

we don't have control over someone else—that we can't make them want to stop drinking. It's not easy to admit defeat. Yet, this surrender is absolutely necessary if our relationships are to be saved from the ravages of alcoholism and if we are ever again to have sane happy lives.

Sobriety, if it is to work, must be the alcoholic's responsibility. We are asking for trouble when we interfere and try to protect those we love from temptation, or try in any way to control them. As one man's angry wife put it in the middle of an argument, "I'm damn mad. But I'm not going out to hit the bottle! Is that what you're worried about? Well, let me tell you something. You can't make me drink! No matter how much you want to, you can't drive me to drink. That's my decision, and mine alone. So stop worrying."

Time spent trying to control another person's behavior is time wasted. So many more useful things can be done. Joining an Al-Anon group, where an ever-growing number of men are learning to deal with the adverse effects of alcoholism in someone close to them, can be very helpful.

Al-Anon literature:

- P-7 Guide for the Family of the Alcoholic
- P-9 How Can I Help My Children?
- P-16 To the Mother and Father of an Alcoholic
- P-48 Understanding Ourselves and Alcoholism
- P-62 Does She Drink Too Much?
- B-22 *How Al-Anon Works 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

For information and catalog of literature write to
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This pamphlet is also available in: Dutch, French, German, Icelandic, Italian, Norwegian, Polish, Portuguese, and Spanish.

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Al-Anon may be listed in your telephone directory.

Al-Anon IS For Men



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

Al-Anon IS For Men

Men—husbands, fathers, sons, brothers, friends, and lovers of alcoholics—who feel that the problem drinking of someone close to them has affected their lives are welcome in Al-Anon.

Al-Anon is a fellowship of relatives and friends of alcoholics, who are making an effort to achieve a comfortable way of living by sharing their experience, strength and hope with one another. Members meet informally to discuss how their attitudes and reactions to the disease of alcoholism may be aggravating their situations.

The Al-Anon program is based on the Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) and offers both men and women a way to find serenity and develop their confidence.

IS AL-ANON FOR YOU?

When you read the First Step of Al-Anon, “We admitted we were powerless over alcohol—that our lives had become unmanageable,” you may say, “This program’s not for me! I manage my life all right. Don’t tell me I’m powerless over alcohol! You must have me confused with the alcoholic!” That’s a common reaction to the First Step—due to misinterpreting it. Actually, a clear understanding of this Step is the key to learning to live a serene life.

Let’s start with the second half of the First Step, “. . . our lives had become unmanageable.” You may think you are managing very well, but . . .

- How well are you managing those social occasions when your loved one gets falling down drunk?
- How well are you managing your responsibilities?
- Do you find yourself taking on additional responsibilities?
- Do you find your family or friends taking sides and frequently not supporting *you*?
- Do you think others close to the alcoholic have been affected and that they might need help?
- How well are you managing financially? Do you find that money that should have gone to pay bills has been used to buy alcohol?

How well are you managing to control yourself when you find your loved one drunk again despite all the promises? Are you crushed?

How well are you managing to maintain a loving relationship with the alcoholic, one that is based on mutual trust and respect?

Do you resent the fact that drinking has made your loved one quiet, passive, and withdrawn or loud, aggressive and hurtful?

How happy are you with yourself?

Do you find you can’t sleep nights, because you are worrying about the future?

Do you find yourself worrying about other family members when you are away from home?

Do you find you are losing your temper over trivial things?

Do you find you are having trouble concentrating at work or on studies?

Do you feel uncomfortable covering up for someone else’s behavior?

Is one of your parents, your wife, child, friend or other loved one a problem drinker?

How many of these problems are yours?

Did you say your life had not become unmanageable?

Still, you may question the need to get help for yourself when it is obviously the alcoholic who is making your life miserable. Thousands of other men have thought the same thing. They said, “I’m good at my job, provide for my family, fulfill all my responsibilities. If only the alcoholic would learn to manage without causing so much chaos, everything would be O.K.” Perhaps you enjoy a few drinks now and then without overdoing it, so you cannot understand how someone can lose control the way your loved one does.

“O.K.,” you say, “but it’s not *my* fault my life is unmanageable. If the alcoholic would only straighten out, everything would be very manageable again.”

Stop kidding yourself! How much time do you spend worrying about the drinking? Do you think you would spend less time worrying if there were sobriety? Perhaps you’ve become obsessed with drinking. Yes, obsessed. Many loved ones of alcoholics are; it’s a natural reaction. You spend your time trying to prevent the drinking,

cover up for it, pay for it and do two jobs—your own and the alcoholic’s. Or you try to force the alcoholic to do what you think ought to be done.

Perhaps, the drinking has stopped. Now you spend as much time and energy thinking about the “not drinking” as you did the drinking. Now that your loved one has found sobriety, you walk on eggs, fearful of saying the wrong thing or perhaps, you try to make sure the alcoholic doesn’t get over-tired or isn’t tempted to drink. You may even try to make sure the alcoholic is busy every minute so there won’t be time to think about a drink.

Isn’t the story familiar no matter who the alcoholic in your life is?

Are you starting to see that much of what YOU DO is being determined by what SOMEONE ELSE DOES? That certainly isn’t managing your life. How did you get into this bind in the first place?

Let’s go back to take a look at the first part of the First Step. We get into trouble when we fail to realize we are “powerless over alcohol.” We’re powerless over who drinks it, when they drink it and what it does to them. We’re powerless to make them stop and we’re not responsible for their becoming alcoholic either, no matter what they say. Alcoholics, in trying to excuse their drinking, very often blame whomever is handiest—spouse, father, mother, boss, friend.

The alcoholic spouse says, “If only you were a better provider,” (or a more aggressive personality, or a smoother lover.) The alcoholic friend says, “If only you didn’t spend so much time away,” or “If you just wouldn’t hang around here all the time.” The alcoholic parent says, “If you would help me more,” or “If you would just get out of the way.” The alcoholic child says, “You never have time for me,” and then, “Leave me alone.” The alcoholic says, “I need you,” and then says, “Mind your own business!” Do you get the picture? YOU LOSE!

We can’t win if we play the alcoholic’s game because the alcoholic makes all the rules and changes them faster than we can keep up with them. The alcoholic will always find something else to rationalize drinking, because drinking is the real name of the game.

It’s a pretty strong blow to the ego to have to admit