

Loners' Letter

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

July 2024

Dear Loners

In this month's share, an anonymous member shares how she has come to lean on the word *hope* in her Al-Anon journey of recovery.

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"When I count my blessings, I remember to count Al-Anon's gift of hope." (*Hope For Today* [B-27], p. 366)

Al-Anon slogans and acronyms are some of the easiest tools of the Al-Anon program to use, whether we are long-time members or newcomers. They serve as gentle, calming reminders that our pain and suffering can be overcome, "One Day at a Time". I may feel frustrated and desperate, because of my circumstances, but these tools help me to see that there is light at the end of the tunnel.

The brief, comprehensive slogans and acronyms offer hope, reassurance and comfort. They help me to calm down, take stock of my situation and look at my problems, through a different perspective and changed attitudes. I can immediately change how I perceive myself, others and my addicted loved ones. I can treat them and myself with respect, empathy and compassion. A simple slogan or acronym can help put things into perspective when I am overwhelmed, confused and desperate.

Hope is a word that has new meanings for me since I joined Al-Anon. When I came into the program back in August 2021, I felt utterly bereft and hopeless. However, I found help, love and understanding in the program, and soon, I was not hopeless or helpless. I felt empowered and I was no longer swinging on the pendulum of hate, resentment, anger, despair, desperation and denial.

H.O.P.E

Happy. Our. Program. Exists.

Hold on the pain ends

Hold on the pain exits

Hold on positivity exists

It took some work on my part to achieve this. I read Conference Approved Literature, I attended meetings, I spoke to other Al-Anon members, I reasoned things out, I worked the Steps and I started applying the principles in all my affairs. I also surrendered to my Higher

Power; the God of my understanding. Through attending Al-Anon meetings, I had realised that: I can't, God can, and I let God.

The acronym HOPE that most applies to me is one that I read about in the 2018 issue of *The Forum*. Hearing. Openess. Practice. Educate.

H = *Hearing*: I *hear* at meetings what others have to say, when they share their experience, strength and hope. I benefit greatly from their shared stories and wisdom, and I grow in strength. I "Listen and Learn"; I remove the cotton wool from my ears and put it in my mouth. By making an effort to *hear* the words of others, I am also practicing "Pause".

O = *Openess*: I *open* my heart and mind to different ideas and become willing to consider that what has helped others may help me, too. The slogan I practice is "Keep an Open Mind". As I practice keeping an *open* mind, I tend to cross paths with people who are also flexible in their thinking and we help each other to see more clearly. (Courage to Change [B16], p. 147)

I also remind myself of the Al-Anon closing: "If you try to keep an open mind, you will find help. You will come to realize that there is no situation too difficult to be bettered and no unhappiness too great to be lessened."

P = *Practice*: I *practice* what I learn using the Steps, Serenity Prayer, slogans, and other program tools to attain peace of mind. The Al-Anon program is about "Progress, not Perfection" and I understand that I will not graduate from Al-Anon. Members *practice* the Al-Anon principles in their lives. Fortunately practicing Al-Anon principles benefits me in all my affairs. I know I am part of the Al-Anon program for life and "Keep Coming Back" is the slogan I associate with the word *practice*.

E = *Educate*: I *educate* myself about the disease of alcoholism, so I can better understand what my loved one is going through. I use Al-Anon Conference Approved Literature to work toward my recovery. The slogans and sayings I associate with this are "Keep an Open Mind", "Live and Let Live", "Living Life on Life's Terms" and "Together We Can Make It".

I also find this quote helpful: "'Live and Let Live' helps me stay on my own plot of recovery where I can do the most good, rather than wasting my time on someone else's." (*Hope for Today* [B-27], p. 70)

"Living Life on Life's Terms" means that when life shows up, I take it as it comes and I don't run from my problems by controlling and going back to my old habits of living in self-pity. Dealing with life on life's terms is not something I am accustomed to. I am learning to do this in Al-Anon through Awareness, Acceptance and Action.

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Thank you for sharing how your engagement with the Al-Anon program is helping you to grow in hope and understanding.

Best wishes

Clare

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

### **Soweto Al-Anon Meeting**

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

### **Middelburg Al-Anon Meeting**

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

### **Glenferness Al-Anon Meeting**

125 Duncan Road, Glenferness, Midrand.  
Tuesdays 19h00 – 20h00

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

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

### **Midrand Al-Anon Meeting**

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

**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

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