

## 2016 Jan/Feb



### January is over...

... and I find myself facing the first part of the serenity prayer, "Grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change". That includes the selfish, the drivers with road-rage, the powerful, the 'needy' and a few others.

So what do I do? I ask for "the courage to change the things I can". What can I change? Clearly not the alcoholic's behaviour and a whole host of other things. That does not make me weak and helpless. It reminds me that there **are** things I **can** change.

I can change how I **respond** to what's going on. I can examine myself to find out where to stand firm and where to smile and say, 'You may be right!' I can choose whether to sidestep the approaching storm or face adversity head-on with resolve. But one thing I have learned over the years is that strength to do either of those comes from working my Al-Anon program, getting the hang of who I am and what's important to me (4<sup>th</sup> step) and starting to look at how I behave (steps 5 and on) and where to soften and where to firm up.

Without the Al-Anon program, without my home group, without my links to my sponsor and my higher power, without Al-Anon literature to support me, I know I will falter and wither. We need to keep Al-Anon working. We need to make sure that Al-Anon holds its own and expands here in Gauteng.

All of us need to help to make sure this happens, or we face the risk of losing this amazing tool for growth, which is given to us with such generosity. Please choose and send a group representative to our area meeting once a month, to keep you and all your group in touch with our Al-Anon area and linked in to the wealth of care, support and skills here to keep your group growing and thriving.



### What's On

Send us details of your events!

**Mon 15 Feb 19h00: Intergroup Meeting** – Don't miss this! St Francis, Forest Town. Al-Anon, AAC and AA all together for a fun recovery meeting.

**Sat 20 Feb: G&D Area Meeting**  
Workshop: **Guide for Group Reps**

**Sat 12 March: G&D AGM** followed by area meeting.

**Sun 20 March: Piston Ring Car Boot Sale Modderfontein.** Bring your unwanted things to raise funds for Al-Anon.

**25-28 March: National AA Convention, Cape Town** – Don't miss it. Find out more at [www.aasouthafrica.org.za](http://www.aasouthafrica.org.za)

**Sat 16 Apr: G&D Area Meeting**

**Sat 28<sup>th</sup> May: G&D Al-Anon 65<sup>th</sup> Birthday Rally** - Be part of our celebrations! Save the Date.

Send details of your group's events this year to [alanontvl@absamail.co.za](mailto:alanontvl@absamail.co.za)

## For Alateens...

*“When I was younger, I thought I was different from everybody else and that no-one understood me. I even thought about committing suicide until I came to Alateen and met my best friend.*

*“He told me three things I’ve never forgotten. The first was that suicide is a permanent answer to a temporary problem. Second, there is no elevator ride to serenity so I need to take it one step at a time. Third and most important, everyone did the best they could at the time.”*

This is an extract from 23<sup>rd</sup> April in the Alateen Daily Reader, *“Living TODAY in Alateen”*

It goes on to explain how the teenager felt going to an Alateen group, and how much it helped. It ends with something to think about, a thought for the day, just like the Al-Anon daily readers.

Young people today are faced with huge pressures, and it’s not easy to protect them from life, nor can we. But we can help. Here are three things you can do to help young people who are growing up with alcoholism

1. Support Alateen with funds for buying Alateen group literature.
2. Talk about Alateen to people. Raise awareness that young people need support to survive this family illness.
3. If you are interested in helping to get an Alateen group going in your district, contact our G&D office and ask how to get involved.

***We can make a difference. All it takes is the determination to do something, and the effort to take the first step. For us too, it’s one step at a time.***



## Getting the Concept? Concept One

*When I first came to Al-Anon, the concepts didn’t make much sense to me. Gradually I have come to see that they are remarkably useful in my relationships with others...*

**Concept One: The ultimate responsibility and authority for Al-Anon world services belongs to the individual Al-Anon groups**

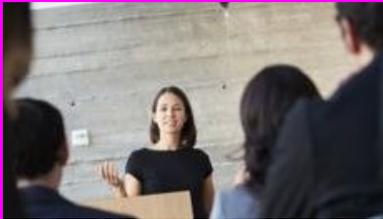
What does that mean? Basically, that as a unit, the group is in charge of its own success or failure, and has decision making power in Al-Anon. It affirms that I am responsible for my own life. We can’t expect others to take on our responsibilities. Where we may have been forced to take charge of other adults in the past, in order to survive, now we can hand the responsibility back to them and just be responsible for our own stuff, leaving them to take care of theirs.

In the same way, our Al-Anon group takes care of its own structure and runs its meeting the way the members choose, and not as dictated to by anyone outside. If we run our group well, people will join and enjoy it, and our group will grow. That’s our responsibility. There is a body of knowledge of what works in Al-Anon groups, (amazing help in the World Service Manual) and it’s up to us to try these tested methods and see if they work for us.

The same follows in other group situations, like the family. What goes on in my nuclear family is our decision, and other distant family members can’t really tell us how to run our own show. They may have helpful ideas but they can’t inflict them on us. I can tell my extended family to butt out, if I have to. Because it’s up to me and my immediate family to make things work for us. Again, there are ideas and principles we can use to help us learn and grow, and we pick those up by working the Al-Anon program.

### Questions to ask:

What is my responsibility? What is the responsibility of those around me? How can I assume responsibilities in a more balanced way?



## *Public Outreach Meets the Challenge....*

### *...With Your Help*

When I volunteered for service as the Al-Anon G&D Public Outreach Co-ordinator, I was expected to attend Area meetings and I was excited at 'making Al-Anon a household name'. It was quickly but very gently pointed out to me that no, we couldn't accept money, gifts or any kind of contributions from the many commercial entities I would normally and confidently approach for help! But not one to give up, and with the help of experienced long timers, I soon had a Public Outreach plan that would reach many more people in need of our Fellowship, support and strength.

Today, G&D's Public Outreach programme is a busy one. We hold events - teas, breakfasts, meetings - for Professionals who work with families affected by excessive alcohol abuse. This includes everything and everyone from rehabs, the SAPS, medical and healthcare workers, social workers, employers who hold Wellness days for their employees, schools, etc.

We send our volunteers to talk about Al-Anon, AAC and Alateen at AA Rallies, other 12 step programmes, corporate Wellness days, training centres, etc. We have individuals who have never spoken in public before who bravely volunteer to speak to church groups and social worker workshops, or take a shift and man a table at a Wellness Day. Without exception they all come back and tell me how much they enjoyed it, how they were 'mobbed' by questions at the end, or asked to speak again at another meeting. This is yet another way in which we learn self-confidence and growth in Al-Anon.

Public Outreach does reach a lot of people who are working with damaged families. But we constantly have to decline invitations to speak as we don't have anyone to send. **Without volunteers for this essential service we cannot not spread our message of hope. More volunteers means more activities.**

So that's Public Outreach (PO) very briefly and in a nutshell. If you'd like to help, please contact the office.

And don't forget, every time you tell someone in need about Al-Anon and your own recovery, you are doing PO and service. You are spreading our message of hope. Long may that be.

*G&D Public Outreach Co-ordinator*

## **You can Contribute!**

**Our banking details are:**

**ABSA Bank, Oakdene 632 005**

**Acct no: 1118881482**

**Al-Anon Information Service**

**Please put your name or group as reference.**

Details of contributions will be sent separately to all groups with the financial statement.

### **Opt out?**

Send an email to [alanontvl@absamail.co.za](mailto:alanontvl@absamail.co.za) with the word "unsubscribe" in the subject line.

To **add friends** to the list, please send their email addresses to the address above and they will be added to our mailing list.

## *Public Outreach and Al-Anon Traditions – how it works*

**Tradition 11:** *Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, films, and TV. We need guard with special care the anonymity of all AA members.*

**Tradition 7:** *Every group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions*

Given Tradition 11 above, we can't use standard marketing for Al-Anon Family Groups. When we add Tradition 7, our PR efforts must be carefully handled so that we work within our Traditions. We don't accept donations or sponsorships. We do welcome members' help of all kinds.