

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*

**For meeting information call:**

1-888-425-2666 (1-888-4AL-ANON)

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

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This pamphlet is also available in: French, German, Italian, and Spanish.

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World Service Conference  
Al-Anon Family Groups

# The Al-Anon Focus

*For Al-Anon/Alateen  
Members Who Are also  
Recovering Alcoholics*

gram which enlarges the scope of our recovery, but does not conflict with our need for sobriety.

PEGGY: A.A. taught me how to live with me—to accept myself for who I am. It taught me that I don't have to drink in order to do that. My first responsibility is to A.A. for my continued sobriety. With sobriety I have a chance to live.

MARY: My husband objected to my attendance at Al-Anon and A.A. I went despite the objections. I attend regularly because through these meetings I achieve a more personal contact with my Higher Power. My life has become much more meaningful.

BILL: I go to A.A. to stay sober and to remind myself that I am powerless over alcohol: I go to Al-Anon to learn more about living with other people and that I'm powerless over them, too.

## Feeling Comfortable at Al-Anon Meetings

BILL: When I go to an Al-Anon meeting, I do not say I am alcoholic. I concentrate on identifying as a concerned family member. At Al-Anon, my focus is on letting go and getting another perspective.

PEGGY: In the beginning I had some trouble deciding to attend Al-Anon. If I had known there were others with the same story, I might have come sooner. Then too, I had quite a hang-up left over from my early days in A.A. I was afraid the Al-Anon members all felt as I did—that a female drunk is the lowest of all creatures! I was sure that only an alcoholic could understand me. The love and understanding my Al-Anon friends gave me has helped me to lead a life of relative peace and serenity even though my husband continues to drink. Now I have the best of both worlds, A.A. and Al-Anon.

## Anonymity in Al-Anon

MARIE TERESA: As a member of both A. A. and Al-Anon, I have found it important to maintain my anonymity. In Al-Anon I share my experiences of living with another person's drinking. I focus on the Al-Anon principles and avoid revealing my A.A. membership. In A.A. I focus on my sobriety. By maintaining my anonymity, I keep my purpose for attending a meeting clear in my mind and my recovery in each program grows. I have asked members of other Twelve Step programs to do the same, so the meeting is not diverted from its primary purpose.

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done so in desperate attempts to help those we love. We come, because while A.A. and/or other programs have helped us to become sober, it is in Al-Anon that we truly learn to accept others as they are. We stay in Al-Anon because we want and need help in learning how to allow others to deal with their own drinking problems while we concentrate on our own recovery.

### Al-Anon Stresses Detachment

DON: In making a conscious decision to put aside those things which are outside myself—beyond my direct control—such as another person's mood, behavior, or thinking, I am practicing detachment. This concept is reinforced by members at meetings who encourage me to "Live and Let Live" with a special emphasis on *letting go*.

MARY: I can now see that, through these years, I was trying to carry a burden that was not mine to carry. His drinking or his sobriety were not my problems.

PEGGY: Al-Anon is showing me how to live with people—to accept them for who they are. I have no business trying to manage anyone else's life.

BOBBY: It isn't easy, but I continue trying to release him to God with love. I try to maintain an attitude of gratitude in everything, so that there is no room for anger, resentment, or other negative attitudes.

MARY: Even though we were both sober, I had turned into a complaining nag. I condemned his faults and mistakes that I overlooked in myself. In Al-Anon, I am learning to detach with love, to love him enough to let go, and to quit trying to run his life for him. I am finding I can let him be responsible for his own actions, making his own decisions as he chooses. When I make this commitment, I also ask my Higher Power to help me forgive myself. Then I come to know a real sense of peace. Bitterness, hatred, and resentment seem to slowly disappear.

### Members and Their Children

Alcoholism in the family can be particularly damaging to children, who are often defenseless and unable to cope with the effects of the disease. Discipline and loving care come in unpredictable doses. Two drinking parents multiply their problems, and even the sobriety of one parent isn't enough to eliminate the resentments and behavior problems that have developed through these years. Alateen, for younger members of Al-Anon, often helps our teenaged family members to better understand

the nature of the disease. The Alateen program offers our children an opportunity to concentrate on their own recovery, to eliminate divided loyalties, to let go of their resentments, and to develop positive attitudes.

MARIANNE: With my sobriety and Al-Anon, I still couldn't seem to handle the way the kids reacted to their father and me. Sometimes they seemed to resent me more because I was sober and I could actually see what was going on in the house. I wanted to pass on the benefits of the program. Some of the kids were happy to take my word for it and would spout the program back when I got off the track. The others were harder to reach. I suggested Alateen. The results were definitely good. It's still a noisy household, but those screaming scenes are a thing of the past.

RUSS: I didn't want the kids to go to Alateen at first. I was really afraid it would be one of those sessions where they would "knock the old man" and blow my anonymity. Now I'm glad they go. They're beginning to accept their mother and me as *people*. I can't tell you how much that means to me!

### Taking Our Own Inventories

Many of us, as recovering alcoholics, have learned in A.A. that we are less than perfect and that our emotional and spiritual well-being cannot be restored until we reach for personal growth through the Twelve Steps. In Al-Anon we look at our own abilities and shortcomings in terms of our relationships with our families and friends. Although this process may be painful, we have found it to be worthwhile.

PEGGY: Some A.A. members ask me why I go to Al-Anon. After all, we use the Twelve Steps. Well, in Al-Anon the Steps took on *additional* meaning. I began by admitting and accepting the fact that I was just as powerless over alcohol when my husband was drinking as I was when I was drinking. Next, I have no business trying to manage anyone else's life. In taking my own inventory as a partner, I discovered that I was not guilty of all the accusations leveled against me.

MARY: I spent a lot of time just thinking. I didn't like what I saw. It is so easy to pretend we don't care, just to cover up. It really hurts, but when we begin to hurt enough and to care enough, we can do something about it.

### Responsibilities to Al-Anon and A.A.

As recovering alcoholics, we see Al-Anon as a pro-