

Loners' Letter *Gauteng & Districts*

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

March 2023

Dear Loners

Al-Anon's Twelve Traditions are a set of suggestions that guide Al-Anon members on how to work together as a fellowship in our common interest and without losing our focus on our common purpose, which is recovery for ourselves.

With March, being the third month, we often speak about Tradition Three at meetings around this time of year:

Tradition Three: The relatives of alcoholics, when gathered together for mutual aid, may call themselves an Al-Anon Family Group, provided that, as a group, they have no other affiliation. The only requirement for membership is that there is a problem of alcoholism in a relative or friend.

This Tradition refers to the fact that Al-Anon members come together as a fellowship, to help each other with the shared pain of living with alcoholism. Anyone affected by the alcoholic behaviour of another can attend Al-Anon meetings and benefit from its programme which has been designed to help overcome the damage, sometimes generational, of living with alcoholism. It also refers to the fact that while attending Al-Anon meetings we put aside our differences with regard to outside issues i.e. politics, religion, and other potentially divisive matters as they will just end up dividing us and distracting us from our primary purpose. Instead at our meetings, we focus on sharing how we have been affected by alcoholism, how it has affected our own thinking and behaviour, and how we heal ourselves so that we are able to live fuller, happier lives. Hearing how other Al-Anon members have worked the Al-Anon programme, helps us to do the same for ourselves.

This month we have a letter from someone who prefers to remain anonymous and they will be sharing on what Tradition Three means to them.

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Tradition Three holds a lot of value and meaning for me. I don't take for granted that I am able to attend a Zoom meeting or a face-to-face Al-Anon meeting. The key words I focus on in this Tradition are "gathered", "together", "mutual aid" and "group".

Although we live in the 21st century with the availability of cell phones, fast internet, and mega data at our fingertips, there are many among us that don't have the liberty, ability, means or freedom of choice to gather together for mutual aid in a group, where they can find the support and help they need, when faced with the alcoholism of a loved one, relative or friend.

Many affected persons are not at liberty to join a group such as Al-Anon, or any support group for that matter, because of the restrictions imposed on them, by an authoritative figure: a father, mother, brother, husband or family patriarch or matriarch. The reasons are many, some of which are religious views, family views and society views. Unreasonable restrictions and oppressions are some of the obstacles that people may face when trying to get help.

While most of us may have the capacity to act physically, mentally, morally and financially, and are able to join a fellowship such as Al-Anon for our personal growth and enhanced understanding of the disease; many don't have the ability to be part of a group, for lack of capacity. And finally, many don't have the freedom or right to act, speak, or think as they want. And many don't have the choice to choose one or more possibilities for their personal growth and healing.

Most Al-Anon members have the opportunity to attend meetings, read Conference Approved Literature (CAL), communicate on WhatsApp groups, call up a Sponsor, and apply the Al-Anon principles to our daily lives. We may have the liberty, ability and the means, or maybe only the liberty and ability, or only the ability and means, but we are able to be part of the Al-Anon fellowship and to benefit from the shared experience, strength and hope.

I don't take for granted that I am able to "gather together for mutual aid" and I am eternally grateful to be part of this fellowship. Attending a meeting on the Zoom platform or face-to-face is a privilege for me.

My sharing is inspired by a friend, who, although she could be helped by the Al-Anon tools to cope with the challenges in her life as a result of living with an addict and alcoholic, is unable to attend meetings, buy or read any Conference Approved Literature, meet with friends, or communicate via social media platforms outside what is approved by the family patriarch.

Thank you anonymous for sharing your experience of Tradition Three and how it relates to both you and your friend.

You are indeed privileged to be able to take advantage of the mutual help and guidance provided by fellow Al-Anon members when they share their experiences, the lessons they learn about themselves, and how they are transformed and are once again able to laugh and have hope despite living in difficult circumstances.

Thank you also, for reminding us not to take this privilege for granted. I hope your friend is able to find the help and assistance she needs.

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 with the subject "Loners' Letter Submission".

UPCOMING EVENTS

Convention 2023

Date: 7 to 9 April 2023

Venue: University of Pretoria, Pretoria.

Register: www.aasouthafrica.co.za

Al-Anon is a self-supporting organisation – we rely on financial contributions from our members to keep our offices open and our meetings going. Thank you to everyone who contributes.

Tradition Seven

Every group ought to be self-supporting, declining outside contributions. If you would like to contribute towards our office expenses, payment options are provided below.

Al-Anon Information Services, ABSA Bank, Oakdene, Current Account No: 1118881482
Branch code 632 005. Please use your **name** or **group** as the reference.

PayFast: Al-Anon Information Services

<http://www.payfast.co.za/donate/go/alanoninformationservices>

Please use group or event and members name as reference.

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