

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@iafrica.com

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

ISSUE NO. 9 OF 2025 (SEPTEMBER)

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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Recovery – Through The Steps

The threefold guides of Al-Anon point the way to a normal, useful life for the individual. They are also a framework within which the groups can carry on their affairs in harmony.

Unity – Through The Traditions

Service – Through The Concepts

WHAT'S ON IN THE AREA



AA SPRING RALLY
West Coast School Saldanha Bay
Friday 3rd - Sunday 5th October 2025

Accommodation incl meals R1100 pp
Day visitors: Full weekend pass R120 pp

Bring own Bedding, Eating Utensils & Totch/Light

Payment by EFT: West Coast Spring Rally
FNB
Acc no: 63152990884
OR
Cash on Check-in
No ATM Cash Deposits Please!

Reservation & Inquiries call:
Sussie 0735216545
Japie 0731830040
Marlene 0722679147

- **Member-At-Large – Admin:** Glenda W., Constantiaberg
- **Public Outreach:** Janice C., Bellville
- **Members Services:** Margie D., Maitland
- **Alt Member Services:** Leslie C., Constantiaberg
- **Alateen:** Carol B., Durbanville
- **Finance:** Fatima D., Courage to Change
- **Alt Finance:** Zelda A., Hottentots Holland
- **Literature:** Colleen C., Maitland
- **Alt Literature:** Lauren S., Lansdowne.
- **Delegates:** Fatima D, Margie D, Zelda A.
- **Alt Delegate:** Roch H., Constantiaberg

"Let It Begin with Me": A Call to Action

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.*



Al-Anon Family Groups®
hope for families & friends of alcoholics

To some, these words may sound like a prayer. However, unlike a request for support from a Higher Power, a declaration is a formal statement, often made to assert something purposefully. The Al-Anon Declaration is more than just a statement of hope – it's a pledge and a promise to be there for others so that no one faces this struggle alone.

The 1974 World Service Conference theme, "Let It Begin with Me," resonated deeply with Al-Anon members. It became the foundation for the Declaration, which was introduced and adopted the following year. First printed as a wallet-sized card, the Declaration appeared in Al-Anon literature and early public outreach materials. Since then, members around the world have recited it. It reminds us of

our personal commitment to recovery and acts as a call to action to help others.

For me, the Declaration not only reminds me to remain committed to my own recovery but also invites me to serve others. Reaching out, offering support, and extending a hand to those who are struggling is my way of fulfilling that promise. It's a living, breathing declaration that requires me to act. I must do more than just hope; I must reach out and help those who are still suffering.

One of my first experiences with public outreach was when I spoke at a local treatment centre. A fellow Al-Anon member had arranged for the inclusion of Al-Anon in their family orientation program, and I volunteered to share my story. As I spoke, I recalled sitting in the same chairs as those attending, feeling the same overwhelming emotions of anger, confusion, and heartbreak. I shared how Al-Anon had been a balm for my pain, offering hope through the example of others in recovery.

A few weeks later, I ran into a woman at my home group who seemed familiar. She mentioned that she had been at the treatment centre and had heard me speak. "You told me to come here," she said with a smile. It was a moment that touched my heart. Knowing that my words had helped her take that first step toward healing reminded me why we do this work. It's not just about sharing our stories; it's about offering hope and showing others; they are not alone.

The Al-Anon Declaration reminds me that while recovery is a shared journey, it begins with each of us committing to help. "Let It Begin with Me."

By Heather S., Associate Director – Community Relations, The Forum, April 2025

2025/26 Service Committee

The Cape Area's Annual General Meeting and Elections took place on 16 August 2025. The positions of Chairperson and Alternate, Policy & Planning Coordinator and Alternate, Alternate Public Outreach, and Fundraiser remain unfilled. Newly elected members have joined the Service Committee; we extend our congratulations and appreciation to these individuals, as well as to all members who have committed to serving the Area. Your dedication is sincerely appreciated.

Meet the new Service Committee

- **Area Service Board Member:** Andrea J., Bellville



The "Hero's" Journey

Ancient myths, earliest writings and modern literature all contain the narrative of the "Hero's Journey" or the "Monomyth Pattern" from as early recorded as 2000BC. The journeys are a template followed by countless pilgrims on their life journeys as they embark on routes of self-discovery, growth and eventual transformation in the unique context of their lives.

Being a member of Al-Anon means that you and I are on this journey, and it is my privilege to share the progress of this pilgrim on her pilgrimage with you.

In "The road less travelled," Scott Peck writes that "Each journey begins with a calling to leave behind that which is familiar and start a journey on a road less travelled," which will make all the difference to one's spiritual journey.

I value each phase of my life: A gentle, loving and exciting childhood. It handed me a wealth of experiences, a love for nature, music, reading and sport. It taught me social skills, values, time and opportunity to try and fail and succeed, introduced me to religion discipline, responsibility and provided me with wonderful role models. I was nurtured and loved, within the framework of a large family in a specific timeframe with accepted value systems, educational premises and disciplinary practises which all contributed to the co-engineering (with myself of course), of a specific ego and personality structure.

Then came a privileged post school education, marriage at the tender age of twenty-one and the start of my teaching career. We enjoyed a carefree early marital life, low stress career and fun socialization. Our first daughter was born four years into married life, and I found the early motherhood phase challenging but fulfilling, with the first distinct development of humility as a "by product".

A golden period of life from my mid-thirties to fifty years of age followed, guiding the children from one successful year to the next, unconsciously notching their achievements against my name too. Enjoying a variety of teaching settings and managing all aspects of life

successfully and happily. Fulfilling my hunger for knowledge by studying postgrad, and subconsciously over identifying with the racked-up degrees as a part of my worth.

By fifty I exited teaching on my own terms, with expectations of a well-controlled new phase in life lying ahead for us, with the same abundance of resources, enthusiasm and smooth sailing. We had decided to relocate from Gauteng to Cape Town. This was a good decade before the "semigration" that has become a regular feature of life.

I do not discount the lessons learned, and the growth recorded in this first half of life, and it was a truly enjoyable time, with me as reference frame to life. My emotions, opinions, judgements, values and interests driving the passion for living. In retrospect this was exercised in a rather controlling, manipulative and assertive way.

Inevitable disappointments, rejections, insecurities and fears were easily absorbed and paled compared to the perceived successes, rewards, acceptance, confidence and courage of this period.

The series of calls to embark on this "Hero's journey" came only when things started unravelling from the neat weave of control.

The call to start the journey in earnest.

Somehow, we begin to believe that life is all about us. Our viewpoint, comfort, future, pain, and the illusion that we have control over our lives.

I was about to begin to realize that the scaffolding of self that was erected from birth was a necessary but temporary support. It was a place I could hang my dreams and my visions, but it was never meant to be permanent. I was soon going to be introduced, painfully, one tiny bit at a time to what is permanent.

When a worldwide economic downturn in 2012/2013 halted our relocation to the Cape midway, with a house sold upcountry in Pretoria and a new one purchased in Somerset West, belongings in storage, but a transfer to a newly established office in Stellenbosch for my husband that never materialised, it was the first loud call to amend the route and heed the call to "change direction and change the mind".

Having gone ahead to spearhead settling in, I had to go back to Gauteng, where my husband had temporarily moved into a tiny, furnished apartment in Johannesburg, and live in limbo for three years under circumstances deemed below my standard at the time. I had to find a job and knuckle down. This

traumatic turn of events guided me firmly along the first stretch of enrolment in "Humility 101". I took my medicine willingly, but little did I realize that this was only foothills being traversed and that the road into the unknown was going to become even rockier and unmanageable.

The wilderness and detours

What we often miss when we set out, often grudgingly, on this journey, because we aren't really given a choice, is that it is not a path that leads somewhere tangible in terms of our habitual references like career, resources, success, status, achievement, etc., but that it is an inner, emotional and a spiritual journey in search of something or somewhere we cannot define and do not have vocabulary for. We do not comprehend the scope and dimension of the path ahead. We dither when we can't find signboards showing the way. We give up when our tried and tested strategies get us nowhere. We panic when we realise, we are going nowhere at a stumble, and often we end up in a maze with no map to escape. This is the liminal space where we are given no option than to face our fears and our wounds.

Often, we are handed reprieves through detours that appear to be solutions to problems and experience some growth happening, compared to where we were, as our plans chug into gear once more and we start gathering momentum in the direction we think we are going.

Valleys of fear

And so, we eventually landed up in the Cape at the beginning of 2017 after a three year pause in the wilderness, for me, and in retrospect for my husband, as I suspect it was here where the "self-medication" began. All seemed set for resuming an earlier, easier version of traversing life until the new unknowns, unfamiliar and new pressures caused the scourge of alcohol abuse to erupt like a rash from a dormant virus. I did not catch on immediately, and ascribed the increased sleeping, lack of energy, enthusiasm and self-care to a bout of depression due to all the changes and pressures of the move.

It was time to face fears, shadow self, wounds and reality. I shifted gears and started tackling the problems with gusto by means we have all employed: coercing, pressuring, threatening, shaming, encouraging, anger, negotiating and eventually by taking off for six months to go and teach in Namibia where I had a six-month contract. The rejection

experienced by my husband escalated the alcohol binging, causing much stress and I believe embarrassment to my daughter, as she and her husband stayed with him in the house for four months as they returned from a gap year in Thailand and waiting for their house to be completed.

And then COVID hit, and lockdown happened, and we were given a reprieve, as the alcohol was no longer such a big factor and our relationship normalised slightly, with great hopes for the future, and convinced that the three-month time out had broken the attachment. Never realising he was managing to stay hooked by his playful obsession to always have pineapple beer on tap!

I searched for a counsellor for joint sessions as agreed during lockdown conversations and after the first sessions, realised there was no intention of changing or addressing the addiction or the broken relationship. I went ballistic and my reactionary behaviours soared. I was helpless and my life had become unmanageable, but I refused to accept reality as it was.

John of the Cross refers to the dark night of the soul, when you get to a place where you have nowhere to turn or deny your own darkness. And I knew I had to surrender my weapons and seek salvation for myself, as I realised, I couldn't save the both of us and our relationship. This is when I joined Al-Anon at the beginning of February 2021.

I needed guardrails to guide me to a radically new understanding of my relationship to my Higher Power, others and myself. I was at last majoring in humility.

The inner journey

"The longest journey you will ever take is the 46 centimetres from your head to your heart." — Andrew Bennett

Somewhere between the desert of our mind and the unexplored wilderness of the heart, there occurs a confrontation... a wrestling match with ourselves. This thrashing and straining and weeping are a slow birthing of a more authentic self. Seeing ourselves and reality as we are and it is. We no longer see ourselves as we should be or who we wanted to be but honestly who we are for ourselves, and so we come to first true self-awareness. Our shadow selves are no longer lurking repressed and unacknowledged, but clothed, accepted and welcomed to the whole with gratitude. We can recognise and release the illusions we hung onto and resume the journey free of this burden.

I believe we have to discover the authentic version of ourselves, before we can even realize how we see and relate to our Higher Power. To meet our authentic selves, I believe we need to be entirely vulnerable.

This battle wounds us, but it is our choice to keep the wounds bleeding or allow them to become valuable scars, reminding us of the progress we have made. The battle scars are a small price to pay for the battle bounty of wisdom, perspective and the loss of illusions. We journey on from each battle with less baggage and more focus.

This inner journey is a mystery and so is attachment, intuitive to how the world we live in operates... but that is probably the point, because if focus remains in how things are done in this world, we will be threatened by and fearful of the inevitability of physical death, but if we have transcended the human obsession with attachment, and practised "dying" to these over and over ... then the inevitable death looming loses all menace and we can enjoy heaven on earth. Serenity and joy amidst chaos/hardship/worry/sadness/disaster or loss.

Homecoming

To experience the distinct awareness that this process is a homecoming, does not mean that our journeys are over, but that we have a powerful "secret" to journey on with. A secret which is hidden in plain sight but requires training to actually see it and embrace it. We have practiced to Let Go and Let God, to Keep It Simple, to THINK, and Keep An Open Mind, to Listen and Learn, to Let It Begin With Me, to Live and Let Live, to ask How Important Is It... to remember we assess progress and don't demand perfection, we remember that But For the Grace of God... and to detach with love.

These things are all do-able **IF** we remain anchored firmly and surrendered in the deeper wisdom and truth of a Higher Power.

Then our lives are glowingly meaningful, and we live with purpose.

I am ending with a provocative quote: *"The spiritual journey is not about becoming someone else, but about unbecoming everything that you are not."* — Lao Tzu

By Fiona S., Port Elizabeth, July 2025

**Change starts
with ME.**

**Letting Healthier Parenting
Begin with Me**

When I first joined Al-Anon, the slogan "Let It Begin with Me" struck me. It felt like those particular words, in that

particular order, were the essence of what brought me to my first meeting.

One memory stands out most clearly. I was in the middle of the kitchen talking to my adolescent daughter. I knew that she was upset with me for something, and I felt so uncomfortable with this idea that I pleadingly asked if she was mad at me. Her face softened and she started to apologize.

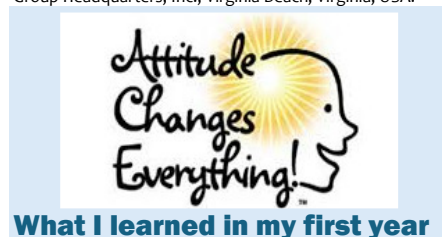
Before she could even finish, I felt as if I were outside my own body, watching the interaction unfold. Immediately, I flashed back to a childhood of over-responsibility. I saw myself unable to experience my own emotions, caring instead only for those of my alcoholic mother. I realized I had been no more responsible for my mother's feelings than my daughter was responsible for mine in the present.

She deserves to have her feelings and be validated for them. As her mother, I am responsible for understanding why her frustration with me or unhappiness at my choices makes me uncomfortable. By accepting this responsibility, I can allow generational trauma to end with me.

By replacing the maladaptive parenting strategies that were modelled for me with program principles and guidance from my Higher Power, I am choosing to "Let It Begin with Me." I can let my daughter's generation of parenting begin with me. It will never be perfect, but when I make the choice every day to seek guidance from my Al-Anon program and my Higher Power, it doesn't have to be.

By Hope W., New York, The Forum, June 2024

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What I learned in my first year

Finding out that the alcoholic was not the cause of my unhappiness was my first revelation in Al-Anon. Even though he had made me so unhappy, I discovered another window through which to view the situation. I took a good look at myself: at my attitude; my arrogance; my selfishness; and my lack of faith, prayer, and spirituality. Through that new window, I tried to take another look at all my life experiences.

I discovered the power of the written word on the mind: the slogans – brief yet so powerful; the literature, so useful in

helping me to see my own defects and, at the same time, a tremendous tool of encouragement and connection to the fellowship.

I still have not truly learned the lesson of detachment but, most important, I've learned that detachment means to turn the focus on myself. Sometimes are harder than others not to feel sorry for myself because of the alcoholic. At times, it's a real challenge to react lovingly, and not coldly, but I am learning with the help and example of my Al-Anon family.

In our meetings, I was surprised, and moved, by the "thank you's" to one another. I am trying to remember to thank my Al-Anon family when they share. Being on the receiving end of "thank you" is very powerful.

I was introduced to the concept of doing God's will. Somehow, I missed this lesson in my upbringing. It was there, but I guess I did not heed it or really listen. I remember learning that we had a free will, but I guess my mind stopped listening at that point. I thought I could just do what I wanted; God had given me the green light.

I'm learning that to do God's will takes patience, just as growing in Al-Anon takes patience. My Al-Anon family members have all helped me on my road to patience. If I truly take the time to listen to their experience, strength, and hope, I will learn something about recovery. That lesson is not always immediate, but it usually comes.

The slogan "Progress Not Perfection" has helped me to keep moving forward, and to keep trying. These tools are such a gift because they give me hope that I can and will recover. I must make the effort – over and over again.

I have learned the power of humour. Some situations involving my husband – where I first felt anxiety – were sometimes humorous in retrospect. I have loved to be a part of all the laughter that at times surfaces in these Al-Anon rooms.

I have often heard many of the members say that these rooms are filled with love. Then one day, I knew it to be true. I could feel the love. How did that happen? The members have been very courageous in sharing with me who they were, who they are now, and who they hope to become or continue to be, by practicing the principles of the program. They have given me the gift of being themselves, and this has helped me in my healing. They have been my comforters.

I, too, am learning that I must make the effort, be brave, and share about myself, because maybe something I've experienced and learned can also help someone else. In this sharing with one another, my Higher Power speaks to me. Tradition One talks about the common good, and I think part of that is my realization that I too must do my part in sharing who I am with my Al-Anon Family group.

Throughout my first year in Al-Anon, members have given me these words of wisdom:

- Surrender the problem to God.
- I don't have to react to what other people do.
- Knowing you have a choice is empowering.
- Give love; "Let It Begin with Me."
- Gratitude reduces fear.
- When you change the way you look at things, things you look at change.
- Consider what's in the hula-hoop and what's outside it.
- Relax – God is in charge.

I learned the importance of service. Once I started setting up for the meeting, reading the opening and closing, or choosing a topic for discussion, I really felt like I was a part of the fellowship. Service was the beginning in giving a little bit of myself and helping me feel more comfortable with the members of my Al-Anon family.

The spirituality of the Twelve Steps has helped melt my heart; it has helped me to be unafraid. It has helped me to accept my husband, as well as other people in my life. It has given me the means to maintain a positive attitude.

I have often heard many of the members say that they are grateful to the alcoholic who brought them to these rooms. I am not yet ready to say that I am grateful to the alcoholic. I know it would be my wish that he never had a problem with alcohol. Yet I know that in wishing that, I would have never walked into the Al-Anon rooms, and I probably would never have met the God of my understanding. Perhaps my reluctance to say it is a sign that I still have so much to work on. Perhaps it is a sign that I still have resentments. Should that time ever come where I can say I am grateful for the alcoholic in my life, I will celebrate that milestone with all the members of my Al-Anon home group!

Thank you for sharing in my first-year anniversary!

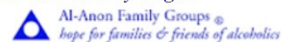
By Catherine R., Connecticut, The Forum, November 2011

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Uitleef van die Al-Anon Verklaring

Die Al-Anon Verklaring

Laat Dit Met My Begin
Wanneer enigiemand, enige plek, uitreik vir hulp, laat die hand van Al-Anon en Alateen altyd daar wees, en –
Laat dit met My begin.



In my vroeë dae in AlAnon het ek 'n dieper bewustheid ontvang van die uitwerking van alkoholisme op my lewe en verhoudings. Deur Al-Anon-vergaderings, literatuur en die gedeelde ervarings van mede-lede het ek die gevolge van alkoholisme en die gedrag wat daarmee gepaarde gaan, herken.

Bewustheid alleen was egter nie genoeg om my groei en genesing te bewerkstellig nie.

Aanvaarding het 'n transformerende krag in my herstel geword. Aanvanklik was aanvaarding 'n moeilike begrip vir my. Ek het gesukkel om my aandeel in die probleme wat ek in die gesig gestaar het, te erken, en het dikwels my verantwoordelikheid vermy of ontken. Maar soos ek aan die program gewerk het, vergaderings bygewoon het en 'n verhouding met my Sponsor ontwikkel het, het ek begin om aanvaarding as 'n noodsaaklike deel van my herstelreis te aanvaar.

Aanvaarding het my toegelaat om die behoefte om die alkoholisme in my lewe te beheer of reg te stel, vry te laat. In plaas daarvan kon ek my fokus op my eie gedrag en houdings rig. Ek het besef dat verandering by my begin. Ek het slagspreuk "Laat dit met my begin" as beginsel gebruik waarvolgens ek my lewe lei. Deur grense te stel, selfsorg te beoefen en my los te maak van die alkoholisme se gedrag, het ek 'n positiewe aanmoediging vir verandering in my eie lewe en in die lewens van diegene rondom my, geword.

Soos ek voortgegaan het om die Al-Anon-program te werk en deur die Stappe te vorder, het ek 'n geestelike ontwaking ervaar, soos verwys in Stap Twaalf. Hierdie diepgaande ontwaking het my verbintenis met 'n Mag groter as ek self, verdiep en my 'n hernude gevoel van doelgerigtheid en betekenis in my lewe gegee. Dit het my oë oopgemaak vir die transformerende moontlikhede van herstel – nie net vir my nie, maar ook vir ander – en het my die gereedskap en leiding gegee om die boodskap van hoop aan ander oor te dra.

Deur hierdie reis van groei en geestelike ontwaking het ek die belangrikheid daarvan geleer om my

program toe te pas. Om vergaderings by te woon, die Stappe te werk, om diens te lewer, en volgens Al-Anon-beginsels te leef, het my begrip van die program en my geestelike verbintenis versterk. Deelname en diens het my in staat gestel om bewustheid en aanvaarding te omskep in werklike, positiewe aksie wat my lewe verander het.

As 'n personeellid by die Wêrelddienskantoer wil ek jou verseker dat jy nie alleen in jou reis is nie. AlAnon bied 'n rykdom van hulpbronne en gereedskap om jou groei en genesing te ondersteun, waarvan baie beskikbaar is op die Al-Anon-webwerf. Deur die krag van bewustheid, aanvaarding en aksie in die AlAnon-program te aan te gryp, glo ek dat jy ook die krag, hoop en vermoë kan vind om positiewe veranderinge in jou lewe te maak.

Deur aan onself te werk en die beginsel van "Laat dit by my begin" aan te gryp, kan ons positiewe verandering in ons eie lewens en in die lewens van ander wat deur alkoholisme geraak word, aanbring. Indien jy dit nog nie gedoen het nie, moedig ek jou aan om jou eie reis van herstel in Al-Anon aan te pak. Benut die beskikbare hulpbronne om jou bewustheid van die uitwerking van alkoholisme te verdiep en neem aanvaarding as 'n pad na persoonlike groei. Neem aksie deur die Nalatenskappe (Al-Anon se Stappe, Tradisies en Konsepte van Diens) te leef om vordering te maak met jou herstelwitte. Saam, as mede-Al-Anon-lede, laat ons mekaar ondersteun terwyl ons hierdie pad van herstel volg. En "Laat dit met my begin."

Deur Bob H., Webmeester, Die Forum, September 2023

Herdruk met toestemming van Die Forum, AlAnon Familie Groep Hoofkwartier, Inc., Virginia Beach, Virginia, USA.

(Translated by Margie D., September 2025)

How I use my program

For me, it has always been about the slogans we have, especially 'One Day at a Time'. I did not understand that concept when I first walked into the rooms of Al-Anon; signed off work with stress, on anti-depressants and pretty much crazy. So much worry, so much anxiety, so many expectations (of myself and others!), so much to do but having no physical, mental or emotional energy to do anything at all. I had got to the end of myself.

I knew I needed help, and it came from three lovely people meeting weekly, helping me to be me, 'One Day at a Time'. Time has passed but still that 'One Day at a Time' is so relevant, so

helpful, so calming, so right. I only have this one day. As others shared around the room, another slogan jumped up at me, 'Let it Begin with Me'. That's what we were all sharing about – how each of us was letting it begin with me, despite what others were doing, saying, or feeling.

My first Sponsor used to impress on me that the programme is all about the first word of the first Step. We don't do the programme alone, we listen and learn together, we share together, we are honest, open and willing with each other. That's how I work my programme, 'Just for Today'.

By H, Area 28, Al-Anon Today, Dec 2019

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When I'm at my wit's end...

I say the Serenity Prayer (sometimes over and over again) and repeat slogans such as "How Important Is It?", "Live and Let Live", "First Things First", "Keep It Simple".

As I start to calm down, I take a slow breath and think "Let It Begin with Me". This can slow down my racing heart and reduce my tension, resentment or anger. Then I am ready to face the situation with sanity and respect. It is great having these small nuggets of wisdom to apply to my every day.

By Anon, Austra-Link, April 2022

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Learning how to take care of myself

Walking through the doors of Al-Anon into my very first meeting was the first time in my life I had made a choice to take care of myself. I didn't know that at the time, but I know it now; the first step of many steps where recovery would become the centre of my life.

On that day I was willing; willing to be open-minded, willing to do something new, willing to simply sit and listen but I was also desperate. For me desperation was a gift, a gift I needed to raise my hand and say, 'I need some help'.

The journey has been slow for me in taking better care of myself. To begin with I wasn't aware that I didn't take care of myself. My life felt unmanageable, my focus

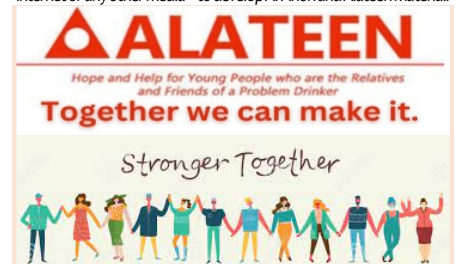
was on others, my feelings felt out of control, and I felt deeply lonely, sad and unhappy. Al-Anon and the people in the meetings showed me how to do small things to take better care of myself. Firstly, I could go to meetings. I could listen and learn. I could share. I could make myself and others a cup of tea. I could give hugs and learn to receive them with gratitude. I could start reading Conference Approved Literature.

I listened to how others cared for themselves. I was unsure when people spoke of boundaries, the Slogans and the Steps but I started to take action. Small actions that would grow into great changes.

The process of taking care of myself has been like completing a jigsaw, one piece at a time, one choice at a time. Al-Anon has taught me that I am responsible for myself. That I am worthy of care, love and respect. 'Let it Begin with Me'.

By Anon, Al-Anon Today, September 2022

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Except from "Alateen – Hope for children of alcoholics" (B-3), p.49 – "The Slogans – Together We Can Make It. Alateen is a group. No group can survive if only one member participates. This slogan is a short way to remember Tradition One. We must learn to lean on others and sometimes accept others' leaning on us. We must share our experience, strength, and hope with others so that we can all grow. We can't do it alone. No man is an island, no one is a rock. Only by truthfulness and trust can we grow in Alateen. "Together We Can Make It."



al-anon.org/for-alateen

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.



The Merry Go Round

Six years ago, in desperation, I found the number of Al-Anon on the internet and I have been a member ever since. I didn't think it was for me at first, a group of people all happily chatting and laughing!

When I was given the Merry Go Round leaflet (P-3), I thought it had been written for me!

I played every part in the play and although I thought Al-Anon was not for me, something kept me coming back and I am so grateful for that leaflet. Then I heard the Slogans, Easy Does It and First Things First. I felt a sense of calming slowly begin. It took me a long time to realise that I was controlling and that I was trying to take care of everyone.

Now, I try to meditate daily with a simple meditation, I read my daily readers to help me prepare for each day and accept that sometimes, I need to take it an hour at a time.

As I work through my programme, I accept my powerlessness over my family situation and by taking care of myself this has improved.

I have accepted that I am an adult child because of the past but now I live my life daily.

I never thought I would have this lightness in my chest that my fellow members spoke about and called serenity. I am now never alone, and I have regained control of my own thoughts and feelings. I

know that this is an inside job, and I work with my Higher Power, as I understand Him. Al-Anon has given me my life back and I am so grateful.

By Anon, Al-Anon Today, Winter 2024/25

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LITERATURE NEWS

Conference Approved Literature (CAL)

Being led to a solution

This year my daily meditation readings include the Al-Anon book "Opening Our Hearts, Transforming Our Losses (B-29). This morning it helped me uncover the source of a shortcoming that has resurfaced in compulsive actions.

I realised that unacknowledged fear drove these unhealthy thoughts and reactions. Looking up "fear" in the index of the book, I read pages 31-33, which comforted me, changed my thought, and directed me toward a solution – making an inventory of my current fears...

I am thankful I was led to a solution by this helpful book.

By Vicki P., Arizona, The Forum, Jan. 2017

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Please share how Al-Anon's Conference Approved Literature has helped you. Send your share to alanonct@iafrica.com

NEWS FLASH

Now locally printed
NEW PRICE



Available and in stock from the local Area office or online Bookshop and a best seller, GSO is happy to announce the price of this essential book has been reduced by nearly 60%.

"Opening our Hearts, transforming our Losses" B29ZA – Grief and loss affect almost every aspect of living or having lived with alcoholism. Members share how they have learned to acknowledge and accept these losses with the help of Al-Anon Family Groups. Indexed, softcover. 201 pages.

General Service Office (GSO) is committed to bringing our members the best literature at the best affordable prices. B29ZA is the latest book to be printed locally. Your Area Offices have it in stock.

Our World Service Office (WSO) understands that the foreign exchange rates and transport for South Africa has made US Dollar prices out of reach of many members. We currently print some of our Conference Approved Literature (CAL) under licence – and in all aspects of global copyright ©.

Buy from your Area Office or order via our Online Bookshop at www.alanon.org.za.



"Healing within Our Alcoholic Relationships"

(P-95) – This 48-page booklet captures the essence of the Al-Anon program in a series of brief but powerful messages of

timeless wisdom, adapted from Al-Anon literature on relationships, including The Dilemma of the Alcoholic Marriage (B-4). It is perfect for newcomers or anyone needing to "Keep It Simple" and get back to basics.

Buy either of these titles, and many others from your Area Office or online from our Bookshop at <https://online.alanon.org.za/>

PUBLIC OUTREACH

SEPTEMBER, WE TARGET PRIVATE SECTOR AND THE WORKPLACE

"What do we live for if it is not to make life less difficult to each other." —George Eliot.

Drop of a piece of literature, Al-Anon business cards, bookmarks posters, venue list with your human resource (HR) person at your workplace. Collaborate with HR in how Al-Anon can best make the program available to the workers.

Call the Industrial nurse or Employee Assistance office of a large company to tell them about Al-Anon and drop off information.

Drop of bookmarks in public toilets, restaurants, cinemas, and theatres, any public space you may visit in the month of September.

Public Outreach is the responsibility of all Al-Anon members, so let it begin with me.

By Janice C., Public Outreach Coordinator, Cape Area.

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.

I'M STARTING TO LEARN THAT
I DON'T HAVE TO REACT TO
EVERYTHING THAT BOTHERS ME.
SOMETIMES I JUST NEED TO
BREATHE, LET IT GO, AND
PROTECT MY PEACE.

unknown / tingbudha.com

AFG CAPE AREA 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.

NEW GROUP/S

*AL-ANON KALK BAY GROUP

Meeting on Monday nights at 6.30pm. Venue: Holy Trinity Church, 42 Main Road, Kalk Bay

UPCOMING EVENTS

MEETINGS	
* SERVICE COMMITTEE – Saturday, 20 September 2025 at 9.30am.	
* AREA ASSEMBLY – Saturday, 18 October 2025 at 9.30am (electronic). Workshop on Concepts – don't miss it. All members welcome.	
* AREA ASSEMBLY – Saturday, 15 November 2025 at 9.30am (electronic). Workshop on Concepts – don't miss it. All members welcome.	
RALLIES/CONVENTIONS SAVE THE DATE	
* A.A. SPRING RALLY (WITH AL-ANON & ALATEEN PARTICIPATION) THEME: SERENITY AFTER THE STORM	
Date: 3 to 5 October 2025	Venue: West Coast School, Saldanha Bay
Registration fee: Weekend R1100 per person / Day Visitors R120 per person (full weekend pass)	
More information to follow.	
* MINI CONVENTION (WITH AL-ANON & ALATEEN PARTICIPATION) THEME: THE STEPS WE TOOK	
Date: Saturday, 25 October 2025	Venue: St Michael's Church, Rondebosch
Registration fee: R TBA	Program: Registration 8am, meetings at 9.30am, 11.30am and 2pm
Lunch and tuck shop available. More information to follow.	
* NATIONAL CONVENTION 2026 (WITH AL-ANON PARTICIPATION) THEME: WAVES OF TRANSFORMATION	
Date: 3 to 5 April 2026 (Easter weekend)	Venue: Sastri Academic & Convention Centre, Greyville, Durban
Visit https://www.alanon.org.za/convention-2026/ to keep up to date on plans for Convention.	
FUNDRAISERS / GROUP NEWS	
Is your group celebrating a special occasion, holding a combined meeting, arranging a fundraiser? Advertise here. Email details to alanonct@iafrica.com or WhatsApp to 066 158 0234. Visit https://www.alanon.org.za/meetings/ for meeting details.	
* AL-ANON SEA POINT GROUP	
Meeting on Friday nights at 6pm. Venue: St James Church, St James Road, Sea Point	
➔ Combined meeting with A.A. and Al-Anon last Friday of each month.	

NEXT ISSUE Send Your Shares Submissions due by 17 September 2025

For the next issue the topics are:

- Al-Anon Adult Children – for those people who grew up in alcoholic homes – How has Al-Anon helped you, as a child of an alcoholic “grow up”?
- 36 Principles – How has Step 10, Tradition 10 or Concept 10 helped in your recovery process?

“Your heartache is someone else's hope. If you make it through, somebody else is going to make it through. Tell your story.” —Kim McManus

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://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.

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

We have no dues or fees; according to our Seventh Tradition, “Every group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.” This Tradition suggests that Al-Anon is fully self-supporting at all levels of service – in our groups, Area Office, and General Service Office. We contribute in gratitude for what we have received from Al-Anon. We do this through our own voluntary contributions by passing the basket to cover group expenses, including rent or platform fees, purchase of literature, and support of our service arms.

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.

“If you have received help, and no doubt have, why not give to further the cause for the peace and serenity of future members.”

—Anne B., Al-Anon Cofounder.

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
