

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

Together we can make it

April 2026

Dear Loners

A while back, a file name on a Twelve Step Recovery website caught my eye; “Levels of Silence”. Intrigued I opened up the page and found that the contents reflected my journey of recovery in a beautiful new way. Basically the page broke down silence into five different levels and explained how an attentive, listening attitude can lead to deeper levels of inner silence.

The Silence of Speech

Before I began my journey of recovery in Al-Anon, silence was certainly not something I thought about. I enjoyed talking and I talked a lot. If I was happy, angry or nervous, I talked. I would interrupt people and join in conversations without really listening to what others were saying. I think talking was my way of connecting with people and I didn't realise that I wasn't actually listening.

When my life started to fall apart, and I began lurching from one worrying crisis to another, I went into a state of shock. Finding Al-Anon helped me to understand what was happening and I became more reflective about my role in the ups and downs of my life. Along the way, I lost the need to talk as much. I slowed down and began listening more. I listened to lots of recovery shares and I learned and I learned. I also began to recognise and appreciate the peacefulness of silence.

The Silence of Thought

This was the first level of silence that I came across on my recovery journey.

I had been worrying about my loved one for years and my life felt like it had been turned upside down. I was always worrying about what was happening, what was going to happen and what had already happened. It was exhausting and debilitating.

In my quest for answers I came across a speaker who stated that *I was not my mind; I was the one listening to my mind*. He explained what he meant and I got it. I realised that I could quieten my mind by not listening to it. I wasn't telling my mind to stop worrying; I just removed my attention from my wandering, worrying mind.

It was a wonderful discovery for me and gave me some peace especially in the quieter times between crises.

Once I became aware that I had a choice over whether to listen to my mind, it would settle down like it had permission to go off duty. Once my mind spent less time in its high state of alert anxiety, I began to feel calmer.

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The Silence of Will

Silencing the will is becoming more aware of myself and my behaviours. When I read about silencing the will and detaching from selfish desires, I thought: "I've been doing this with my Steps 4 – 7. I've been getting to know and understand myself better; identifying behaviours that don't work for me, and setting an intention to let go of these behaviours."

What I like about Steps 4 – 7 is that they took me on a gentle, gradual journey of self-discovery. In the process, I came to understand myself better and I became willing to let go of behaviour patterns that were not working for me.

For example, previously I would never have said I was a controlling person but as I began to see myself more clearly, I saw how much I was trying to control my loved ones, my family members and my world. It has been a blessing learning to detach from my need to control, to stop being so judgmental and critical, and to stop being unhappy because things or people aren't the way I think they should be.

In the ongoing process of letting go of my negative habits and patterns of thinking, I have asked for help from my Higher Power because wanting to change and actually changing takes effort and practice.

The Silence of the Unconscious

Many of our habits have their roots in our unconscious. Silence of the unconscious means working deeply on ourselves to understand the causes behind some of our behavioural patterns. It can involve identifying mental wounds from earlier experiences or protective barriers created to protect ourselves.

Again this level of silence reminded me of Steps 4 – 7 and how the process of doing a moral inventory of myself helped me to see myself with new eyes. I looked at myself with a gentle gaze and started to understand why I had been behaving the way I had been. Why I craved consistency, why I was so focused on safety, why I needed approval from others... it was truly eye opening to dig deep and see all of me.

Understanding the deep underlying reasons for my negative habits helped me to change. I could pull out the problems by their roots instead of just tearing off bits and pieces.

The Silence of Being

This level of silence takes me closer to my Higher Power; closer to the calm, quiet voice of wisdom deep inside of me.

It also reminds me of the process I followed through Steps 1 – 3, where I realised that I was powerless over others, that my Higher Power could help me through my troubles, and that I was willing to accept help from my Higher Power. It feels great not to feel responsible for everything and it feels great not to feel alone.

To me this level, the silence of being, is Step 11, where I make the time to improve my conscious contact with my Higher Power. I do this best in quiet time by myself and I also try to carry some of this silence of being with me throughout my day.

I hope you have enjoyed this meander through the levels of silence.

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."

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

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