

Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism 2012

*Strength and hope for families and friends
of problem drinkers*

Therapist explains
effects of
addiction

I thought
I was to
blame

How
Al-Anon
helps
me



How do I know if Al-Anon could help me?

We can easily recognize how alcohol affects the drinker. It's not as easy for family and friends to recognize how the drinker's behavior has affected them.

These questions can help you identify some of the effects of someone else's drinking may have had on you. If you answer "yes" to any of these questions, Al-Anon Family Groups may be able to help.

1. Do you worry about how much someone else drinks?
2. Do you have money problems because of someone else's drinking?
3. Do you tell lies to cover up for someone else's drinking?
4. Do you feel that if the drinker cared about you, he or she would stop drinking to please you?
5. Are plans frequently upset or canceled because of the drinker?
6. Do you make threats, such as, "If you don't stop drinking, I'll leave you"?
7. Are you afraid to upset someone for fear it will set off a drinking bout?
8. Have you been hurt or embarrassed by a drinker's behavior?
9. Do you search for hidden alcohol?
10. Have you refused social invitations out of fear or anxiety?
11. Do you feel like a failure because you can't control the drinking?
12. Do you think that if the drinker stopped drinking, your other problems would be solved?

For more questions, please visit the Al-Anon Web site at
www.al-anon.alateen.org.

Dear Reader,

Two memories came to mind when I first saw the cover photo for this edition of *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism*. I recalled the times I spent wishing that something different would happen in my life. I also remembered the moments when I worried about what had happened the night before or what I would face when I arrived home.

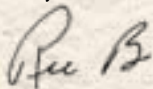
The idea of “if only” draws many families and friends of alcoholics into the trap of wishing or believing that our lives would be better, if only the alcoholic would stop drinking. It never occurred to me that I could be happy, whether the alcoholic was drinking or not. That hopeful thought was presented to me at my first Al-Anon meeting.

At first, I didn't believe it could be possible. Then I worried that Al-Anon members would want me to leave the alcoholic in order for me to be happy when the drinking continued. I couldn't yet admit that I had already physically left the alcoholic, even as I allowed alcoholics to live rent free in my mind for several years more.

Once I truly “let go” of someone else's drinking as the main focus in my life, I was able to see sunsets, enjoy rainbows, and drive my car safely without fear of running into someone because I wasn't fully aware. I could work without jumping when the phone rang, sleep through the night, and even answer the question, “What do you want to do today?” without the familiar “if only . . .”

The hope and help that Al-Anon Family Groups offered me is available to you. Each of us only has to go to an Al-Anon meeting to find other people who understand and are willing to share their experience, so that you can find the answers that you are seeking.

In Al-Anon, we don't promise specific results, but we will tell you how we found the peace of mind and joy of living that I used to only dream about. Why not join others like me at a meeting in your community? You might be surprised what you can learn at an Al-Anon meeting near you.



Ric B., Executive Director, Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc.

I found support and understanding

It is stated that Al-Anon's primary purpose is to help families and friends of alcoholics.

When I reflect on how it is that I have been helped, my heart answers that I have been "nurtured to maturity." By this I mean I have been listened to, loved, understood, accepted, supported, and encouraged while learning some of life's most serious lessons, which perhaps I could not have learned while growing up in an alcoholic family.

Through the love, kindness, and patience of the Al-Anon fellowship, I have learned much about giving and receiving unconditional love, acceptance, surrender, self-caring, faith, trust, and hope.

As I continue to grow in the Al-Anon program, I find that contentment and even happiness have a very real presence in my life.

Mary C., NY

Al-Anon is for anyone who is troubled by someone else's drinking

Al-Anon—Where you can find help

Al-Anon is a mutual support program for people who are living with—or have lived with—problem drinking. Sometimes the drinker is a spouse or partner. Sometimes parents are concerned about a child's drinking—whether their child is a teenager or a fully-grown adult. Sometimes the drinker is—or was—a parent or another relative.

How serious does the drinker's problem have to be for Al-Anon to help? Some drinkers have a more serious problem than others, and it's not easy to know exactly how much drinking is enough to be considered "alcoholism" or problem drinking. The most important issue for family members and friends, however, is not how severe the drinking is. From an Al-Anon perspective, the only thing that matters is: does the drinking trouble you?

Many people come to Al-Anon when the alcoholic in their lives is already sober. Some come even after the alco-

holic has died. Again, it's important to remember: Al-Anon's primary purpose is to help people who have been affected by someone else's drinking—whether the drinking is still active or not.

Alateen is the Al-Anon program for a peer group of young people. The Alateen members chair their own meetings. Alateen Group Sponsors are Al-Anon members who have been certified as having met the safety requirements set by their Area to attend Alateen meetings and, if necessary, provide guidance.



A counselor explains: understanding the problem drinker— what to do, what not to do

Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism 2012 interviewed Carole Bennett, M.A., the principal of Family Recovery Solutions, a nationwide counseling service for the family and friends of the alcoholic/addict in Santa Barbara, California. A counselor in the field of alcohol and drug dependencies, she is the author of *Reclaim Your Life: You and the Alcoholic/Addict*, and a staff blogger for The Huffington Post.

I'm not the drinker. Why should I go to a meeting?

Often family members believe that only the alcoholic has a problem. To a degree they are right: only the drinker can stop drinking. However, problem drinking is a family problem.

As long as you have a connection with the alcoholic in your life (whether or not the drinker is in recovery), burying your head in

the sand about what *you* need to do regarding your own recovery is as unhealthy as the alcoholic's denial that he or she may have a problem.

Some family members find it easier to be in denial than to undergo their own recovery. But those who seek recovery for themselves can come out the other side stronger, wiser, healthier—and ultimately happier.

What should I do to help the drinker in my life?

Chances are family members have turned themselves inside out in an effort to do anything within their power to get their loved one to stop drinking, enter a rehab program, or at least acknowledge that there is a problem. But the alcoholic's chances for a successful recovery can be hampered when family members do not understand their responsibilities in conjunction with their loved one's road toward recovery.

Here are a few key suggestions that family members should consider as part of their own recovery program:

- Don't quiz the alcoholic or monitor his or her progress.
- It is the drinker's program and journey, not yours.
- Allow them to rebuild their own life on their own terms, in their own way.
- Attend counseling and Al-Anon family programs for continued support.

What kind of help could be counter-productive?

Enabling and rescuing are often confused with love. In actuality, we are doing the drinker an unhealthy disservice. When we cover for them or excuse poor decisions, we are robbing them of the opportunity to experience their successes (as well as their failures) on their own terms.

Families are desperate to fix the drinkers' problem, to show them there is a better way to live, because we believe that it will demonstrate how much we love them—and they will, of course, love us back.

I encourage the family unit to work together to support each other by drawing up a contract or plan that will help to bolster the "weaker" family member who may be tempted to float a loan or call a boss to cover for the drinker's irresponsible behavior.

One last thought: be careful that you are not monitoring each other, but working together. This arrangement should encourage family members to support one another—not to babysit one another, as resentments might ensue.



Why do you think it is so difficult for family members to set boundaries?

Boundaries are extremely important when it comes to sharing any part of your life with the alcoholic. But to be effective, boundaries need to be enforced. The difficulty comes when the family member or friend cannot set those boundaries, does so in a way that represents a minimum challenge for the alcoholic/addict, or is inconsistent.

I have worked with clients who are afraid to set boundaries because they are afraid that the alcoholic in their life will be angry, disapprove, or withhold love. That should be expected and is standard operating procedure for the alcoholic—to punish anyone who does not respond or do what they want.

They have become used to having free rein, with no boundaries set for their actions—whether they're in recovery or not. Don't give in to their emotional shenanigans. Set your boundaries and stick with them, even if they are as small as what time to show up for dinner.

“Families are desperate to fix the drinkers’ problem, to show them there is a better way to live, because we believe that it will demonstrate how much we love them—and they will, of course, love us back.”

What benefits do your clients who are family members gain from attending Al-Anon?

Al-Anon is a wonderful program of camaraderie and support. Knowing that you are not alone, that so many of your frustrations, concerns, fear—and yes, victories—are shared by others. Al-Anon’s literature is simple, clean, and very healthy. Al-Anon is the perfect place to go—it is that core group of special people sharing and understanding what you’re going through.

I love my Al-Anon program and my Al-Anon Family Group. I feel like Columbus must have felt when he discovered America. “Wow, this was here all along and look how many years it took for me to find it.” It still amazes me how I walked into that room, sat down, and felt right at home. As I listened to the members sharing, I could relate to each and every story in some way.

Delores F., PA

For additional insights into the family problem of alcoholism, listen to the podcast interview with Carole Bennett, M.A., on Al-Anon’s Web site, www.al-anon.alateen.org.



I'm learning to trust and know that Al-Anon is a safe place to share. I know that I won't be judged or criticized—or told I shouldn't feel what I feel.

Kathy M., IL

What is 'anonymity' all about?

Al-Anon's principle of anonymity protects your privacy. If you're in a public place with co-workers or friends who do not know about your concerns about a problem drinker, you don't have to worry that someone from the Al-Anon meeting will approach you and start discussing your relative or friend's drinking.

Everything said at an Al-Anon meeting is confidential. That confidentiality is maintained outside of the meeting. This helps to create

a safe and trustworthy meeting environment.

The principle of anonymity assures members that they are able to speak at an Al-Anon meeting without fear or embarrassment.

Confidentiality at an Al-Anon meeting, however, should not be confused with a legal right to privacy.

Anyone who openly confesses a crime at an Al-Anon meeting, for example, should not expect any legal privilege or protection.



This table tent card is displayed in most Al-Anon/Alateen meeting rooms as a reminder to maintain each others' anonymity and confidentiality of sharings.

If the Al-Anon meeting is held at a church....

The Al-Anon meeting list shows that Al-Anon meetings take place at various churches. What if I'm not a member of the church where the meeting is held?

From the Al-Anon perspective, religion is strictly an outside issue. Al-Anon members do not discuss their religious beliefs at meetings. Al-Anon groups focus exclusively on issues related to helping the friends and families of problem drinkers.

Al-Anon meetings include people of different religious faiths, as well as individuals without any religious beliefs. Al-Anon is not affiliated in any way with any religion or religious organization — even when an Al-Anon meeting is held in a church. Al-Anon groups are autonomous and self-supporting, so they usually find a meeting place in an institution (such as a church) that will charge only a nominal fee for rent.

Some Al-Anon groups meet in hospitals, community centers, or libraries. Just as they are not affiliated with any church or religion, neither are they affiliated with any other private or public organization.

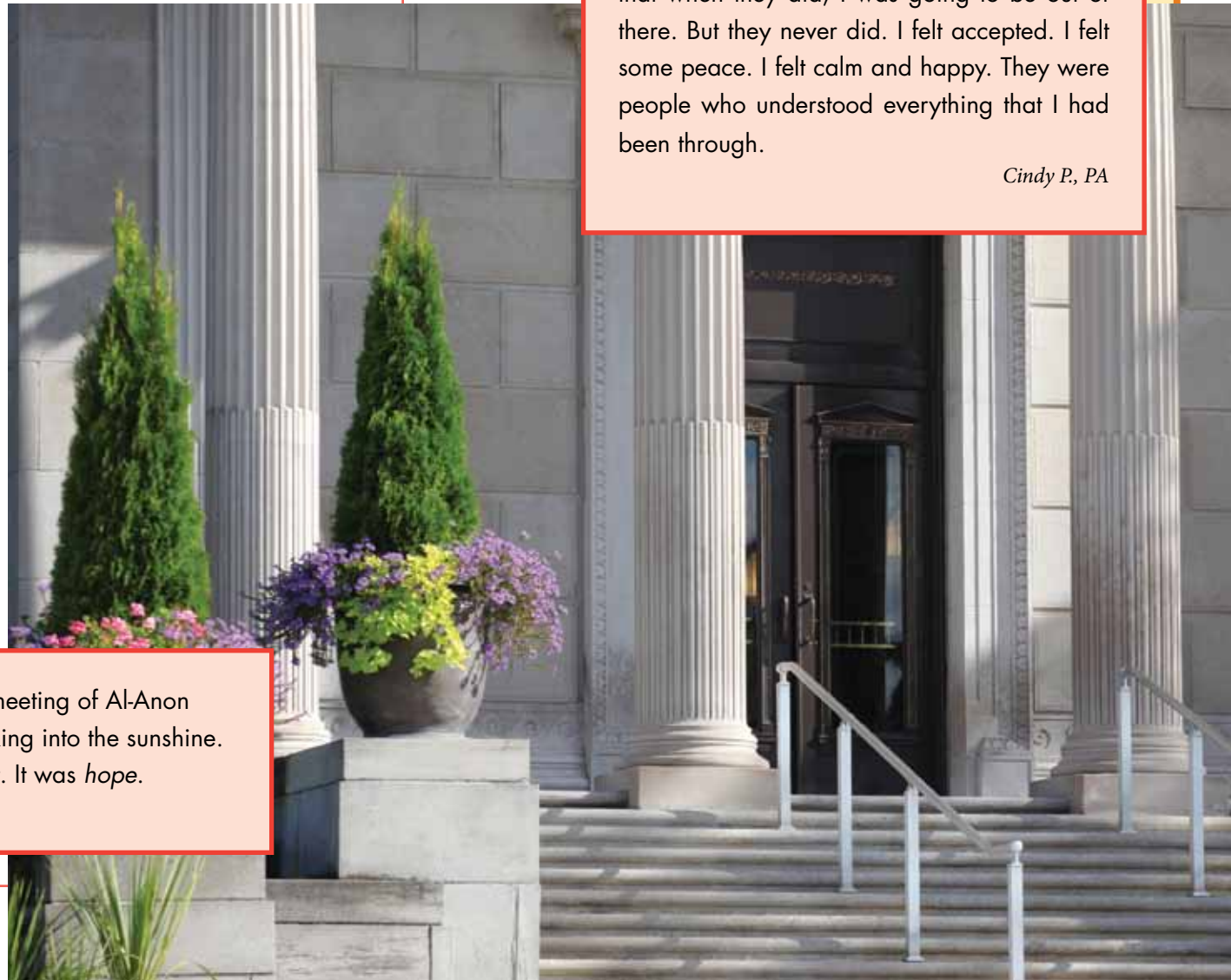
Walking into my first meeting of Al-Anon was like a blind man walking into the sunshine. I couldn't see it, but I felt it. It was *hope*.

Lee M., GA

I didn't believe in God. He failed me growing up. He didn't get my mother sober. He didn't keep my parent's marriage together. He didn't fix my brother. In my mind, there was no God.

I thought Al-Anon members were going to try to force religion on me. I was prepared that when they did, I was going to be out of there. But they never did. I felt accepted. I felt some peace. I felt calm and happy. They were people who understood everything that I had been through.

Cindy P., PA



The meeting schedule lists “open” and “closed” meetings...

Anyone concerned about someone else's drinking is welcome to attend any Al-Anon meeting, whether it is listed as “open” or “closed.” A “closed” meeting is exclusively for people troubled by someone else's drinking. An “open” meeting also welcomes guests and students.

What happens at an Al-Anon or Alateen meeting?

Al-Anon members share with each other their experiences in applying the Al-Anon principles to their lives that have been affected by someone else's problem drinking. This peer-to-peer exchange of experiences helps them discover new choices. They do not give each other advice or specific direction.

What if I'm concerned about someone else's drug problem?

According to Al-Anon's 2009 Membership Survey, one in three Al-Anon members *first* came to Al-Anon Family Groups because of a friend or relative who had a drug problem. But after going to Al-Anon meetings for a while, and learning more about alcoholism and its effects, nearly nine in ten of them came to realize that alcohol abuse was also part of the overall problem.



How to find an Al-Anon or Alateen meeting

Is an appointment necessary to attend an Al-Anon or Alateen meeting?

No advance notice is necessary. Anyone concerned about someone else's drinking is welcome to attend.

Call **1-888-4AL-ANON** (1-888-425-2666) Monday – Friday, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. ET, or visit www.al-anon.alateen.org for meeting information. Al-Anon may also be listed in your local telephone directory.

On-line meetings and telephone meetings sometimes supplement, rather than replace, face-to-face Al-Anon meetings. They are also helpful for the homebound and for those who live in rural areas, as well as for travelers who can participate in a meeting from anywhere in the world.

To request a list of electronic meetings, visit www.al-anon.alateen.org, or send an e-mail to wso@al-anon.org.



Are there dues or fees for membership?

There are no dues or fees. Members make voluntary contributions because each group is self-supporting and declines outside contributions. Most groups pass a basket at each meeting to help cover its routine costs, such as renting the meeting room, supporting Al-Anon services, and buying literature.

Al-Anon members report improved well-being

About 95 percent of Al-Anon members reported that the program helped them improve their lives in many ways, according to the *2009 Al-Anon Membership Survey*.

Members said their mental health and physical health have improved since attending Al-Anon Family Group meetings.

More information from the Membership Survey is available on Al-Anon's Web site at www.al-anon.alateen.org.



To learn more about Al-Anon—and to get a sense of what a meeting could be like—listen to some selections from Al-Anon's Podcast series, “*First Steps to Al-Anon Recovery*.”

These short audio presentations are available at no charge on Al-Anon's Web site, www.al-anon.alateen.org.

Learning how to support, not to ‘fix’ the drinker

Karen Carnabucci, MSS, LCSW, TEP
Lake House Health & Learning Center, Racine, WI

As a psychotherapist, one of the most common questions that I hear is: “How do I make someone stop drinking?”

Well, you’ll never *make* someone stop drinking. But what you do, or don’t do, will have an effect on the well-being of the other person—as well as your level of sanity and ability to function in your world with the drinking (or drinking and drugging or pill-taking) person.

You will want to learn how to support, not to fix. This isn’t easy.

People naturally want to make things better for people they love. But we certainly don’t want to support chemical dependency, illness, excuses, or procrastination. We do want to support health, well-being, and appropriate boundaries.

A good place to start: attend Al-Anon, which offers a program to identify and help change behaviors that are enabling, destructive, and counterproductive to health. You will also learn how to practice detachment with love and step away from becoming entangled in the person’s illness.

It isn’t always easy to join a group. We may be cautious of groups—especially if we’ve had bad experiences with groups in the past. It is natural to wonder how a mutual support group could be helpful compared to a professional who has degrees and other special training to “solve” the problem. And, many people are too embarrassed to let others know about the indignities they experience because of the chaos of alcoholism.

I like to take the role

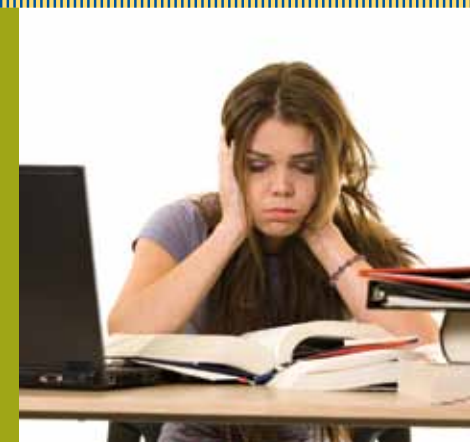
of coach to help people use this important resource in the best way:

- Shop for a group. Different groups have different personalities and levels of recovery.
- Attend at least six meetings before making a decision about staying or leaving.
- Reconsider favorite belief systems, including ideas that you “should” be able to handle your own problems or that it’s embarrassing to talk about your feelings with strangers.
- Listen. Don’t feel pressured to share until you are ready to talk.
- Get connected. Identify a person who knows the program well and ask him or her to explain the culture of the group.
- You may see people you know in the community and they will see you. Remember that you now share a common goal: to grow and to show respect for each other’s courage to reach out.
- Avoid complaining and people who complain. Share your experience, strength, and hope and listen to people who do the same.

The rewards: relief that you aren’t alone in the chaos of the illness, a sense of community, and new ideas to respond to your particular situation.

Each Al-Anon meeting I go to, I come away with a new thought, idea, or a new perspective. For one hour, I am in a room with people who share the same problem I have—they love someone whose drinking bothers them.

Connie M., OK



I was entirely overwhelmed by my husband’s drinking problem. I was a full-time college student, caring for two young children, and watching my husband struggle with alcohol. I did a lot of listening at my first Al-Anon meetings. I realized I wasn’t alone.

Gerry S., IL

I didn't know that Al-Anon could help me in the way it did. It was a great relief to know that there were so many people with the same problem—and to learn that alcoholism is a disease and that I didn't cause it.

Anonymous, MA

I thought I was to blame...

Bev M., OH

I came into Al-Anon because of my oldest son. He was my perfect child, straight "A"s, good athlete, popular, never in trouble. But when I went to parents' weekend at his college, he got very drunk. I was devastated and shocked.

I knew my other two sons were drinking and smoking pot, but I didn't want to see it in this son. I needed him to be the perfect child, so I didn't feel like such a failure as a mom.

A friend told me about Al-Anon and I ran to my first meeting. I knew I was in the right place from the first meeting. Members spoke openly. I felt safe to share my secrets about my sons and a husband who stayed at work, leaving me to deal with and straighten out the mess. I had no clue I was dealing with alcoholism.

My friends in Al-Anon were my lifeline. I needed the love, support, and guidance, as I processed the idea that I was dealing with a powerful illness that I could not control. This disease was too strong for me to deal with by myself. They told me to keep coming back.

Today, I still deal with this powerful disease that has been in my family since my birth. I know I didn't cause it, can't control it, and can't cure it, but I can cope by using the things I've learned in Al-Anon.

I did not go to Al-Anon sooner because I felt too ashamed. I was fearful of reaching out for help and being rejected. It helped enormously when I realized that it was okay to ask for help.

Anonymous, Australia

Hope—and new insight into my problems

JM B., ON

I always leave my Al-Anon meetings feeling renewed, even when I showed up exhausted or troubled. I do not know what it is specifically that allows this transformation to happen; I just know that it does happen, and I leave with a smile on my face, along with a new perspective and hope for the days to come.

I remember a time when life was much different. Growing up in my home as a child, there was not much reason to be hopeful. I was accustomed to disappointment, broken promises, and dreading what I might face when I got home. Would I be the referee of a fight between Mom and Dad? Or would we be walking on eggshells so as

not to wake Dad, who was already passed out on the couch?

My father died—alone— at age 65. It was very sad, and I was angry for a long time. My dad had been sober for a year before he relapsed. I was so disappointed. How could he do that to me? Why couldn't he choose to be sober? It wasn't until I found Al-Anon that I learned he had a disease, and he did not choose it. He did not *choose* to hurt me.

It took a long time for me to stop being angry. I understand anger is the first step in grieving and there are no rules about how long it is going to be before we move to the next step. Just like in Al-Anon: no rules, only principles, some guidelines, and a lot of hope.



When I first came to Al-Anon, it was the laughter that helped me the most. People talked about things that I was feeling—the hurt, the anger, and the guilt. And yet they were able to laugh about it, and not scream or cry. I couldn't remember when I last had an honest laugh. That laughter and camaraderie kept me coming back. I wanted to find out how to get happiness back in my life; and I did—bit by bit.

Joan H., SK



Therapist advises patients to attend Al-Anon

Janet Fluker, LPC

Director, Family Recovery Center

Metro Atlanta Recovery Residences (MARR), Doraville, GA

When families first come to our Family Recovery Center, I always recommend they attend an Al-Anon Family Group meeting. Why? I tell them, “We want you to learn how to be okay regardless of what your addicted loved one does!”

“What makes a family member a good candidate for Al-Anon? When I ask them how they are doing—and they respond by telling me how their loved one is doing, that is a sure sign.”

What makes a family member a good candidate for Al-Anon? When I ask them how they are doing—and they respond by telling me how their loved one is doing, that is a sure sign. Similarly, when I ask how they are feeling and they honestly do not know, it alerts me to how focused they are on their loved one instead of themselves.

In addition, when a family member can't seem to say “no” or set boundaries with others, I know they could benefit from the support of Al-Anon.

Many family members have been living in the chaos of addiction for so long that they can't even imagine a life of peace and serenity. Attending Al-Anon allows them to meet others who have been where they are, but have learned to detach from the addict with love and take care of themselves.

Families begin to experience the support they so desperately need and leave behind the isolation that addiction creates. This support gives them the strength to make the changes in their own behavior that will bring about the peace and serenity they desire.

The family members who attend Al-Anon gain hope for the future, learn to set boundaries with their loved one, and begin to recognize that they can't control anyone but themselves. These benefits make Al-Anon an invaluable resource for families impacted by addiction.



My mom referred me to Alateen. She had been in Al-Anon for some time. She finally spoke what hadn't been said: “Your dad has a drinking problem. I think it would be good for you to try Alateen.”

To run out and air “the family secret” in front of other people now seemed contrary to what had been our family rule. What could sitting around a table talking to a room full of strangers do for me?

Amazingly, going to Alateen did a lot for me. Alateen gave me the freedom to talk about what was bothering me, without fear of being judged. I wasn't the only person feeling the way I did. I didn't have to hold all that stuff that was inside. I had people around me who could relate to what I was going through.

Bernie E., DE



How Al-Anon helps me

Leigh B.

My son had become an alcoholic and drug addict. It was having a tremendous impact on my family and me. His disease became “our” disease.

I sought the guidance of a lawyer to assess the financial risks of a child getting into all types of trouble. I figured as the parent I would be paying the bills, at some time, for someone to clean up the mess resulting from his alcoholic behavior. The lawyer suggested a therapist, who in turn suggested Al-Anon.

As a typical “guy,” I was not a big fan of therapy—or support groups. I had never needed anyone’s help before, but I was faced with a difficult situation that had no end in sight.

I was surprised at the support I received from my very first meeting. The most comforting feeling was that I was not alone, that there were dozens of people in my own community who were also struggling with this family problem.

As time passed, I learned

how to listen and learn from others’ experiences. I came to look forward to the meetings. I kept coming back. I took away a new outlook on life.

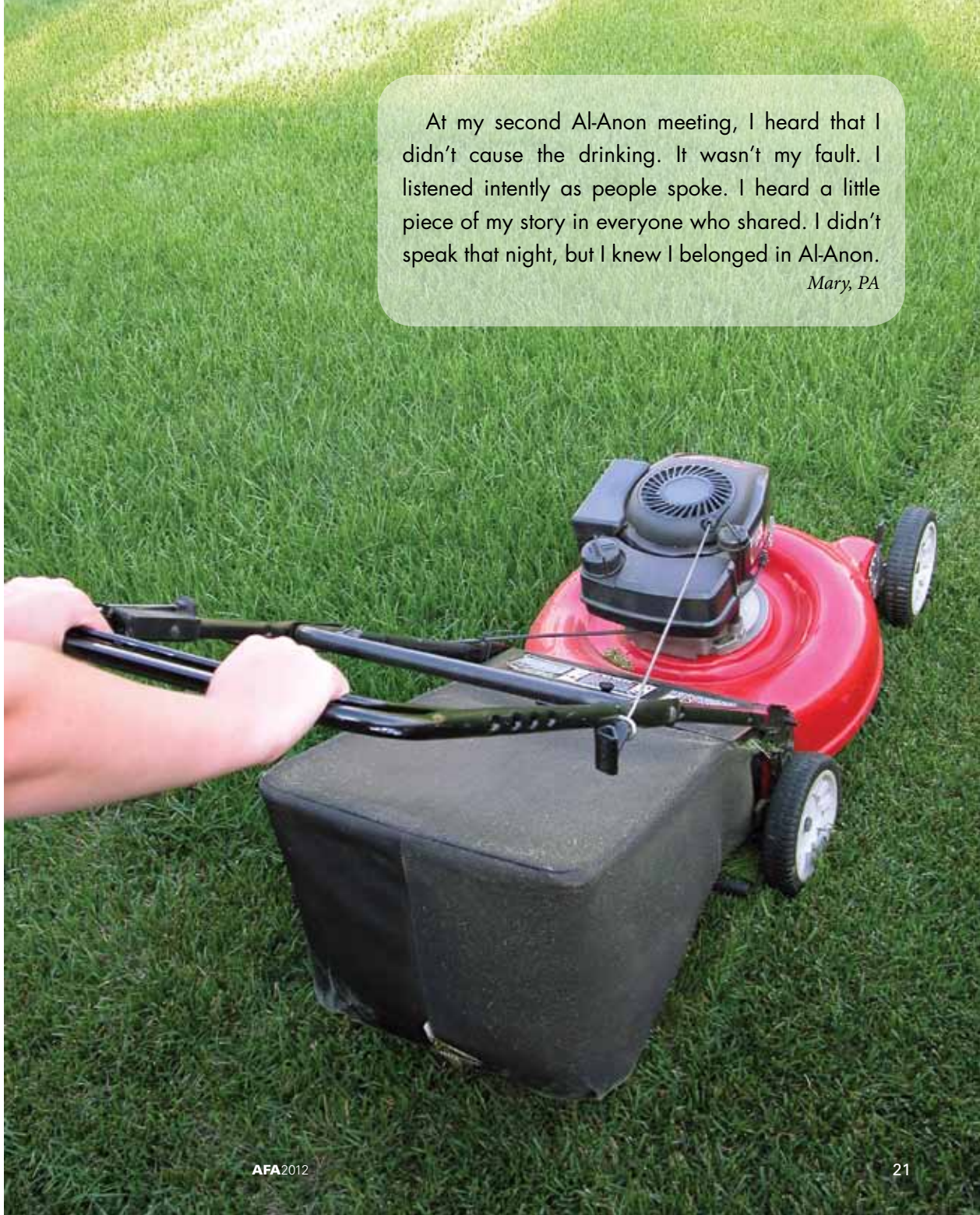
Al-Anon works in a very subtle manner. Success with the “program” is like watching grass grow: you don’t see it growing, but one day you realize it needs to be cut. In Al-Anon, one day you feel better about yourself and the situation at hand, and you wonder when/how it started happening.

In my opinion, the key is putting your focus back on yourself, instead of on your son, your spouse, or whoever the drinker is. In this way, you come to feel better about yourself in all aspects of your life.

The benefits of Al-Anon are clear: I have taken my life back; I have a better understanding of alcoholism; and a renewed relationship with my son that may be better than ever, based on mutual respect and trust.

At my second Al-Anon meeting, I heard that I didn’t cause the drinking. It wasn’t my fault. I listened intently as people spoke. I heard a little piece of my story in everyone who shared. I didn’t speak that night, but I knew I belonged in Al-Anon.

Mary, PA



Therapist explains effects of addiction

By Chris Loeffler, MSW, LCSW
Forays Counseling Services, Denver, CO

Paula and Jess (not their real names) came into therapy to do some couple's work. Paula was an inveterate caretaker. The middle child in a chaotic family, her dad drank and her mother hid. Never able to fix her own family, she focused on Jess.

Jess was not about to be fixed by anybody. The oldest son of two alcoholics, he was determined to do things his way. So she attacked, and he retaliated. Yet somehow they remained a couple. In session, she lamented: "I do all the work in this relationship. You should see how mean he is." To which, he retorted: "Nobody would put up with her complaining." I smiled and asked: "Yet here you are, still together after ten years. Pretty amazing that you both would continue to put up with such abuse, don't you think?"

Actually, anyone who knows alcoholism knows it's not unusual at all. Children of alcoholics have low expectations for relationships. Having denied or minimized their parents' frightening inconsistencies for years, adult children of alcoholics know how to survive, at best. To genuinely thrive is a foreign

concept to them. Intimacy is a scary prospect that they fear will starkly reveal all their many shortcomings.

Yet these two did love each other in a strange way: they complemented each other, all the while tearing each other apart. We can call it the dance of denial or simply the stance they inherit from witnessing past role models.

Both Paula and Jess understood that they were living their parents'

macabre dance. They just didn't know how to break it. Acknowledging that they had nothing to lose, each agreed to go to Al-Anon. What they didn't know was how much they had to learn. While therapy could educate them, only a mutual support program such as Al-Anon could help them connect to others and see that, although they were separate, they were not alone.

Paula could come to see that loving someone does not mean changing them or putting up with abuse. Putting the focus on herself

and her "side of the street" became her mottos. Jess could start to move away from his long engrained "angry victim" role. Both could slowly come to appreciate that the hope and encouragement they lacked as children was exactly what they could gain from Al-Anon, and begin to extend them to each other. Now that's truly complementary and therapeutic.

Chris Loeffler, MSW, LCSW, operates Forays Counseling Services and specializes in relational empowerment counseling in Denver, Colorado.



Understanding how my father's drinking affected my choice of a partner...

Lynda J., ON

I left my first husband because of his behavior when drinking. A pastor recommended I go to Al-Anon, but I thought my husband just needed to stop drinking and everything would be all right.

Later, I was attracted to another man whose drinking also affected me. Over a period of several years we lived together and married. All the while his drinking progressed, along with all of the behaviors that went along with it.

In desperation, I came to the doors of Al-Anon already knowing that it was to help me overcome

the effects of the family disease of alcoholism. What I did not recognize was that alcoholism in my father, grandfather, and uncles had also affected me. More importantly, my mother's reactions to their drinking had the most influence on my inability to cope.

I came to Al-Anon, abandoned my stubbornness, opened my mind, and have never regretted it a day since. The welcome I received began my road to recovery, a path with ups and downs, but clearly toward a better, more serene life.



Statement of Purpose

Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism was the title of Al-Anon's second book, first published in 1965. This magazine (like that book) includes articles by Al-Anon members and treatment professionals who share their personal perspective on how Al-Anon Family Groups can help people troubled by someone else's drinking.

Al-Anon cooperates with the professional community, but does not affiliate with any individual professional or organization. Similarly, all articles written by Al-Anon members reflect only their own personal experience with Al-Anon Family Groups.

Stories in this magazine present the personal experience of actual Al-Anon and Alateen members. In keeping with Al-Anon's tradition of anonymity, this magazine credits members without using last names. No one whose full-face image appears in this publication is a member of Al-Anon or Alateen.

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Do you wish the drinking would stop?

You have choices.
Al-Anon Family Groups can help.

**How do I find an Al-Anon or
Alateen meeting?**

Call

1-888-4AL-ANON

(1-888-425-2666)

Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. ET.

or visit

www.al-anon.alateen.org

for meeting information.

Al-Anon may also be listed in your local telephone directory.



Al-Anon **Family** Groups

Strength and hope for friends and families of problem drinkers