

Sincerely Al-Anon

Step Four — “Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.”

“Step Four is an inventory, a list of characteristics, thoughts and behavior patterns, relationships, and events that make us who we are today.

It helps us to take stock of ourselves. This step makes it possible to learn about ourselves, our strengths and weaknesses, our unconscious habits and unrecognized talents, our unspoken shame, secret delights, and hidden passions.”

—How Al-Anon Works, pg. 51.

You know I believe that I cannot work the steps without a sponsor. Al-Anon is a we program, and we can't do this alone. Before Al-Anon I felt hopeless and that it was me against the world. Today I know people in Al-Anon have my back and my wellbeing at heart. Before I was ready for step four, I needed to have the foundation of the first three steps. When I work with my sponsees I ask these questions as we work the steps together:

- **Do I really believe that I am powerless over people, places, and things?**
- **Do I have a loving Higher Power?**
- **Do I have trust that a Higher Power greater than myself will help with people, places, and things?**

I want to look at the wording of the step. “Searching” -- to look into or over carefully or thoroughly in an effort to find or discover. If I want change, I need to learn about myself. “Fearless” -- a defender of freedom, bold, brave, or courageous. My sponsor heard this at a meeting, “Fear is the dark room where we go to develop our negatives.” I do trust my sponsor and I do trust my Higher Power, knowing that I will be OK No Matter What when writing my fourth step. “Moral” -- concerned with the principal of right (healthy) and wrong (unhealthy) of human character or behavior.

I am willing to look at all of myself in a healthy and kind way. With that in mind I need to be gentle with myself, remembering that I am human, and I have made mistakes. “Inventory” -- a complete list of what is found. I can make a list. As a matter of fact, I love to make lists. There are plenty of ways to do a fourth step. I like to keep it simple. My list is:

- **I fear.....**
- **I resent**
- **Wrongs I have done to others.....**

From this list I get my defects of character and shortcomings — the people, places, and things I need to pray for, and my list of all persons I have harmed. Once I started writing it was very freeing to get it all out. It was worth it and felt good.

The fourth step will help me be a better person and be able to live life the Al-Anon way of kindness and love for others. I know this can be scary because we look ahead to the fifth step. Stay in the moment and do not look ahead. If you are paralyzed with fear, go back to the third step and review it with your sponsor.

(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 is: **APRIL 7 @ 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 Four, cont. from prior pg.)

I have done this many times with all the steps. Also remember you are not alone. Many Al-Anon members have done this step, and you can do it too.

With the help of your sponsor please review other ways to complete a fourth step by reviewing Al-Anon literature, such as:

- **How Al-Anon Works (B-32)**
- **Blue Print for Progress(P-91)**
- **Paths to Recovery (B-24)**
- **Paths to Recovery Workbook(P-93)**
- **Reaching for Personal Freedom (P-92)**
- **From Survival to Recovery (B-21)**
- **The Twelve Steps & Twelve Traditions (P-17 & B-8)**
- **Alateen 4th Step Inventory (P-64)**
- **The Twelve Steps & Twelve Traditions for Alateen (P-18)**

“To overcome my faults, I must first know what they are. Then I must admit to them, and finally, with patient self-correction, diminish them, even if I cannot set myself wholly free.” — One Day at a Time, pg. 171.

— Susan C., Friday Night Fellowship

Spring Fling Needs Volunteers!

My name is Helga H. and along with Gina G. we are the Al-Anon chairs for the **2022 Spring Fling Convention**, which is an AA event with Al-Anon participation. This is our second year in this position and we both look forward to being of service, seeing friends, hearing wonderful speakers share their experience, strength, and hope, and feeling a part of. The convention is **April 22-24** at the **Hilton St. Louis Airport**. Ellen C. from Addison, Texas is the Al-Anon luncheon speaker. She has an amazing story, filled with hope and humor. I know I am looking forward to welcoming her to St. Louis and seeing her experience Al-Anon in the Show Me State. Please consider attending the convention and especially the Al-Anon luncheon to give Ellen C. an enthusiastic welcome and support.



If you would like to feel a “part of” we are looking for volunteers. If interested, please contact me at chhintze@att.net or Gina at gillardi.gina@gmail.com. For convention information and registration go to www.springflingstl.com. Don’t miss out — we hope to see you there!

— Helga H., Spring Fling Al-Anon Chair

Check Out the Al-Anon Birthday Plan — What a Great Way to Give Back!



Our IR reported from the last IR meeting that the AIS Office and Board are seeking ways to raise funds for the office expenses. In my younger Al-Anon days, we were informed to make a Gratitude Contribution on our Al-Anon birthday or during the month. The Birthday Plan is one dollar per year of attendance. Maybe some long-time members may find it hard to contribute the whole amount, but splitting it in half or just any donation would be appreciated.

Many years ago, Eledia S., Panel 15 Missouri Area Delegate, brought to my attention that we get many worthwhile appeal letters in the mail. People in the outside world can donate to them, but only Al-Anon members can contribute to our program. I do get a lot of those appeal letters and they are worthwhile causes. I have chosen a few to donate to, but took to heart what Eledia said.

So, pass the idea around to your groups about the Birthday Plan month and see how successful we can be.

Let’s remember also that only Al -Anon members can contribute to our much-needed services. Love ‘n Service.

— Loretta R., Friends in Al-Anon, District 14

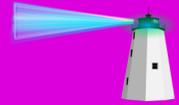
Our New Service Manual is HERE!



[2022-2025 New Service Manual](#)

The Al-Anon Alateen Service Manual is now available in a PDF. Just click the above link to view it now!

Public Outreach Beacon . . . Greetings to all from YOUR PO Team!



This is Our WHY! Check Out the WSO Survey Results

The WSO recently released the results of their membership survey. You may remember completing this online survey in June/July of 2021. In this survey, 16,486 Al-Anon members worldwide responded. To access the results, click on the link shown here: <https://al-anon.org/pdf/2021-MembershipSurvey.pdf>

The Public Outreach Committee has made an effort in the last year to get the word out about our program by pushing outreach work to the next level. Whether it be with the use of billboards, a catchy flyer, or simply contacting nearby libraries, food pantries, doctors' offices, or speaking at informational meetings and treatment centers, members have helped immensely in all of these efforts. Just last year the message of our program was carried by an Al-Anon speaker to the Missouri Mental Health (Jefferson City) virtual conference of **Real Voices - Real Choices**.

According to the WSO survey results, "83% of members report improvement in their mental health within the first year (of Al-Anon). 93% of members with 4 or more years of Al-Anon involvement indicate improved mental health, with about two out of three indicating significant improvement."



What better reason do we need to spur us on in our outreach efforts? An 83% improvement in mental health within the first year of attending Al-Anon? Wow! For those who are regular attendees at meetings, these results come as no surprise. In using any form of outreach communication to those outside of Al-Anon, we share our experience, strength and hope with the thought of bringing members to the table. Aren't we all looking for improved mental health? Perhaps this

is our WHY. If you have any questions or want to get involved with our PO Committee please call the AIS Office at 314-645-1572.

— Cathy W., Public Outreach

How to Host a Successful Al-Anon Hybrid Meeting



Two years ago many of us had no idea what Zoom was or even how to log on! Al-Anon members were scrambling trying to figure out how to stay connected while not being in a meeting room. So, many of us were forced into becoming "techy" and learn how to Zoom.

However, the group I attend, One Step at a Time in Oakville, has succeeded in having a good hybrid meeting and we continue to have new members join on a regular basis. Therefore, I have been asked to share our success story with other

Al-Anon groups who may still be struggling with the technology.

Four members have committed to bringing in their laptops on a rotating basis, and after over a year of trying different microphones and ways to see each other, we were almost ready to throw in the "hybrid" towel. Then we heard about the Webcam Pro device. This device includes a camera and microphone which can pick up voices in a larger meeting room. We tried it, realized the improvement, and in a group conscience, decided to purchase it. We connect the laptop to a TV using an HDMI cable and can all see each other as well.

Our secretary emailed the meeting procedures to all members so those at home are able to be of service by chairing a meeting, and also often serve by being the speaker. In the procedures, we ask that everyone keep their devices on the "mute" setting unless they want to share. Most members attending via Zoom also turn on their video and we all feel very connected!

Also, we sincerely appreciate the members who have agreed to be on the Speaker's Bureau, and we call upon them on a regular basis. I encourage groups to consider investing in technology available as a means of maintaining a vibrant and healthy Al-Anon group.

—Mary Kay H., One Step At A Time



TRADITION 4

Each group should be autonomous, except in matters affecting another group or Al-Anon or AA as a whole.

4

"This Tradition helps me see that every decision my group makes could be tested by the question, 'Is this good for our fellowship?' Sometimes groups have ideas that they feel could put our message across to more people who need it. They have the responsibility to make sure these ideas don't have consequences that would be more prudent to avoid."

— 12 & 12, pg. 103.

As a member of Al-Anon I also think of the newcomer and how my action or the group's action would make them feel "a part of" or "not a part of." We need newcomers because they are our future; without newcomers Al-Anon would die. I was so confused and distraught when I arrived at Al-Anon. I was learning what my part was in the dysfunctional family disease. I didn't know it at the time, but what I wanted was balance in my life. It is important for me to remember the newcomer when I think about how my actions can affect others.

When I first attended meetings, I got a sense of belonging because I knew what was going to happen at the meetings. Examples of this are: use of the same readings, the use of conference approved literature (CAL), taking turns sharing, not commenting on other people's shares (which makes me feel safe), and service work at the meeting level. I knew I was getting the same message of recovery although individual members had their own take on how they worked the program.

The use of CAL encourages positive and solution-finding recovery shares. Nothing is perfect, however, as occasionally a member would go on a tangent. Then I would pause and remember that we all came to Al-Anon for help and we are all at different stages of our recovery. I start praying for them instead of silently judging them. I know in time they will understand how what we say and do might affect the group as a whole. Learning to be kind and loving is the Al-Anon way.

At the group level, we are autonomous in that we can decide what works best for our group. Examples of this are: where and when to have the meeting, choice of format (open or closed, women or men only, or mixed), what our opening or closing is, our monies collected (7th Tradition) and how we spend it, what literature we purchase, and our prudent reserve amount. Autonomy gives the group members a voice, which has been an important part of my recovery on how to be a healthy member of Al-Anon and a member of my community.

"On a personal level, Tradition Four reminds us that although we have a right to do what we believe is best for us, so do those around us. We need to be considerate of others and not infringe upon their freedom. With this understanding comes not only independence, but also mutual respect and dignity. It can be summarized by the slogan "Live and Let Live."

— How Al-Anon Works for families & Friends of Alcoholics, pg. 112.

— Susan C. , Friday Night Fellowship



Save the Date for This Event!

**District 15 Recovery Picnic
August 13, 2022, 5 pm - 9 pm**

**Emmenegger Nature Park
11991 Stoneywood Drive
Kirkwood, MO 63122**

Speakers to be announced at a later time.
Please click on flyer link on page 6 to view
the flyer for this event.

Tools of Recovery: Service Work

“Albert Schweitzer said, I don't know what your destiny will be, but one thing I do know: the only ones among you who will be really happy are those who have sought and found how to serve.” -- *“When I Got Busy, I Got Better”*

The two words “service work” can make people run for the hills. When I hear, “I don't like service work, it is too political” I believe it comes from the fear of confrontation. Perhaps our past, the way we were raised, or our crazy home life have instilled no trust, no feelings, or the sense of “it's my way or the highway.”



As a young person, my life was frightening. We were not taught how to express ourselves in a healthy way. At my house, nobody could have any feelings, and the only emotion ever expressed was anger by a parent. That contributed to my fear of not knowing what is coming next.

Now, in Al-Anon, I began to feel better about myself. By working the steps and taking Al-Anon suggestions, I am able to navigate in this world with confidence and a better understanding of others. My sponsor has told me often, “You can't keep it unless you give it away.” This means I need to give back what was so freely given to me. If I use my tools of Al-Anon, service work can be a wonderful and rewarding practice. Here are some things I have experienced:

1. **Life-long friends.**
2. **Learning healthy ways to interact with people.**
3. **Being open to others' points of view.**
4. **Recognizing my Higher Power working through others.**
5. **Learning about the Traditions and Concepts.**
6. **Patience, acceptance, and compassion for people.**

The Al-Anon booklet “*When I Got Busy, I Got Better*” gives wonderful examples of how members got out of themselves. After each story, thought-provoking questions are presented. Examples of these are:

- **What abilities have I learned to trust in Al-Anon?**
- **Do I say yes to the program?**
- **How have I made a difference today?**
- **How have I grown in service?**

(cont. on next page)

FEBRUARY 2022 Group Contributors

District # & Meeting	Contrib.
Dist. 2 Wednesday's Child ACA	✓
Dist. 2 Joe's Place	✓
Dist. 2 Serenity Seekers	✓
Dist. 13 Back Door Adult children	✓
Dist. 13 Choices	✓
Dist. 13 Eureka Sunday Sanctuary	✓
Dist. 13 Creve Coeur	✓
Dist. 13 Fully Relying On God (FROG)	✓
Dist. 13 Sunday Serenity	✓
Dist. 13 Men's Path to Serenity	✓
Dist. 14 How Al-Anon Works	✓
Dist. 14 Fresh Start	✓
Dist. 14 Friends in AFG	✓
Dist. 14 How AFG Works	✓
Dist. 15 Friday Night Fellowship	✓
Dist. 15 Sunday Serenity	✓
Dist. 17 Solutions of Harvester	✓
Dist. 18 Illinois Monday Night Serenity	✓
Dist. 28 Just for Today	✓
TOTAL CONTRIBUTIONS	\$5,103.93



We Would Love to Have You Write Something for Sincerely Al-Anon — Will You Consider?

You just never know who might benefit from reading what you have to share. Guidelines are: we reserve the right to publish or not publish submitted material due to content and/or length, and in accordance with the Three Legacies & the Principles of Al-Anon, all submissions will be reviewed for typos and/or grammatical errors, articles should be 300 words or less; deadline is the 15th of the month at noon.

(Tools of Recovery: Service Work, cont. from prior page)

I was drawn to service because I did have the time, and I was ready to give back. Service is another tool in my recovery toolbox. Yes, strong personalities are often involved in service work. If I remember that we are all here to help and pass along the principles of Al-Anon, I can more easily put into play our Tradition 12 "Principles before personalities." With help from my sponsor on using the tools, I learned service work can be very rewarding.

I have many ideas, but I must be willing to do the work if nobody else steps up. To me, suggesting ideas without being willing to do any of the work is like giving advice or being a know-it-all. Which isn't the Al-Anon way. I try to lead with my heart where I feel my Higher Power's guidance. It is important for me to soften my ego and approach each situation thinking what is best for the greater good or the whole.

Some ways to be of service:



**SERVICE
TO OTHERS**

- **Chair a meeting**
- **Be a Group Treasurer, Group Secretary, Intergroup or Group Representative**
- **Make the coffee at your home group**
- **Set out Al-Anon literature**
- **Set up and clean up at a meeting**
- **Volunteer to do readings at the start of a meeting**
- **Speak at a meeting**
- **Welcome newcomers**
- **Become a sponsor**
- **Be a good listener**
- **Write an article for Sincerely Al-Anon or Round Robin**
- **Attend a new meeting or an Area Assembly**

There are many other ways too numerous to list, including all sorts of service position opportunities. The more you lean into service, the more ways you will discover to contribute. Please prayerfully consider taking on some service work you haven't tried before— or coming back to a job up for rotation you did previously. Ask your Higher Power to guide you in recognizing opportunities for which you have the ability to step up.

Some words of wisdom from Lois Wilson:

"Hearts understand in ways our minds cannot."

"Focus on what you can do, then do it with all your heart."

"The world seems to me excruciatingly, almost painfully beautiful at times, and the goodness and kindness of people often exceed that which even I expect."

— Central Office of Salt Lake, A Grateful Member of Al-Anon

You Can Now Link Directly to Al-Anon Event Flyers from this Newsletter!

Instead of including pdfs of the event flyers in *Sincerely Al-Anon*, you can now link to the flyer directly from this page. Just scroll down to the flyer you want to see, hold down the CTRL button, left click, and you're there!

[April 9 - District 17 Spring Workshop](#)

[April 22-24 - Spring Fling Convention](#)

[April 26-30 - Love Gifts For Our Delegates](#)

[May 12 - Cooking with the Concepts & Concepts Camp](#)

[May 21-22 Area Assembly \(Registration\)](#)

[June 11 - Day in Service \(Raffle\)](#)

[June 26 - District 14 Picnic](#)

[July 14 - Writing Workshop](#)

[July 29-31 - Mo State Convention](#)

[August 13 - District 15 Recovery Picnic](#)

[September 8 - Knowledge Based Decision Making](#)

[September 23-25 - MO Al-Anon & Alateen Convention](#)

[November 10 - TBA](#)

[New Meeting: Monday Meters](#)