

Loners' Letter • **Gauteng & Districts** •

Together we can make it

February 2026

Dear Loners

For a very long time, I viewed recovery as a destination – a finish line I would eventually cross. Being part of Al-Anon for Young Adults has shifted that perspective. It hasn't just taught me how to manage the journey; it has shown me how to handle the trauma of living with an alcoholic. I've realised that while we may never forget the past, we have the power to decide how much of a hold it has on our future.

I am the oldest daughter in a family of four. Naturally, I stepped into the role of managing and controlling the well-being of everyone around me. My father began drinking at age seven; by the time he stopped, he had been drinking actively for forty years.

I am now 24 years old, and it has been three years since active drinking was part of my daily life. Yet there have been times when my life felt more unmanageable after the drinking stopped, than it did before. It felt as if there was a sudden gap in my life. The space I once allocated for fight-or-flight, playing the middleman, entering survival mode to fix poor decisions, and protecting my mother and sister – was suddenly vacant. That part of my brain simply did not know how to respond to "peace".

I found myself asking: *How does one just continue as if the last twenty-one years didn't happen? How do we stop the past from dictating our future?*

Al-Anon has been my anchor. Knowing I am not alone and having a program to guide me through this unknown territory has changed everything. It has allowed me to grow without pushing aside what I've lived through; instead, I can face it head-on. The program has given me a safe place to voice my feelings. Often, I don't even know how I feel until the words leave my mouth.

This level of self-discovery is something I've longed for, especially since my identity was so tightly woven around the alcoholism that I was living with. I walked into recovery not knowing who I was; today, I am meeting myself for the first time.

Life is not perfect, and I've come to accept that it never will be. However, through the Twelve Steps, I've learned that while I cannot control the wind, I can finally adjust my sails.

I want to share a recent experience: A few nights ago, I went to bed with a heavy heart, looping through thoughts of all the ways I had been wronged and the circumstances that led me to this space. When I woke up, I reached for the *Hope for Today [B-27]* daily reader, desperate to break out of that cycle of self-pity.

I turned to the January 17th reading, and it was exactly what I needed to hear. The reading spoke about letting go using the analogy of a flower, describing how some flower buds never open or unfold. It made me realise that by restraining ourselves – by fearing judgment or holding our past against ourselves – we stop ourselves from blooming. I don't want to withhold my own magnificence anymore.

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I am still at the beginning of my recovery, but I am learning that the gap left by the past is exactly where my new life has room to grow. I am a deeply grateful member of Al-Anon for Young Adults.

Keep coming back. It works, if you work it!

Best wishes

Anonymous

▪ How Al-Anon Works ▪

Al-Anon is a group of people who have been affected by the drinking of a family member or friend. We share our experiences with others like ourselves and share what has or has not worked for us. Having a common experience enables us to have insight into how we are being affected or have been affected, and what has helped us.

Al-Anon Meetings: In-person meetings and Zoom meetings are held throughout the week in South Africa and internationally. [Click Here to Find A Meeting](#) or phone our office on 063 270 2535.

Alateen Meetings: We hold Zoom meetings for young people (9 – 17 years) who have been affected by someone else's drinking. We help them to understand that they are not at fault and help them to keep a healthy focus on themselves and their own responsibilities.

Al-Anon Books: We have a range of Al-Anon books which detail the experiences of other Al-Anon members and what they have found works for them. Some suggested starter books are:

- *How Al-Anon Works for Families and Friends of Alcoholics* [B32ZA]
- *Courage to Change* [B16ZA]
- *Discovering Choices* [B30]
- *Alateen - Hope for Children of Alcoholics* [B03ZA]

These books and others can be ordered from the Gauteng Al-Anon office: alanontvl@absamail.co.za

Free Downloads: We also have a range of Free Downloads available on the Al-Anon website. <https://www.alanon.org.za/free-downloads/>

▪ Tradition Seven ▪

Every group ought to be self-supporting, declining outside contributions.

*At Al-Anon we support ourselves. Please contribute towards our operating expenses so
that we can continue to help ourselves and others.*

Al-Anon Information Services

Bank Details

ABSA Bank, Oakdene, Current Account No: 1118881482 Branch code 632 005.

Please send proof of payment to alanontvl@absamail.co.za and use your **name, group and/or event** as the reference.

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