragging myself through each day.

❖ *JUST FOR TODAY I will be happy. This assumes to be true what Abraham Lincoln said, that "Most folks are as happy as they make up their minds to be."*

I definitely wasn't ready for this one. I felt like a complete failure as a mother and couldn't believe the mess my family was in. I had been so determined to be a good mother and to do right by my children. These days I am on board with Abraham Lincoln's advice. I work at catching negative thoughts and flipping them into positive ones.

❖ *JUST FOR TODAY I will adjust myself to what is, and not try to adjust everything to my own desires. I will take my "luck" as it comes, and fit myself to it.*

I didn't understand this one. I was used to dealing with emergencies with my loved one or waiting in fear and dread of the next disaster. Adjusting everything to "my own desires" and having "luck" sounded like luxuries. Later on I came to understand this better and realised that I was constantly adjusting things to how I thought they should be. I have learnt that people have different ways of doing things and this is fine.

❖ *JUST FOR TODAY I will try to strengthen my mind. I will study. I will learn something useful. I will not be a mental loafer. I will read something that requires effort, thought and concentration.*

This one was no problem. Reading and researching are my safe zones so I was quite happy to go here. I was already reading whatever I could find to help resolve the situation I was in. So I read Al-Anon literature and anything that pertained to the situation I was in. Now three years later, I interpret this to mean that I must also tackle difficult things not related to the problem that brought me to Al-Anon.

- ❖ *JUST FOR TODAY I will exercise my soul in three ways: I will do somebody a good turn, and not get found out; if anybody knows of it, it will not count. I will do at least two things I don't want to do – just for exercise. I will not show anyone that my feelings are hurt; they may be hurt, but today I will not show it.*

Doing someone a good turn didn't appeal to me... I was too busy trying to save my loved one. I didn't have the energy to try and help someone else, let alone not get found out.

*I will not show anyone that my feelings are hurt...* this was also impossible. My heart was broken. My personal beliefs were now all in doubt. I didn't see the point of anything.

However, the sentence in the middle, gave me something I could hold on to. *I will do at least two things I don't want to do – just for exercise.* I remember sitting on the edge of my bed and thinking, this I can do. I would write down two things – not my usual chores/tasks – and do them. Then I would feel a bit better about my day. This helped carry me through the next while. These days, I am tackling my issues with fear and procrastination. Instead of putting things off until I can do them perfectly, I am practicing "Progress not Perfection".

- ❖ *JUST FOR TODAY I will be agreeable. I will look as well as I can, dress becomingly, keep my voice low, be courteous, criticize not one bit. I won't find fault with anything, nor try to improve or regulate anybody but myself.*

Again this one didn't resonate with me. My loved one was still a huge concern and saving her was all I wanted. These days I am aware of the need to keep my attention on myself instead of on others but getting here has been a process. I am far less judgmental and critical than I used to be. I am also a lot more understanding about other people's behaviour/emotions.

- ❖ *JUST FOR TODAY I will have a program. I may not follow it exactly but I will have it. I will save myself from two pests: hurry and indecision.*

I didn't know what the programme was when I read the pamphlet but I have gradually developed one. My programme has involved a lot of letting go and surrendering. These days I am aware that I must not allow myself to feel hurried but I do have bouts of indecision and I know these are warnings that I have strayed from my serenity – my calm centre.

- ❖ *JUST FOR TODAY I will have a quiet half hour all by myself and relax. During this half hour, sometime, I will try to get a better perspective on my life.*

This worked for me and every morning I would sit quietly and read my *Courage to Change* (B-16) and *Hope for Today* (B-27) daily readers. I would also breathe and try to meditate. This all changed when everyone began working from home. Now it is much harder to start my day with quiet time but I try to make time.

- ❖ *JUST FOR TODAY I will be unafraid. Especially I will not be afraid to enjoy what is beautiful, and to believe that as I give to the world, so the world will give to me.*

At the time this was impossible. I was very afraid for my loved one. I didn't have time to enjoy what was beautiful, let alone notice it.

I have been in Al-Anon for just over three years now and my loved one has been sober for three years too. Learning to let go has helped the two of us so much. Moving my spotlight off her, gave her the space to heal in her own way. Our relationship is much, much better.

And these days I am able to be happy and to enjoy what is beautiful. I am also starting to appreciate the benefits of being happy for my life and for having had the opportunity to learn so much about myself.

I have also forgiven myself for the mistakes that I made with my loved one. I was doing what I thought was best. Now that I know better, I am doing better.

And every now and then, I read the *Just for Today* pamphlet and find myself understanding and finding deeper meaning in it.

Best wishes

Clare

P.S. If you would like to send a share for possible publication in the Loners' Letter, please forward your contribution to [alanontvl@absamail.co.za](mailto:alanontvl@absamail.co.za) with the subject "Loners' Letter Submission".

**Tradition Seven:** Every group ought to be self-supporting, declining outside contributions. If you would like to contribute towards our office expenses, our banking details are below. Thank you to everyone who contributes.

<p><b>Al-Anon Information Service</b>, ABSA Bank, Oakdene, Current Account No: 1118881482 Branch code 632 005. Please use your <b>name</b> or <b>group</b> as the reference.</p>
--

If you would prefer not to receive this newsletter, please send an email to [alanontvl@absamail.co.za](mailto:alanontvl@absamail.co.za) with the word **UNSUBSCRIBE** in the subject and your name will be removed from the distribution lists. If you know of new members who would like to receive our newsletter, please inform the office.