

Loners' Letter

Gauteng & Districts ▪ ***Never alone in Al-Anon***

March 2024

Dear Loners

This month, an anonymous Al-Anon member shares on how learning to trust her Higher Power is helping her to break the hold that fear has had on her life.

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During my Step Four inventory, where I “made a searching and fearless moral inventory” of myself, I identified behaviours that have governed my life. I have done the inventory process several times since, coming to a deeper understanding of myself and my character traits each time. I realise now that some of these behavioural patterns were useful at a time in my life but since joining Al-Anon and working the Twelve Steps, I have come to view them differently and have identified better ways of living my life.

While I am ready to have a Higher Power “remove all these defects of character” it is certainly easier said than done. Some of my behaviours... being judgmental of others, self-pity, offering unsolicited advice... are easier to give up than others, especially those that are deeply engrained into my subconscious such as fear.

Giving up on judging others and offering unsolicited advice has been somewhat easier to cut down on. I can recognise when I am doing it. At first, well after I have done it, then just afterwards, then as I am doing it and then just before I am about to do it. Developing this awareness of myself is helping me to let go of these old habits that no longer work for me and it's also helping me to develop new behaviours to replace them such as detachment over the behavior of others and gratitude for the good in my life. These days I remind myself that human beings are all works in progress. I let my judgements go, focusing instead on my own behavior and trying to let others live their lives as they choose.

However, giving up my fear is another matter. Through repeated Step Four inventories I became aware of the underlying role fear plays in so many of my negative behaviours that I would like to give up. When fear raises its head in my life, it can be quite problematic revealing itself in expectations of perfectionism of myself and others, and also procrastination as I avoid the expectations of perfectionism that I impose on myself. I can be very brave about certain things and then paralysed about other things. It has been extremely frustrating trying to root out this fear and continually failing.

Another Al-Anon member suggested that I “drop the fear and pick up the faith” but that did not sound like much of a solution to me. I remained focused on the fear trying to tackle it head on and wondering why I kept failing. Eventually though, I found the solution while working on something else; my relationship with my Higher Power.

In Al-Anon, each member has a private relationship with their Higher Power, a God of their own understanding. I like that Al-Anon leaves the decision about our Higher Power up to us as individuals and that we avoid discussions about the specifics of our beliefs.

Eventually while redoing Steps One, Two and Three over and over again... I came to the conclusion that my relationship with my Higher Power was not working for me. I was believing in my Higher Power on good days, and not believing in my Higher Power on bad days. Gradually I realised that I was just mouthing a belief in a Higher Power and just continuing to run my life on self-reliance and not trusting others to look after me, let alone a Higher Power.

Over time, listening to shares at Al-Anon meetings and noting which passages from our Al-Anon readers and literature were resonating with me, I started to realise that learning to trust my Higher Power would help me to deal with my fear. If I believed that a Higher Power was looking out for me, if I trusted that a Higher Power was guiding me, then perhaps fear wouldn't be ruling my life and affecting my decisions and behaviours. This was not a simple process, it took quite a while but over time I accepted that I wanted to believe in something bigger than myself and that I didn't have to have all the answers about my Higher Power – just that it was good and loving.

A reading in *Courage to Change* (B-16) p.154 was very helpful to me. "I can rely on a Power greater than myself to help me through whatever happens. At first I had to "act as if" I believed that I'd be cared for. But each time I took this risk, I observed the results."

So I started to work on believing that I was connected to my Higher Power and that it was a two-way connection. When that belief was doubtful and I started falling back onto self-reliance, I would "act as if" I was cared for. Doing this has helped to calm my fear as it starts to make itself felt, and it has allowed me to make decisions based on the belief that something bigger than me is also looking out for me.

These days, I ask for guidance on issues that arise, I stay calm and listen, then I use my "act as if" to decide on the course I need to take. I also believe that my High Power is loving and compassionate and that my Higher Power doesn't expect me to be perfect. This helps me to keep trying and to keep growing as my life unfolds in unexpected and unanticipated ways.

Picking up the faith in my Higher Power, is helping me to drop my fear. Fear no longer has as much hidden influence as it did in my life. I am better at recognising when it is influencing my actions and I am learning to let go of expectations of perfection in myself and others. I am working on being more loving and accepting of myself and of others, and I no longer worry about making the perfect choices or being fearful of the future. I am learning to love and trust myself as I am learning to lean on love, strength and guidance from my Higher Power.

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Thank you for sharing how working your Al-Anon programme is helping you to know yourself better and how your connection with your Higher Power is helping you to deal with your fear.

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

#### **Convention 2024**

*Date:* 29 to 31 March 2024

*Venue:* Linkside High School, Milpark, Gqeberha/PE.

*Entrance:* R150

*Register:* [www.aasouthafrica.org.za/event/convention-2024/](http://www.aasouthafrica.org.za/event/convention-2024/)

### New Face-to-Face Al-Anon Meetings

#### **KwaThema Al-Anon Meeting**

Khristo INkosi, Dladla Street, Highland, KwaThema.  
Wednesdays 17h00 –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 – 12h30

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**Thank you to everyone who contributes.**

**#Tradition Seven**

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