

Loners' Letter

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

April 2024

Dear Loners

Today we hear from an anonymous Al-Anon member who shares how trusting his Higher Power has helped him to accept himself and to grow spiritually. Trusting God has also helped him to accept other people as they are.

~ ~ ~

My Dad was a functioning alcoholic. Every Friday, Saturday and Sunday he got drunk with his friends and on Wednesdays as well because that was his golf day. Even though he worked on Saturdays and most Sundays, he never missed work.

On holidays he and his friend got drunk every day. Most of the time they were fun when they were drunk so I didn't give it much thought. I assumed it was normal, because all of his friends did it as well.

It was only much later that I found out how my childhood affected me. Of the four brothers, I am the only one whose dysfunctionality took a financial form. My brothers have anger issues, depression and are workaholics, but they are financially successful. I got kicked out of university and couldn't hold on to a job, and this led me to believe that I was the screw-up of the family.

My Mom used to tell me that my Dad told her every night that he didn't know where he went wrong with me. I didn't blame him for my problems though; I just thought I was lazy. I believed I could fix everything if I just worked harder. I never understood how complex the problem was.

It was only at the age of 35 that I started to realise that the problem was much more complex and I began to believe that I was a very broken person. By this time, I was a full-on drug addict; I had no job and no friends, and I was staying with my parents.

Two years later I went to rehab, that led me to AA and that led me to Al-Anon. In Al-Anon they said they have a program that would make me better. They had a bunch of tools. They had the Twelve Steps, the Traditions, Slogans, Conference Approved Literature (CAL) and the fellowship of other Al-Anon members.

I felt like I didn't really need the people because I was independent. I was 38 years old and staying with my parents, but I was independent.

I decided to unpack the Al-Anon tools and figure out how they worked. I remember there was one tool that caught my eye. It said, *Trust God*. I didn't know how trusting God was going to fix me so I decided that this was probably a useless tool. Over time these two words, *Trust God*, took on a whole new meaning for me.

I read something that summed it up quite nicely for me.

- What if we knew with certainty, that everything we are worried about today will work out perfectly?
- What if we had a guarantee, that the problem bothering us today would be worked out in the most perfect way at the perfect time, and in time we would be grateful for that problem?
- What if I know my worst fear would work out for the best?
- What if I had a guarantee that everything that happened in my past was meant to be, planned for me and in my best interests?

It was at this point that I realised that my Dad was the perfect father for me. He was not the perfect father but he was exactly what I needed to become the person that I am intended to become. My Higher Power knew what he was doing. It was merely part of the process where he shapes me; a process that will last an eternity.

My relationship with my Dad changed after that insight. I accepted him exactly for who he was, and appreciated everything he did for me... the pleasant and the unpleasant. A year later he told my girlfriend that I was the only person in the world that understood him. I didn't understand him, but I accepted him.

My Dad never realised he was the perfect father for me. Al-Anon doesn't give me the tools to alter the perception of others, only my perceptions. I sometimes listen to alcoholics feeling guilty and ashamed for what they did for their kids, or Al-Anon Adult Children members being resentful about their childhood, and I want to tell them but it is exactly as God wanted it. It was the process... it was in both your best interests. Then I realise that these people understand exactly what they are supposed to understand at this part of their journey, and I can slip back into serenity.

- What if I had a guarantee that the people I love are experiencing exactly what they need in order to become who they are intended to become?
- What if I knew everybody in my life was placed there by God to assist with this process?

Now I can have the perfect relationship with everybody. I just need to understand the perfect relationship is not a relationship without dysfunctionality but any relationship with a person God puts in my life for reasons that I don't have to understand.

Trusting God didn't fix me, but it stopped me from believing I was broken, and that is basically the same thing. Trusting God will never take away all my fears, because for me spiritual growth is transforming my fears into love. I can't transform my fears if I avoid them; I need to feel them.

I went paragliding a while back, and the weather was quite rough. I was out of my comfort zone and prayed to God to keep me safe and give me courage. The next moment my wing collapsed and I dropped 10 m before it inflated. I started to swear at my Higher Power, but then I realised I was 400 m in the air and this probably not the best place to pick a fight with him. I told him I was sorry and flew to the ground as quickly as possible. When I got to the ground, the weather got even worse and I was very grateful that I was on the ground. I thanked God for getting me to the ground so quickly but told him I am still not speaking to him for a week.

It made me realise, that no matter how uncomfortable or fearful I am, God knows something I don't and this situation is in my best interest.

- What if we knew everything was OK, and we didn't have to worry about a thing? What would we do then?

The answer came to me in a WhatsApp video. An older lady talked to a younger man and told him, "Good people do things for other people. The end."

When I know I am OK, it frees me up to help others. All the blessings that have flown into my life in the past five years; my new girlfriend, my beautiful relationship with my family, my new friends, my new business, are not going to make me happy if I don't use it to help others. So currently spirituality to me is this: *Trust God, help others.*

~ ~ ~

Thank you for sharing how trusting your Higher Power is helping you to heal and find serenity.

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".

Upcoming Events

Al-Anon 73th Birthday

Date: 25 May 2024

Registration: 08h00 – 09h00

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

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

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.

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 and use your **name, event** or **group** as the reference.

PayFast: Al-Anon Information Services

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

Please use group or event and members name as reference.

If you would prefer not to receive this newsletter, please send an email to alanontvl@absamail.co.za with the word **UNSUBSCRIBE** in the subject and your name will be removed from the distribution lists. If you know of new members who would like