

Growing Oaks

Oakland County Al-Anon Family Groups Winter, 2024

When we first come to Al-Anon, we are asked to let go of our conscious - or unconscious- tendencies to want control of everything. We may first hear the words "Power greater than ourselves." (Step Two) Is this a reference to God?

Thoughts of God may go back to how we were raised and what was taught by our family and a religious community we followed. Maybe the rituals in which we participated were comforting. Other kids were doing it, too (think summer camp) so it was a place we felt we belonged. Maybe as a young adult, we continued to follow religious traditions, even as we became aware of other spiritual practices, other religions. Maybe, as part of adolescence, we rebelled.

So now what? As an adult struggling with alcoholism in my family, what are my thoughts? This reading, taken from As We Understood..., p. 72-73, (B-11) may help.

"After several years with no religious training and very little exposure to religious people, I found myself in an Al-Anon meeting with people who were openly crediting their Higher Power with transforming their lives. I didn't know what to think about their ideas. I always considered myself well-versed in religious matters, but I never heard people speak of a power that had a direct effect on their circumstances. I felt a little alienated from the group, but



they had some indefinable something that I wanted... One day, I discussed some of my thoughts with a minister and he asked me if I thought God loved me and I said: "well, it depends what day you ask me." He said, "Yes, I know what you mean."

He really helped me to understand that even if I only have glimpses of my Higher Power's effect on my life, it is still more than I had before. I can marvel at the coincidences, express my gratitude, and practice the Al-Anon Steps. My Higher Power will guide me and provide for my needs. All I have to do is continue to be open and work on living each day well. - *Wisconsin, United States.*"

From a follow-up reading: "Every time I had a decision to make, I would ask for God's guidance and then sit back and wonder what the answer was supposed to be. 'Just give me a sign for what direction I must take,' I would pray. 'Any burning bush will do.'" (p.73)

For me, I am very comfortable thinking and speaking to a power greater than myself. I also have experienced my Higher Power speaking wisdom through the sharing I hear at an Al-Anon meeting. The spirituality we find comforting in each other, the smile, gentle touch or hug, even the laughter when we recognize our own familiar behavior in the stories and struggles of others, keeps me grounded in the program. The closing says "you'll love us in a special way, the way we already love you." That's a gift of love from God for me. Shirley B.



ACCEPT - A NEW ACRONYM

Allowing

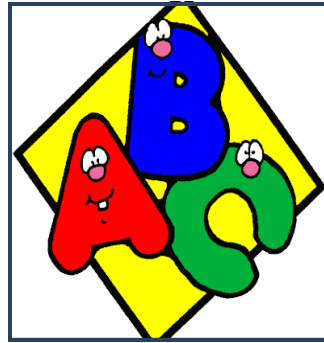
Creation

Conception (time to)

Express

Potential &

Truth



What does ACCEPT mean to you? I've used acronyms to help me retain information that is important to me. Using acronyms was essential in studying for the bar exam that tested 24 areas of law with state and federal distinctions.

I've read of many acronyms in the 12-step program: NUTS (not using the steps), LOVE (letting others voluntarily evolve), GOD (good orderly direction, FEAR (false evidence appearing real), and others. The concept of acceptance is so important to the first step that I felt urged to make it an acronym. The above is what came to me. I'm reminded to recognize that by accepting a circumstance or condition, I allow room for my higher power to work in the situation. I ease God out (EGO) by fretting and trying to control it. So pick a work that is important to you and make an acronym out of it!

Others? NUTS (Not Using The Program). WAIT (Why Am I Talking/Texting/Typing?) YAHOO (You Always Have Other Options). DETACH (Don't Even Think About Changing Him/ Her.)
-Sue F.

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Al-Anon/Alateen Family Groups

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are welcome! Email to:
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Al-Anon Slogans

- * Anger is just one letter short of anger.
- * Let go or be dragged.
- * "No" is a complete sentence.
- * We can't trust God and worry at the same time.
- * What other people think of me is none of my business.
- * Your urgency is not my emergency.
- * Rejection is God's protection.
- * Look back without staring.
- * The elevator is broken - use the Steps.

These are great for journal starters, shares or meeting topics. (<https://marinal-anon.org/new-to-al-anon/slogans-acronyms/>)

Trusted Servants ...Our leaders are but trusted servants - they do not govern. (Tradition 2)

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**(Monthly meetings virtual and in person. Pilgrim
Congregational Church, Adams Rd. north of 16
Mile, Bloomfield Hills)**

How do I find a meeting?

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



For updated list, please check: oaklandafg.org/meetings. See special meeting flyers on our website under Events/flyers.

Excuse file - Why I Won't Go to an Al-Anon/Alateen meeting

1. Too far. Bad weather.
2. Don't feel well. Exhausted!
3. My grandkids need me.
4. Meeting is disorganized, not welcoming, allows cross talk.
5. Unable to drive myself, find a ride.
6. Meeting attendance is TOO big!
7. Poor planning on my part. (trying to do too much before the meeting, dinner not ready for family.)
8. Scared to let out what's really bugging me.
9. (Alateen) "Won't know anyone whose life is like mine. I have too much homework, anyway."



Often said after a meeting: "I didn't want to come, but now I'm glad to be here." (in person, virtual)

Mark Your Calendar

**4th Step Study Group Monday,
April 8 at 7 p.m. Lutheran Church of the
Redeemer, 1800 W Maple, Birmingham**
**2024 MIAFG convention. May 5 (one day)
Double Tree, Bay City, MI**



Members Share Their Favorite Al-Anon Literature and Why

Hope for Today (B-27, daily readings) "I find I relate to the stories as an adult child."

Forum (magazine) "Short stories give me hope and I look forward to getting it in the mail. I like the visuals that go along with the stories, and the Alateen piece each month."

How Al-Anon Works for Families and Friends of Alcoholics (B-32) "I like the summary of all the Steps, Traditions, Concepts and Slogans. Nostalgia; bought it at my first meeting and it's brought me such insight since. Stories of personal courage, strength and hope."

"Just for Today" (M-12) and **"Just for Tonight"** (M-81) Bookmarks. "It's a great way to start and end each day."

Reaching for Personal Freedom (P-92) "Traditions and Concepts are explained and made applicable to life situations to assist with building relationships."

Dilemma of An Alcoholic Marriage (B-4) "I'm currently reading this book for the second time as my husband is struggling with his recovery. It's helped me understand my part in the marriage and to have empathy for my husband."

This is Al-Anon (P-32) "Mini meeting guide to fit in a pocket."

From Survival to Recovery: Growing Up in an Alcoholic Home (B-21). "This book gets down to the nitty gritty in ways no other literature does."

Discovering Choices (B-30) "A great book for personal and group studies. Sixteen chapters that include personal stories and thoughts/questions for discussion. I've used it to lead a meeting. Prep work already done!"

Alcoholism, the Family Disease (P-4). "A brief tool for understanding how the whole family is affected, and how we help and give hope to each other...one day at a time."

Opening Our Hearts, Transforming Our Losses (B-29).

"I found this book when I was grieving the loss of my son. It helped me work through that as well as other losses I didn't know I had. I felt comforted, refreshed, empowered."

"Loss is such a chronic and pervasive part of this baffling disease. Whether it is the actual loss of a loved one or one of the smaller, sometimes daily losses we experience, this book helps to understand grief in the context of recovery."

Blueprint for Progress: Al-Anon's Fourth Step

Inventory (Revised, P-91) "Love the workbook format. Was introduced to the original over 30 years ago. Love to read my past inventories to see my growth."