



Vol.2 Issue 6

# Al-Anon of Fredericksburg

## Help and Hope

the monthly newsletter



July 2014

This month's topic:

## Step One

When I first started Al-Anon Step one confused me, I didn't feel I had a problem, the problem was with my alcoholic in my life. I was attending the meeting to figure out how to help my alcoholic, not get some direction in my life. As i continue to attend meetings I have found that I do have a problem, that problem is alcoholism in my family. I was unable to help my alcoholic until I helped myself by attending, sharing and listening to others who had the same problem as I have. My life was unmanageable since I was trying to manage my life and the life of my wife, my best friend and family members who suffered from alcoholism. It wasn't until I started to put my life in place and began to manage myself and not try to manage other people

Kimo

Length in Program: 7 months

This step helps remind me that I didn't cause it, I can't control it, and I can't cure it. I can't stop the alcoholic's drinking. I can't "make" the alcoholic go get help. I can't "make" the alcoholic see the error of his ways or see that he needs to take more responsibility for his behavior, for household bills. I can't "make" the alcoholic stop blaming me for his behavior. But I CAN stop covering and enabling and labeling. I can detach with love and start taking care of MY life. I can start trusting my gut and stop thinking that the alcoholic is the only one of us two who knows what it best.

Patty

Next month's topic: Let Go and Let God

To submit your share on our monthly topic, or tell how Al-Anon has affected you, please go to [al-anonfredericksburg.org/submitShare.php](http://al-anonfredericksburg.org/submitShare.php)

*continued on back*

## Announcements:

Our district donated literature to the Central Rappahannock Regional Library (CRRL) last year as part of a public outreach effort. You can find these books by using the catalog on their website; then, if you have a library card, you can check-out the books for two weeks. We donated a lot more than just daily readers, so please take a look if interested.

NOTE: Area 57, District 19, Al-Anon Family Groups, and Al-Anon as a whole is not affiliated with, neither do we endorse nor oppose the CRRL. The donated books are property of the library.

We are always looking for Alateen sponsors. The only requirements are that you be at least 23 years of age, have at least 2 years in the Al-anon program, and attend 1 Al-Anon meeting a week in addition to the sponsored meeting.

Our district meeting is on the second monday of every month at Home Team Grille in Eagle Village next to the University of Mary Washington. 5:00 if you would like to eat with us, 6:00 to discuss business. All are welcome to come.

## Step, Tradition, and Concept of the Month

Step Seven:

Humbly asked him to remove our shortcomings.

Tradition Seven:

Every group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.

Concept Seven:

The Trustees have legal rights while the rights of the Conference are traditional.

## Al-Anon Stories from the Heart

It was in 2007 that I found myself walking through a beautiful park in Annapolis, MD. It was a sunny day in October and I had been in Al-Anon recovery myself for 3 yrs. My daily readers and journal were in my backpack and my daughter had been missing for several weeks. It was my intent to write her eulogy- which I did. It focused on all the positive things lost to this disease, all of my hopes and dreams, the beautiful things that were my daughter.

After several years, I realized that I had been grieving the loss of my daughter, as I knew her, and the relationship which could not be as I had imagined it should be. Later, I read the Al-Anon book, "Grieving Our Losses". It was very insightful and helped me through the process of "letting go" and "acceptance".

With the help of the God of my understanding and the rooms of Al-Anon (and all that goes on there), I worked through that part of my grief. It is a process for sure. Grieving is not just something we do only when a person actually dies, but for me, an emotional experience which occurs when we love someone who does not live as we would have them live. This experience which I have had as a family member of an alcoholic, seemed to challenged every part of me being. I could not accept the unacceptable, so I grieved.

For a long time I could not accept that my daughter may not overcome this disease. It is progressive and unless arrested, is terminal I have been told. Having worked as a hospice nurse for several years, I understood this quite well. Accepting that this included MY daughter was quite another thing! Grieving seemed to go on for months and months and rolled into years. My only solution to overcome my grief was to work on myself- to change the things I can. God did and does not intend for me to walk around in the depth of despair, right?

My sponsor back then said something profound to me. She said, "Mary Beth, if your daughter dies, you will get through that too". In a brief instant, I felt relief and knew she was right. Life happens to me and it happens to you. Why things happen is greater than me and I do not pretend to know the mind of my Higher Power. I do know, however, that in all things, that this loving power, this force, this entity, will be there for the taking. My vast experiences in this journey have proven this to be my truth. Miracles do happen and they are very different than I had expected and realized in the early years of "fighting the fight".

## 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.

Living one day at a time;  
Enjoying one moment at a time;  
Accepting hardships as the pathway to peace;  
Taking, as He did, this sinful world  
As it is, not as I would have it;  
Trusting that He will make all things right  
If I surrender to His Will;  
So that I may be reasonably happy in this life  
And supremely happy with Him  
Forever and ever in the next.  
Amen.

Just remember, you cannot  
change yesterday, but you  
can change today.

---

---

### Events:

#### Mid Eastern Alateen Conference (MEAC)

Friday July 18, 2014 - Sunday July 20, 2014  
Location: Virginia 4-H Center, Front Royal,  
VA

This is one of the two annual Virginia Alateen Conferences. It is a fun-filled, exciting weekend for teens aged 7-19 and their Alateen Sponsors.

Early-bird registration (due May 31) is \$90. Regular Registration (due June 30) is \$100, and walk-ins are \$110. The price includes lodging, food, and a good time. MEAC does have money available for scholarships.

(please see GR for news on MEAC)

Grief is real and greatly overlooked. There is healing in the process and that does not lie in the outcome. If I had stayed in a state of denial, anger, fear, etc. I would have missed all of the thousands of "present moments" that I chose to spend in acceptance, freedom from the bondage of fear, and loving the person in front of me. I have grieved deeply, felt the depth of despair, and hoped beyond hope for my loved ones recovery, but who am I to say what will be? I will chose to use that wonderful "Serenity Prayer" and live by those words. I will chose to see the beauty in "what is" and not be overcome by what cannot be- at least for today. I live my life in and for Today.

Thank you all for the thousands of hours helping me to recover! Thank you Al-Anon for being there! Thank you God for listening and redirecting my will. Grieving is normal and as in all things, there is a healthy way to go about it- just ask for help. I can not do it alone and neither can you, I promise.

Mary Beth  
Length in Program: 10 years

---

---

Please remember, we are always looking for your story of your experience in Al-anon, whether you are a newcomer or have been here for over 20 years.

---

---

To submit your share on our monthly topic, or tell how Al-Anon has affected you, please go to [al-anonfredericksburg.org/submitShare.php](http://al-anonfredericksburg.org/submitShare.php)

## Events:

### Eastern Seaboard Alateen Conference (ESAC)

Mid-September

This is one of the two annual Virginia Alateen Conferences. It is a fun-filled, exciting weekend for teens aged 7-19 and their Alateen Sponsors. We have just received the registration packets for ESAC. The total early-bird amount is \$85 GRs, please discuss this information with your groups.

### Al-Anon Fall Workshop

October 4th  
Salem Baptist Church

Al-Anon's District 19 is planning a fall workshop. We will have speakers, workshops, and more. Light refreshments will be provided. More information to come.