

Loners' Letter *Gauteng & Districts*

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

October 2023

Dear Loners

This month, an Al-Anon member shares how the daily practice of Step Ten helps them to maintain serenity and grow while facing the challenges of everyday life.

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*Step Ten: Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.*

Step Ten allows me to observe on a continuous basis... hourly, daily, weekly... my actions, feelings, thoughts and motives. I track my reactions and responses, I examine my choices and I admit promptly when I am wrong.

With this step, I prove to myself that I can control my actions. I am not handcuffed to my old habits and character defects. I adjust to situations that I am confronted with, by taking the time to process my internal conflict and guarding against examining right facts with the wrong attitude.

Several spiritual principles are a part of my working of the Tenth Step, these are:

- Acceptance of my current situation.
- Discipline: Following the program with purpose and intent.
- Humility: Freedom from pride, arrogance, self-righteousness and smugness.
- Patience with myself, my family, my Higher Power and my progress in the fellowship.
- Mindfulness: Consciously being aware of my thoughts, actions and speech.
- Practicing THINK - is it thoughtful, honest, inspiring, necessary and kind?
- Self-restraint: Exercising restraint over my emotions, desires and impulses. Being careful not to lash out and speak without thinking.
- Honesty: Am I honest with myself, and others? Do I exaggerate, dramatise and make mountains out of molehills?
- Fair-mindedness: Am I critical and judgmental about people, places and situations? Do I quote out of context? Am I reasonable and do I listen to other people's suggestions?
- Tolerance: Am I tolerant of people and situations? Or do I constantly want things my way? Am I able to agree to disagree amicably?
- Love: Do I practice self-love, unconditional love, towards myself and others?
- Can I love with detachment? Or do I love with attachments?

- Persistence: Am I persistent in an unreasonable way, when I am faced with challenges, or am I persistent in a gentle and mindful way? Am I determined to push forward with prayer and surrender when faced with difficulty?

Perhaps acceptance is the most important of these spiritual principles. In Step Ten, I recognise my current condition and don't attempt to change it or rebel against it. I might feel uncomfortable, but instead of avoiding it, pushing it down and sweeping it under the carpet, I confront it and take personal responsibility.

Step Ten is a maintenance step and a growth step. It's a step that helps me accept my situation every day, while I remain grounded. Conducting an ongoing personal inventory helps me to stay free from frustration, anger, self-righteousness and fear. This process also prevents resentment from taking root in me. I can turn things over to my Higher Power or the God of my understanding and continue moving forward in my recovery.

My inventory involves asking myself these questions:

- Was I dishonest or resentful?
- Did I say or do anything that warrants an apology?
- Am I worried about yesterday or tomorrow?
- Have I allowed myself to develop an obsession over something?
- Am I hungry, angry, lonely or tired? (HALT)
- Do I suffer from problems physically, mentally or spiritually?
- What can I do to be a better version of me tomorrow?
- What am I grateful for today?

I also take time each day to journal my thoughts and feelings. If things seem off or I am struggling with something, I check in with my sponsor or a trusted friend.

Step Ten is about awareness, acceptance and action. It helps me to live in the present moment and to control my behaviour.

Several practices help me move through Step Ten:

- I avoid immediate decisions based solely on emotion. Instead, I take a step back, breathe deeply, and then act.
- I try to be honest in my assessment of situations.
- I admit to any mistakes I am making or have made.
- I forgive others when they've made mistakes.
- I focus on progress not perfection.

With Step Ten, self-appraisal has become a habit. This is the step in which I put into daily practice all that I've learned in the previous steps. Making right my wrongs is an ongoing process and requires constant self-examination. This isn't to say I won't fail. If I notice an emotional disturbance, I do a self-inventory as soon as possible. This silences or quells my volatile emotions and helps build my character and resilience.

Ongoing personal inventory with Step Ten helps me to:

- Set healthy boundaries
- Manage my emotions
- Stay in control of my moods
- Maintain better physical health
- Improve relationships
- Achieve a productive work life
- Function as a healthy and productive member of society

Emotional disturbances can trigger negative behaviours. I can return to old habits because of how I feel and I can respond to my emotional triggers in a self-destructive manner. Step Ten is about helping me to better manage these triggers. Better management requires recognising my emotional disturbances and knowing what to do to avoid turning to destructive behaviour, thoughts and actions.

Step Ten helps me keep a clean spiritual house. I still make mistakes, but remaining emotionally and mentally sober requires owning up to these mistakes and righting my wrongs as quickly as possible. By facing my mistakes and taking responsibility for them, I am preventing things from festering until they become anger, resentment, remorse, blame, denial, anguish, pain and turmoil.

Step Ten allows me to walk away from any situation knowing I've done my best to make things right and that I'm taking responsibility for my behaviour.

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Thank you very much for sharing your understanding of Step Ten and for also sharing the questions that you ask yourself, the ongoing practices that you have adopted, and the benefits that you are realising by practicing Step Ten in this way.

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".

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| <b>UPCOMING EVENTS</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <p><b>Al-Anon End of Year Rally</b> <i>(with AA and AAC participation)</i><br/><b>When:</b> 28 October 2023<br/><b>Time:</b> 09h00 - 13h00 (Registration starts at 08h30)<br/><b>Venue:</b> St Francis Methodist Church, 1 Tarlton Road, Forest Town.<br/><b>Cost:</b> Adults (R50) Teens and Children (R20).<br/><b>Bring along:</b> Friends and family.</p> |

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.*

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