

Growing Oaks

Oakland County Al-Anon Family Groups Spring, 2022

Happy Spring! The air smells of the season's flowers and trees. We hear different birdsong and the outdoor voices of our neighbors. Some of us are getting active with Spring and early Summer cleaning—inside our homes and out in our gardens.

Let's continue with a focus on our steps that match the months of the year. Fits with Spring Cleaning, too.



Step Four — Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.

Blueprint for Progress: Al-Anon's Fourth Step Inventory Revised (2004) is what we use for individual or group study. In the introduction, we read: "The Fourth Step can be an essential tool for personal growth.... We may have lost sight of our personal goals, neglected or potential, and become too concerned with our attempts to change someone else. Often our good qualities lay hidden behind frustration and fear." (p.9). The format of the book, with reflections and questions addressing 22 topics, such as anger, fear, guilt, relationships and love, helps us through the process.

When might a person do a Fourth Step? There is no right time, or even a number of times to do it. "When I can't find a solution to a problem, when I have nagging doubts, fears or frustrations, when I feel lost or confused, a searching and fearless moral inventory of myself can make a tremendous

difference." (p. 55, in Courage to Change.)

Step Five — Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.

Doing Step Four at one's own pace, and using Step Five for personal reflection and companionship from my Higher Power and from a trusted friend, can ease the effort. "I am learning the 'nature of my nature' from the Twelve Steps. I trust that I will uncover what I need to know for now, and leave the rest for another time." (p.50, Courage to Change. "God knows exactly what I need, and has already given it to me. My job is to keep it simple" (p. 65, Courage to Change.)

Reading slogans in the meditation books is a good place to help us be kind to ourselves as we consider Steps Four and Five. "One Day at a Time." "Live and Let Live." Or "Together We Can Make It."

Our daily meditation readings can help to center us as we deal with constantly changing "constants," such as how to keep safe in the pandemic, jobs and income sources, how to stay connected with loved ones — anybody important to us — if only by little boxes on a computer or by text or phone. Maybe manageability involves creativity, patience, a bit of laughter, healthy food and a restful night's sleep. A smile, even if it's just on Zoom, from an Al-Anon friend. Your face for newcomers to know they are not alone.

- Shirley B.

WHEN I GOT BUSY, I GOT BETTER

Somewhere in our literature I recall this phrase about getting busy and healing. And it's very true. Program has taught me to focus on myself and live in the now. Al-Anon has given me the gift of sitting in the audience and just watching situations play out—with no direction from me.

I started with small acts of service. And one thing led to another. I tried to offer assistance in areas I enjoyed and had a strength. Over the years I've served as group Treasurer, done open talks, panels, and chaired weekend retreats. The result was an overwhelming sense of peace and it was so rewarding.

Was I afraid? Sure – at times. But I always knew God was there to help me through it. Besides strength, He often gave me the words. You know what they say about fear: it's False Evidence Appearing Real. Everyone has special gifts to contribute.

Even when you don't think you need a meeting, the meeting needs you.

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Just like sharing at a meeting – you never know how what you say might help someone else.

There are so many opportunities to give back and keep our program vital. The pandemic has certainly altered meetings. I'm so grateful that many meetings are returning to in-person formats. And bless those souls who faithfully carry out Zoom and Free Conference Call meetings.

So next time you hear about the need for help, consider jumping in. Someone will be there to help you and lead the way. Great things never came from my comfort zone.

- Warmly, Grateful member

Trusted Servants 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. (Tradition 2)

2022 Board Members

Chairperson: Paul R. 248-330-3631

Co-chair: Nora A 313-300-0024

Secretary: Ken L. 248-763-5439

Treasurer: Jackie F. 248-321-0749

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**Please contact Jennifer W. at
248-961-0415 for help with finding
a meeting.**

How do I find a meeting?

In our time of connection with caution, what is available for me?

- Zoom meetings (ID and password provided)
- Hybrid meetings (both virtual on Zoom as well as in person)
- In person meetings (social distancing and masks required)



Much will depend on technology at sites, meeting room availability and Zoom account information. **For most updated list, please check: oaklandafg.org/meetings**

Is Al-Anon Service work on your horizon?

"I found myself in Al-Anon service work for many reasons. I wanted to enjoy the comradery of friends who shared my spiritual needs...What have I received from Al-Anon that I would most like to share?"

[Paths to Recovery: Alanon's Steps, Traditions and Concepts](#) (p. 125-126)

Openings to be filled are:

- Alateen Coordinator for Oakland County
- District 12 Rep (and alternate)
- District 14 Rep (and alternate)

Contact for further information: Paul S., Board Chair, paulsrosen@gmail.com.

There are several other ways you can support Al-Anon as we serve our communities. Events coordinator, Al-Anon World Service Committee Liaison. Your group rep may have suggestions, or would be willing to pass along your name and interests to our board members and other trusted servants.

Mark Your Calendar

F.Y.I.

Saturday, May 14 - State convention (Zoom)

Saturday, June 11 - Assembly Meeting (Zoom)

Wednesday, June 15 - Alateen sponsor AMIAS recertification deadline.

KOMIAC retreat - Alateen event in Indiana. TBA

Sunday, Aug. 21 - Oakland County Picnic.

12 - 4 p.m. Heritage Park, Farmington Hills.

All Al-Anon members and their families welcome.

More details to come on our website.

Mental Health Awareness Month



A former Adult Children of Alcoholics member shared: "Life isn't always a perfectly staged photo or video, a "highlight reel" of a vacation or event, or a brag board of your kids' activities. Life can be wonderful and magical, but it can also be hard, scary, stressful, and sometimes it just sucks. We all need to feel we can share the good, bad, and ugly without judgment or stigma.

May is Mental Health Awareness Month. I know far too many who have lost loved ones to mental health disorders and I bet everyone experiences a bit of "something" from time to time. (Who isn't anxious these days?)"

We in Al-Anon have known for decades how important having a safe place, with caring, respectful friends, can be to our general well-being.

In the spirit of Step Twelve, let's find ways to inform our health professionals, our bosses and work colleagues, our family members and friends how Al-Anon, Alateen and the Twelve Steps have brought us tools and hope for life's challenges. Your group can provide literature, website info and ways to share our message.