



Lifelines

The Newsletter of the RI AFG, August 2008

AL-ANON LITERATURE Q&A

Recently, several Al-Anon members asked questions about Conference Approved Literature (CAL) and why certain CAL is now out of print. As our Area's Literature Coordinator, I contacted the Al-Anon World Service Office to find out more. This article is my report of what Tom C., Associate Director of Communications—Literature, shared with me on this topic.

Q: Why are certain pieces of Al-Anon literature no longer available? Who decides when a piece of CAL should be discontinued? Do we, the members, have a say in this process?

A: When I asked Tom C. these questions, he shared with me the process for discontinuing Conference Approved books and pamphlets.

Books: A Conference Approved book will only be discontinued if the following criteria are met:

- ▲ The book has been in print for at least 3 to 5 years
- ▲ Sales of the book reflect minimal interest by the membership
- ▲ The content of the book is, or will be, adequately covered in other CAL material, if needed
- ▲ The Literature Committee—which is made up of Delegates from different states and areas—must recommend the book be discontinued (As an aside, did you know the Delegate for Rhode Island is part of the Literature Committee?)

Once all four criteria are met, the Board of Trustees (that we hear about in Al-Anon's 12 Concepts) may grant approval to discontinue the book. If a decision is made to discontinue the book, the Board of Trustees will notify all Conference members (including our Delegate) of its intent to discontinue the book. This notice occurs while there is still at least a 1-year's supply of books in stock at the World Service Office.

Pamphlets: The process for discontinuing Conference Approved pamphlets is a little different. Like books, it requires the recommendation of the Literature Committee. Then, the Executive Committee must pass a motion to discontinue the pamphlet. (The Executive Committee is a 7-member group whose members are appointed by the Board of Trustees. The Executive Committee is the administrator of the World Service Office and conducts the daily affairs of the Board.)

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Q: If a Conference Approved book or pamphlet is discontinued, is it still considered CAL? Is it okay to use these discontinued books in Al-Anon meetings?

A: As you know, we keep the focus on Al-Anon at Al-Anon meetings. One of the ways to do that is by using only Conference Approved Literature (CAL) at meetings. This led several members to ask whether discontinued CAL "loses its CAL status." Tom C. share his experience on this issue with me.

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Please Read at All Alateen Meetings

Attention Alateens: This page is for you! Alateen is a vital part of RI Al-Anon/Alateen Family Groups and, as such, should be represented in its newsletter.

If you are an Alateen who likes to write or express yourself artistically, please consider submitting something for the next issue, either on your own or as a group. Please e-mail your submissions to Deb E. at destre99@yahoo.com, or drop off or mail them to the Al-Anon office (see last page).

Please provide your first name and/or the town or group to which you belong, unless you wish to remain anonymous.

Al-Anon Members Needed for Alateen Service

Alateen needs Al-Anon members to become certified and volunteer to support existing groups as alternates to help fill in at meetings.

Alateen Spoken Here

Anonymous

Many times I do not want to make the effort to attend the Alateen meeting, but after the meeting gets started, I'm always glad I'm there. Each time I attend a meeting, I learn something about myself. I discover how I am working or not working my program. Hearing others share how they are living with the disease of alcoholism and applying the principles of the program in their lives reminds me that I have choices and that I don't know everything. There will always be more to learn about life, recovery, loving myself, and my Higher Power. Alateen helps me open my ears, my heart, and my mind.

James

He stares with those eyes full of pain
The ones he tries to hide with alcohol

He talks with such power, it scares me
When he comes and picks on someone

He sits and sleeps fading everything away
Like his life means nothing but drinking

He acts like we're nothing to him
I know deep inside somewhere, my dad is there.

Maria

I am being raised by my grandmother. I grew up with three uncles who are alcoholics. Since I started Alateen I have changed a lot. I guess if I don't do anything to help myself, nobody will. Alateen has helped me understand that I can't change the alcoholics. I can accept the disease and help myself. Alateen is a place I can share about my problems and learn from other members of the group. Alateen helped make me become a better person; it changed the way I think. Alateen has given me hope and shown me how to think positive about things.

Used with permission from Alateen Talk, Volume 41, Number 4.

Discontinued CAL

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First, he clarified that discontinuing a book or pamphlet does not revoke its status as CAL. However, the decision to discontinue a book is often made because it is no longer timely or reflective of the current membership. Discontinuing a piece of literature is a group conscience decision, involving the input of many Al-Anon members. The process for discontinuance (which is described on page 1) makes certain that such a decision is not made lightly. For these reasons, using discontinued CAL at meetings may not present our program in the best light. Additionally, getting members excited and interested in books that are no longer available may cause frustration and be counterproductive. Tom shared that groups are encouraged to trust the group conscience that determined to discontinue the book and use current, available literature at meetings. As always, we keep a stock of current, available Conference Approved Literature at the Al-Anon office.

Happy reading!
Leah D., Literature Coordinator

What Gifts Have You Received Serving as a Group Representative?

During my recovery in Al-Anon, I have served as GR and interim GR for two Massachusetts meetings and also offered some Alternate GR support for Cranston/Warwick Tuesday. The opportunity for this kind of service has given me far more than I ever could have expected. I learned so much about how Al-Anon works at Group and District levels. I gained confidence in myself and a clearer understanding of how the Traditions and Concepts apply to groups, Al-Anon as a whole, and my personal recovery. These things made it much more possible to make life decisions I could feel good about and to pass information on to the group that could help us create a healthier group conscience.

However, I cannot say I didn't have a learning curve while doing GR work. But I certainly can say it was growth inducing and worth it. I needed to learn through my mistakes and by taking my own "reaction" inventory as group issues arose. In one group, there was a time when only two or three regulars would take on service positions. I built up resentment about that and had to bring it to the group. After talking it over with experienced members from other groups, I saw that I was enabling that group not to take responsibility for its own growth. Unfortunately, my sponsor and I had to step back from doing repeated rotations of service and watch that group fold.

Together, we made the healthy choice to follow Tradition 7 (Every group ought to be fully self-supporting...) and Concept 4 (Participation is the key to harmony). Although I was resistant and it was painful to watch, I now feel that it is best for the growth of Al-Anon as a whole, if mainly the healthy, self-supporting groups survive to carry on and propagate healthy practices.

Another time, as an interim GR, I had to make amends to the group because I became aware that I was unconsciously pushing my own agenda on an issue I very much wanted to see changed in the group. I needed to accept that the group as a majority was content with conducting things in the way they always had in the past. I had to learn to give more respect to group process and group conscience.

Most of all, I want to share that I had a lot of support from other members and never felt criticized or judged for making mistakes along the way. My experience is that: members who do service as GRs and devote their free time to the group and to attending Area meetings are very much appreciated and supported. There are countless members who have walked before me and are willing to share their experience, strength, and hope around service; they become unofficial (and official) service sponsors. Through such service, I have the opportunity to form close friendships with other members whom I may not have otherwise met.

I thank Al-Anon for all I am learning,
Sharon F. (Tuesday—Cranston/Warwick Day)

The Friday night "When I Got Busy, I Got Better" meeting has changed its format to a general discussion meeting. We could really use your support as we transition! We meet Friday nights at 7:30 PM at Bradley Hospital in East Providence.

Look for more sharings from Group Representatives in future issues of Lifelines.

Upcoming Events

September

Alateen Informational Sponsors Meeting

Sat., Sept. 6, 1:00 PM

Area Office, 106 Rolfe Street, Cranston

All Al-Anon members who are currently involved with Alateen or are interested in volunteering are encouraged to attend.

Area Meeting

Tues., Sept. 16, 7:00 PM

Area Office, 106 Rolfe Street, Cranston

If you are interested in participating in service, please attend!

Saturday Nite Live Anniversary

Sat., Sept. 27, 2008

Calvary Methodist Church, 200 Turner Road, Middletown

Please join us for speakers, food, and fellowship!

October

Tides of Change; Waves of Healing: 25th Annual New Hampshire Convention with AA Participation

Fri., Oct. 31–Sun., Nov. 2, 2008

Ashworth-by-the-Sea, Hampton Beach, NH

This is a yearly, 3-day convention devoted to fellowship, sharing, and personal growth sponsored by the NH Area Assembly. For a registration form, visit <http://www.nhal-anon.org/Convention.html>. The registration is deadline is September 22, 2008.

November

Tiverton 'There Is Hope' Al-Anon 17th Anniversary

Mon., Nov. 10, 7:00–9:00 PM

Amicable Congregational Church, 3736 Main Rd., Tiverton

Join us for our "Attitude of Gratitude" Dinner of Thanks. Come join us as we begin the Holiday season by giving thanks for the blessings of recovery through the 12 Steps. We'll have speakers, food, fellowship, and literature.

SEPTEMBER 2008

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OCTOBER 2008

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RI Al-Anon Family Groups Area Office/Literature Distribution Center (LDC)

106 Rolfe Street, Cranston, RI 02910

Hours: Please call the office

Phone/Fax: 401-781-0044

E-mail: RI_Al-Anon@hotmail.com

Lifelines e-subscription: destre99@yahoo.com (type "Mailing List" in the subject line)

Web: www.RIAFG.org

An area newsletter is a vital link in keeping groups and members informed. The purposes of *Lifelines* are to: encourage attendance at service events; communicate local, area, and Al-Anon Information Service news; and attract Al-Anon members into service.

Lifelines submissions may be sent to destre99@yahoo.com or mailed to the office at the address above. The deadline for the next issue is **September 10**.

If you wish to receive *Lifelines* and other Area news via e-mail, please e-mail destre99@yahoo.com and type "Mailing List" in the Subject line.