

Loners' Letter *Gauteng & Districts*

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

August 2023

Dear Loners

This month's Loners' Letter focuses on Alateen and how this fellowship of young people, whose lives have been affected by alcoholism in a family member or close friend, help each other by sharing their experience, strength and hope.

Below are some shares from young people explaining how going to Alateen has helped them to develop healthy ways of coping:

*I used to be scared about what would happen when my dad was drinking and gambling. Now that I have been coming to Alateen, I don't have to be afraid any more. Alateen teaches me how to let my emotions come out but not in a bad way. Here, I feel comfortable and feel my emotions. Alateen is a group that makes me feel like I am part of a family. I keep coming back because it works. **Anonymous***

*When I first came to Alateen, I hated everything. I hated my classmates, my family, the Alateen group, the room where we met, the way I was treated, and most of all I hated myself. At first, I was mad because I thought people in my group were just pointing out the flaws I already hated and that I was just another broken toy to fix. After a while, I realised that people cared about me and honestly wanted to help. I learned that knowing my flaws and hating them doesn't help me get better. As the Serenity Prayer suggests, I have to change what I can, and accept and love what I can't. **Anonymous***

*I thought it was my fault that my mother drank. I felt I needed to protect her from my dad's anger! I was so confused until I learnt to understand that alcoholism is a disease. Today I love my parents but sometimes I don't like their behaviour. "Easy Does It" and "Let Go and Let God" are two slogans that help me. **Anonymous***

*I thought it was my job to 'fix' my parents from drinking. In Alateen I learnt about the three Cs...I did not cause the drinking; I can't control the drinking; I can't cure it! It took me a long time to understand this but in time I learnt to concentrate on my own behaviour and especially my anger! **Anonymous***

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Our next share is from a mom who explains how Alateen is helping her children:

*Living with active alcoholism is an extreme sport that makes your life unmanageable. The situation at home was very challenging, especially for my three daughters.*

*One day a member at an Al-Anon meeting shared about Alateen explaining how it had helped her. At that moment, I made a decision to take my daughters to an Alateen meeting because I understood how Al-Anon was helping me to cope with the impact of alcoholism.*

*After finding out about Alateen, I shared my story about the impact of alcoholism with my three daughters. At the time, I had been struggling to understand the anger, resentment and hurt my elder daughter was experiencing and wanted to help her deal with it.*

*My girls embraced the program and used the tools they learnt about in the program to cope with the effect of alcoholism on their lives. They apply the same tools in all their affairs.*

*The program has brought serenity and light to their lives. They enjoy all the good moments and take good care of themselves during stormy days as we still live with active alcoholism. As they say there's always a rainbow after the storm.*

*Our circumstances are still the same at home as alcoholism is a progressive disease. Fortunately, the program has worked wonders for my girls and they use the tools of the program to take care of themselves to the point that sometimes they sponsor their mom. I'm always reminded by my girls to apply Al-Anon 101, and take care of myself. As the slogan says, "First Things First".*

*My girls have confidence and self-esteem. They approach their lives with a positive attitude and apply it to everything they put their minds to. I will always be grateful to Alateen for giving my girls a lifeline. **Anonymous Parent***

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Lastly we hear from one of the volunteer AMIAS (an Al-Anon Member Involved in Alateen Service). She helps to host Alateen meetings and provides a safe environment where youngsters can share and help each other cope with the effects of someone else's excessive alcohol use:

I am very grateful that I have had the privilege to serve Alateen over the years. In the early days, everything I knew about the Al-Anon programme and myself, I learnt by helping the Alateen members.

We don't teach or council the teens but rather create a safe space where they can share their experience, strength and hope, and help each other by using the 36 principles of the Al-Anon programme.

Contrary to some parents' fears, the behaviour of the alcoholic is not the focus. Alateen meetings involve sharing how we have been affected by someone else's drinking, understanding our feelings and learning how to use healthy coping tools.

*Alateen and Preteen meetings are for children aged nine to 17. No adults other than the AMIASs are allowed into the meetings. The pamphlet, How Can I Help my Children [P 9], is an excellent guide to find out more information. If you are interested in serving Alateen by becoming an AMIAS or would like your children to attend Alateen, please contact our area office. **Anonymous AMIAS***

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This year Alateen is celebrating its 66<sup>th</sup> worldwide birthday and on 26 August 2023 in Gauteng we will host a special Al-Anon meeting with Alateen participation to share our beautiful programme with parents, family and other Al-Anon and AA members.

Alateen needs the support of teamwork between teens, parents, AMIAs and Al-Anon and AA members. *Together we can make 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".

### UPCOMING EVENTS

#### **Alateen 66<sup>th</sup> Birthday**

**When:** 26 August 2023

**Time:** 10h00

**Venue:** Zoom

**Birthday Donations:** See banking details below. Send proof of payment to [alanontvl@absamail.co.za](mailto:alanontvl@absamail.co.za) using this reference: **Alateen Fund**

#### **Al-Anon Spring Food Fair**

**When:** 9 September 2023

**Time:** 12h00 - 16h00

**Venue:** St Francis Methodist Church, 1 Talton Road, Forest Town.

**Contribution:** R50 - Adults R20 - Children

**RSVP:** 4 September 2023

**Payment:** See banking details below. Send proof of payment to [alanontvl@absamail.co.za](mailto:alanontvl@absamail.co.za) using this reference: **Spring Fair and your name**

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 our contributors.

### 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 send proof of payment to [alanontvl@absamail.co.za](mailto:alanontvl@absamail.co.za) and use your **name, event or group** as the reference.

#### **PayFast: Al-Anon Information Services**

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

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