

Al-Anon Family Groups CAPE AREA ECHO

For information regarding meetings please contact one of the numbers below or refer to the 'List of Meetings' at

<https://www.alanon.org.za/meetings/>

CAPE AREA OFFICE: WhatsApp 066 158 0234 / Telephone 021 595 4517 / Email: alanonct@afrika.com

NEW SITE, NEW LOOK – Visit Al-Anon South Africa's new website at <https://www.alanon.org.za/>

ISSUE NO. 1 OF 2025 (JANUARY)

NEWCOMERS ZOOM MEETING Group for newcomers, newer Al-Anon members or those struggling with active alcoholism. Welcome to Newcomers <https://www.alanon.org.za/welcome/>

Cape Town: Wednesdays 5pm

WhatsApp: 066 158 0234

Al-Anon is a mutual support program for people whose lives have been affected by someone else's drinking. Alateen, a part of the Al-Anon Family Groups, is a fellowship of young people (mostly teenagers) whose lives have been affected by someone else's drinking whether they are in your life drinking or not. Opinions expressed herein are not to be attributed to Al-Anon as a whole. Members share their personal experiences and stories and invite other members to 'take what you liked and leave the rest', to determine for themselves what lesson they could apply to their own lives

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WHAT'S ON IN THE AREA?

Al-Anon Family Groups
Help and hope for families and friends of problem drinkers

CAPE AREA

SAVE

22 FEB '25

VALENTINE'S WALK, ALPHEN TRIAL, CONSTANTIA
MORE INFO TO FOLLOW

JAN '25

TRIPLE A RALLY
MORE INFO TO FOLLOW

THE

MAR '25

LOIS BIRTHDAY HIGH TEA/IAGSM FUNDRAISER
MORE INFO TO FOLLOW

CAPE AREA NEWS

Area Office Annual Closure

Please note that the last day to collect literature from the office will be Wednesday, 18 December. The last date for literature orders that require delivery will be Thursday, 12 December. The office will be closed from Thursday, 19 December 2024 and reopen on Monday, 13 January 2025.

Conference Approved Literature (CAL) – a gift that keeps on giving

Books, pamphlets and/or bookmarks make wonderful gifts or stocking fillers for family and friends. Visit the office or view literature online to see what's available. You'll find that there's literature for everyone – teens, adult children, spouses, friends, parents, grandparents and anyone else who may be affected by someone else's drinking. At an extra cost, literature can be delivered to almost anywhere in South Africa. Contact the office administrator for more information.

CAL SPECIALS!

The Area is offering its members great specials on selected locally printed CAL. There are limited stock available. Prices will

be valid while stocks last or to end March 2025. Contact the office to place your order. If you are considering placing orders for literature or purchasing literature as gifts, please ensure your orders are placed on or before 12 December.

Al-Anon Family Groups
Help and hope for families and friends of problem drinkers

LITERATURE SPECIALS 2024

Limited stocks – These specials will only be available to 31 March 2025 or as long as stocks last. Office will be closed from Thursday, 19 December 2024 and reopen Monday, 13 January 2025.

ITEM	CAT	DESCRIPTION
3032A	SKS	Alateen: hope for children
3062A	SKS	One day at a time
3162A	SKS	Courage to change
3247A	SKS	Paths to Recovery
3272A	SKS	Hope for today
3322A	SKS	How Al-Anon Works
3332A	SKS	Intimacy in alcoholic relationships
36A	SKS	I'm doing 'n keer
K10	PAM	Sold Out Newcomer Packet
A022A	CRD	Serenity Bookmark
M122A	CRD	Just for Today Al-Anon Bookmark
M132A	CRD	Just for Today Alateen Bookmark (thead)
M132A	CRD	Just for Tonight Al-Anon Bookmark
P07	PAM	A guide for the family of the alcoholic
R18	PAM	Parents of alcoholics
S12A	PAM	Detachment
A24	CRD	Focus Declaration Table Card

Bank Details:
Bank: ABSA
Account: Al-Anon Family Groups Cape Area
Account No.: 4073215579
Branch: 630005
Type: Cheque
Ref: LI-50, Name: Group

Contact Annalise at the Office:
Monday to Thursday: 9:30 - 2pm
Phone: 021 5954517
WhatsApp: 0661580234
E-mail: alanonct@afrika.com

Al-Anon Family Groups
Help and hope for families and friends of problem drinkers

Resources available on website!!

Visit the South African website <https://www.alanon.org.za/> and find the many resources available to you just a click away. There are guidelines at <https://www.alanon.org.za/manuals-and-guidelines/> that may help you navigate family gatherings, and many invaluable resources such as "Suggestions to Improve Relationships at Family Gatherings"; "Suggested Guidelines for Living with an Alcoholic"; "Suggested Newcomer's Readings" and much more.



Reach Out Today

"True spirituality is not to escape life but to embrace life as it is." From The Forum.

"Place yourself in the middle of the stream of power and wisdom which animates all whom it floats, and you are without effort impelled to truth, to right and a perfect contentment." – Ralph Waldo Emerson, Spiritual Laws

In my life I've used religion as a crutch and I've turned my back on it, at various times. Thanks to the gift of desperation that brought me to Al-Anon, devastated by a loved one's drinking, I have found a stream of power and wisdom – and also of love, compassion, grace, courage, so many good things – that I can put myself into.

I have learned that if I keep my mind and heart open to the world, I receive the answers I need to live a life of contentment, joy and purpose, one day at a time. Even though I still have a problem drinker in my life.

I have learned that a prayer can be as simple as saying "I am awake" when I wake up or "Please" when I struggle.

Most of all, I have learned to reach out for help to my Al-Anon family. I only have to put up my hand and I am put into that stream of wisdom.

Reach out today if you need to. And trust that you will find answers. The answers might not come in pretty packages with ribbons and bows, but they will be what you need to grow. Love in fellowship.

By Hanlie, Cape Area

"Fellowship of the Spirit"

Betty's Bay – Summer Rally 29th November to 1st December.

I've always wanted to attend a Summer Rally, and the day was perfectly bright and mild for my day visit.

Al-Anon – help and hope for families and friends of problem drinkers.

This year's was held on the Overberg coast in the majestic DisaKloof River Trail campsite. I could already hear Cliff Richard's popular song calling, "We're all going on a summer holiday". What an adventure, passing through quaint villages like Rooiels and Pringle Bay.

Stopping to snap photos of seaside cottages and tidal pools, the iconic coastal road hugs the sea edge with towering mountains on the one side and waves crashing over rocks on the other.

Surrounded by fragrant fynbos gardens, I felt great excitement as I crunched up the gravel driveway. The sound of happy chatting and laughter could be heard from under the trees, and I joined for early morning coffee.

Beautiful shares and meetings with titles like "The age of miracles is still with us" and "The spiritual life is not a theory", invited me into a deeper spiritual journey.

Hearing the courageous stories of both A.A. and Al-Anon speakers moved me to tears.

The campsite was very well equipped with lovely cottages, campsites, ample ablutions, halls for open and closed meetings and dining. Delicious teas and lunches are always served at these rallies.

Well stocked inexpensive literature tables usually draw a lot of interest and add well needed funds to the coffers.

I especially love making new friends from different areas and even, to my surprise, hometown. In this setting I have the freedom to make close connections and can talk openly about my own recovery journey and some of the dilemmas I face myself.

I find folks eager to share their program heartaches and victories and I left feeling both challenged and inspired.

I have never experienced a similar recovery countdown. As an open group, we were invited to share our recovery date, starting from 50 years down to one day, one by one we stood up and joined the circle snaking right round the edge of the room. Holding hands, we felt humble reverence for the combined bravery of each soul. Finally, the three longest timers spent one on one time encouraging the three newest members. What a sense of oneness settled on that hall.

We are not and never have to feel alone again.

By Jean, Cape Area

Passing on the Comfort I Found

I came to Al-Anon out of desperation. I was desperate to learn how to get my alcoholic loved one to stop drinking. I was consumed with anxiety and obsessed about his every move. I felt guilty about

neglecting our daughter and believed I wasn't being a good mom. I had isolated myself from my friends, I was losing focus at work, and I wasn't sleeping or taking care of myself.

My first meeting gave me hope that if I kept going to meetings, things would get better. At the time, I didn't realize that meant that I would get better! Regardless of whether my loved one kept drinking or not, I would get better. Imagine that!

I think I cried my way through those first meetings. After one such meeting, a kind older member approached me and spoke to me gently. She told me that I would be okay. Just hearing that I would be okay was the experience, strength, and hope I needed. Then she gave me the most wonderful hug and passed me some neatly folded pages. She said that over the years of coming to Al-Anon, she had compiled these wise words that had helped her, and she was passing them on to me.

That was almost eight years ago, and that member has since passed away. I continue to go to meetings and have gratefully taken on service, because I truly believe that when I get busy, I get better. I try to be a comfort to new members like she was to me. I pass on her wise words, paying forward her kindness, strength, and hope. Her kindness that day and her wise words continue to comfort and inspire me.

By Karen A., The Forum, November 2024

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New Beginnings, New Hope, New Choices

How many beginnings do I have in my life? As the world changes, as I change, opportunities for new beginnings appear. Accepting that change is a fact, and a reality has certainly helped me in my recovery.

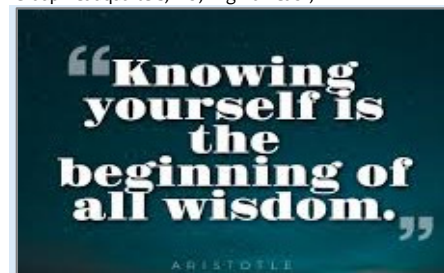
It took time – months, even years of weekly Al-Anon meetings in my rural town before I recognized how powerless I was to change the person I loved and realized I was trying to control his behaviour. I wanted him to have the same dreams I had and to want the same family happiness I wanted. I had thought that I could accomplish this dream if I just prayed with all my heart and studied my religious scriptures. I believed we could be happy if he changed.

Then came Al-Anon. Step One says, "We admitted we were powerless over alcohol – that our lives had become unmanageable." This is written in the past tense. Something has already changed. I am looking back. I am standing on the first Step.

As I continued in the Al-Anon program, each Step I worked on brought me to a new view from a higher position. Over time, as I studied each Step, I finally got to a place where I could "see the future." I saw new hope and discovered new choices. Now I love waking up to each new day. It may be the usual routine or hold some new experience. But Steps One, Two, and Three always bring renewed hope and new possibilities as I apply them to my life today.

By Rosemarie B., The Forum, October 2024

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Uncovering the Beauty Within

My adult daughter was visiting me from out of state. Throughout her life, she has struggled with anxiety and depression. When I look at her, I see a beautiful, statuesque young woman, but her appearance shows only her outer protective shell, not the thick layers of fear, abandonment, need for control, and other symptoms of the family disease of alcoholism that encase the beautiful being hidden within.

I know this because I am an adult child of alcoholics. I understand her because I was her. I learned at a tender age to be hypervigilant and observant to try to control my out-of-control family life. My main control method was trying to make all the angry, depressed, sad people around me happy. Their happiness was my focus. My attempts to cope with my family situation created a protective shell made of hard, thick layers of dishonesty, distorted thinking, fear, anxiety, and self-loathing. By the time I was my daughter's age, my thinking about myself and others was warped.

I had no idea who I was, what I felt, or how to get the love and security I longed for. I sought to fill these needs in all the wrong places – self-medicating with alcohol; dating men who were alcoholics, addicts, or emotionally unavailable; and spending time with "friends" I wanted to please even though I didn't like them.

I attended my first Al-Anon meeting over 40 years ago. Before that, I didn't know that my mother, father, and sister were alcoholics. Having been planted deep in the woods of a dysfunctional family, I

had no way of knowing there were other ways of living in the world. But Al-Anon changed this.

During my early days in Al-Anon, I was my usual silent, sad, miserable self, though I kept a smile painted on my face no matter how awful, angry, and resentful I felt inside. I was so focused on everyone else I never thought of honestly looking at myself. But I heard over and over that “in this program, the focus is on you.” That idea was foreign to me. I had no idea that the security, stability, and love I longed for could never be found outside myself, which was where I was seeking it. Instead, it resided within me where my Higher Power was.

Al-Anon is the spiritual vessel on which I set sail all those years ago in my quest to discover what was hidden beneath the shell I grew to protect my heart. The meetings, literature, Steps, principles, my Sponsor, service, and friendships helped me navigate life in new ways and recover from the devastating effects alcohol and addiction had on my life. Today, the Al-Anon program continues to reveal those parts of my shell that still need to be removed to uncover more of the serene, joyful, beautiful me inside.

By Anon, *The Forum*, July 2024

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Getting Off the Rollercoaster

The last six years of my life have been a rollercoaster, both physically and emotionally. At times, I have felt like it's me against the world. I have felt angry, confused, and most of the time, very alone. About a month ago, I decided to start attending Al-Anon.

I went into the meetings looking for answers to all my problems. I was hoping someone was going to tell me what to do. What I found was so much better. I found a group of people who knew what I was going through—without ever meeting me before. I talked, and they listened. They never offered an opinion on what I should do, they just listened. I was not alone! In turn, I sat and listened to their stories and found comfort and hope I thought I could never feel again.

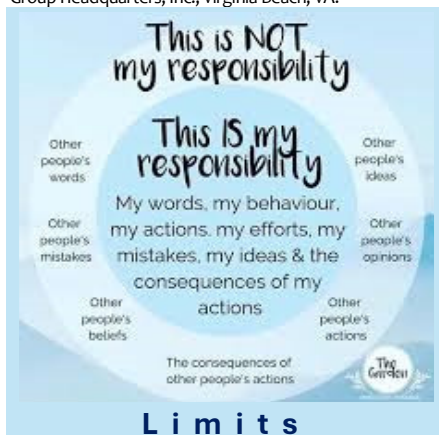
Now, if I find myself in a day where I cannot control my thoughts or anxieties, I find a meeting to go to. They are everywhere. And in an hour or so, I feel better. Since I have been affected by the alcoholism and addiction of someone I love, I continue on my Al-Anon path. It was intimidating at first, walking into a room with people I had never met—let alone sharing some of my deepest thoughts and feelings—but it helped. Three things I've learned in Al-Anon that I repeat to myself

often are: 1) the drinking is not my fault; 2) I cannot control the choices of others; and 3) I am not alone.

Walking with people who care about me and my recovery, I can hang on and be strong!

By Ben D., *The Forum*, September 2022

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In living with the alcoholic there have been many discussions where we both said very hurtful words to each other – painful things that made us suffer.

This was repeated often until it became normal within our coexistence.

In Al-Anon I learn to see these behaviours as something in common among those of us who suffer from living with active disease. The alcoholic may tend to provoke arguments and thus find one more reason to drink.

I have also learned to see the situation with new perspective and to change my way of acting by setting my own limits.

When I noticed another heated discussion was starting again, I was able to calm down and not fall for the provocations. I focus on what I learned in the program, and I apply the motto “Live and Let Live”. I calmly tell him that it is not the time to speak, that while he is so drunk I'm not going to argue, even if he might want to. We can talk another day, and I withdraw from him, maintain distance and leave him alone.

Al-Anon teaches me that I am not responsible for what others do, I am only responsible for me, my actions and my welfare.

I start to respect myself and also to respect others. One of my limits is respect.

When I see that the other person – through their gestures, words or actions – disrespects me, I concentrate, and I gain strength and defend myself by moving away in those tense moments of that situation.

Everyone is free to make their decisions, and my decision is to achieve my serenity.

By MC. Area 10, *Austra-Link*, January 2024

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Finding Courage

This programme has changed my life in so many ways. When I came to Al-Anon, I was full of anger and resentment. I hated my alcoholic husband and my mother, who I blamed for not loving me and for the way she treated me in my childhood.

Slowly, my thinking changed, and these feelings started to melt away like the story of the snowman in *Hope for Today* – Feb 23rd.

I listened to people at the meetings and realised that my husband suffered from a disease called alcoholism and that my mother's behaviour was due to her being affected by my father's drinking.

Things started to fall into place, and I started to have feelings of compassion and empathy. Then my behaviour toward them changed and our relationships got better. It wasn't easy. I had to have a long hard look at myself, and I realised my behaviour in the drinking days was just the same as my mother's.

Through a lot of hard work on myself with my Sponsor, I am proud of myself today. I have gained self-worth, self-esteem and gained a confidence I never had.

I only have all this One Day at a Time. That's why I stay in Al-Anon, even though there is no alcoholism in my life now. I must live with myself. I need this programme to keep me on track.

By Myra, *Southsea, Al-Anon Today*, Spring

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My Tool for Program Reflection

I belong to an electronic Al-Anon group, categorized on the Al-Anon meeting search page as a “bulletin board” group. I love it! It has become a powerful tool for working my program, because of the unique advantages a bulletin board format provides over the live meetings.

My ability to attend bulletin board meetings is not limited by set meeting times. These meetings are open and available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. I can go every day, which has made a big difference in my progress.

Bulletin board meetings are conducted in writing, with sharings posted and left up for a month. I can go back and revisit anything I find helpful, which allows me to study Conference Approved Literature (CAL) and absorb the experience, strength, and hope shared.

Each morning there is a new meeting topic posted on the site, with corresponding CAL and a lead from the meeting chairperson. Just as in any Al-Anon meeting, experience, strength,

and hope from members follows. If I don't feel ready to share, I can go about my day, explore my reactions and feelings around the topic, and then come back to post my share when my thoughts have settled. Bulletin board meetings allow me to develop a deeper understanding of the topic and of myself.

By Anon, The Forum, December 2024

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The story of an Adult Child of an Alcoholic

Every good story begins with Once Upon a Time. Once upon a time, not too many years ago, there was a man who had already survived his mid-life crisis, but who was nevertheless a confused and indecisive individual. He was unable to make progress in any field of endeavour, because he kept changing the direction in which he wanted to go. Why was this so? He didn't yet realise the full impact, but he had grown up in an alcoholic family. His father, now dead, had behaved in a completely bizarre way throughout the man's life, getting worse as dementia set in. His mother was just not able to deal with the problem. The anxieties and fears that the man was experiencing were the consequences of this. It was at this stage that the man decided to take control of his life.

It is only in looking back that I am able to see the path I have already taken and realise that there have been far too many coincidences for the whole journey to have been pure chance. The process has definitely been under the control and direction of God. Through a combination of therapy, self-study and Al-Anon's Twelve Step program recovery has been taking place for some time now. Like all adult children of alcoholics, I have to deal with issues of emotional and physical abandonment. Children of an alcoholic grow up with deep sense of worthlessness. There is a feeling of constant fear, primal fear of survival, which manifests itself in feelings of hurt and anger. Anger is a way of dealing with fear and this is one of the biggest problems in my life.

This is a problem that has resulted in mistreatment of those that I really love and care for. I abused them in ways that still leave me with feelings of guilt. It is to my own children that I have to make amends. They have inherited the anger and resentment I have carried all my life, and before it causes problems in their own relationships, I need to spend time with them talking through this issue.

Confusion has plagued me all my life. At school I was a poor student. I just couldn't

get my thoughts coordinated. When I tried studying at university level in my early twenties, I just couldn't do it. Later I was able to get organised enough to study, but then I just studied for the sake of studying – any topic of course would do. But there is hope. Progress has been made; various areas of my life are more organised than they have ever been before. Today I study for a definite purpose: I have definite goals.

We started this story with "Once upon a time", so while I can't say with certainty "and they lived happily ever after", I can say that the journey of recovery is helping me get a little better one day at a time. Where I am today and where I have been are two different places, and where I am now is a far happier place than I ever realised was possible. No longer do I think and act like a victim. More and more, I think and act like a winner. That can only be a good thing, so yes, they did all live happily ever after.

By Dave, Gauteng & Districts Area, Unitas, September 2008



Hope and Help for Young People who are the Relatives and Friends of a Problem Drinker

Alateen: Finding Compassion, Empathy, and Family

My mother is an alcoholic. She has been one since the day I was born. But there was a period of peace that lasted until I was four or five years old. I remember snuggling with her on the couch under our special blanket to watch movies. My parents were happy together, and I was happy with them.

Things got worse, and there were lots of incidents, but never did I think I'd have to experience a day that would lead to losing my mother forever. That day came when I was eight and walked in from school to find my mom unconscious on the stairs and bleeding from her head.

My father explained that no one was harming my mom but herself. As a child, of course, I wondered if it was my fault. I wondered what I had done wrong to deserve this. What could I have done differently? When these questions got so intense that I would break down and cry into my father's arms and every tear was about blaming myself, he decided I needed support. We both had needed it for years.

So, we went to Al-Anon and Alateen. When I say Alateen saved me, I don't mean it hyperbolically. I do not think I would be where I am today without it. As an eight-year-old girl, I stepped into that room of teenagers and was accepted with wide-open arms. I was mature for my age, due to the constant need to rely on myself and hold conversations with police, but I was still a lot younger than the other members.

It didn't matter to them, though. I was another child of alcoholic parents, reaching out for help, and they took my hand. And when my mother was taken from the house for involuntary commitment (emergency evaluation and treatment for persons who are a danger to themselves or others due to a mental illness), Alateen guided me through it all.

The Alateen members let me know that I wasn't the only child in the world to experience alcoholism. I had felt that loneliness for years, so having ten or more people share their experiences gave me my first exposure to empathy. Not having my mother around was hard, but I had found my people. These people understood me like no one else could – not even my father, who eventually became an alcoholic himself.

For years after, I struggled, and hard. Nothing was ever consistent for me. It was like no one ever stayed. But Alateen always did. Always.

By Lila, The Forum, March 2024

**Published in The Forum under the title "Always There for Me"*

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Keeping the focus on myself has been the single most important agent for change in my recovery from the family disease of alcoholism.

Weakening the Impact of Alcoholism

Growing up in a home with active alcoholism permanently stained my soul. But in Al-Anon, I've learned that even though I can't change my past, I'm not hopeless. Maybe because tea is my favourite beverage, this image helps me understand that the impact of alcoholism can be diminished.

Once I put a teabag into a cup of hot water, nothing is going to get the tea out of the water again. However, if I pour that tea into a bigger container – a bathtub, for instance – and then fill the tub with clean water, the tea will still be in the water, but the effects of the tea will be greatly weakened. The more fresh water I add, the weaker the tea-like characteristics become.

Every time I go to a meeting, read my Al-Anon literature, talk to a program friend, or connect with the God of my understanding, I'm adding fresh water to my tea-stained heart and soul. The impact of alcoholism will never be completely gone, but its power to colour my life continues to fade as I "Keep Coming Back."

By BJ, New Jersey, The Forum, August 2022

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Alateen is for teenage relatives and friends of alcoholics. Alateen is part of Al-Anon Family Groups. For information about Alateen meetings contact the Area office or the Alateen Coordinator. Office contact details: Email alanonct@iafrica.com
Tel 0215954517/WhatsApp 0661580234

Although you cannot stop anyone else from drinking, you can get support for yourself in an Alateen meeting.

Although you cannot stop anyone else from drinking, you can get support for yourself in Alateen meetings.

ALATEEN

Hope and Help for Young People who are the Relatives and Friends of a Problem Drinker

Alateen, part of the Al-Anon Family Groups, is a fellowship of young people whose lives have been affected by alcoholism in a family member or close friend. We help each other by sharing our experience, strength and hope.

When: Thursdays
Time: 6 to 7pm
Where: Online

WhatsApp 084 502 2542 for login details.

Age group: 12 to 17 year olds

Al-Anon helpline 086 125 2666

Visit www.alanon.org.za for more information.

"Do You Love Me Today?"

Growing up in an alcoholic home, I lived amidst instability and insecurity daily. Unlike children who grew up being told they were loved "to the moon and back," or "this much" by someone with arms spread wide, I would ask my mother, "Do you love me today?" only to be answered with a shrug of her shoulders and, "Eh, same as usual." She died when I was 15, and I never got a different answer.

When my son's drinking grew out of control, I retaliated with all the fury that had gone unexpressed in my childhood. I lectured, punished, and bargained with God. I searched my son's room; snooped in his drawers, closet, and car; rifled his pockets; tested him; and tried to smell his breath when he came close. I cajoled, belittled, and threatened. He lied, stole, and retreated to his room. He was angry and shut me out completely. It seemed I'd lost him. Only when I realized I was losing myself did things begin to change.

In Al-Anon, I learned to start taking care of myself and loving myself. Progress was slow at first because I thought I was unlovable. I felt like a failed daughter and mother. But as I became more aware of how my behaviours transferred my pain to my son, I began to change, to pull back and let him have the dignity and self-determination he is entitled to.

Recently, my son told me he'd tried heroin several months ago. He waited for my response. I waited for my Higher Power. Instead of being angry or upset or hurt, I looked into his eyes and saw my little boy,

my son. I heard myself say, "Thank you for sharing that. Thank you for trusting me. I love you; I always have, and I always will."

Before Al-Anon, I never would have been able to hear that what he was really saying was, "Do you love me today?"

By Deirdre B., New York, The Forum, November 2022

Reprinted with permission of The Forum, Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc., Virginia Beach, VA.

My Al-Anon Journey

My life was unmanageable for many years before coming to Al-Anon. Trying to manage the lives of those around me with problems of alcoholism and addiction-built resentment, self-pity, despair, and negative emotions. It had ripped my life apart and I had difficulty letting go of my anger and resentment. My head felt like a washing machine, and I was clouded with confusion. It not only made me sick but harmed the people around me.

Four years ago, I somehow found the courage to go to my first Al-Anon meeting.

I heard that I couldn't save anyone and that the most loving thing I could do was to take care of myself.

I kept coming back and I knew I was in the right place; these people knew what I was going through. I listened to the shares of the people in the room, and I shed many tears. I read the Al-Anon literature, and I learned not to react, to mind my own business and to detach with love. I learned that I could choose to start my day again at any time.

Going to meetings, listening to the Al-Anon message and working the programme brought peace and serenity into my life. I put my trust in my Sponsor and started working through the Steps. I was told I didn't need to do it all on my own, I didn't need to know all the answers or understand everything all at once. I found a Higher Power, a loving God of my own understanding, and one day at a time I placed my will and my life into his hands.

I began to feel calmer, at peace with myself and a more rational human being. I started to feel emotionally stable and spiritually whole; I could find serenity in the simplest of things.

I was able to let go and release my loved ones into the care of a Higher Power and allow them to heal on their own path whilst loving them and myself through the process. I now hand my loved ones over daily. I continue to practice self-care and keep the focus on myself.

Today, my journey of recovery is ongoing. One day at a time, I have found my wings and begun to fly. Working the Al-Anon programme gives me the tools to live, The Twelve Steps, The Traditions, and the Concepts of Service. I am full of gratitude for

the opportunity of growth offered by my Higher Power and my Al-Anon family.

By Anon, Al-Anon Today, Issue No. 042 Autumn 2024

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Is your group ready to welcome newcomers?

Visit <https://www.alanon.org.za/welcome/> for more information. New pamphlet pack available – "Welcome Newcomers!" (K-10) is available from the office and is currently on special. The pack contains seven pamphlets, "So you love and alcoholic" (P-14), "What do you do about the alcoholic's drinking?" (P-19), "Just for Today bookmark" (M-12), to name a few. Also available are the Newcomer Envelopes (LNE) which contain information on Al-Anon. Stock up on these. Contact the office to place your order.

WELCOME

Having a plan in place to welcome newcomers and visitors to your group throughout the year helps newcomers and members alike.

Here are a few things to keep in mind for your group's "Welcoming Checklist":

- ☒ Ensure that your meeting information is accurate in all locations, including:
 - ☐ The facility in which the meeting takes place
 - ☐ Anywhere the meeting is listed within the community or online
 - ☐ Al-Anon Information Service/InterGroup
 - ☐ Area website
 - ☐ World Service Office
- ☒ Provide specific meeting location instructions on meeting schedules and flyers.
 - ☐ Are there special requirements to gain access to the building or does it require special sign-in for visitors?
 - ☐ Does the facility's contact know the day, time, and location of the meeting?
 - ☐ Does the facility have a way to publish your meeting information?
 - ☐ Are special instructions needed for late arrivals, e.g., "After 7:00 pm, ring buzzer by door."
 - ☐ Are instructions clear enough for out-of-town visitors not familiar with your community?
- ☒ Help people find the meeting room and feel welcome.
 - ☐ Are there signs pointing to the right room for the meeting? Have you gained permission from your facility to display the signs?
 - ☐ Does your group have enough Newcomer Packets and literature on hand?
 - ☐ Does your group have current meeting lists on hand?
- ☒ Consider discussing in a group business meeting if the meeting format should be revised when a newcomer or visitor is present.
 - ☐ Discuss the role of the chairperson when new people are present.
 - ☐ Is there an optional reading in Groups at Work (P-24) that the group would like to read to offer support and hope?

We want everyone to feel welcome in our Al-Anon and Alateen meetings!

Suggestions for meeting topics

- *The 3 C's – Cause, Control, Cure
- *Overcoming fears
- *Using the tools of the programme
- *Detaching with love

Al-Anon Declaration

Let It Begin with Me

When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help,
let the hand of Al-Anon and Alateen
always be there, and—Let It Begin with Me.

Serenity Prayer

God grant me the serenity
to accept the things I cannot change,
courage to change the things I can,
and wisdom to know the difference.



NOTICE BOARD

NEW SITE, NEW LOOK – Visit Al-Anon Family Groups South Africa's NEW website at <https://www.alanon.org.za/>
Visit Al-Anon Family Groups South Africa **NEW ONLINE BOOKSHOP** at <https://online.alanon.org.za/>
CAPE AREA OFFICE CONTACT DETAILS: Tel 0215954517/WhatsApp 0661580234 / Email alanonct@iafrica.com

WHERE DO I BUY CAL (CONFERENCE APPROVED LITERATURE)?

Order your literature by visiting the office, email alanonct@iafrica.com, telephonically on 021 595 4517 or 066 158 0234 or visit the online bookstore at <https://online.alanon.org.za/>. Payment options are direct deposit, EFT, Snapscan, SnapStore, Payfast or cash.
Visit the literature desk at upcoming events to view CAL available. Our friendly literature coordinators will be happy to speak to you.

IN-PERSON & ELECTRONIC MEETINGS

Visit <https://www.alanon.org.za/meetings/> for up-to-date meeting information. Inform the Area office of any changes in group's information. Please contact the office for more information.

Information regarding meetings between 16th December to 22nd January:

- ⚠ Bellville Group will hold an Open Meeting on 25th December at 7.30pm, Presbyterian Church Office, Lingen Street, Bellville.
- ⚠ Constantia Group - Meeting 30th December will be at a private venue. WhatsApp 0723756122 for address.
- ⚠ Courage to Change in person meeting on Tuesday nights – No meetings 24 and 31 December. Meetings resume 7th January.
- ⚠ Delft Group will hold meetings as usual.
- ⚠ Durbanville in person Group will hold meetings as usual
- ⚠ Durbanville Zoom Group will resume meetings 12th January.
- ⚠ Heathfield Group will not be meeting during this period and will resume in January.
- ⚠ Helderberg Morning Group will hold meetings as usual.
- ⚠ Hottentots Holland Group will hold meetings as usual.
- ⚠ Lansdowne Group will hold an Open Meeting on 25th December at 5pm, St Aidan's Anglican Church, Lansdowne.
- ⚠ Maitland Group will be closed on 25th December and 1st January. Meetings will resume 8th January.
- ⚠ Sedgefield/Eden Group will close and resume meetings Wednesday, 22nd January at 9am. Rina will be available if needed.
- ⚠ Stellenbosch Group will hold meetings as usual.

UPCOMING EVENTS

MEETINGS / EVENTS	
*Area Assembly – Saturday, 18 January 2025 at 9.30am (electronic). All members are welcome to attend Area Assemblies.	*Fundraiser – Valentine's Walk – Saturday, 22 February 2025 Alphen Trail, Constantia. Save the date. More information to follow.
RALLIES/CONVENTIONS	
*Triple A Rally 2025 (A.A. Rally with Al-Anon participation) Date: 25 or 26 January 2025 MORE INFORMATION TO FOLLOW.	
*East Rand Convention 2025 (A.A. Convention with Al-Anon participation) Theme: Love and Tolerance Date: 18 to 20 April 2025 Venue: Wordsworth High School, Farramere, Benoni Registration fee: R130 per person Check your inboxes for the Convention 2025 newsletters or contact the office for more information.	
FUNDRAISERS / GROUP NEWS Is your group celebrating a special occasion, holding a combined meeting, arranging a fundraiser? Advertise here. Email details to alanonct@iafrica.net or WhatsApp to 0823422102. Visit https://www.alanon.org.za/meetings/ for meeting details.	

NEXT ISSUE Send Your Shares Submissions due by 17 January 2025

For the next issue the topics are:

- How can you attract newcomers while protecting your anonymity? In what ways does your group welcome newcomers?
- 36 Principles – How has Step 2, Tradition 2 or Concept 2 helped in your recovery process?

"Ever read someone's story and think: This is exactly what I needed to hear today! Your story will do that for someone else."~Kelly McNelis

Please share your experiences, strength and hope on these or any other topic, by sending your shares to alanonct@iafrica.com. We'd also love to have your input on topics for future issues. Send your suggestions to alanonct@iafrica.com. How long should my sharing be? (<https://www.alanon.org/pdf/writing-guide-for-the-forum-F1.pdf>) - Most sharings are 300 to 400 words long but can range from a sentence or two to a 1,200-word personal recovery story.



Are there topics that you would like to read about in upcoming newsletters?

Send your suggestions to alanonct@iafrica.com or WhatsApp 0661580234.

We'd love to hear from you.

Participation Is Key!

TRADITION SEVEN ~ Every group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.

A reminder to all members to pay group contributions on a regular basis. The Area needs every member's contribution to continue to keep its doors open. Every member and group are part of the solution.

"By taking care of our own needs, we can remain free from outside influence." How Al-Anon Works for Families & Friends...

Bank: ABSA, Branch No: 632005 Type: Cheque Acc Name: Al-Anon Family Group Cape Area Account No: 407 321 5579 Ref: GC, Group, Name	SnapScan https://pos.snapscan.io/qr/SSWA0763	SnapStore Pro card machine
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