

Growing Oaks

Oakland County Al-Anon Family Groups

Winter, 2025

The colder temperatures and less daylight now may give us a time of simple contemplation, even as passing the Winter Solstice in December and a short February month may give us hope for Spring.

One interesting topic for my Al-Anon journal, provided by a friend's email, is: "What's my idea of luxury?"

Are there everyday luxuries in my life that I can enjoy without a credit card, trip to a store, using up energy I don't think I have right now? They may need a slowing down to recognize the comfort and pleasure that is provided, even just for a moment.

Here are a couple of mine:

Slow mornings - Waking when my body, rather than an alarm clock, says it's time to start the day. They may be followed by a short to-do list, with a lot of delegating and questioning if something really matters that day.

Home-cooked meals - Comfort food, especially in winter or being unwell. The joy in focusing on simple tasks like cutting a vegetable or piece of fruit, simple, tried-and-true recipes that don't need a "presentation". Crock pot dishes simmering, providing a delightful fragrance.

People I love - So many ways to connect, some ways I like, others not so much. I prefer two-way encounters. Face-to-face, even as simple as smiling or talking briefly while walking in my neighborhood. Phone calls with my sister in another state. Face time with my granddaughters in another state. I connect with others through letter-writing, looking at photos and memory books.

People who love you back - Sometimes it's hard to focus on this even as it's important to be aware that I am seen and valued by others even if we don't agree or travel different



paths.

How do I tie this to my Al-Anon journey through recovery? We start the year with Steps One, Two and Three. In Step One, identifying how our lives have become unmanageable, ideally in a loving manner to ourselves. Steps Two and Three encourage us to find and give our trust to our Higher Power. For me, my Higher Power tells me to slow down and enjoy those everyday luxuries which I believe are ongoing gifts, treasures. Things, situations that are nurturing and useful long after those Holiday gifts we get. I found Gretchen Rubin, American author who writes that when we give more to ourselves - think first things first - , we can ask more of ourselves and live happier, healthier lives.

Want some other ideas about everyday, simple luxuries?

- Listening to music while cleaning house.
- Watching a favorite movie with a pet on your lap.
- Hot chocolate with marshmallows. (Yes!!)
- Watching birds at feeder.
- Fresh homemade bread (and the time to make it).
- Lighting fragrant candles.
- Silence on a winter walk.
- Naps under a heated blanket.



What might be on your list? think of an everyday luxury and relate it to Al-Anon. Examples:

- Big windows, natural light. Step 11 - "Sought through prayer and meditation" site.
- Handmade soap made by a special friend (or sponsor).
- Completing a puzzle even if it takes a while. - Easy Does It.
- Sharing family history - within the safety of an Al-Anon group, - Shirley B.



Acceptance is my path to serenity. Acceptance means I cannot change the behavior of other people and I cannot change the situations that result from their behaviors, but I am capable to change my reaction to them.

As a child, I was exposed to frequent, and at times, unrealistic criticism, in Al-Anon, I learned that criticism is often a response from injured adults with low self esteem. As an adult, I have come to see criticism as a reflection of the malcontent and I should not take it personally.

Quit Taking it Personally (QTIP) is one of my favorite slogans. In the business world, we often spoke of altering the behaviors of our employees. Managers would apply various behavior modification techniques to their subordinates in order to reduce unacceptable behaviors and ultimately increase production.

With Al-Anon, I have learned that trying to change another person's behavior is highly improbable, but in the process of attempting this, I run the risk of aggravating the situation. It is ongoing contradictions such as these that can cause me to stray from my path to serenity.

The first line of the Serenity Prayer reads: "God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change". This implies that one must have serenity first to gain acceptance

yet much of the Al-Anon and Alateen literature states that acceptance will lead to serenity.

This prayer reminds me that acceptance and serenity are part of a continuous feedback loop with one positive attitude reinforcing another.

No longer am I trying to sustain the illusion of control over people or situations. The only thing I can control is my way of thinking and the ways I react. I am surrendering and in doing so, making room for God to help. In the process of acceptance and ultimately surrender, I am moving towards serenity.

Regards, Ken D.

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

2025 Board Members

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(Above numbers may be used to text.)

Monthly meetings virtual and in person. Pilgrim Congregational Church, Adams Rd. north of 16 Mile, Bloomfield Hills. First Saturday at 9:45 am. Workshops (1 hour) follow as scheduled.

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are welcome! Email to:
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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

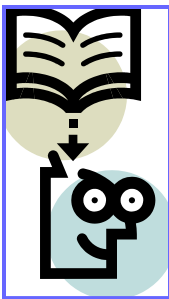


For updated list, please check: oaklandafg.org/meetings. See special meeting flyers on our website under Events/flyers.

Best Way to Get Al-Anon Conference Approved Literature (CAL)

To order: email Oaklandafgliterature1214@gmail.com. Melissa can only accept cash or checks at this time. Books and other literature can be picked up at the monthly District 12 and 14 meeting. You may contact Melissa to make other arrangements.

Thinking about how to carry the Al-Anon message to others? (Step 12) How about, as an individual or group, donating a book to a church, school, lending library or community center near you.



Mark Your Calendar

Several groups will schedule special events, such as anniversary meetings, pot lucks, or meetings with special speakers or topics. Please consult **our website** for current day, time and location of these events.

Up coming monthly one-hour workshops at **11 a.m.** following our in-person District monthly meetings at Pilgrim Church. First Saturday.

Feb. 1 - Fall Festival planning workshop

March 1 - Working Step 4 Together

March 7-9 - March Roundup, Motor City Hotel, downtown Detroit.

April 5 – Sharing our Thoughts in the Forum magazine

Our own Jeanette H., District 14 group rep, is the Al-Anon contact for the **AA March Roundup**, to be held March 7-9 at the Motor City Hotel, 2901 Grand River Ave., Detroit 48201.



Catherine K., from Dallas Tx, will be the Al-Anon speaker at 2:30 pm, Saturday. There will also be Al-Anon panels. Events include panels, speakers, entertainment, banquet, skits, yoga and informal opportunities for fellowship.

Registration is \$30 by 2/16, \$35 after 2/16. Banquet Saturday evening is \$85. Register by mail in or at AA-Semi.org.

Please contact Jeanette (see Trusted Servants, page 3) if you have questions, or are willing to be on a panel. Consider getting a small group to go together on Saturday. Meet new people, hear speakers, learn something, too!

Public Outreach Library Displays: Sharing the Message



This display was prepared and used for nine different libraries, including Auburn Hills, Berkley, Ferndale, Farmington and Rochester Hills Public Libraries by Terese M. She reports it was used in 2018 and 2019, and the materials, paid for by district Public Outreach funds, have been stored in her home. She has also compiled an extensive list of library staff contacts for communities we serve in Districts 12 and 14.

The list is available through Terese or through our current Public Outreach Coordinator, Shirley B. May you consider something - maybe not as elaborate - for a library you visit? Terese obviously has quite a lot of material to use. Perhaps this is something a few members of your group might do as a service project. Add a personal touch for how Al-Anon speaks to you!