

Loners' Letter *Gauteng & Districts*

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

January 2024

Dear Loners

Today an Al-Anon member shares on how working the Al-Anon programme has helped her to use the principles of honesty, hope and faith when dealing with problems and how Al-Anon's Warranties provide her with essential guidance for living a better life.

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The Al-Anon programme asks us to keep our attention on our own lives and detach with love from the drama and turmoil created by alcoholism. Guided by the Serenity Prayer, I find stability when I detach from what I cannot control and sharpen my focus on what I can change within myself.

Before learning this, my mind was so filled with the chatter of someone else's business that I was not giving any attention to me. My mind was trapped in past obsession and fearful imaginings of the future. Spiritual resources were at hand, but the distraction was so great that I failed to notice them.

When I began to listen to other Al-Anon members share honestly about themselves, I reflected on my situation. This helped me to become more aware of my feelings as I was feeling them. I also started a gratitude list which helped to put the focus on me, even if only for a short while. By doing this, I found that I had less room for self-pity, control and despair. It also helped me to see the good qualities in others.

These first three Steps are the acceptance steps. They give me the foundation for working the rest of the Steps. The principle I see in Step One is *honesty*. I must examine my problem honestly so that I can deal with reality. *Hope* is the principle I received in Step Two. I know that a power greater than me can show me the sane way to proceed. Step Three gave me the principle of *faith*. I believe that my Higher Power can help me handle my situation.

In Al-Anon I learned I could have my own Higher Power. Working Step Three not only changed my concept of God, but it also changed my life. I have found a friend who will always be there for me. Once I understood my Higher Power, the decision to turn my will and my life over to Him was easy. I began to talk to my Higher Power in prayer and meditation, using gratitude to open this avenue.

Al-Anon's Steps, Traditions and Concepts have provided me with a guide for better living, but it is the Warranties which have had the greatest impact on me. For me, they are the entire Al-Anon programme wrapped up in just a few words.

In the first Warranty, the words “only sufficient operating funds” help me to understand that wealth is not a necessary goal in my life. Although it may be what I think I want, it is not what I need. What I need is enough to survive; to keep a roof over my head; to have food for nourishment; to have heat, water, and light. I do the footwork, make the plans, and then leave it in my Higher Power’s hands without planning the results.

The word “prudent”, for me, is wisdom with balance. This is true with finances and my physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being. Conserving my energy when I am hungry, angry, lonely or tired is prudent. Time for rest and leisure is prudent.

No “unqualified authority” by any one individual means that I can be free when I also allow others to be free. I let others live their lives as they are comfortable so that I may live my life as I am comfortable. I am also less judgmental. No one except my Higher Power has the right, authority or need to take control of me, and I turn others over to their Higher Power. However, I must also realise that sharing my experience strength and hope may help another and listening to them may help me. Today the true authority in all my affairs is a Power greater than myself as He speaks to me through others. This warranty brings balance into my life.

“Unanimity” does not mean that I may not share a dissenting opinion or contrary point of view. I may share my personal feelings, ideas, experiences, strength and hope, but once I have shared, I am not free to insist that others agree, adhere or even listen. Today my family most often discusses decisions to be made, rather than each of us running off in our own direction and thereby creating confusion and chaos.

The fourth Warranty is my think principle. For my actions not to be “personally punitive” to myself or others, either in public or private, I must think before I speak or act. I need to put my brain in gear before I step on the gas or run the engine. Again, the word balance seems to fit in with this warranty.

The democracy of the fifth Warranty is, for me, the Al-Anon programme in action in my life. Through democracy, I become a better trusted servant. I can let others do a job with their ability, not mine, and I am less critical of results that are different than what I anticipated. With true democracy comes freedom, acceptance and unity.

As I keep the words of the Warranties in mind, I become aware that they are a balance of principles, not musts, and that I need to use the Warranties in all my affairs.

Thank you Anonymous for sharing how the principles entailed in Steps One, Two and Three and the Warranties help you to live a balanced life.

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”.

New Face-to-Face Al-Anon Meetings

KwaThema Al-Anon Meeting

Khristo INkosi, Dladla Street, Highland, KwaThema.
Wednesdays 17h00 to 18h00

Mbombela Al-Anon Meeting

St Michael's Anglican Church, Ferreira Street, Mbombela.
Mondays 18h00 -19h00

Middelburg Al-Anon Meeting

Saint John's Presbyterian Church, Middelburg.
Mondays 19h00 -20h00

Midrand Al-Anon Meeting

Cavalry Methodist Church, Halfway House, Midrand.
Wednesdays 19h30 – 20h30

Soweto Al-Anon Meeting

Entokozweni, Early Learning Centre, Moletsane, Soweto.
Sundays 11h00 to 12h30

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 below.

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