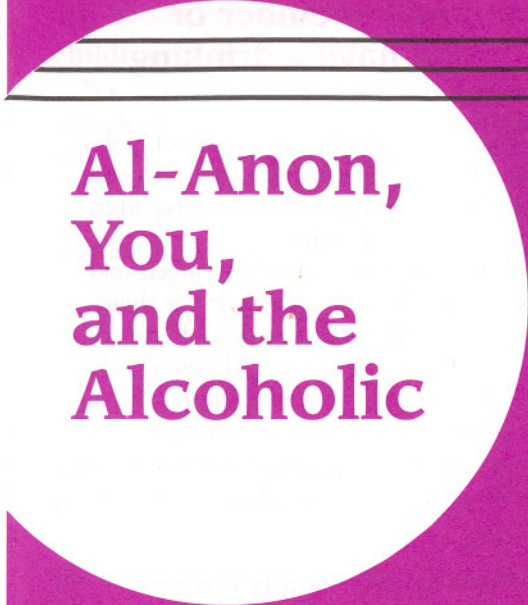


The Al-Anon Family Groups are a fellowship of relatives and friends of alcoholics who share their experience, strength, and hope in order to solve their common problems. We believe alcoholism is a family illness and that changed attitudes can aid recovery.

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.

"Suggested Al-Anon Preamble to the Twelve Steps"



Al-Anon, You, and the Alcoholic

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For information and a catalog of literature write
World Service Office for Al-Anon and Alateen
Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc.

1600 Corporate Landing Parkway
Virginia Beach, VA 23454-5617

Phone: (757) 563-1600 Fax: (757) 563-1655

www.al-anon.alateen.org/members

e-mail: wso@al-anon.org

For meeting information call:

1-888-425-2666 (1-888-4AL-ANON)

(US and Canada, Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-6 p.m. ET)

Al-Anon/Alateen is supported by members' voluntary contributions and from the sale of our Conference Approved Literature.

This pamphlet is also available in: Dutch, French, German, Italian, Portuguese, and Spanish.

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Approved by
World Service Conference
Al-Anon Family Groups



AL-ANON FAMILY GROUPS
hope for families & friends of alcoholics

Does a family member or close friend have a drinking problem?

You are not alone. There are millions of problem drinkers throughout the world, and each one affects relatives, friends, and coworkers, often creating in them a need for help.

Many thousands of these family members and friends of problem drinkers find help for themselves in the constructive approach offered by Al-Anon Family Groups. In fact, Al-Anon's sole purpose is to help *anyone* whose life has been adversely affected by someone else's drinking.

Here are some typical questions asked of Al-Anon by people seeking help. The answers may help you.

1. What is Al-Anon Family Groups?

Al-Anon Family Groups, more frequently known simply as "Al-Anon" or "Alateen," is a fellowship of wives, husbands, children, parents, other relatives, and friends of problem drinkers.

Members of these groups share their experience, strength, and hope with each other in order to solve their common problems—fear, insecurity, lack of understanding of themselves and the alcoholic, and damaged personal lives resulting from alcoholism, a family illness.

2. How do they do this?

By attending Al-Anon meetings and applying the Twelve Steps of Recovery adapted from Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) to their personal lives, many have found the help they need to deal with the effects of living with or having lived with the alcoholism of another. Reading Al-Anon books and pamphlets and sharing with other Al-Anon members helps to develop an understanding of alcoholism and the effects it has on those close to the drinker. Al-Anon members recognize their powerlessness over the disease of alcoholism and focus instead on physically, emotionally, and spiritually improving their own lives.

3. Is Al-Anon part of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA)?

No, Al-Anon is a separate fellowship established to meet the needs of those whose lives are, or have been, adversely affected by someone else's drinking. Al-Anon, like AA, stresses confidentiality and the anonymity of its members.

4. Why are Al-Anon members anonymous?

Although many people know that alcoholism is an illness, there are others who make harsh judgments about alcoholics, their families, and their friends. For that reason, Al-Anon groups make it a practice to assure all present at a meeting, especially the newcomers, that their anonymity will be respected. Everyone is asked to respect the anonymity of all Al-Anon members, as well as the confidentiality of their sharing.

5. How is Al-Anon supported?

Al-Anon is self-supporting. Al-Anon and Alateen members make voluntary contributions to pay for rent, refreshments, Al-Anon literature, and the maintenance of service centers.

6. How do I get in touch with an Al-Anon or Alateen group?

Al-Anon or Alateen groups may be listed in your telephone directory and meetings may be listed in local newspapers or church bulletins. AA members, social workers, doctors, or clergy may also know of local meetings. For meeting information in the US and Canada, call our toll free number or contact the address on the back page.

7. Will Al-Anon show me how to stop the alcoholic's drinking?

No, this is not Al-Anon's purpose. While it is not possible to stop another person from drinking, Al-Anon can help you gain a new perspective of your situation, which can reduce your anxiety, confusion, and frustration.

8. Will Al-Anon help me convince someone that he or she is an alcoholic?

There is no purpose in trying to convince anyone that he or she is alcoholic. Most alcoholics know they have become slaves to the bottle, though they may not admit it even to themselves.

Challenging, blaming, or pleading is likely to create hostility. An understanding attitude may do much to help someone want to seek help for their problem drinking.

9. Will Al-Anon help me understand why the alcoholic can't stop after one or two drinks?

Yes, Al-Anon members and Al-Anon literature will explain that alcoholism is a compulsive illness. There is no moderation for the alcoholic. Going to open AA meetings may help you understand the many drinking patterns of alcoholics.

10. If I join an Al-Anon group, should I refrain from drinking?

Al-Anon membership does not require you to refrain from drinking. Whether or not you do is a personal decision. Discussing this at an Al-Anon meeting can help you decide what is right for you.

11. Will Al-Anon help me control my temper when the alcoholic is drinking?

As you learn through Al-Anon to move beyond resentments of the past and fears for the future, you may realize that it is futile to react in anger to the disturbing things the alcoholic says and does. Changed attitudes can aid recovery.

12. Will Al-Anon improve my life?

Al-Anon can help you live one day at a time and deepen your reliance on whatever Higher Power you acknowledge. This often helps improve our lives.

13. Does Al-Anon offer help to the children in the family?

Yes, children are quick to reflect improved attitudes that help them deal with their feelings and sense of shame about the problem drinking.

If children are old enough, Alateen meetings can give them the understanding, knowledge, and support necessary to live in an alcoholic situation.

Adults who are children of alcoholics have found Al-Anon invaluable in coming to grips with their past, learning how it has affected them, and taking positive action to improve their present situations.

14. I have young children. Can I bring them to an Al-Anon meeting?

Some groups have babysitters to care for younger children during meetings. Attendance of young children at meetings is a group conscience decision and practice will vary from group to group. You can find more information by asking Al-Anon members at the meetings you attend or by calling the Al-Anon information service listed in your telephone directory.

15. Will Al-Anon help me feel less shut off from old friends and interests?

Through Al-Anon, you may gain the assurance to resume some former activities and find new interests. As your fear, shame, and self-pity diminish and your attitudes change, you may feel comfortable seeing old friends again and you will form new friendships with Al-Anon members who understand your problems.

16. What shall I do if the alcoholic does not want me to attend Al-Anon meetings?

It is very common for active drinkers to object to anything that suggests they are alcoholics. The decision to go to Al-Anon and risk disfavor must be a personal one. If you decide that Al-Anon is necessary for your recovery, but find you cannot go to meetings, telephone conversations with

members, reading Al-Anon literature, or on-line Al-Anon meetings may eventually help you gain the strength you need to overcome objections.

17. What shall I do if I fear for my own safety?

While Al-Anon's gentle process unfolds gradually over time, if you face violence or potentially life-threatening situations, you may have to make immediate choices to ensure safety. No one has to accept violence. We all deserve to be safe.

18. Should I go to Al-Anon even if the alcoholic is no longer drinking or if I no longer live with an alcoholic?

By all means! In Al-Anon we discover how someone else's problem drinking, past or present, has affected our attitudes and behavior. We also learn how we can change our lives with a new sense of spiritual values and the help of other Al-Anon members.

Most Al-Anon members come to realize that they continue to benefit from Al-Anon whether the alcoholic continues to drink or even remains in their life. For them, Al-Anon becomes a way of life.

19. Does Al-Anon have answers to such personal questions as:

If the alcoholic loved me, wouldn't the drinking stop?

Did I cause the excessive drinking?

Should I leave or stay?

Rather than give advice, Al-Anon members share their experience, strength, and hope with each other. As we listen and share with other members, we find our own answers.

20. I go to open AA meetings with the alcoholic. Should I still go to Al-Anon?

Yes. While going to open AA meetings may show your support for the alcoholic and can enhance your understanding of the disease, going to Al-Anon meetings is doing something positive for yourself.

21. I'm in AA. Other members of my family also have drinking problems. Can I go to Al-Anon?

It is not unusual to have more than one problem drinker in the family. As a result, an increasing number of AA members turn to Al-Anon for help in learning that they are as powerless over other alcoholics as they are over alcohol. In Al-Anon we focus on our common experience of having been affected by someone else's drinking.

22. My counselor recommended that I attend Al-Anon. Does this mean I should stop seeing a professional?

This is a decision that is up to you and can be discussed with your counselor. Members often find that Al-Anon complements the care offered by professionals because it is a mutual support program based upon members sharing with each other. Many Al-Anon and Alateen members report that they received some form of professional counseling after attending Al-Anon/Alateen.

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.
