



THE RAP

Reaching Al-Anon People

January 2016

The Al-Anon/Alateen Newsletter of the Delaware Valley

Step One

We admitted we were powerless over alcohol—that our lives had become unmanageable.

Tradition One

Our common welfare should come first; personal progress for the greatest number depends upon unity.

Concept One

The ultimate responsibility and authority for Al-Anon world services belongs to the Al-Anon groups.

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.

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Working the First Step

Step One: We admitted we were powerless over alcohol—that our lives had become unmanageable.

I am so grateful for Al-Anon.

I have tried for so many years to control. As a child I thought that if I just could get the alcoholics to not act a certain way, not do certain things or not say nasty things, then things would be different. If I could get the other people, the non-alcoholics, the ones that were obsessed with the alcoholics, to not act a certain way, not do certain things, or to stick up for themselves, then things would be better.

In Al-Anon, I hear and really listen to people work a program to let go of the illusion of control. I am learning that I am absolutely powerless over people. I am learning that I cannot change anyone. That a person's behavior reflects on that person, not on me. I am also learning that my behavior reflects on me, not someone else.

Working the first step, to me, is admitting that I have created a faulty house of cards in my mind. The idea that I can coerce, manipulate, shame, charm, fool, outwit, trick, demand or force anyone into doing "it" my way has to be smashed. I will never be one step ahead of alcohol or alcoholism. Owning this in my core is working this step.

Then there is the dash in the step (read the step again; you will see the dash). That dash is like a sliding board. The more I try to control—the more I slide into unmanageability. I am one of those people that is obsessed with the alcoholics in my life. The more I focus on coercion, manipulation, shame and the like to gain control over what I am absolutely powerless over, the more my life falls apart. I pour so much energy into my illusion, into trying to prove how bad I have it, how others are not doing "it" right, that I cannot live up to my own responsibilities. I do not show up for my own life. That is unmanageability.

Working the first step over and over is the only way to freedom that I have found. I must admit deep in my soul that I am powerless over alcohol—that my life has become unmanageable. The first step is a paradox and the last thing that seems like the answer to my problems. Surrendering the whole shootin' match is an act of humility, and truly, the only way out of my own house of cards.

In grateful service,
Another Member of Al-Anon

a publication of... AISDV

Al-Anon Information Service of the Delaware Valley
aisdv.org • 4021 Walnut Street Philadelphia PA • rap@aisdv.org • 215-222-5244 (voicemail)

AL-ANON NEWS AND EVENTS

AISDV 7th Annual Alateen Winter Workshop

Saturday, January 9th 2016
3 pm to 10 pm
Doors open at 2:30

**\$10 Donation Requested/
Permission Slip Required
at the Door**

This is an Alateen Workshop and is Not Open to all Al-Anon Members. Only AMIASes will be Allowed to Attend the Sessions and There Will Be a Limit.

**Donations of Raffle
Baskets/Desserts/Snacks
Encouraged**

Contact Sarah R at
sarahreilly3990@gmail.com
for more information

St. Mary's Episcopal Church
Lancaster and Louella
Avenues
Wayne, PA 19087

Do You Want to be a Speaker at the Women's Prison?

Contact Dawn at
district1dawn@verizon.net for more
info. This is a great opportunity for
service and to carry the message to
those who most need it!

Can Your Group Take a Writing Commitment?

*Would you like to write
for the RAP?*

February: ????

March: ????

April: ????

Contact Franny at rap@aisdv.org
or 267-535-0945 for more info.

NEW MONTHLY WRITING MEETING !!!

"Let It Begin With Me"

Begins Saturday, Jan 16th
10 AM to 12 Noon
& Meets Once a Month

8419 Germantown Ave, Phila.
3rd Floor (no elevator)

If you are interested, contact Ruth
@ 215-260-1015 or e-mail her at
relaxwithruth@gmail.com

*Meet with like-minded people
interested in writing their
stories or writing for the RAP,
the Forum or the new daily
reader!*

Want to Learn about More Events and Opportunities for Service?

Go to aisdv.org and click on
Calendar

To Sign Up for Regular E-Mails:

Go to aisdv.org and click on
Announcements then click on
Sign Up for AISDV Announcements

A New Al-Anon Daily Reader

is in process to reflect the diversity
of the fellowship as it is today

More sharings are needed
from all of us! Go to:
<http://www.alanon.alateen.org/members>
to submit your story.

Want to Get More Involved in Service?

Elections are occurring at AISDV in January for:

Assistant Chair Assistant Treasurer
Secretary Assistant Secretary

Call Lorrie D for more info @ 215-442-9792 or come to
the next AISDV meeting if you would like to step up!

For position descriptions, go to aisdv.org and
click on Who We Are and scroll to the bottom of the page.
You do not have to be an ISR in order to run.

The next mtg is Thurs 1/21 at 7:30 @ The Reformed
Church of the Ascension, 1700 W Main Street, Norristown

Upcoming Anniversaries and Special Meetings

District 4 and 5 Workshop Planning Meeting

Lima Methodist Church
209 N. Middletown Road, Media, PA
Saturday, January 9th 1:30 PM

God As I Understand Him Meeting

Hosted by: Hope and Serenity
Davisville Baptist Church
325 Street Road, Southampton, PA
Friday, January 15th 10:00 AM

Far Northeast Anniversary

Our Lady of Calvary
11024 Knights Road, Philadelphia, PA
Sunday, January 17th 6:30 PM

You're Not Alone 18th Anniversary

Come Celebrate!
AA and Al-Anon Speakers
Food, Fun and Fellowship
Food Contributions Welcome!
St. Gabriel's Parrish House Basement
233 Mohawk Avenue, Norwood, PA
Friday, January 22nd 9:30 AM

Third Annual District One Cookie Swap

Bring a Dozen Cookies divided up into
three bags to swap.
Topic: God As I Understand Him
All Saints Church
1811 Loney Street, Philadelphia, PA
Monday, January 25th 7:30 PM

Hope and Serenity Celebrating 16 Years

Food, Fun, and Fellowship
Potluck/AA, Al-Anon and ACA speakers
St. Andrew's Church
47 W. Afton Avenue, Yardley, PA
Wednesday, January 27th 9:30 AM

Reflections on Step One

Step One: We admitted we were powerless over alcohol—that our lives had become unmanageable.

When I admitted I was powerless over alcoholism, I was able to begin to let go of my “delusions of power and control.” When I first came into the Al-Anon rooms, I was definitely hurting. I felt helpless over my situation and as if I, alone, was the one responsible for finding solutions. I was still under that delusion that I could cause, control and cure my qualifier's alcoholism as evidenced by my repeated family interventions, trips to the ER, forced admissions to a local rehab center, my verbal threats that our marriage would end if he didn't stop drinking and my self-righteous rage. I listened politely at my first meeting, but I wasn't ready to hear the message until later that summer after, yet another, relapse. My sense of failure at not having been able to save him or myself and my desire to become emotionally healthy for my children and husband, drove me back to the doors of Al-Anon.

It was difficult at first to admit my powerlessness because I was raised to be an achiever, a doer, a hard-worker, a problem-solver and outwardly self-reliant. My pride and arrogant thinking led me to believe that I could control the uncontrollable—someone else's drinking and my own unhealthy reactions to this disease. When I came back to Al-Anon the second time, I was ready to accept the fellowship of the Al-Anon family. At first, I felt hopeless and depressed, but as I listened to everyone's stories, I could see glimmers of possibility and healing. I was not alone in my pain. I realized that because I was trying to go it alone, without knowing how to turn to my higher power and the gentle recovery of this program, I kept making the same mistakes. After all, I was only human.

The **effects of the disease of alcoholism make my life unmanageable because** it is a disease of the family. Not only does it hurt the alcoholic, because unmitigated, it robs him of his freedom of choice, his ability to reason clearly, and to be in control of the outcome of his actions, it also affects my relationship to him. I distrusted him, I judged him, and I treated him like a child, instead of preserving his dignity and self-respect. It was only after participating for while in Al-Anon, was I able to see my own role in this disease. I began to understand and accept that I did not cause it and cannot control it or cure it. I learned that my yelling and daily criticisms of my loved one only shut him down further and that my ultimatums, interventions, attempts to hide or pour out the bottles or drive him to rehab when he wasn't ready, didn't really help. My thinking had become distorted and I was irritable and unreasonable without knowing it. My anger, fear and sense of frustration at my failure to fix someone else only prevented and still prevents me, when I let it, from focusing on what I can change... myself.

What can I change about myself? My attitudes towards people, places and things and my reaction to things that upset me and challenging situations. My ability to show love, forgiveness and patience instead the opposite or instead of waiting for someone else to give that to me. I can carefully reflect on the choices I make each day and respond differently, and I can get in touch with the kinder, gentler, more loving and lovable me. I can focus on what I should be doing *right now* to take care of myself—my health, my well-being, my sense of inner peace, because it is only through **self-care** that I can begin to take **appropriate** care of my loved ones.

Accepting that I am powerless over alcohol puts an end to struggling and frees me to work on what **can** be changed—me. It is *me* that needs to be changed because the effects of this disease in my family of origin run deep. The upbringing of keeping secrets, hiding true emotions, competition and perfectionism all shape who I am today. It isn't about any one alcoholic. Step 1 requires humility and honesty. It means I must admit that I cannot deal with all the challenges in my life, including this disease, alone. It means I

(continued on page 4)

Group/Individual Donations

World Service Office

Payable to/Mail to: AFG Inc.
1600 Corporate Landing Parkway
Virginia Beach, VA 23454-5617

PA/State

Payable to: PA A Assembly
Mail to: Stephanie M.
5594 Fairway Dr W
Fayetteville, PA 17222

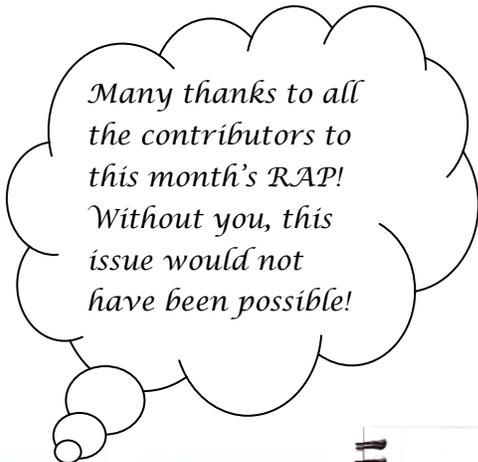
Al-Anon Information Service of the Delaware Valley

Payable to/Mail to: AISDV
4021 Walnut Street
Philadelphia, PA 19104

Alateens/NOMAAC

Payable to: NOMAAC
Mail to: Scott L.
5320 Little Gap Road
Kunkletown, PA 18058

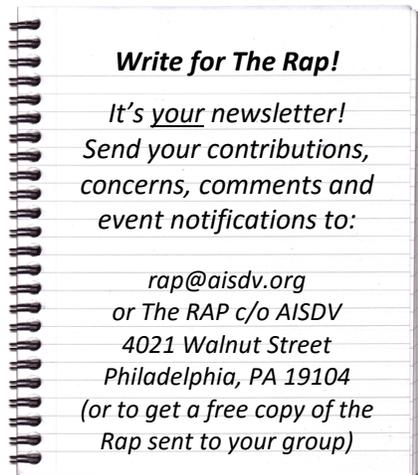
Please write your Group Name and WSO ID# on all checks and include a return address on the envelope.



Many thanks to all the contributors to this month's RAP! Without you, this issue would not have been possible!

Need Directories???

Contact Joe T. at
610-522-1359
or e-mail him at
directory@aisdv.org
for more information



Write for The Rap!

It's your newsletter!
Send your contributions,
concerns, comments and
event notifications to:

rap@aisdv.org
or The RAP c/o AISDV
4021 Walnut Street
Philadelphia, PA 19104
(or to get a free copy of the
Rap sent to your group)

Reflections (continued from page 3)

admit that I, too, am sick and I need the help of a recovery program—a spiritual fellowship, guided by real steps, principles and traditions, so that I can move forward on my journey of personal recovery. I love this program because it reminds me that I have choices, and that, when I am ready, I can accept what **is** and relinquish my “delusions of control.”
-Anna D. Pennsylvania

*All quotes are from Paths to Recovery and Reaching for Personal Freedom

Step One and Accepting Grief

Step One: We admitted we were powerless over alcohol—that our lives had become unmanageable.

After many 24 hours in Al-Anon, I suffered the loss of a loved one from alcoholism. My first reaction was to deny my grief, to minimize and rationalize it. An inner voice would whisper to me, “This is not so bad. You can handle it. All you need to do is find the grief cure.” So I began searching for it, awaiting the day when I could finally perform magic. I would cure grief. Although some days were better and some worse, my life was spinning out of control—becoming unmanageable. I remained hopeful that I could finally discover the cure. Then, one day an Al-Anon member shared that she did not believe we are meant to get over grief. In that statement, I heard the wisdom of the first step—reminding me of my powerlessness. I could not cure my grief. It was a new fact in my life whose presence I needed to acknowledge, not defeat.

I used to feel proud when my out-of-control emotions gave me a leading role in the alcoholic drama playing out around me. Today I know that feelings are not facts. I first need to acknowledge their strength; then I can begin to look at my rage, grief, or fear and ask myself what has triggered them. The first step often provides the answer. It shows me that my own emotions are often among the immovable forces I have been vainly trying to vanquish. Step One’s reminder of powerlessness is not a reason for despair. It teaches me that although a situation may be difficult to handle, I do not need to choose unmanageability; I can step off that merry-go-round by acknowledging my powerlessness. Only then can I begin to discover how best to get on with the business of living my life.

-A Recovering Member

Get Involved!!!

The next AISDV Meeting is
Thurs, Jan 21st @
7:30
The Reformed Church
of the Ascension
1700 W. Main Street
Norristown, PA

Want to Find Out About What's Going On In Our Area???

Go to aisdv.org and click on Calendar