

Words of Wisdom (WoW)



December 2024



Al-Anon Family Group KwaZulu-Natal

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“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”

Hi everyone

Christmas is upon us and the festivities are in full swing. Family members and friends are gathering from all parts of the country in anticipation of enjoying precious family moments. The Malls and entertainment venues are filled with visitors and people who want to let their hair down after a hard-working year.

This period is often referred to as the silly season as everyone is focused on enjoying themselves with little regard to the consequences.

For many of us in the fellowship holidays are also fraught with stresses and emotional baggage from the past. It also affords me the opportunity to practice and use the Al-Anon tools to navigate this period. Some helpful suggestions are:

- Don't feel obligated to attend every holiday event or celebration.
- You can choose to do something else or go somewhere else that is joyful and serene for you.
- Always carry some Al-Anon literature with you. The Just for Today card and the Serenity prayer are helpful tools.
- Keep your sponsor and Al-Anon friends on Speed dial.
- If you feel stressed or anxious, go for a walk or step outside for a few minutes.
- Plan to leave while things are still good especially if alcohol is being served.
- Set healthy boundaries with family and friends.

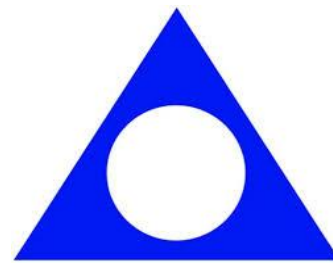
For those who have loved ones celebrating their first sober festive season, my mind goes back to some of the words of wisdom shared by long timers when I entered the doors some 31 years ago. My hubby was three months sober during the festive period:

- Have tea/coffee on tap together with sweet treats.
- Practice an attitude of gratitude. Be grateful for sobriety in your home.
- Be kind, loving and gentle with yourself.
- You are as important as everyone else. Get enough sleep.
- Imbibe the spirit of giving.
- Keep your Al-Anon Family close.
- Attending meetings is important. In the early days attending meetings on both Christmas and New Year's Day was non- negotiable.

I want to take this opportunity to wish everyone a very blissful Christmas and a New year filled with abundance.

With lots of love and warm regards.

Logas M



***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.***

It would be wonderful to have an interactive newsletter, and I look forward to receiving your share (it can be anonymous).

Kindly email any suggestions, stories, queries, and feedback to:
madhunlallogas@gmail.com

***TRADITION 7: Every Group
ought to be fully self-supporting
declining outside contributions***

In keeping with Tradition Seven, I would like to humbly encourage groups /members to continue honouring their monthly financial obligation to our Area Office. **Contributions are voluntary.**

Should you wish to send a gratitude donation, our bank details are as follows:

Bank name: ABSA.
Account name: Al-Anon Family Groups Kwa-Zulu Natal (KZN)
Account number: 4074787557.
Branch name: Musgrave
Branch code: 632005
Reference: Your name / Group

My Dear Al-Anon KZN Family,

As we approach the end of 2024, my heart is once again filled with gratitude, love and hope, as I reflect on the last 12 months and the incredible journey we have shared. I am so grateful for my growth and recovery through service, and I am blessed to be surrounded by, loved and supported by the most wonderful Al-Anon Family Group members.

I have learned ... when called into service, where I have been honest about my capabilities and capacity, have prayed for guidance from my Higher Power and have meditated, listening for answers, where I have been willing to learn, to work hard, and to ask for help, that I am truly living the Al-Anon programme in all my affairs and I am recovering in new, wonderful ways, beyond my wildest dreams.

This year has not been without its challenges, we have lost loved ones and have had to make some big decisions, but we have been blessed with perfect solutions and positive outcomes. I have learned so much from the abundance mindset in our Area that guides our every decision.

Some of our achievements over the year have included our fun-filled Valentines Dinner Dance, a big and beautiful Al-Anon Rally, our scrumptious Food Festival, a well-attended RSS combined with a face-to face ASC meeting, our annual Longtimers Celebration Tea Party, and two high-energy, ever-popular Barnyard fundraiser events. We also introduced more face-to-face Area meetings and events; successfully combining Public Outreach events with ASC meetings in Port Shepstone and Stanger, as well as our inaugural Convention 2026 meeting with an ASC meeting. The KZN Area is so grateful to our wonderful members who supported all these events, through many generous contributions, including their time and hard work.

My heartfelt gratitude goes to all our members in Area service, who contribute so much of their time and energy to keeping the doors of Al-Anon open and making our Al-Anon meetings safe places for recovery and hope, filled with love and laughter. Not only do we work hard in KZN to keep our existing meetings healthy, but we have also managed to start new groups this year. Thank you to all the Area Service Committee portfolio holders who work consistently to meet all their objectives and deadlines, and to the members of the Admin Committee who guide our Area in all aspects.

Our theme for 2025 is "Moving Forward, Embracing Change". Through Al-Anon I have come to love and embrace change. Al-Anon introduced me to the idea that my life can change for the better, when I have the courage to change. Where I once was fearful of change, I now embrace it and see it as an opportunity to grow and explore new choices. Al-Anon has taught me to be flexible, to take risks and to be open to opportunities, and though that I have learned to adapt and grow. I love this quote from Opening Our Hearts, Transforming Our Losses "As we let go of our old, familiar patterns, we become free to inhabit life – in all its vastness – more fully". I look forward to moving forward and embracing change with you.

Our Area is strong and healthy because of you – each one of you has contributed. With Convention 2026 taking place in Durban, this is the perfect opportunity to get further involved, as there are many varied activities - something for everyone. We need each one of you.

My wish for you this holiday season is that it is filled with hope, love, peace and gratitude for the gift of recovery and that you return rested and filled with enthusiasm for what the new year has to offer.

I am so grateful to be journeying together with you and I look forward to a great 2025.

Yours in Service

*Peggy G
KZN Area Chair*

The festive season is almost here, bringing with it a special challenge to those affected by alcoholism. Holiday celebrations can be a time to be forgotten or a time to be cherished. I have experienced both...

As my partner's drinking progressed, I changed from being the life of the party to a party pooper. With a house full of guests, I was still alone. With a table full of delicious meals, I was only full of expectations, disappointment and anger, gripped with anxiety about my partner's drinking, yearning for peace and understanding. Even in the early days of my partner joining AA and me not being in Al-Anon, I was nervous and worried about his sobriety and would be uncomfortable going to parties where alcohol was present.

Coming into Al-Anon, I realized I was not responsible for his drinking, and I am not responsible for his sobriety, but I need to support and encourage him in his recovery. This meant revising our lifestyle to accommodate recovery, making a few sacrifices, doing things a little differently and adopting a positive attitude towards life in sobriety. This doesn't mean that our holidays are monotonous and dull. Simple changes, like no longer purchasing or having alcohol in our home, still allow for the excitement and fun that previous partying entailed. Recovery not only gave me my loved one back, it brought hope and serenity. Our holiday celebrations are now full of love, joy and laughter.

Al-Anon tools like prayer and meditation, having a conscious contact with my Higher Power, always remembering when I can't, God can and I should let Him, practicing the slogans, detaching with love, creating healthy boundaries, developing an attitude of gratitude has been helpful in eliminating stress, worry and fear in uncertain times and in ensuring our family holidays are much more enjoyable and serene.

If you are anxious about your loved one's sobriety or are uncomfortable about going to parties where alcohol is present, you might find the following suggestions helpful:

- *Remember the three C's: you did not cause the alcoholism; you can't control it and you can't cure it.*
- *Detach yourself from the situation: Have an escape plan, a Plan-B, in which you can remove yourself from uncomfortable situations.*
- *Go back to basics when things get stressful: recite the Serenity Prayer, read your literature, practice your slogans, call your sponsor or a friend and continue attending meetings.*
- *Don't participate in the blame game: If things get out of hand, walk out of the room and calm yourself down so you can go back and enjoy your family.*

Whatever your circumstances are this holiday season, remember life's lessons don't always come wrapped in beautiful packages, sometimes they come wrapped in everything we don't want to be. One thing's for sure, it's you who decides whether you place faith over fear, whether you turn your will and life over to your Higher Power, whether you focus on the chaos and uncertainty or whether you Let Go and Let God. You decide if you are the party pooper or the party rocker...

I pray that the understanding, love and peace of our beautiful Al-Anon program grows in all of us throughout the festive season.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS

*Angel B
Woodview Group*