

## End Results

Believe me, it works. I can vouch for that. Everything good that has happened in my life stems from the fact that I married a beautiful person, who became a different person with the illness called alcoholism. This was the hopeless one, the lost one, rejected and condemned, who came to Alcoholics Anonymous, learned to live again with her program, and became once more a mighty fine and wonderful new person, one I am very proud to call my wife; someone I love very much.

This husband was at least willing enough to walk hand in hand as an Al-Anon member. All of the changes in my life, based on the simple philosophy learned, have given me a full and good life in all ways. I have a family that is the sort of family that I never imagined or dreamed that I would have.

If it worked for us, and for so many other hundreds of thousands of others, it can work for anyone, if they wish or elect to try. Al-Anon is waiting. Use it. You and your people have the answers available. It's up to you folks. Let's work together, both as individuals and separately, but as one in our desires, aims, and goals.

It's worth the effort. It pays off. You people of labor and management receive the benefits of tremendous financial returns but more importantly you watch a family that was falling apart, a family on the rocks, start to change and unite—start living as a family should live.

And that's the real benefit.

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## Al-Anon and Employee Programs

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**by Paul L.  
Member, Al-Anon  
Board of Trustees**

My name is Paul and I'm proud to be a member of the Al-Anon Family Groups.

Thank you for inviting me to be a part of your NCA Labor-Management panel. What I say is my opinion. I am not a spokesman for Al-Anon. My comments express my own experiences and thoughts, and what I have learned during the past 28 years as an Al-Anon member, as well as a member of the Al-Anon Board of Trustees.

You have requested that I explain exactly what Al-Anon can and cannot do in the way of cooperation (without affiliation) with employee alcoholism programs. This is rather simple to accomplish, as the answers are spelled out in the Twelve Traditions of Al-Anon. Briefly, these include:

1. The only requirement for Al-Anon membership is that there be a problem of alcoholism in a relative or friend.
2. Al-Anon never endorses, finances, or lends its name to any outside enterprise.
3. Although a separate entity, we do cooperate with Alcoholics Anonymous.
4. We are self-supporting and decline outside contributions.
5. We are non-professional.
6. We have no opinion on outside issues and do not engage in public controversy.
7. Our public relations policy is one of attraction rather than promotion.
8. Our personal anonymity is always maintained at the level of press, radio, TV and films.

### **Personal Experience**

I have been part of both labor and management. I do not find too many differences between them. I believe everyone has the identical feelings of love or hate, ambition or lack of ambition, personal needs and desires, heartaches or joys, family pride and family problems. I can go on and on, you name it, and we all have it—whatever it may be.

Allow me to tell you a few of my personal experiences, as we do in Al-Anon. We generally relate our stories to illustrate how changes happen in our lives, and what happens in our family and relationships. We normally do not offer ad-

vice, but rather try to be an example in following the principles of recovery as Al-Anon works.

My first experience with alcoholism occurred when I was a young stockroom boy. This was at a company picnic, when a fellow employee and friend had way too much to drink and ended up a horrendous mess. It was a traumatic experience where I felt helpless and alone, completely ignorant and unable to comprehend or assist in any way.

Later, as Executive Vice-President of a large national organization, I had various salesmen working for me, that I now feel could qualify as alcoholics. These men were real annoyances, lots of problems every day. They were likable, even though completely unreliable.

Again looking back, even though they worked perhaps only 60 per cent of the usual time, they were all top producers in sales. That may say something as to the abilities of alcoholics. It is my considered opinion that a sober A.A. employee, working his or her program to the fullest, is an excellent bet as a good employee, of either labor or management status.

### **Marital Problems**

In 1940, my wife and I were married in Chicago. We were complete opposites. In fact all of our friends, hers and mine, were unanimous in their opinion that our marriage would be lucky if it lasted a year at the very most; I like to mention this fact after 40 years of marriage. When dating, as well as during the first year or two of our marriage, I didn't think too much of her drinking. Come to think of it, I didn't think too much of it later either.

Our family was a family on the rocks. Our house was not a home, it was a disaster area. We were all in deep trouble, my beautiful wife, our two lovely daughters and I, as well as (indirectly) both our parents. I will not go into the gory details of violence, attempted suicides, numerous hospitalizations, physical hurts, also the mental agony and hurts, you name it. Any aspect of alcoholism and its effects. We went through it all.

How ignorant I was. To illustrate—I had been fairly successful in everything that I ever tackled in my life. Then I encountered my wife. I spent years trying to get her to stop her drinking. This was my complete, 100% failure; and did I work at it!

## Refused Offers

It was in the early 1950's. I was sales manager of the largest operation of its kind in the world. Over a period of time, I had received many offers of positions from major firms and competitors. My stock answer was "No—I'm real happy where I am." The honest answer was "No—I have a beautiful wife at home with the illness known as alcoholism. How can I move with her passed out? How can I function with her at a new company? How can I, and on and on—I can't!" Fear, frustration, loneliness, and despair were the ruling emotions of my life.

Outwardly I was a success; inwardly a failure with an alcoholic-obsessed family, involved in alcoholism to the nth degree. Reflecting back, I can't see how I functioned as well as I did in the business world.

In 1952 we found Alcoholics Anonymous. Again, no long details, but suffice to say that my wife was one of those who came to A.A. but was unable to stay sober. For the ensuing six years she was unsuccessful, classed as the typical hopeless case.

During this period we also found a kind, compassionate, and understanding physician, Dr. Elmer Zweig of Fort Wayne, Indiana, who helped us so very much. He is still active in the field of alcoholism. Prior to his care, we had two other physicians tell us that they didn't wish to have my wife as a patient any longer. I was insulted and disgusted; again looking backward, they were right. They were not capable of helping, and realized the fact.

## Start of Al-Anon

I came to Al-Anon when I was requested to leave a closed A.A. meeting as a non-alcoholic. This was in 1952. We started as an auxiliary, but shortly thereafter we started the first Fort Wayne Al-Anon Group.

We went through the six years of hope and hopelessness. Then our sobriety came in 1958. My wife has been a qualified A.A. member for the past 22 years.

In 1960, another offer of employment came. We now had a sober family. Our two daughters were charter members of the first Fort Wayne Alateen Group. We moved to Kentucky. I became marketing manager of a new operation that, starting from point zero, became, within a few

years, the largest manufacturer of its type in the world in production and sales.

All this illustrates what is possible with a recovering alcoholic family. At age 56, I resigned and, with two partners, started a new firm near Louisville. Within less than three years, we were, and still are, Number One in our field. I resigned as president and marketing head a while ago, sold out, and retired to my present status of a professional loafer.

## Knowledge Gained

The family illness, alcoholism, is a major industrial headache. The cost to industry runs into billions of dollars each year. Absolutely no one can establish the total cost—so many factors—absenteeism, poor work performance, lost production, accidents, sick payments, faulty judgment, employee turnover, the various bad or damaging customer and public relationships, you name it; this is only a partial listing.

## Pervasive Problem

We have a big problem. Industry and labor have a mutual big problem. Big is wrong. What is the largest descriptive word we can use? Colossal, huge, immense, gigantic, vast, all the adjectives put together don't begin to cover the scope of our problem, affecting every aspect of our lives—the problem of alcoholism.

I have mentioned how I was affected, how my wife was affected, how our children were affected. We found answers that reversed the downhill progression of our family, and enabled us all to change and climb to the peak.

## Functions of Al-Anon

Now let's get down to the real questions that I am here to discuss.

Our assistance or help is readily available and freely offered, based on the Traditions of Al-Anon as mentioned previously: Namely alcoholism, non-affiliation, no financial aid, no controversy, no promotion, and personal anonymity at the media level.

Industry is doing well with alcoholism programs for alcoholic employees. But what about the employees with alcoholics in their families? They are equally affected and have similar problems of absenteeism, sickness, lower production, inferior quality, accidents, employee turn-

over, poor judgment, and all the other manifestations of the emotionally disturbed person.

There is an answer for you folks in labor and management, an organization called Al-Anon.

If percentages run true to form, there are some of you sitting here in this meeting, looking for help in a bleak and apparently hopeless situation with a problem drinker who creates horrible problems for you. You know who you are. Why not reach out for help? You just might find some answers. Al-Anon can be of help to the alcoholic family, be certain of that fact. There is proven performance.

## Road to Recovery

Talking at one time with Bill, co-founder of Alcoholics Anonymous, it was agreed that one of the greatest sources of A.A. membership was, and is, Al-Anon. Perhaps 50% or more of our membership are living with an active drinking problem. More and more it is found that an alcoholic comes to Alcoholics Anonymous due to his or her spouse's membership in Al-Anon.

This is due to the change in attitudes, the curiosity aroused, and the subsequent happenings. An old cliché says, "One gives up and wins," which those of you who are knowledgeable appreciate. If you are interested in saving your valuable employee with a drinking problem, Alcoholics Anonymous is a valuable ally. If you are interested in saving your valuable employee living with a drinking problem, Al-Anon is a valuable ally. Either way, remember— recovery begins with the family.

Here are some suggestions:

1. Each of you should contact Al-Anon. Get the facts. Where are meetings? What time, what place, what day? Find Al-Anon in the phone book. Call and get information. [If necessary, write to Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc., P.O. Box 862 Midtown Station, New York, New York 10018-0862 for guidance. We have Cooperating with the Professional Community committees to assist you.]

Don't ever forget—and these are facts—there are somewhere between forty million and fifty million spouses, children, parents, or other kin, living with, or rather existing with a problem drinker. Add the estimated ten million alcoholics, and you have fifty to sixty million people in our country affected directly or indirectly by alcoholism. Quite a few employees, isn't it?

2. When an employee is ill, absent, tardy or any of the other classic symptoms (you all know them), why not ask a simple question such as "Is there a drinking problem in your family?" Denial is normal, but the thinking process is there, and sometimes a "yes" answer comes back and the door is opened. You can then refer the employee for help. I might strongly suggest that when you steer alcoholic employees to Alcoholics Anonymous, you tell them to take direct action to have the family go to Al-Anon and Alateen. Recovery involves all; when all work on recovery, results are greatly improved. The emotional sickness of all members of the family needs healing.

3. Your Medical or Personnel Department might have a list of questions on a sheet of paper,\* as regards a drinking problem situation, and then allow the individual to decide. Help could be offered or directions given where to find help. All information is readily available. Operate the same as you do for the alcoholic employee.

4. I would suggest that those larger firms that have a elaborate switchboard system, arrange a listed extension or number as a "hot line" to dial. The employee can call and remain anonymous, but can talk to someone who understands and is knowledgeable with help and information available. At the proper time they can decide to identify themselves. So many keep the situation hidden and suffer in stoic silence. I did. It's worth a try and the anonymous phone can help, such as an extension for instance, listed under "Drinking Problems." Also publicize the "hotline" phone listing on bulletin boards, in company newspapers, etc.

5. Al-Anon willingly and gladly cooperates in helping your employees, the same as Alcoholics Anonymous. We cannot be a part of your programs. We cannot accept any financial assistance or lend our name to you. We can and will help, to the very best of our abilities, anyone who is living with, or close to, a drinking problem in a relative or friend. Help your employees by sending them to us. Help them to find a new way of life; help them to change completely from a pitiful existence to living in a way they never dreamed possible. There is a good future with changes in attitudes and thinking. Instead of defeat, you win in your life endeavors.

\*Al-Anon Is It For You—a list of 20 questions, is available from the Al-Anon World Service Office.