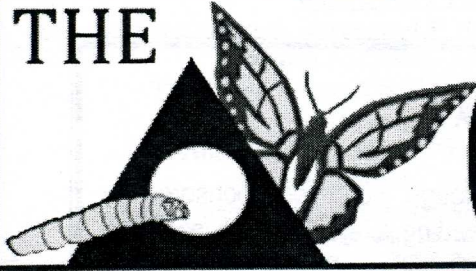


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CATERPILLAR

Al-Anon Information Service Office ~ 9417 Brookline ~ Baton Rouge LA 70809 ~ 225 924 0029
Office Hours M-F 9am til 3pm (call ahead to verify daily volunteer staffing)

Behind the Curtain ~ Service Work

Terry C. Baton Rouge

I arrived at my first Al-Anon meeting in crisis. After several months of "coming back", I noticed someone collected the money from the donation basket after the meeting. Someone else brought coffee and cups. There were newcomer packets and schedules available. And a "G.R." was going to "Area Assembly", whoever and whatever that was. I had been a volunteer in the past, but my life was too out of whack to assist.

After some time, I offered to help in ways that would not over commit me, small things. I arrived early to make coffee and stayed after meetings to welcome newcomers. Someone asked me to be in a skit for an Al-Anon workshop, and I said yes. Our group passed a list to take after-hours calls from the Al-Anon Information Service Office (AIS), generally folks looking for meeting locations, and I signed up for one evening. Eventually I became Treasurer for my Home Group, and recently sold raffle tickets at the door for an Al-Anon event.

There are lots of folks behind the scenes that keep our fellowship moving forward. What can you do? Ask your sponsor to suggest service work. Offer to help with an event - registration, food, flyers - something you enjoy. Volunteer to be a Group Representative (that's a G.R.) or Alternate G.R. for a meeting you attend regularly (aka Home Group). Volunteer once a month at the AIS office from 9am - 3pm, and catch the noon meeting while you are there. Attend an AIS Quarterly Meeting to learn about service committees and find one that interests you. Say "yes" if you would like to, and pass if it exceeds your desire to commit. We are all growing, learning, healing.

There are payoffs! You can get to know members outside of the meetings, practice healthy relationships, and be "a part of" carrying the message with chairs ready and lights on when the next newcomer arrives.

Gifts I Have Received from Al-Anon

Pat I. Baton Rouge

Serenity ~ Happiness ~ Trusting God ~ Finding Myself ~ Liking Myself ~ Learning to Listen
Allowing Others to Live their Own Lives ~ Understanding of this Illness ~ Understanding of Myself
Acceptance ~ Close Relationship with God ~ Self-Esteem ~ Choices

Recovery DOES Work

Cindy L. Baton Rouge

Times when life feels most grueling and I can't force myself to do the next right thing, I pick up an Al-Anon book and read, make a phone call, or simply allow myself to feel and remind myself, "This too shall pass." Times when things were unpleasant or hard, I needed more meetings and self-care. I needed to be gentle with myself. Each time, I eventually came back to myself and found I was better than I had been in the first place. Recovery DOES work.

Sharing Our Experience, Strength, and Hope Workshop

Clara E. Baton Rouge

Thirty-six Al-Anon members gathered Saturday August 29, 2009 at a Baton Rouge workshop sponsored by Louisiana District 13 and the Baton Rouge AIS Office. Members participated in writing exercises such as listing "The gifts I've received in Al-Anon," "Al-Anon tools that give me strength," and "Qualities of my Higher Power." After sharing their lists with the entire group during brainstorming sessions, participants were encouraged to choose one item on their list and write about it for 5-7 minutes. Volunteers shared their writings with the entire group after each writing exercise. Several of these writings are included in this newsletter. Keep writing!!

COMMITMENT and DISCIPLINE

Jay P. Baton Rouge

The disease of alcoholism brought me to my knees. I admitted my powerlessness in saving an alcoholic from a strong grip of addiction and suffering. My obsession with an alcoholic loved one made my life unmanageable. After a long struggle, I finally surrendered to my powerlessness and unmanageability. I chose to abandon the old way of living and made a decision to search for a new way as suggested in Al-Anon's *Three Legacies – the 12 Steps, 12 Traditions and 12 Concepts of Service*. I made a commitment to myself that I would make my recovery a top priority, to learn how to apply the steps to my spiritual recovery. I made a second commitment to God; became willing to trust God, seek God's will for my life and do my best to live according to God's will as I understood it. Remaining focused on these two personal commitments I spent all available time to work the Steps for one year. During this time my marriage and my career both failed. My two personal commitments were guiding lights that helped me through these crises without losing hope for a better tomorrow.

My two personal commitments and discipline to stay focused on working the steps helped me emerge as a spiritually strong person. I accepted my losses and understood how my character defects and character assets pushed to obsession had played a major role in my failures. After completing the steps, I came across a wonderful lady very active in Al-Anon service who later became my Service Sponsor. She took me to workshops, conventions and Area Assemblies. This gave me glimpses of the other side of Al-Anon that I could not see by just attending meetings. By this time I was dating a wonderful lady who I married two years later and also found a new job which led me to build a new and exciting career. My service sponsor got me started on practicing the *Three Legacies* in my personal life. I began to assume service responsibilities and have been active in service for the last twenty years.

God had sent just what I needed to build my new marriage and career on a strong spiritual foundation. My first two commitments were to myself and to God which were under my full control. But now I am becoming willing to make commitments to other people to rebuild my personal and professional relationships where I had been hurt the most in the past. Through the participation in Al-Anon service I found many tools providing guidance in making these new commitments and importance of discipline necessary for success.

Al-Anon Legacies are a complete set of guidelines equally effective in rebuilding broken relationships, improving existing relationships and building new relationships. These guidelines are very flexible but with a very strong backbone. These guidelines have helped me transplant the legacy's strong backbone into my relationships. They do bend, turn and twist. But when the storm is over, they stand up taller and stronger than ever before.

