



Al-Anon Family Groups

Help and hope for families and friends of alcoholics

LONERS LETTER- MARCH 2023.

Hi everyone.

Lindsay S. is away in New Zealand on a well-deserved break and to visit her loved ones. I wish her a safe and enjoyable time away.

4 March 1891, an incredible woman of phenomenal strength and courage was born. Lois would have been 132 years old. This month we pay tribute to our founding mother. I am eternally grateful to Lois and all those members who have kept the doors opened for me and others who seek a better way of life.

In this issue, there are two shares: A tribute to Lois on the anniversary of her birth by Rubenthree M (Clairwood zoom AFG)

The second share is from Ragini L (Gauteng, Newcomers AFG).

I want to wish everyone a wonderful month of March.

God bless

Lots of love

Logas M.

Lois was born on 4 March 1891 in New York. Her father was a gynaecologist and surgeon. She graduated from The Parker Collegiate Institute in Brooklyn. She later attended the New York School of Fine Arts and Applied Arts.

Lois was adventurous referred to herself as a tomboy. Her family was upper middle class and they lived in Vermont for a while. Her parents were friends with the son of former United States President Abraham Lincoln. When she met Bill Wilson, they were friends at first. Their friendship turned to love and they married in 1913. This was just before Bill was sent off to war in Europe. While Bill was away Lois studied Occupational Therapy and also got a job in that field. Lois got pregnant a few times when Bill returned from the army. The pregnancy always ended in a miscarriage. Lois wanted to be a mother so they tried to adopt but the agency found out about Bills excessive drinking which was a problem in their marriage. Bills drinking worsened and he lost many opportunities for employment as a result of this. Lois tries to make her husband stop drinking but failed. During this time Lois was the only bread winner and she did private consults to earn extra money. Although Bill stopped drinking in 1934, in 1939 they lost their home and were forced to live with friends. In 1941 they got the opportunity to purchase a home and this later became Stepping Stones. Bill and his friend Bob Smith helped many people with drinking problems

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stop drinking. At this time Bill suggested Lois start a 12 step program for families of alcoholics. She was assisted by Bob's wife Anne. Sadly Anne passed away after a while. Before her passing Ann and Lois wrote to 87 non alcoholics asking for information about living with the alcoholic. They received replies from around the world including South Africa. This was the birth of Al-Anon Family Groups.

Lois started Stepping Stone, the aim was to welcome visitors who wanted to learn about the legacy of Bill and Lois in the field of alcoholism. Lois died in 1988 at the ripe age of 97 years old. Lois's life was a life well lived.

Al-Anon a way of life.

Modus Vivendi

At 56 and a few months short of my 57th birthday, I came into the rooms of Al-Anon. 14 August 2021 to be exact.

I came broken but determined to fix the alcoholic rather than myself. I stayed on to help myself and my life changed forever.

Life before Al-Anon, in my household was chaotic; I existed from one crisis to the next. Crisis created by alcoholism and addiction.

I barely coped with life before I joined the fellowship. I did not live life. I knew something had to give, it would be matter of time before the difficult, challenging situations at home came to a head.

As a family member of problem drinking relatives, I often experienced high levels of chronic stress and extreme negative effects on my own mental, spiritual, and physical wellbeing. I was not functioning at my best, health wise. The Al-Anon Family Groups offered me support to understand alcoholism and gave me tools, to deal and heal with every challenging situation I encountered. And I was thirsty and hungry for this help.

As a family we were counting the phenomenal cost of alcoholism and addiction to our family. Alcoholism had a very deep and long-lasting negative outcome for my family.

Costs of alcoholic relationships include physical symptoms, injury, mental problems, ill health financial difficulty, legal troubles, and relational stress. We as a family experienced all of this. Al-Anon is perceived beneficial for six primary reasons: Al-Anon philosophy, format, social support, accessibility, effectiveness, and potential to change the drinker's behaviour by changing my own attitude and by accepting that alcoholism is a disease.

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Al-Anon, a way of life, benefits me by preserving self-identity, social identity, values, security, stability, and hope.

Here are some of the specific ways I incorporated Al-Anon spiritual principles in all my affairs.

The 12 spiritual principles of recovery:

Acceptance: of alcoholism as a disease and acceptance of the things I cannot change.

Hope: for restoration.

Faith: that I am not alone My HP and God of my understanding is guiding me.

Courage: to change the things I can.

Honesty: to acknowledge my defects of character.

Patience: Let time take time.

Humility: That I am not more or not less than anyone else.

willingness, to surrender control.

Brotherly-love: Towards my fellow Al-Anon friends.

Integrity: That I am always doing the right thing. I am authentic? & what is my motive?

Self-discipline: I must practice the principles daily or risk slipping into old habits.

Service: Giving back the gifts of Al-Anon. Paying it forward.

I work recovery through the steps.

1. I Can't
2. God Can
3. Let God
4. Look Within
5. Admit Wrong
6. Ready Self For Change
7. Seek God's Help
8. Become Willing
9. Make Amends
10. Daily Inventory
11. Pray and Meditate
12. Give it Away

I apply the 12 Twelve Traditions (my personal life)

1. All for One, One For All
2. We Have but One Boss - A Loving God
3. Relatives of Alcoholics Help Others to Help Themselves
4. We Run Our Own Affairs That is Enough for Most of Us

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5. We Have but One Purpose - That's a Full Time Job
6. We Tend to Our Own Business
7. We Pay Our Own Way
8. We Hire People to Do Things We Cannot Do
9. We Don't Organize, But We Make Some Arrangements
10. We Stay Out of Squabbles - We Might Fight Dirty
11. We Let People Know We Exist - Politely and in Good Taste
12. Anonymity is our Cloak of Protection. It Protects Us, It Does Not Hide Us

And the best kept secrets of Al-Anon are the concepts.

In meetings, at home and in my workplace.

I can apply the concepts when I do service with my family, my friends, the community, the workplace, and in meetings.

The Al-Anon concept allows me to grow in service within the good guidelines stated in each concept.

How do I live my life now?

In a simple fashion.

I begin and end my day with Gratitude.

I surround myself with people who practice the principles of the fellowship

My conscious contact with God and My HP is of utmost importance.

I celebrate life, despite the everyday challenges.

Fixing, controlling and enabling only one person....Me.

Minding my own business.

Guarding my serenity through prayer and meditation

Practice, Practice and more practice.

I have changed, I have less, but much more contentment and this is a blessing I am grateful for.

I have a constant smile and I laugh often.

A beautiful life begins with me. I have choices to live life, or live life the Al-Anon way.

Thank You for allowing me to share.

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