

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

Dear Loners

June 2021

What a lovely surprise to receive this share on **Communication. Thank you!**

We look forward to hearing from everyone on how you are coping. We care. We invite you to join us online at the many meetings available. Recovery is easier if we try and do it together.

I recently realized that I have labelled myself as a bad communicator which is not a good place to be because what I believe about myself has the power to come to life.

I realize now that this is not a true label because I am only a bad communicator under stressful conditions and there are times that I am a particularly good communicator.

I have also realized that the lockdown of last year revealed certain things to me.

One – I am really a people person. Before I was happy with people or happy without

It was only when interacting with people was taken away from me that I realized how valuable people really are to me.

Combined with my own fears of not wanting to get to an online meeting I really shot myself in the foot because communication deteriorated to being mainly by phone or messaging communication – and the worst is that I did not see the deterioration just because of being out of practice. I am really grateful to Robynne who encouraged me to join the digital platform which has now opened a whole new world for me.

At the beginning I struggled to communicate online, I thought I was talking to the wall and that at the same time I could not see people or their reactions so thoughts like these entered my head and I would lose my train of thought but luckily, I persevered.

My disastrous communications that have had bad results are when I have been in stressful situations. This for me is when I am very emotional about something that someone has said to the point that I don't even think of a time out. One goal is to be rid of that emotion.

Other stressors are like - I was trying to hold onto a wiggling 11 kg dog and had a conversation with someone who had phoned me who had a screaming toddler on the other side.

At times like these the still small voice of my Higher Power is evident to me, but I overrule it by thinking things like that's not logical this is important to be said – these are the times that are the worst for me. But I am holding onto hope that if I can hear that voice then at least I am in a better place than if I could not hear it.

Trust -- in communication has also been a big issue for me as I have a pattern of trusting unworthy people and then forgiving them and continuing the relationship but not opening up and sharing so that the relationship becomes an outer shell only.

Also, I had a communication with someone that came to me angry about me getting help - at that time I was cooking. I calmly replied you have chosen your behaviour and path, so I have chosen to

get help. I calmly turned off the cooker and left the room gracefully so that what I had said could sink in as I was not open for debate with an angry accusing person.

Another big factor for me is messaging abuse and I will call it that because I do have some people that won't call me and talk about an issue. They quickly roll off a voice note or send a text to say they are unhappy with me – or battling in their own lives, in their mind's communication has happened. Here communication can't happen because if it is a serious issue, I feel it needs to be discussed. In these situations, I end up with feeling I don't know what to do to reach resolution. I do not want to voice note. I am not good at them and texting for me important stuff does not sit right with me now.

I remember as a child saying things and there was a deathly silence afterwards.

I remember times when I have wanted to talk but it felt like I had a lock on my jaw and physically could not say anything. For me I see communication as tied to my recovery and view of myself. If I am in a strong place and content with me and an issue comes up, I usually handle it well.

If I am in a not ok place, then there is danger.

The danger signs I need to recognize are:

Emotion

Am I feeling attacked?

Am I feeling inferior?

Am I under time constraints?

Am I worried about running out of airtime?

Am I fully present or am I distracted?

If I can't recognize the emotion, the conversation needs to happen after a time out.

or

Do I actually know what I want here?

Can I keep my focus on the goal of the conversation?

Can I recognize the red herrings avoid them and stick to topic?

Am I able to stay kind and say what I want?

I understand today that the health of my relationships depends on the quality of my communication and basically a big part of this is words spoken, or not spoken, reactions, and reading other people as to how they respond to me, as well as reading me and how I respond to them.

I am quickly learning that listening is a big part of communication.

Looking for signs, clues etc. That the more aware I am the better I can communicate

Another important factor is when in a dialogue how is my listening IQ am I good with hearing the person out completely or am I wanting to chip in to be heard because this reflects, an attitude in me where I am not ok with me.

Also, I need to enquire more and find out more facts especially if I don't really understand or even if I think I need to clarify and make sure we have both heard. For example, yelling out will someone please wash the dishes is probably going to mean I will end up doing the dishes.

But if I address someone specifically and ask them then to make sure they respond in the affirmative it is now someone else's responsibility.

Am I respecting and valuing the other person?

Realizing I am not an island my communication or lack of it has effects on others. My words reveal my attitude. Also, to realize that sometimes the fault is not with me as the other person does not want to communicate and that is their choice, and it is not a reflection on me – however I have taken this personally in the past

From *Hope for Today* [B-27]

Nov. 6 , page 311 “It’s my responsibility to stick with people who are affirming and trustworthy and to limit my exposure to those who are not.”

And from Nov 18, page 323 “When I’m uncommunicative or dishonest in any interaction, I set myself apart and feel rejected. Conversely, open, truthful communication nurtures feelings of trust and encourages me to participate fully in life.”

From *Courage to Change* [B16] June 22, page 174 “What do my words communicate? Do they express what I am trying to say? Today I will listen more closely to what my words have to say”.

The loner committee welcomes all share for consideration in our newsletter. Please send to the office.

If you would like to attend an online meeting, please go to our websites [www.alanongauteng.co.za](http://www.alanongauteng.co.za) or [www.alanon.org.za](http://www.alanon.org.za) to find contact details for online meetings. Tradition Seven: Every group ought to be self-supporting, declining outside contributions. Although we are under lockdown our office expenses still need to be paid. If you are able to help our bank details are below.

Stay Safe, Juliet

ABSA Bank, Oakdene, branch code 632 005). Current account no 1118881482.....in the name of <b>Al-Anon Information Service</b> . Please put your <b>name or group as a reference</b> .
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