

Sincerely Al-Anon

STEP 10 — “Continued to take personal inventory and when we are were wrong promptly admitted it.”

“This Step is difficult only if I don’t practice it daily, because things tend to build up. I have to throw away my pride, because it only gets in the way. The more I live Step Ten, the more I become the real me.”

-Courage to Be Me - Living with Alcoholism, p. 86

10

My first sponsor (who has passed) told me once, “You bite your tongue until there is a callous on it.” That sentence has saved me many, many times from making statements that would have hurt others. For which, in turn, I would have had to make amends. We’ve all heard the old saying, “Sticks and stones will break my bones but words can’t ever hurt me.” I’ve learned through working an Al-Anon program that this is not true—whether I’m on the giving or receiving end of the words! Before Al-Anon, I gave too much of my power to others. I allowed words to hurt me deeply. Once something is said, it is out there forever. You can clean your side of street, but you can’t ever retract the words.

I made a decision that I DO NOT WANT TO HURT PEOPLE. I was tired of making the same mistake over and over with the difficult people in my life. I use my Al-Anon tools to follow through with that commitment. Yes, there are people in my circle for whom it is hard to honor that commitment. I am not perfect, so this step is the way to admit my wrongs and make the amends. I just keep the focus on myself.

If I am upset over someone’s behavior, I need to look at myself. It is usually a character defect that is flaring up. I’ll call my sponsor, who inevitably tells me “Susan, what I think you need here is simply MORE SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT.” I will take a personal inventory of myself and the situation. With God’s help, I am able to let go. When I “Let go and let God,” I have compassion and empathy for others in my life. Also, I may have to set up healthy boundaries, which I also discuss with my Sponsor.

I have a few tricks I use to help me with people, places and things over which I have no control. I ask myself these questions before I speak:

- Is it true?
- Is it kind?
- Is it necessary?

If I can answer yes to all three, then I can say what I want to say. To this day I haven’t answered yes to all three. Even with difficult people.

Another trick is to stay inside my hula-hoop. If it is out of my hula-hoop, it is none of my business. It is not my job to be everybody’s sponsor. People have a right to their own journey — the good, the bad and the ugly.

In the morning, I turn over my day, asking my Higher Power to give me the strength to do God’s will, not mine. In the evening, I reflect on my day, asking myself if I did God’s will. If not, where do I need to change? I also need to look at the healthy things I have

(cont. on next page)

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To Contact: Call 314-645-1572 or email us at: aisoffice@stl-al-anon.org

Website: www.stl-al-anon.org

Speakers Bureau: Call 314-645-1572

Public Outreach Coordinator: Cathy W., 314-645-1572

IR (Intergroup Rep) Meeting: Held the first Thursday of each month. All members are welcome. Virtual meeting information will be shared the week of the meeting. Next IR meeting: **OCTOBER 6 @ 7:00 pm**

To be Added to our Contact List and receive *Sincerely Al-Anon* as well as meeting & event updates, please email your name and email address to: aisoffice@stl-al-anon.org

MO Al-Anon Website: <https://www.missouri-al-anon.org>

WSO Website: <https://al-anon.org>

AIS Office Hours & Literature Sales

The office is open. Masks must be worn when entering the building and one person is allowed at the office door at a time. Our hours are:

MONDAY-FRIDAY, 9am-5pm.

To Order Literature

Call the office to place an order or purchase on-line. Pick up inside, curbside, or have your order shipped to you. Credit or debit card payments are accepted by phone. Checks and exact cash are also accepted at the time of pick-up. Visit us soon!



(STEP 10, cont. from prior page)

accomplished, thanking my Higher Power and the Al-Anon program each and every night. With time and patience, Step Ten gets easier. Remember to be easy on yourself and stay connected with your Higher Power, your sponsor and other Al-Anon members. Through Al-Anon meetings and working with a sponsor I have learned how to offer a healthy amends, which is a skill I have taught my children and other Al-Anon members.

Things to Think About

“...I am only human. I have the ability to make mistakes. I also have the ability to deal with my mistakes. Fortunately, the benefits of the program are for me too, not just the newcomer.”

---*Courage to Be Me* ---
Living With Alcoholism

—Susan C., Friday Night Fellowship

Al-Anon's Alphabet Soup

As the weather gets cooler, we turn to thoughts of soup. Comforting, nourishing, and delicious — there are a variety of broths, ingredients, and flavorings, but they all have those three things in common. Al-Anon's alphabet soup has only four letters in it: A, C, F, and M. But, gosh those letters make a tasty treat!

From *Courage to Change* (page 256), we have the 3 A's- Awareness, Acceptance, and Action. We also have the reminder to pause for that middle A, "Acceptance", before we leap into some panicked action, trying to fix the discomfort from the awareness. Acceptance is just the best- as the reading says "Acceptance can be empowering because it makes choice possible."

In meetings and in our literature, we find out about the 4 M's, a sour mouthful of what not to do. We set aside that nasty broth of Manipulation, Martyrdom, Managing, and Mothering, for the sweeter, more nourishing options that our program offers. Thank goodness for progress, not perfection, and that when we try another bite of those four M's, we don't have to finish the bowl!

When we come to Al-Anon, we receive comfort and sustenance from the 4 C's- we didn't Cause alcoholism, we can't Control it, we can't Cure it, but now we don't have to Contribute to it. It feels so good to come in from the bitter cold of those mistaken thoughts and actions, to the warm grace of Al-Anon.

The last of the letters, F, is a new saying, heard recently at a meeting. The speaker shared "Don't Force, don't Fix, don't Fight, and don't Figure it out." Setting those aside has made a huge difference in keeping my heart, mind and relationships peaceful.

Of course, the alphabet soup is just a small portion of the Al-Anon potluck of recovery. We have the Steps, sponsorship, meetings, fellowship, literature, and slogans, all available to us whenever we are ready and willing to dig in. But, really, isn't it nice to start with a bowl of soup?
—Mary D.

The WSO is Ready to Welcome You HOME Again!!!!

After a 2+ year hiatus, the World Service Office (in Virginia) has once again opened its doors for guests. We have really missed seeing you, and as of **Monday, September 19, 2022**, the wait was over!

To ensure the safety of everyone we felt it necessary to make some changes.

- Tours will need to be scheduled on our online booking platform at al-anon.org/tourwso at least 24 hours prior to your desired tour time
- Tours are available:
 - Tuesday morning and afternoon
 - Wednesday morning and afternoon
 - Thursday morning and afternoon
 - Friday morning only

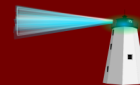


In an effort to increase Staff satisfaction, productivity, and comfort, the dress code has been changed from business casual to casual. Staff will be wearing comfortable clothing which includes jeans.

We hope to see you the next time you are in the neighborhood!!

—Sarah Smith, Director of Programs

Public Outreach Beacon



. . . Greetings to all from YOUR PO Team!

Public Outreach Success at District 14 Illinois Event!

The sold out **"When Mental Illness Hits Home"** conference held on August 26, 2022, in Belleville, IL had about 135 attendees. In attendance as well were professionals, clergy, and others with a personal interest in mental health. The Al-Anon table was staffed throughout the day by nine Al-Anon members taking shifts.

The eye-catching Al-Anon public outreach poster *"Not Everyone Trapped by Alcoholism is an Alcoholic"* with District 14's website and phone service information was prominently positioned on the table. *The "Alcoholism a Merry-Go-Round Named Denial"* (P-3) and *"So You Love an Alcoholic"* (P-14) pamphlets were gone by 2 pm! People also liked the *"Alcoholism, the Family Disease"* (P-4), *"Understanding Ourselves & Alcoholism"* (P-48) pamphlets, *"Just for Today"* (M-12) bookmarks, and *'Detachment'* (S-19) flyer. Past copies of *"The Forum"* along with the current *"Where & When"* were personally handed out.



We heard several comments about being "grateful members" as well as others "wishing someone they knew would go." It appeared most people took the information because they were interested in it, or they knew it was a good and helpful resource. Thanks to all who assisted in this wonderful outreach effort!

— Public Outreach Committee

From our Archives. . . RESPONSIBLE FOR MYSELF



Sponsorship relationships are so special. My first sponsor became my Service Sponsor as well (Service Sponsors, P-88.) She was a real priceless gem in my life: a guiding light in darkness, a calm in storms and the love and support that helped me to embrace my humanness. Truly grateful, I am.

Before Al-Anon, I was always an image I had to live up to, a label, a good name, a cursed name, someone else's expectations or someone's disappointment. I didn't know who I was, what I wanted or what I thought or felt.

However, it took the pain of living with the family disease of alcohol addiction and running ragged at home and at work to change all that. Upon entering the program, I was desperate and broken—mentally, emotionally, physically and spiritually. In the one particular meeting I adopted as my home group, I met a loving, shy, reserved lady who, though nervous around me, took me under her wings. I was the only woman of color attending this meeting, and I was just as shy and reserved. By my third meeting, I was invited to come to the table to join everyone else. Shyly, I did. Tears began to flow as if someone had opened up a dam inside of me. No one or group of people had ever asked me to be part of anything and truly meant it—to love, support and help me. These women meant it.

From that experience onward, that one darling lady would greet me before meetings and give me suggestions; then again, after the meeting, more suggestions and literature to read. It took a year, though, for me to ask her to be my sponsor. I will never forget her response, "Yes, and you want to make serenity and your dignity the number one priority in your life." It took years for me to achieve that goal, but it takes what it takes. During the course of our relationship, I asked God to be my sponsor as well, and our relationship deepened and became more meaningful.

My son and I are survivors of domestic violence and alcoholism. Reading and reflecting on January 12, *Courage to Change*, I could see that I have made much improvement. "When I sense that a situation is dangerous to my mental, physical, emotional and spiritual wellbeing, I can put some distance between myself and the situation." Before Al-Anon, my hurt pride and fragile ego wouldn't let me back down from a fight even when I knew a situation was escalating. Today, my dignity, saved with the help of my sponsor, has kept me from getting physically hurt plenty of times. I have learned to leave a room, to simply shut up, take a walk or go for a drive.

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I currently live in a homeless shelter with many stressed people, staff included. Daily I ask myself, "How important is this person to me?" Whether not much or a great deal, I say nothing. I keep my dignity. Just like the author of this sharing in *Courage to Change*, "I have learned to back down from insanity instead of delving into it." *Discovering Choices* put it all into perspective for me by suggesting to apply these behaviors to being self-supporting, emotionally and mentally.

Responsibility for my mental and emotional sobriety belongs to me, not others. How I handle feelings and emotions without hurting myself or others determines my ability to practice Tradition 7 in ways other than financial; and today, I've got it! First things first—each day my emotional and mental sobriety is placed into God's care and hands as well as those crazy reactions I can have at times. I like myself today. I smile on the inside because I can handle my temper today, or I can choose actions to get me out of situations where I would probably lose my dignity.

Today, I am responsible for myself.

—Submitted by a grateful Al-Anon member who wishes to remain anonymous.

AIS Office Sustaining Support Campaign



WHAT IS THE AIS OFFICE — AND WHY DOES IT NEED YOUR SUPPORT?

AIS (Al-Anon Information Services Office) is located in Maplewood, MO and was founded in 1965. It was officially incorporated in 1975 and serves the St. Louis Metro area, including parts of Illinois. Services provided by the AIS Office include:

1. Answering inquiries from those seeking help (including after hours)
2. Providing public outreach
3. Information exchange hub for all regional groups
4. Maintaining supply of Conference Approved Literature (CAL) for sale
5. Publishing the monthly newsletter ***Sincerely Al-Anon***
6. Maintaining www.stl-al-anon.org website with updated list of meetings
7. Maintaining a speakers bureau
8. Staffing office during regular business hours Monday-Friday

The pandemic caused a decrease in group donations and a decline in overall literature sales. In addition, there have been no in-person fundraisers. This has caused the office to operate at a deficit. Funds are needed to keep the office going and maintain a prudent reserve.

YOU CAN HELP US KEEP THE AIS OFFICE ACTIVE AND THRIVING BY CONTRIBUTING! HOW?

Send a check from an individual or from your group, payable to AFG-STL (please write **Sustaining Support Campaign** on the check). Mail to: **Al-Anon Information Services, 14 Sunnen Drive, Suite 144, Maplewood, MO 63143**

Contribute at a meeting by putting a check or cash in the AIS Sustaining Support Campaign envelope that will be passed around at each meeting.

Log on to the AIS website at www.stl-al-anon.org and click on "Contribute" on the home page. It will then walk you through the steps.

All Contributions Are Tax-Deductible*. Thank you for supporting the AIS Office.

* For contributions of \$20 or more, the AIS Office will email or mail donor a tax receipt.

Heard Through the Grapevine

- *You deserve a better life. That is the hope that keeps me coming back.*
- *Working the 5th step, my sponsor told me You're not that good at being that bad.*
- *Everything I ever let go of had claw marks all over it. Al-Anon taught me to Let Go with Love.*
- *I came across a book title Self Sabotage Syndrome: ACA's in the Workplace. I didn't bother buying the book because everything was said in the title!*
- *Now I am learning to detach with love. Before I went to Al-Anon, I could only detach in a "you're dead to me" kind of way and that's a hard place to come back from.*
- *I am enough. If I say this often enough, I start to believe it. God thinks I'm enough. Who am I to say I'm not?*
- *God, if you're not going to give me what I think I need right now, then please remove my desire for it.*
- *On worry: we like to have our pain in advance. Then, if the thing we're worried about actually happens we get to have our pain twice!*
- *I spoke "Victimese" and thought your phone number was 911. After working the steps, I learned that I am not defined by my past. I am a victor, not a victim.*
- *Show up. Pay attention. Be honest.*
- *God loves us just as we are and loves us too much to let us stay that way.*
- *I try to listen for God's calling, but there are times when I'm called to take a nap.*
- *If you're having a bad day, go to bed early.*



AUGUST 2022 Group Contributors

District # & Meeting	Contrib.
Dist. 13 Creve Coeur	✓
Dist. 13 Finally Relying On God (FROG)	✓
Dist. 09 AFG District 9	✓
Dist. 15 Everyday Grace	✓
Dist. 13 Spiritual Awakening	✓
Dist. 09 Courage to Find Serenity	✓
Dist. 14 Fresh Start	✓
Dist. 17 Climbing Higher	✓
Dist. 14 Hampton WSO	✓
Dist. 13 Men's Path to Serenity	✓
Dist. 28 Just for Today	✓
Dist. 17 Hope for Today	✓
Dist. 02 Care and Share	✓
Dist. 14 Wonderful Possibilities	✓
Dist. 15 Friday Night Fellowship	✓
Dist. 09 North County Parents	✓
Dist. 14 Friends in AFG	✓
Dist. 15 Healing Steps	✓
Dist. 14 Avoidance AFG	✓
Dist. 02 Serenity Seekers	✓
Dist. 15 Hope and Fellowship	✓
Dist. 14 How Al-Anon Works	✓
Dist. 15 Serenity Sisters	✓
Dist. 18 IL Monday Night Serenity	✓
Dist. 13 Solution Finders	✓
Dist. 15 Focus on Solutions	✓
Dist. 15 Wymen in Recovery	✓
Dist. 15 Our Gang Men's	✓
CAF	✓
Dollars & Sense	✓
TOTAL	\$3,487.22

AIS Office Holiday Hours — Mark Your Calendars!

Thanksgiving Thursday, Nov. 24 — Closed Thursday and Friday (24th and 25th)

Christmas Sunday, Dec. 25 — Closing early (3 pm) on Friday the 23rd. Closed Monday, December 26th

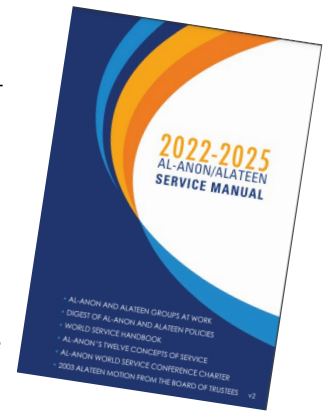
New Years Day Sunday, Jan. 1 — Closing early (3 pm) on Friday the 30th. Closed Monday, January 1st.



Differences Between the NEW 2022-2025 & the 2018-2021 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manuals

Warm greetings from your World Service Office (WSO)!

Changes in the text of the **2022-2025 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual** (P-24/27) v2 are reflected by the appearance of a black vertical line in the margin adjacent to the text that was changed. All changes found in the "Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies," "World Service Handbook," "Al-Anon's Twelve Concepts of Service," and the "Al-Anon World Service Conference Charter" are all decisions made by the World Service Conference (WSC) and reflected in the "World Service Conference Motions" section of the World Service Conference Summary (P-46). You may have to review the current and last year's summaries to see the changes that were made. The Summaries are available as free downloads on al-anon.org. Click here to view: [WSC Summary Archives](#).



Any changes made in the "Groups at Work" section are reflected with the same vertical line in the margin. The only way to see what the changes are is to manually review the previous version of "Groups at Work" as this section is not approved by the WSC but are reflections of the shared experience by members and is written by WSO Staff. This section relates the procedures that support the policies and principles for Al-Anon groups.

Love in service,

—Sue Pérez, Associate Director - Group Services

THE NEW SERVICE MANUAL IS HERE!!!!

[2022-2025 New Service Manual](#)

At this time the Service Manual is only in PDF form.

Conference Approved Literature (CAL) Update

Currently out of stock:

- *Courage to Change* (B-17 large)
- *Lois Remembers* (B-7)
- *Paths to Recovery* (B-24)
- ODAT (B-6)
- *Survival to Recovery* (B-21)
- *Alateen Detachment* (P-73)
- *Alateen Slogans* (P-73)

Available only as PDF:

- *New Service Manual*

NOTABLE QUOTES

Only in the darkness can you see the stars.
—Martin Luther King Jr.

Don't be in such a hurry to condemn a person because he doesn't do what you do, or think as you think. There was a time when you didn't know what you know today.
—Malcolm X

Don't go through life. Grow through life.
—Eric Butterworth

I can control my passions and emotions if I can understand their nature.
—Spinoza

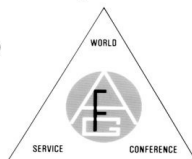
Real isn't who is with you at your celebration. Real is who is standing next to you at the rock bottom.
—Unknown

Life is all about balance. You don't always need to be getting stuff done. Sometimes it's perfectly okay, and absolutely necessary, to shut down, kick back, and do nothing.
—Lori Deschene

Being wanted feeds the ego. Being valued feeds the soul.
—Unknown

What is CAL? Conference Approved Literature

- **CAL is written by and for Al-Anon members**
- **CAL has passed a rigorous review process**
- **CAL is identified by this logo**



TRADITION 10

"The Al-Anon Family Groups have no opinion on outside issues; hence our name ought never be drawn into public controversy."

"Our Group has come up with a Tradition list for dealing with: Controversy vs. Harmony — Traditions Three, Four, Six, Seven, Eight and Ten."

—*Courage To Be Me -Living with Alcoholism, page 187.*

I try really hard to not bring up outside issues at meetings. The meetings are for recovery and helping each other deal with ourselves and the alcoholics in our lives. Bringing up outside issues can cause hurt and upset feelings, which we don't need in our safe meeting space. Yes, I have witnessed this happening at meetings. When it does, I pause and say a prayer. If it goes on for just a short time, I let it go. If it keeps happening, I talk with my sponsor or someone else who attends the meeting whom I trust. We will discuss how the matter can be addressed in a kind way.

I was chairing a Zoom meeting and someone who hadn't attended our meeting before brought up an outside issue. I let it go for a short time, and then gently said, "that is an outside issue." Enough people knew about the Tradition and the conversation stopped.

For me, it is important to be inclusive, not exclusive. Bringing up outside issues is one sure way to be exclusive. Remembering that our one primary purpose is (Tradition 5) "...welcoming and giving comfort to families of alcoholics."

Another way this Tradition helps is in my family. Some members are know-it-alls. They will keep pushing their point, even if it is incorrect. Once I was asked a question about my job. I worked for the St. Louis City Schools at the time. I explained the true situation; and this person kept repeating themselves, not believing me, even though I was working for the school district. I realized some people just want to believe what they believe. Nowadays, if I'm asked a question, I give my answer. If they don't listen or want to argue, I excuse myself or let what they are saying go in one ear and out the other. It makes my life easier.

Another way I use this Tradition—I encountered a person who strongly believes in everything I DO NOT. I mean we are 150% different people. In the past, I would have chosen to hate this person because of their beliefs, which I construe as exclusive not inclusive. But I paused and prayed, asking my Higher Power to help me let this go. I said to myself, I'm not going to be a judgmental so-and-so. We all have a right to our own beliefs. The fact is, this individual's beliefs do not interfere with my well-being. So I let it go, and the next time I saw that person we had a lovely conversation.

I have a saying that I try to practice when I'm out in the real world. I call it my M & M. Leave a message not a mess. Be kind. Don't hurt other people's feelings, and stay in my own hula hoop. Life can be hard, and maybe the people out in the real world are having a bad day. Perhaps they have unmanageability in their lives with no tools like Al-Anon to help them cope. What if I'm the only Al-Anon member someone may meet? It's best to spread a message rather than leave a mess as I walk through my life.

"Tradition Ten reminds us to stay focused on our own attitudes and actions. The affairs of others are an outside issue to our own recovery. This Tradition frees us from giving unsolicited and unwanted opinions and advice to family members and friends."

—*Reaching for Personal Freedom, page 107*

I MET GOD

I met God in the morning, when my day was at its best.

His presence came at sunrise, like a glory in my breast.

All day long the presence lingered, all day long he stayed with me,

And we sailed in perfect calmness or a very troubled sea.

So I think I know the secret learned from many a troubled way.

You must seek him in the morning if you need Him through the day.

—*A Grateful Member of Al-Anon (This prayer was on my mother-in-law's refrigerator.)*



View Al-Anon Event Flyers from Our Website!

Instead of including pdfs of event flyers in *Sincerely Al-Anon*, please go to

<https://www.stl-al-anon.org/>

and click the EVENTS tab to see flyers for these events:

October 1— District 10 Picnic

October 8 — District 15 Holiday Workshop

October 9 — District 14 Fall Resolution Holiday Workshop

October 9 —District 17 Fall Picnic

October 15 — District 25 Serenity Walk

November 5-6 — MO Area Assembly (Hybrid)

November 10 — District 14 Business Meeting & Knowledge Based Decision Making Workshop

District 15 — Business Meeting Dates

District 14 — AUG/SEPT Newsletter

NEW or Returning MEETINGS

Alateen Safety & Behavioral Requirements

PEARLS OF WISDOM CALENDARS ARE BACK FOR 2023



The calendars are **available for purchase September 1, 2022 — January 31, 2023** on CheddarUp. Ctrl/Click on the following link to place your group's order!

<https://2023-pearls-of-wisdom-al-anon-calendar.cheddarup.com>

For more details, Ctrl/Click on [District 13 Pearls of Wisdom Calendar](#) to access the informational flyer.