



THE RAP

Reaching Al-Anon People

August 2015

The Al-Anon/Alateen Newsletter of the Delaware Valley

Step 8

Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.

Tradition 8

Al-Anon Twelfth Step work should remain forever non-professional, but our service centers may employ special workers.

Concept 8

The Board of Trustees Delegates Full Authority for Routine Management of Al-Anon Headquarters to its Executive Committees.

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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"Keep It Simple"

Today I'm having a hard time. So it's an especially good day to be writing about slogans, and about "keep it simple" in particular. I know I'm having a hard time because I'm making everything complicated. I see everything as something to worry and agitate over. I feel overwhelmed.

Having worked many of the steps in this program with a sponsor, I've come to understand that each step helps me by bringing me closer to my Higher Power. But before I had a sponsor to work the steps with, before I even had any real understanding of my Higher Power, I had the slogans. They were my introduction to recovery. And like the steps, the slogans worked on me by steering me away from unhealthy thinking and toward my Higher Power -- even before I knew that I had a Higher Power.

"Keep it Simple" is a great example of that guidance. It helps direct me away from my own unhealthy thinking and toward the love, acceptance and care of God. The fact of the matter is, before I found a Higher Power in this program, I had my own higher power, and it was my own unhealthy thinking and worrying. The slogan of my old higher power was "it's complicated." My life's complications made me feel special and unique, but also alone and beyond help -- who would possibly understand what I was going through? My own complicated over-thinking made my head dizzy and numb. I appreciate that this kept me from feeling painful feelings, but the answers to my problems always seemed obscure and out of reach -- just a little bit more complicated than anticipated, requiring even more complicated solutions.

Today I know the true solution, and it's my Higher Power. To access that solution, I have to reject my old slogan "it's complicated!" and all the negative thinking that kept me from a conscious contact with God. If I want to have my Higher Power in my life always, I need to "Keep it Simple" every day. And for me that means keeping the focus on my feelings instead of my thoughts. My feelings are simple. They're not always easy to feel, but they're simple. They just are.

Take today. I was about to make my life very complicated trying to figure out what was wrong and why I felt bad. I was going to spend the day agitated, running from one invented crisis to the next. But instead this morning I spent a moment meditating -- getting my mind as simple as I could. And in that moment I realized that I was afraid because my cat was sick. He doesn't have a life-threatening illness, but I'm still afraid that he will die. I'm afraid because my last cat *did* die. She was sick and I didn't take her to the vet in time. I think her death was my fault.

So there's a very simple reason why I'm upset today -- I have a lot of unresolved grief and guilt in my heart. But I initially missed that simple reason. I didn't see the connection because I'm never looking for the simple answer. I need my Higher Power's help to see the simple connections in my life. And if I want that help, I need to ask for it. "Keep it Simple" is how I ask. It's my promise to myself that, just for today, I will live the kind of life that makes me available for God's help.

-Alex T. Philadelphia, PA

a publication of... AISDV

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AL-ANON NEWS & EVENTS

**Just For Today
33-Year Anniversary
Celebration!**

**August 15th • 1 to 3 PM
A.A. and Al-Anon Speakers
Food and Fellowship
All Are Welcome!**

**James Memorial Church
Thelma Nichols Building
57 East Haines Street
Philadelphia PA 19144**

**The RAP is Our Newsletter
And We're Depending on You to
Circulate It!**

**Please Copy* and Distribute to
Your Group!**

**Ask your group at your next business meeting for permission for monthly reimbursement of copy costs.
And **THANKS** for your service!*

**This Year's PA Assembly
(State Annual Business Meeting)
is August 21st-23rd 2015
at the Harrisburg Hilton**

**Has Your Group Rep
Registered?**

Don't Miss Out!

**Conshy AFG 1st Anniversary
Friday, August 28th 2015**

6-7 PM Food & Fellowship,
7:00 PM AA & Al-Anon Speakers.
Feel Free to bring a dish or dessert.
St. Mark's Lutheran Church
508 Harry Street • Conshohocken PA

Literature/Media

A new *Al-Anon Daily Reader* is in process to reflect the diversity of the fellowship as it is today

The last daily reader was published 10 years ago!
More sharings are needed from all of us!

Go to:
<http://www.alanon.alateen.org/members> to contribute

The new book, *Intimacy in Alcoholic Relationships* has received 1100 sharings so far. The publication is ready for editing. As editing proceeds, more sharings may be requested on specific topics.

A motion passed at the last World Service Conference to convert *Lois's Story* and *Lois and the Pioneers* from VHS to copy protected DVD. Check it out!

If your group is interested in doing a public outreach event, summer festival or institutions commitment...

*There is free literature available at the AISDV office to take to the event!
Contact Gabi @ 215-921-3861 or
Joan G. at literature@aisdv.org for more info.*

Want to Receive E-Mails about Service Opportunities and Special Events???

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

Tradition Eight

When we enter the rooms of Al-Anon, we leave our professional and other worldly distinctions at the door. This is the Anonymity that we all agree to as a principle of our membership. Whether Religious, Therapist, Physician, Lawyer or Elected Official, when we pass through the doorway of Al-Anon we are all put on the same basis - equals on the road of recovery. Our own experience, strength and hope with the disease of alcoholism becomes the sole criteria for our new membership and the wellspring out of which our Twelfth Step work emerges. Service work is voluntary and carries the vital message of hope to the newcomer by keeping the doors open and providing the loving fellowship of the group.

As the Al-Anon fellowship has grown in numbers and complexity, it has a much larger task to perform which cannot be left to the voluntary service of members alone. Our literature is a fine example of the need for paid professional involvement in carrying that message on a much broader scale. CAL, while composed by members, still needs to be edited, laid out for printing, and graphic designs selected for its covers & illustrations. Prices for publication must be negotiated. The finances of such a large organization require the skills of paid accountants, lawyers and others that will keep our fellowship solvent.

Another aspect of this tradition is to recognize our own limitations and that of the program. Although we receive valuable spiritual and sometimes practical support from our fellow members, there are times in our new life when we might require the help of a professional to handle the complexity of our own real life problems, whether they be legal, financial or therapeutic. Al-Anon does not provide any special knowledge or expertise in these particular areas of living. While we may receive moral support from our sponsor or other friends in the fellowship, this is no substitute for the expertise of those trained and licensed to act on our behalf in these areas of living. There's the story of a devout – if not impractical - man who pleads tirelessly with God to make him a Doctor. After many long hours of pleading, a shout finally comes back from above stating, "Go to Medical School!" Prayer is not magic, neither are the effects of the program.

-Joe C. Philadelphia, PA

ALATEEN CORNER

Let It Begin With Me

A dim lighted room
 Full of chairs
 A safe place
 At the bottom of the stairs
 A circle filled
 With love and tears
 That I've grown to know
 Throughout the years
 A group of teens
 Who lend their support
 Even if they came here
 As a last resort
 You're welcomed by many
 With open arms
 And our sponsors protect us
 From any harm
 Our home lives may be
 Chaotic and hard
 But with your story

We shall guard
 We use slogans to help
 When the days get rough
 We love a higher power
 Who knows that we are tough
 All these things make up
 A place I call home
 My reminder that I
 Am never alone
 We tend to call ourselves
 a big crazy family
 The only people who can
 Help us keep our sanity
 Alateen cannot cure
 The alcoholism
 But it teaches us
 Serenity, Courage and Wisdom

--Paulina F. Wayne Alateen

Concept Eight and Learning to Trust

Concept Eight, for me, is about trust. I mean, I've delegated authority before... that is, until the person doesn't do things the way that I would, and then I say, "Oh, let me do that!" and take the authority right back.

What am I so afraid of?

That the person will mess it up beyond redemption? Probably not....since it's often something as silly as setting the table correctly. That people will blame me for "not doing it right"? Here comes that control thing again. That I'll be questioned and criticized? Here comes that fear of authority. That I'll look foolish or that people will be angry with me? Here comes that people-pleasing again. Or worse, that I'll be let down, once again, by the outside world and I'll "see," once and for all, that I really am alone in this struggle, that I am the only one who really cares, that I am the only one I can truly depend on? I don't think I can take that disappointment again.

So, yes, when delegating authority, a lot is at stake. But I need to recognize that this isn't just about trust in another person. It's about trust in a Higher Power. As a result of delegating, sometimes things *will* get "messed up" and go in the wrong direction for a while. But can I trust that Higher Power will make them right? *I could* be blamed for another's mistakes, and *I might* be

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Group 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.**

Concept Eight and Learning to Trust

(continued from page 3)

questioned and criticized. But can I trust that Higher Power will heal my fragile self-esteem and restore my good name? People *might* be angry with me. But can I trust Higher Power to help me communicate effectively and resolve conflicts? And yes, I *will* be disappointed again. If I live on this Earth for any number of years, that *will* happen. It's part of the human condition. But can I trust Higher Power to allow me to fully feel my feelings and to grieve, not just this loss, but all of my other losses, and come out OK on the other side? Of course I can. Higher Power can handle all of these things. Higher Power doesn't necessarily write the script or control the puppet strings in every situation, but Higher Power is my source of comfort, faith, healing and trust. Although Higher Power doesn't get involved in every decision, it does guide us and the moral arc of the Universe back in the right direction again and again and again.

So what do I have to gain by delegating authority? I might actually see things done differently, a way that I never thought of before, a better way. I might be giving someone the opportunity to stretch and grow, gain confidence and heal. By working *with* someone, I might be given the gift of camaraderie and friendship. And I might **not** be disappointed again (imagine that!), and my trust in other people and my Higher Power will deepen and grow. And isn't that gift truly worth the risk?

-Franny B. Philadelphia PA

SAVE THE DATE!

*Al-Anon's International Convention
July 5-8, 2018 · Baltimore, MD*

Want to find a meeting?

*Go to aisdv.org and
Click on Meetings*

Announcements

*Welcome to District 31!
District 31 (Reading Area) has met
all of the requirements to be
included as part of AISDV, and the
motion to include them passed at
the last meeting.*

*Exciting News!
Check out our Billboards on I-95
and the Platt Bridge this summer!
Your contributions have helped to
carry the message!*

*AISDV Coordinator Positions Still Open!
Contact Lorrie D. at 215-442-9792
or at chair@aisdv.org
if you are interested in service!
Or come to the next AISDV meeting!*

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)*

Get Involved!!!

*The next AISDV
Meeting is
Thurs, Sept 17th @
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*