


www.al-anon.alateen.org, or call 1-888-4AL-ANON (1-888-425-2666) between 8:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. (ET) Monday through Friday.

 "I am not always right, I am not always wrong. My life is not my sister's, my brother's, my parents', or grandparents'! It has become deliciously my own. My recovery is new, but coming to Al-Anon is a beginning. Al-Anon is a place to stop running, a place from which to start, to continue, to grow."

Al-Anon Books that May Be of Interest:

How Al-Anon Works for Families & Friends of Alcoholics (B-22)

From Survival to Recovery: Growing Up in an Alcoholic Home (B-21)

Hope For Today (B-27; large print/soft cover, B-28)

Alateen—Hope for Children of Alcoholics (B-3)

One Day at a Time in Al-Anon (B-6; large print, B-14)

Courage to Change—One Day at a Time in Al-Anon II (B-16; large print, B-17)

Courage to Be Me—Living with Alcoholism (B-23)

Paths to Recovery—Al-Anon's Steps, Traditions, and Concepts (B-24)

Living Today in Alateen (B-26)

Al-Anon's Twelve Steps

1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol—that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God *as we understood Him*.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.

8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God *as we understood Him*, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to others, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

Al-Anon may be listed in your telephone directory.

Compiled and Distributed by:
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Al-Anon/Alateen is supported by members' voluntary contributions and from the sale of our Conference Approved Literature.

Al-Anon Is for Adult Children of Alcoholics

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The Al-Anon Family Groups are a fellowship of relatives and friends of alcoholics who share their experience, strength, and hope in order to solve their common problems. We believe alcoholism is a family illness and that changed attitudes can aid recovery.

Al-Anon is not allied with any sect, denomination, political entity, organization, or institution; does not engage in any controversy; neither endorses nor opposes any cause. There are no dues for membership. Al-Anon is self-supporting through its own voluntary contributions.

Al-Anon has but one purpose: to help families of alcoholics. We do this by practicing the Twelve Steps, by welcoming and giving comfort to families of alcoholics, and by giving understanding and encouragement to the alcoholic.

Suggested Al-Anon Preamble to the Twelve Steps

Al-Anon Is for Adult Children of Alcoholics

Alcoholism is a family disease. Every alcoholic affects at least four other people, including children, siblings, parents, spouses, partners, friends, and co-workers. Many people who were exposed to alcoholism in childhood find difficulties with relationships in their adult life. There are often problems with handling fear, anger, guilt, shame, and self-esteem issues.

“The painful misery that alcohol causes almost had the best of me. It has been with me all my life. Yet I never confronted it. I never understood it. I hoped I’d outgrown it. I was afraid of it and terribly ashamed, always hiding. I was pushing everything under the rug, and sometimes there was even room for me under there.”

“I grew up in an alcoholic home. The environment was erratic, dangerous, tension-filled. At times there were shows of affection, but I could never trust them. I saw anger displayed violently by my father and in the icy coldness of a mother who refused to talk to me. I’m afraid of my own anger and of how much violence is in me. I learned a lot of negative patterns from my role models.”

If you grew up affected by someone else’s drinking, Al-Anon is a safe place to bring your concerns, your questions, and your desire to lead a better life.

Whatever your problems, there are those in Al-Anon who have had them too. Together, we learn to face the past, to let go of it, and to lead happy, productive lives in the present.

“Al-Anon was a safe haven for me. For the first time in my life I belonged and was accepted for who I was. Al-Anon taught me to take the emphasis off the alcoholics and put it on me. I began to change old behavior patterns and learn new ways to resolve my problems. I learned from the spouses of alcoholics why they react the way they do. For the first time in my life I realized that everyone in the family is affected by the drinker.”

“The feelings I heard around me in the meeting room sounded like my own: the mistrust, anger, aggression, resentment, uncertainty, and protectiveness. These people were comfortable with nerve-wracking, hard-to-accept emotions. I felt relaxed and less of a misfit. I carried away encouragement and a commitment to accept myself.”

Some Al-Anon meetings are designated as “Al-Anon adult children” meetings and focus on the effects of having grown up with alcoholism—however, every Al-Anon group is open to all families and friends of alcoholics, and offers help and support to all people affected by someone else’s drinking, whatever their relationship to the alcoholic.

“At my first meeting I was the only child of an alcoholic. It didn’t matter. I had hoped for a better future, and these people gave me hope from the very first day. They understood my pain. I was no longer alone. I was given tools to deal with alcoholism. My parents’ drinking was no longer interfering with my life.”

“After six months, I have finally realized I belong. At first I felt I was different from the other members who were married to alcoholics. I never realized I had just as much resentment, anger, hatred, etc. as the wives or husbands of alcoholics. Being 25 years of age makes no difference; in fact, age has no meaning in Al-Anon. We are never alone in this program.”

There are no “experts” or professional counselors in Al-Anon. In informal discussion groups and by sharing one-on-one, members learn to face their

fears, to feel their feelings, to share them with others, and together recover from the scars of the past.

“Al-Anon meetings saved my life. I found many things, especially love and insight I couldn’t find anywhere else. We’d been through the same war, fought the same battles, and shared the same scars. We are all walking miracles. We love and support each other. I am learning to live 24 hours at a time. I’m not afraid to reach out. Life is more serene. By changing what I can—myself—I find happiness.”

In Al-Anon we learn to be kind to ourselves, and give ourselves the time we need to recover. We carry a lifetime of baggage into our meetings, and it takes time to recover from the effects of the past. We learn that alcoholism truly is a disease, that we didn’t cause it, can’t cure it, and can’t control it.

“Attending Al-Anon meetings gave me a new understanding about the disease of alcoholism and how it affected my loved ones. It was a relief to finally understand I didn’t cause my family members to drink, and that I could not somehow control their desire to drink. Al-Anon taught me that the only person I had control over was myself. Accepting this allowed me to recover from the effects of growing up in an alcoholic home. When I stopped interfering with what the alcoholics were doing, I discovered me.”

“The behaviors and attitudes I learned as a child were killing my life, my creativity, and me. After two Al-Anon meetings, I began to understand my anger, their anger, and I knew that I wanted more than the freedom to be angry. Al-Anon gave me that something more. Al-Anon gave me tools to harness that incredible energy I had so long blocked, which would be wasted merely as anger. Al-Anon gave me a healthy understanding of love—for others and myself!”

It is suggested that you attend six meetings before deciding if Al-Anon is for you. We encourage you to talk to others before and after meetings, and to read Al-Anon literature. To locate a meeting, please look in the business white pages of your local telephone directory for “Al-Anon,” visit our Web site,