

**How Can
I Help
My
Children?**

R e c o v e r y

AL-ANON FAMILY GROUPS

hope for families & friends of alcoholics



The Al-Anon Family Groups are a fellowship of relatives and friends of alcoholics who share their experience, strength and hope in order to solve their common problems. We believe alcoholism is a family illness and that changed attitudes can aid recovery.

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.

The Suggested Preamble to the Twelve Steps

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How Can I Help My Children?

It is hard to imagine a more baffling life situation than the one which faces the mother or father whose spouse is a compulsive drinker.

For the man with an alcoholic wife, it can mean making special provisions to have the children cared for while he is at work.

The problems of the wife and mother can be different. She is usually dependent on her husband's earnings. Both must somehow manage to keep the home together and face the daily responsibility of caring for their children. It isn't easy. A succession of crises they don't know how to cope with keeps them in a constant state of confusion, fear and bitterness. These feelings are almost always passed on to the children, no matter how hard they try to hide them.

The first thing for a parent to realize--and accept--is that the situation is not as hopeless as it seems. What we say and do can have an effect both on our spouse and on our children. We can discover, by accepting the help Al-Anon offers, how to make the family's life happier.

Identifying the Problem

It is not hard to believe that the children of alcoholics are the worst sufferers in a family. There is much we can do, however, to help reduce the harmful effects of alcoholism on them and to create a climate in our homes that will be conducive to their emotional health and happiness.

Children usually have natural tolerance and compassion for the alcoholic. If we want our children to grow up well-adjusted, we'll have to stop worrying about the alcoholic's influence on them. We can't control what the alcoholic says and does, but we can change our attitudes and behavior. We can minimize the effect our negative attitudes may have had on

our family by making every effort to improve our own attitudes. It stands to reason that a change for the better in us will be a force for good that will help the entire family.

Trying to Control the Alcoholic

Until we come into Al-Anon and become convinced of our powerlessness over alcoholism, many of us spend a great deal of time and energy trying to control the alcoholic's behavior. We may even involve the children in this struggle. We may insist that they be models of good behavior when the alcoholic is around, making them feel that what they do may trigger a drinking bout. Some of us encourage the children to help us find and throw out the bottles. We may send the children along when the alcoholic leaves the house, hoping this will discourage drinking while outside the home. We may upset the children with our own fears and then blame the alcoholic, hoping that seeing the children upset will effect a change in the alcoholic's behavior. Some of us send the children looking for the alcoholic in bars; others leave the children at home like watchdogs to keep an eye on the alcoholic when we have to leave the house. In our desperation, we may even allow the children to get into the car when the alcoholic has been drinking!

Al-Anon teaches us we have no control over alcoholism. We may be able to keep them from drinking *this* drink, or getting drunk *this* time, but alcoholics will eventually get drunk anyway. All our interference does nothing to arrest or slow down the disease.

Enlisting the children's help in our futile efforts to control the alcoholic makes them feel frustrated and increases their sense of guilt.

Let's not make the children feel responsible for their parents' behavior!

Explaining the Disease

It's easy to deceive ourselves into thinking that the children don't know what is going on. But if we are really honest, we will see that the children *do* know something is terribly wrong. Children have an amazing capacity for dealing with the truth. Shrouding the illness in mystery and lies is far more frightening than a down-to-earth talk about the disease of alcoholism.

*In explaining the disease to young children, it is helpful to compare it to an allergy. We can point out that the alcoholic is sick and doesn't mean all the things said while drinking. We should be careful to explain to the children that they are in no way responsible for the drinking and we must remind them that they are loved.

Making Amends

Most of us are so preoccupied with the alcoholic before Al-Anon that we were unable to concentrate on the other areas of our lives. We may have taken care of the children's physical needs but neglected them emotionally. How many of us have put the children to bed early so we could be free to worry? How many of us have left the children to their own devices while we tried to think up solutions to the drinking problem? How many of us have taken out our resentments on the children, even to the point of physical abuse, and then gone overboard being solicitous because we felt guilty?

Surely our children must come at the top of the list of those we have harmed and to whom we must make amends. It helps to remember that children copy what we *do* and not what

*See *What's "Drunk" Mama?*, Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc., Virginia Beach, Virginia 1977

we say. They react to the emotional climate in the home. If we provide a stable environment, they will feel more secure. If we are in control of ourselves, they will sense our strength and will not be so frightened. If we show compassion for the alcoholic, the children will not be forced to take sides. If we refuse to tolerate unacceptable behavior, the children will develop a sense of justice.

Children who have grown up in an alcoholic home are usually confused, very often as a result of their parents' inconsistency. Not knowing what to expect from parents at any given time makes a child feel insecure. Children need and want limits on their behavior. When parents set limits and strictly enforce them one day, then completely disregard them the next, the children become confused and may engage in more unacceptable behavior until limits are once again enforced. Making amends to our children may mean applying consistent discipline in order to provide them with a sense of security.

Communicating with Our Children

If we have neglected our children because we were too preoccupied with the alcoholic, we can help undo the harm by establishing two-way communication with them. That means listening to them without always trying to correct them. It means encouraging them to speak frankly about their feelings, without fear of our criticism. Even adults have negative feelings at times. We get angry and resentful. We even hate. But having bad feelings doesn't make us bad people. Feelings are involuntary reactions. If we refuse to accept them, or even to recognize them, they can only hurt us. Part of growing up is learning to cope with our feelings so they don't destroy us. Rather than con-

demn our children for having negative feelings it is better to let them know we understand how they feel and help them to find healthy outlets for their anger. Sometimes just letting them talk it out is enough. Sometimes they must be helped to find nondestructive ways of expressing themselves.

Many of us are quick to jump to conclusions expecting the worst from our children. We may fail to give them a chance to explain before meting out punishment. This makes children feel they are being treated unjustly. It chips away at their image of themselves as worthwhile, trustworthy persons. Children tend to live up to our expectations. If we expect the worst from them, they will oblige us. Constant criticism will make them lose their desire to try to please.

Examining Our Attitudes

Children are great imitators. If we find something in them that we don't like, let's look at ourselves to see if what we disapprove of in them didn't originate with us. A martyr-like attitude, a bossy tone, a critical or sarcastic approach, a habit of arguing—all such discourteous behavior can be passed onto our children without our even being aware of it.

We can best help our children by correcting these faults in ourselves, thereby setting a good example. We can treat them with respect to make them feel they are important and deserving of our courtesy and consideration. Although they are small, they have a right to their dignity, too!

Working the Program at Home

Consider the newcomers in Al-Anon. They may have been beaten down, criticized, belittled

and unappreciated. We know what that kind of treatment can do to someone's feelings of self-worth. No wonder they are confused, unsure of themselves, unable to make a decision, perhaps even hostile and belligerent!

Once in Al-Anon, they thrive in the atmosphere of love and encouragement they find there. Their smallest efforts to improve are recognized and praised. Their failures are not condemned; they are reassured to know that everyone there has been just as silly or hard-headed or slow to learn. Before they know it, they begin to like themselves. They develop self-respect and find the courage to try things they'd thought were beyond them.

Why not use this same approach with our children?

Children are Impressionable

It is easy to understand that much damage is done to children who are allowed to witness violent scenes and arguments. When the mother and father on whom the child depends behave as though they hate each other, it can be a shattering experience for a youngster. Once we come into Al-Anon, most of us learn not to argue with the alcoholic, and many of these ugly shouting matches become a thing of the past.

A child identifies with both parents. Feelings within are tied up with feelings about them. If a child is allowed to overhear conversations in which either parent is being denounced, it creates conflicts that are not easy to resolve. Telephone sharing is important, but it should not be done at the expense of the children. If we need to unburden ourselves and talk about what the alcoholic has done, or go into detail about problems we're having, it's best to do it when the children are not around.

Sometimes, out of a desperate need for someone to talk to, we are tempted to use our children as our confidants. We unburden our troubles and frustrations on them, perhaps even revealing events of the past that would have been better left alone. This can set up a terrible conflict in children making them feel they must take sides. They may end up resenting or losing respect for us. If, out of a desire to help, they make a suggestion which is carried out and then turns out badly, they are additionally burdened with guilt feelings.

Children are impressionable. What they see and hear becomes a part of them. It is well to remember that scars are easier to prevent than to erase.

Protecting the Children

No one need tolerate violence or abuse. We are free to make a choice. There is a growing awareness of, and concern over, what is known as "child abuse." Through television and other media, organizations devoted to fighting this problem are calling public attention to it. According to statistics, a large number of such cases happen in alcoholic families.

This means that a spouse may be faced with the problem of what to do when the alcoholic, completely out of control, does physical harm to the children.

The spouse of an active alcoholic has a serious problem when young children must be left with the drinking partner. In such situations it may be necessary to make other provisions for the children's care.

The spouse who may have endured beatings is terrified of defying the violent alcoholic. However, this is a crucial situation which demands calling on the last reserves of courage to protect self and children.

They may be able to get to the home of a

neighbor or friend and from there call for police protection.

No matter what triggered the violence, only prompt and courageous action will avert what could become a major tragedy.

Children can sense when the situation is out of control. They feel better when efforts are made to restore order. We may not want to take legal action, but sometimes it is the only recourse. This is not blaming or punishing the alcoholic; it is protecting ourselves and our children.

It is equally courageous for either parent who has become violent with the children to seek personal help.

Examining Our Motives

It is sometimes necessary for us to be buffers between the alcoholic and the children. We must protect them from physical harm and step in when we see they are in danger or are having difficulty coping with their emotions. We examine our motives, however, to be sure we are not interfering with their relationship with the alcoholic when there is no need for it. We do not use our desire to protect the children as an excuse to alienate them from the alcoholic.

Making Decisions

In Al-Anon, we learn to release the alcoholic with love. We eventually develop the ability to make decisions without worrying about their effect on the alcoholic's drinking. Putting first things first, we weigh many things in the light of our welfare and that of the children. But we must guard against using the children as an excuse. Whether or not we take legal action, whether or not we separate, these decisions must be made carefully. Rarely are we faced with a choice between a good situation or a bad one. Most of the time, we have to choose the lesser of two evils. We can safe-

ly assume that if something is good for us, it will be good for the children, too.

Breaking the Vicious Cycle

Alcoholism is, indeed, a *family disease*: All family members are affected emotionally and sometimes physically. Children learn how to deal with life by watching their parents. Parental attitudes toward each other, toward life, toward their children, are all passed on without their even noticing it.

The children of alcoholics may marry alcoholics or become alcoholics themselves. Even without that eventuality, childhood in an alcoholic home is poor preparation for a happy, well-adjusted adulthood.

If we want to stop the vicious cycle of unhappiness, we must learn new ways of living, new ways of relating to each other. With the help of Al-Anon and Alateen, we can hope to make a healthy break in the long chain of the effects of alcoholism as they are passed on from generation to generation.

Encouraging Alateen

We have tried to suggest many ways in which parents can help their families to adjust to the difficulties which occur in a home troubled by alcoholism. Al-Anon can give a great deal of support and comfort to these parents. The same help is available to teenage members of the family through Alateen. Alateen, with almost three thousand groups, prepares these young people for a richer, more serene life. It gives them the ability to cope with alcoholism in addition to the difficult problem of growing up.

The following statement by a former member of Alateen who "graduated" to Al-Anon, gives a vivid picture of what this program can do for children growing up in an alcoholic home.

The Graduate

When I left home for the first time, my body was the only thing that left. I was living 100 miles away but my mind was still at home. It used to bother me when I would continue to think of what my mother was doing--"I wonder if she's had a drink today?". . .what my family would think if I did this or that. All this kept me quite dependent on the alcoholic and the whole family for emotional support. I didn't have any good friends and I never felt comfortable where I was living. When I returned to my hometown during semester break, the old feeling of comfort came back and I felt good within the confines of my family.

I had decided that I didn't need to continue with Alateen--I could handle things by myself. After getting into a number of tie-ups and realizing that the discomfort had become too much for me, I realized that I had to go back to Alateen.

With my return came an exciting new enthusiasm which made me really strive for some kind of independence. I was more relaxed and I'm sure my whole family felt more comfortable. I was able to "Let Go and Let God" when my mother had her first slip from the AA program. I began to realize how much I had learned when I didn't panic after her slip.

Last fall I "graduated" from Alateen to Al-Anon. Several AA people asked me why I needed to go to Al-Anon; hadn't I gotten enough of a firm foundation through Alateen? My simple answer was that I had discovered upon returning sometime ago that Alateen and Al-Anon were recovering programs for their members, as AA was for theirs, and that just as sobriety is a continuing thing, so is our search for serenity. I discovered that while having an alcoholic mother was the reason I came to

Alateen, my own unmanageable life was the reason I continued to attend Al-Anon.

I am still concerned about my parents, both of them; but it is a concern which is tempered with detachment and love. It is the kind of concern that has allowed me to grow up and to balance my relationship with my parents. I have also formed a number of warm and loving relationships with the people who mean so much to me--my friends in the fellowship.

Checklist for Parents

- ✓ Do I think of my children as people who have a right to my respect?
- ✓ Do I make them feel stupid, inadequate or bad?
- ✓ Do I humiliate them in front of others? Or do I correct them privately, allowing them to maintain their dignity?
- ✓ Am I courteous to my child?
- ✓ Do I habitually yell? Threaten? Nag?
- ✓ How do I correct my children? Do I attack their character? Call them names? Lose my self-control? Hit them? Make sarcastic remarks? Ridicule them?
- ✓ Do I jump to conclusions, expecting the worst? Or do I give them a chance to tell their side?
- ✓ Do I make a big issue over small things?
- ✓ Do I have the same reaction to major problems as I do to small ones?
- ✓ Do I let my children know they are important? How do I treat the things they make?
- ✓ Do I apologize when I am wrong?
- ✓ Do I set limits on behavior and enforce them?
- ✓ Do I show my children affection and tell them I love them?

Personal Reflections

Self-Pity Was a Way of Life

I have had a tendency to feel sorry for myself. What is worse, I have transferred this attitude to my children. Al-Anon has helped me to realize how harmful this is to them. It drains them of the courage to face reality. It allows them to blame the alcoholic for all their problems. It has distorted their whole concept of what adult life should be.

I now realize it does no good to blame the bad things that happen to us on bad luck or to say, "Poor me, poor me." Al-Anon has restored my faith in my Higher Power and has taught me to count my blessings. Rather than bemoan my lot in life, I am now trying to change what I can, and this has given my children courage to do the same.

My Children Were Mirrors

My son, who was nine and my daughter, seven, had been getting more and more troublesome and destructive, and both had violent tempers. There was just no way I could discipline them, I thought. I blamed the school, their friends, and their father's violence and bad language when he was drinking.

One day, I was called to the school because of some vandalism my son was accused of. I cried and told the principal about our home situation. He said: "Your children have *two* parents. If one is an unfortunate influence on them, perhaps there's something *you* can do." He then suggested I try Al-Anon.

Once in the program, I began to get honest with myself. I had to admit that my children were just copying the example I had set for them. They were allowed to witness ugly scenes with their parents shouting, hurling insults and accusations at one another. They

knew they could get anything they wanted from me if they chose their moment for asking—usually when I was feeling guilty for having treated them badly. My discipline consisted of yelling, empty threats, or verbal attacks on their characters. They heard me tell lies to cover up for my husband's behavior. They heard me berate him to relatives and friends. And if they ever dared to say anything derogatory about their father, I punished them!

Little by little, I have been able to change my behavior and set a better example for my children. I explain to them that I knew I'd been unfair and irritable. I answer their questions and encourage them to speak frankly, realizing that they, too, have their griefs and frustrations. I've begun to treat them with respect. The change has been slow. At first they didn't trust me. Why should they? They had always known me as an unreasonable, hysterical, changeable person, either over-loving or under-loving. They are now gradually coming to accept my affection.

My Son Couldn't Control His Temper

My oldest boy has a terrible temper. Whenever he gets angry, he wants to hit his brother or sister. I know he acts this way because that's how I have reacted to him when I've been angry. I now realize that hitting my children is not a good way to vent my frustration but I couldn't get it across to him.

I talked my problem over with a child psychologist who suggested I buy him a punching bag. When my son gets angry and starts to hit someone, I say, "People are not for hitting. Hit the punching bag instead. When you feel better we can talk about what made you mad." It has worked beautifully.

We all benefited from this advice because we were helped to realize that it is all right to

be angry as long as we let out our feelings without hurting anyone.

With a little imagination, we thought up all sorts of ways to express anger that are not destructive. My daughter makes a picture of the person she's angry with and makes it as ugly as possible.

It's a good feeling to know that we can get rid of strong negative feelings without damaging our relationships with people or doing something we would regret later on.

My Children Were My Allies Against My Husband

For sixteen years, I watched my husband deteriorate before my eyes. When he finally joined AA, our son was fourteen and our daughter was ten. In all the years I was fighting alcohol with the weapon of ignorance and self-pity. I was really not conscious of the impact it had on my children.

I enlisted the aid of my children in my ceaseless war against their father. They sympathized with me and defended me in every argument. They joined with me in all my attempts to prevent my husband from drinking. They helped me hunt the bottles he hid in the basement.

When the drinking wasn't so bad, their natural love for their father surfaced. I remember how I denounced them when they sided with him and not with me. This constant tug-of-war resulted in a pitiful sense of insecurity in them and made them noticeably nervous and unstable. In the end, my will prevailed and they developed a feeling for their father far worse than hate—a kind of patronizing pity. They seemed to regard him as a combination of clown and idiot. Unwittingly, it was I who encouraged them in this. I simply didn't know any better.

If I had it all to do over again, I wouldn't wait

until my husband joined AA to come into Al-Anon. I would tell the children that their father was a sick man. I would try to help them understand that he drank and got drunk because of a terrible compulsion inside him that we couldn't do anything about. I would avoid every argument dealing with alcohol or sparked by it. I would protect my children if the alcoholic became violent, but I would do it quietly, removing them from the house if necessary.

If the clock were turned back, I would build our life on the premise that the alcoholic breadwinning member of the family was an invalid who might at any time become incapacitated. It has happened in thousands of other families—blindness, polio, tuberculosis or heart disease. Those things are hard to take, but they can be borne. The family carries on somehow. This is just as true when the sick person is an alcoholic. We can recognize the sickness and set an example of tolerance and understanding for our children.

Since my husband and I have found AA and Al-Anon, there has been a big change in our home. We have learned to accept our problems and difficulties, confident that God can help us to use them for our growth. There has been a gradual lessening of tensions in our home. Both the children have calmed down. I am sure this is as much the result of my changed attitude as it is due to my husband's sobriety.

The Serenity Prayer

God grant me the serenity
To accept the things I cannot change,
Courage to change the things I can,
And wisdom to know the difference.

Reflecting on each thought in the Serenity Prayer can help put situations into a clearer perspective.

Slogans Used In Al-Anon

To slow us down and help us see things clearly, we in Al-Anon rely on several slogans which have special significance in this program.

First Things First

When nothing seems to be going well, even small decisions create havoc with our thinking. We then need to stop and ask ourselves, "What really needs doing the most?"

Easy Does It

When frustration and chaos have become the order of the day, some people begin driving themselves at a ridiculous pace without ever knowing why. What's the good of a relentless attack on anything if it amounts to beating your head against the wall? Remember, Easy Does It...but do it!

Live and Let Live

The rest of the world is not responsible for our personal tribulations. We need to learn to live, to focus on something good or useful to our lives, and let the rest of the world go about its business.

But For the Grace of God

Nobody yet knows for sure why one person becomes an alcoholic and another one doesn't. But For the Grace of God, we could be alcoholics, too.

One Day at a Time

The alcoholic who is trying to stay sober only tackles the problem for twenty-four hours. Remembering this can help us, too. We are living in this day only, not in a day that has not yet come.

The Twelve Steps

1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol— that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God *as we understood Him*.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God *as we understood Him*, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these Steps, we tried to carry this message to others, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

Dear Mom & Dad

Mom, Dad

Alcoholics suffer from alcoholism mentally, spiritually, and physically. Well, guess what? So does the family, regardless of age or maturity. I always used to hide my feelings, pretending that I didn't care when I was crying inside. Alateen has given me love, hope and the feeling that I'm not alone. Please know that Alateen...

- Is for kids like me who have been affected by someone else's drinking.
- Provides a safe place where I can share.
- Helps me understand the family disease of alcoholism.
- Is a place for me to learn to feel good about myself.
- Encourages me to change my attitude instead of reacting to the situation.
- Gives me the courage to detach with love.
- Is anonymous—we don't discuss what we hear or whom we see at meetings.
- Is grrrrreat!

I hope this has given you both a clearer picture of Alateen's importance in my life. I guess I just want to tell you that I need Alateen.

P.S. Here's what our Alateen sponsor says about Alateen:

As an Alateen sponsor, I have a very special place in your child's life. I'm there to offer guidance at meetings and to provide a safe place in which Alateens can talk freely. A sponsor doesn't play the role of teacher, as we share rather than educate. I do not assume a parental role as I could never take your place.



We learn to respect children as people and they learn to trust us because we honor their confidentiality.

Try to remember, Alateen is NOT:

- A therapy program.
- A program for teenagers with drinking or drug problems.
- A place to complain about parents or anyone else.
- A place for fixing your child.
- A baby-sitting service.
- A social hangout.
- A punishment tool; it's a recovery tool.

I wish I could convey to you how much your kids mean to me. I guess being there with them every week explains it. Each time I think of all the kids who've been helped and of all the fun I've had in the process of sponsoring, I now know how much I believe in Alateen.

If you ever have any doubts about your loved ones needing Alateen, keep this in mind: **You don't have to drink to suffer from alcoholism.**

Alateen, part of the Al-Anon Family Groups, is a fellowship of young people whose lives have been affected by alcoholism in a family member or close friend. We help each other by sharing our experience, strength and hope.

We believe alcoholism is a family disease because it affects all the members emotionally and sometimes physically.

Although we cannot change or control our parents, we can detach from their problems while continuing to love them.

We do not discuss religion or become involved with any outside organizations. Our sole topic is the solution of our problems. We are always careful to protect each other's anonymity as well as that of all Al-Anon and AA members.

By applying the Twelve Steps to ourselves, we begin to grow mentally, emotionally and spiritually. We will always be grateful to Alateen for giving us a wonderful, healthy program to live by and enjoy.

*Excerpted from (P-67) *Dear Mom & Dad*

The Twelve Traditions

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal progress for the greatest number depends upon unity.
2. For our group purpose there is but one authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.
3. The relatives of alcoholics; when gathered together for mutual aid, may call themselves an Al-Anon Family Group, provided that, as a group, they have no other affiliation. The only requirement for membership is that there be a problem of alcoholism in a relative or friend.
4. Each group should be autonomous, except in matters affecting another group or Al-Anon or AA as a whole.
5. Each Al-Anon Family Group has but one purpose: to help families of alcoholics. We do this by practicing the Twelve Steps of AA *ourselves*, by encouraging and understanding our alcoholic relatives, and by welcoming and giving comfort to families of alcoholics.
6. Our Al-Anon Family Groups ought never endorse, finance or lend our name to any outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property and prestige divert us from our primary spiritual aim. Although a separate entity, we should always cooperate with Alcoholics Anonymous.
7. Every group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
8. Al-Anon Twelfth Step work should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers.
9. Our groups, as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.
10. The Al-Anon Family Groups have no opinion on outside issues; hence our name ought never be drawn into public controversy.
11. Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, TV and films. We need guard with special care the anonymity of all AA members.
12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles above personalities.