

LIFELINES AUGUST 2021



In this issue:

More RIAFG groups are meeting again in person, see pages 3 & 4

Make sure your group has a contact for the WSO, see page 2

Public Outreach needs your help spreading the AI-Anon message of hope.

See page 4 & 5

We have three member contributions for this month, see page 2

The Forum needs your sharings on our Three Legacies, see page 8

Editor's Corner:

STEP EIGHT: Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.

We are having a set of stairs added to our deck and replacing the old deck boards and railings. During the day, I am fine with the timeline and cost, but at 3AM, not so much. Why is that? My anxiety seems like an octopus lurking below the surface waiting for any opportunity to rise and stir things up. It tosses scenarios of "what if's" and "yeah, but's" at me. Before AI-Anon, this rumination gave me an illusion of readiness and control. Today, I know better. But in the middle of the night when my vulnerability is at its highest, I can slip easily into that torturous rut. I know trying to be ready for any possible circumstance only steals my present moment and in this case, a good night's sleep.

How does this fit into Step Eight? I have been taught to put myself on the top of my amends' list. I recently read that to amend something is to change it for the better. I amend myself when I strive to make the changes necessary to improve my life. My AI-Anon program provides the tools.

I realize that I have made progress in this amending venture. I have not riddled my carpenter with questions or suggestions. I have accepted that he is the carpenter, not me. From past experience, I know he does good work. Experience helps me remember trust. The carpenter has a plan and materials to build the stairs and improve the deck. His tools are in the trailer that is currently in my yard. He relies on them to get his job done.

I have gained some deeper insights into my own recovery. Building a solid foundation and a strong supporting structure takes time and work. It is essential for the stairs to be safe and to last. I have a foundation built upon the AI-Anon principles I have learned through reading, sharing with members, and going to meetings. My tools require a bookcase, some paper and pens, a desk, and legwork. I use AI-Anon literature, the Steps, Slogans, Traditions, a sponsor, meetings as my "tools." How I start my day is important. I write in a journal, read our daily books, pray and meditate.

Honestly, there are some days when this all seems to slip into oblivion the minute I start the rest of my day. But I make an effort to touch base with myself and my Higher Power. I do this in simple ways: pausing to listen to our mockingbird or the call of a cardinal; the way the wind moves the hay in the field across from my house; my dogs ability to live completely in the moment; and gratitude for these and all the other blessings I have in my life today.

There have been times in my life when I had to face that some drastic changes needed to happen. Life has been particularly messy during those times. I imagine my yard will be messy as the carpenter rips out the old, worn boards and railings. But they serve no purpose now. Neither do my old ways of thinking and dealing with problems. I put myself on my amends' list and become willing to accept my Higher Power's "suggestion nudges." I know doing this by myself doesn't work. Left to my own devices, I don't do it. I know the program works when I use it. I know I can trust It.

Gratefully in service,
Elaine H., Lifelines Editor

Would you like to be on the distribution list for Lifelines? Send an email requesting this to lifelines.riafg@gmail.com. These are sent as "BCC" so your anonymity is protected.

Do you have an upcoming AI-Anon event to announce, an inspirational photo, personal share, etc.? Please email these to lifelines.riafg@gmail.com

Inside This Issue

Editor's Corner

Area Group Records-**Important**

Members Share

Meeting Notices-In Person
Meeting Updates

Upcoming Events

Public Outreach

Forum Articles

Support RIAFG & WSO

News from the WSO

This Month's Step, Tradition and
Concept

Web Sites, addresses and phone
numbers

Photo by T.H.

AREA GROUP RECORDS COORDINATOR: IMPORTANT!

Al-Anon Family Groups World Service Organization has informed RIAFG Records Coordinator that meetings with bounced emails and incorrect mailing addresses will be deleted from their data base within 2 years. Please be sure to keep your meeting's contact information current! Questions? Contact me at: records.riafg@gmail.com.

Thank you, In service, Kit, RIAFG Records Co-ordinator

MEMBERS SHARE:

To me the birds are an inspiration. They live a simple life, setting an example for us all. There are a constant reminder that I should "Let Go and Let God." by Barbara E.

from Hillary

It is often said "God helps those who help themselves." Before recovery, I had no idea what "helping myself" was. Today I have a much better understanding of this.

Over time the effects of the disease of alcoholism became more severe to the point of a hospitalization. My "non-awareness" of hurting myself by reacting to the disease and NO understanding of what codependency is created a deep depression that I thought I would never survive. Amazingly enough, through working a dedicated program, and I do mean dedicated, and with the faithful support of my Higher Power, whom I call God, and loving people in and out of the program, I have recovered and continue to make a healthier life for myself.

At times I felt just a little bit sorry for myself (allright a lot sorry for myself). So much work!!! It's a part-time job by gosh! However, I had to accept that no one was going to do the work for me. I also discovered that helping myself really meant selfcare. No more excuses for neglecting myself.

I could go on for hours sharing special moments where I could feel my Higher Power's presence. This give me courage, understanding, and a sense of joy with peace. I have also felt like God was not there. But He was. I had to slow down enough, listen, and accept when things did not go according to what I thought would happen in order to understand the recovery teaching. I have raged at, cried about, blamed, damned and much more towards those affected with the disease of alcoholism. And guess what? I can forgive myself for all that behavior! It is a part of healing!!! No need for guilt or shame. (Well to be honest, I am still working on guilt and shame but it is so much better)

So, yes, I have helped myself. God has helped me. My service work has helped others. And my fellow recovery travelers have helped me!

Al-Anon thank you!

Ann

Forum Coordinator, Email Coordinator

MEETING NOTICES:

*****Please consult riafg.org for the latest information regarding groups who are transitioning back to in person meetings, changing to a Hybrid format, and for the conference bridge numbers and zoom information for the temporary virtual meetings.*****
*****For the WSO meeting list, please refer to al-anon.org and click on "Meetings"*****

IN-PERSON MEETING UPDATES: (UPDATED 07/29/2021)

SUNDAY

- 9:30 a.m., Monday Morning Al-Anon, Portsmouth.** St. Mary's Episcopal Church, 324 E. Main St.(rt138) in person meeting also with Zoom ID: 4011212121, password: 1212
- 10:00 a.m., Al-Anon Forever Hope** (2-039006), will return to In-person meetings in West Greenwich - Town Hall, 280 Victory Hwy. (Rte. 102) . The group will also be meeting via Zoom. To join the Zoom Meeting:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84013128987?pwd=amp2ZTR5UXAzSW5KOGtEQkl4VEx0Zz09>
 Zoom ID: 840 1312 8987 Passcode: 764812 By Phone: 1-929-205-6099 Meeting ID: 840 1312 8987 Passcode: 764812
- 6:00 p.m., Serenity On Sunday, Newport** – Emmanuel Church, 42 Dearborn St (Library, Guild Room Chapel)
- 7:00 p.m. Sunday Evening Al-Anon** (1-026403), Providence - **First Unitarian Church**, 1 Benevolent St. (Benevolent & Benefit).

MONDAY

- 5:30 to 7:00 p.m., Woonsocket KIS Meeting** is back at their room in the Northern RI Health Center, 55 Cummings Way, Woonsocket, RI. Entrance as before is at the door on the sidewalk of Social Street.
- 6:00 p.m., Live & Let Live Group** (3-502810) will return to In-person meetings in Jamestown - **The Conanicut Grange Senior Center**, 6 West St.
- 7:00 p.m., Self Discovery Al-Anon**, West Warwick, - **Emanuel Lutheran Church**, 9 New London Avenue (rear building).
- 7:30 p.m., Step Up To The Summit**, Coventry, **Summit Baptist Church**, 1176 Victory Hwy. (Jct. Rtes 117 & 102)
- 7:30 p.m., There Is Hope AFG, Tiverton - Amicable Congregational Church, 3804 Main Rd.** (Rte. 77). Please refer to the **Online and Phone Meetings** page for information to join remotely.

*****NOTE*** Starting August 16, 2021 at 7:30 PM Wakefield Just For Today** will return to in person meetings with a Zoom option. They meet at Wakefield Baptist Church , 236 Main St., Wakefield, in the Fellowship Hall. Per the Church, masks are required for unvaccinated people. For Zoom, paste this in your browser: <https://soom.us/j/6127824537>

TUESDAY

- 7:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m. Charlestown New Life** - Cross Mills 1st Baptist Church, 4403 Old Post Rd. (Rte. 1A) Charlestown, RI 02813- If you are fully vaccinated, you do not need to wear a mask. **The group will also be meeting via Zoom.** All are welcome to participate. **To join the Zoom Meeting, go to zoom.us in your browser, enter the Meeting Number: 8447358546 and the password alatuesday (all lower case).**
- 7:30 p.m., New Beginning Al-Anon Family Group**, East Greenwich, St Luke's Episcopal Church - 99 Pierce Street The group holds a separate Newcomers group meeting as needed.

*****New Time*** 6:30 p.m., How Al-anon Works, Middletown - Calvary United Methodist Church, 200 Turner Rd.** Returning to In-Person meetings only.

WEDNESDAY

- ***Needs Support*** 9:00 a.m., Serenity at Sunrise, Warwick** - Sts Rose and Clement Church 111 Long St. Per church: ***It is highly recommended to wear a mask if you have not received the COVID vaccine. Continuing to maintain social distancing is also a recommended practice.
- 7:00 p.m., Let Go and Let God, Cumberland** - St. Aidan's Church, 1460 Diamond Hill Rd. Park in back of church, enter via the Rear door. This Group will also be meeting via Zoom - To join the Zoom Meeting, paste this in your browser: <https://zoom.us/j/88189707610>. To join the meeting manually, go to zoom.us, enter Meeting ID# 88189707610 and the password is 483079
- 7:00 p.m., Serenity by the Bay, Warren** - Warren Town Hall, 514 Main Street, Joyce street entrance. *****NOTE***** The meetings are in person, 7-8 pm, with the **EXCEPTION** of the first Wednesday of the month. On those dates we phone conference: call 712-770-4990, access code 666 383#.
- 7:30 p.m., Gift of Hope Al-Anon, Providence** - St. Martin's Church, 50 Orchard Ave., 3rd floor – (Enter church via door on Orchard Place, facing the synagogue parking lot). The group will also be meeting online via Zoom. All are welcome to participate. To join the Zoom Meeting, paste this in your browser: <https://zoom.us/j/9414840522?pwd=US8vT2VnYS9JazhhMjU0M3JjamhPQT09>. To access by phone: Call 646-558-8656; Meeting ID: 941 484 0522; Password: 974794.

THURSDAY

- 10:00 a.m., Let it Begin with Me, West Warwick** - Emanuel Lutheran Church, 9 New London Ave., Enter from the rear of building and this location is handicap accessible.

PUBLIC OUTREACH (CONT.):

Please consider printing and pinning up the Al-Anon tear off poster below.
Your willingness to do so may attract people to our program.
Please ask for permission at grocery stores, libraries, community centers,
laundromat, mental health facilities, etc.
Thank you!



CUT ALONG THE LINE BELOW



Do you worry about how much someone drinks?

More than half of all adults have a family history of alcoholism.

AL-ANON & ALATEEN CAN HELP

Rhode Island Al-Anon/Alateen
 106 Rolfe St. Cranston, RI 02910
 401.781.0044 | www.riafg.org |

Rhode Island
 Al-Anon/Alateen
 106 Rolfe St.
 Cranston., RI 02910
 401.781.0044
www.riafg.org.

Rhode Island
 Al-Anon/Alateen
 106 Rolfe St.
 Cranston., RI 02910
 401.781.0044
www.riafg.org.

Rhode Island
 Al-Anon/Alateen
 106 Rolfe St.
 Cranston., RI 02910
 401.781.0044
www.riafg.org.

Rhode Island
 Al-Anon/Alateen
 106 Rolfe St.
 Cranston., RI 02910
 401.781.0044
www.riafg.org.

Rhode Island
 Al-Anon/Alateen
 106 Rolfe St.
 Cranston., RI 02910
 401.781.0044
www.riafg.org.

↑ **CUT ALONG THE ABOVE LINE AND UP BETWEEN EACH BOX TO CREATE TEAR OFF TAGS** ↑

FORUM ARTICLE:



Never Too Old to Learn New Ways of Thinking

I first heard about Al-Anon from a pizza restaurant owner I did not know. When I placed my order, he looked at me and said, “Who is this for?” Before I could answer, he spoke our foster son’s name, L, and then asked, “Where is he?”

“In the hospital,” I answered. We talked briefly, and I learned that L—in his 20s—was a regular customer, and the restaurant owner was a recovering alcoholic. I told him that L was getting over a serious needle infection, and my husband and I were helping him get back on his feet. As I walked out with the pizza, the last words I heard were, “You both need Al-Anon.”

Before we had a chance to explore what that meant, however, L got kicked off a Greyhound bus for drinking and threatening behavior, then walked to a nearby casino where he continued to drink and was again told to leave. In trying to return to the bus stop/gas station in the dark, he got lost, fell into a water-filled ditch, and drowned. The following evening, two policemen came to our house to deliver the shocking news.

Fast forward 20 years to the day our 23-year-old grandson, after finding his way to A.A., asked his parents, and my husband and me, to go to Al-Anon. This time, there was no hesitation. And now, three years later, our grandson remains in recovery, and we continue to benefit from the knowledge we have gained and the support and friendships we have found here.

Initially, we felt a little like fish out of water, since neither of us had grown up in nor married into alcoholic or drug-addicted environments. But we quickly learned about the far-reaching generational effects of addictive behaviors and began to realize that Al-Anon would help us focus on recovery from the dysfunction in our own extended families. For my husband, this has meant addressing physical and emotional abuse, and for myself, emotional detachment—behaviors we learned to live with and respond to for most of our lives.

Now we are being introduced to new ways of thinking, responding, and living. We are learning to set limits (with loving detachment). We are discovering our own personal meaning of a Higher Power—an entity we can turn to for love and guidance. And both of us are practicing the “novel” idea of asking for help, knowing we no longer have to deal with our problems alone.

In closing, I’d like to say thank you: to our grandson, who pointed us in the direction of Al-Anon, and to the many people who have been and are accompanying us on this journey of recovery. My husband and I, at 82 and 72 and in retirement, thought there wasn’t much more for us to learn in this lifetime. We were wrong.

By Joyce, Washington The Forum, July 2021

(Reprinted with permission of The Forum, Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc., Virginia Beach, VA.)

Keeping Al-Anon Safe

When I was a newcomer in Al-Anon, safety in meetings meant many things to me, including serenity, anonymity, confidentiality, and acceptance. It meant serenity because the only time I experienced peace during the week was when I sat in a meeting room. The more meetings I attended, the more serene I felt. Safety, to me, meant anonymity because I didn’t have to worry that neighbors or coworkers would find out about my loved one’s drinking, or how I was coping with it. Confidentiality helped me feel safe too, for I knew that what I shared would stay within the walls of the meeting room, just as I extended the same consideration to my fellow members. Safety also meant acceptance. I was free to share from the heart without judgment or criticism. Because of our common bond, I could lower my defenses around a group of strangers who understood me without really knowing me.

As time went on, my feeling of safety in meetings evolved to include other things, like the practice of hugging before and after meetings. Prior to my recovery journey, I had an unpleasant experience with a much larger, physically stronger family member who hugged me so hard it would knock the wind out of me. My voice had been silenced by the shame I felt about that, and I didn’t know how to remove myself from unsafe situations. As a result, I felt apprehensive about accepting hugs from certain Al-Anon members. With the help of my Sponsor, I could name the source of my discomfort, gradually learn to set healthy boundaries, and begin to accept hugs on my own terms. Applying that same principle to others, I started offering hugs to fellow members by first asking, “Would you like a hug?”

FORUM ARTICLE (CONT.):

The content and structure of our group discussions contributed to my feeling of safety too. Knowing that only Al-Anon program principles and literature would be discussed wherever I chose to attend a meeting gave me a sense of consistency that my home life lacked. While some members of my home group had other religious and political beliefs, I observed that when members shared, they focused on recovery from the family disease, not on topics that could differentiate or divide us. I also came to trust that in a meeting my sharing would not be interrupted or discussed openly, and no one would give me advice. We even discussed group problems, like gossip or dominance, in a loving, respectful way.

During my term as Alternate District Representative and District Safety Chair, I facilitated a Knowledge-Based Decision-Making (KBDM) discussion about what safety meant to other District meeting participants. We had a large group, and everyone seated around the table had up to two minutes to share their unique perspectives. I found it to be such a moving, eye-opening experience, revealing that my peers defined safety (or lack of it) differently than I did! I was so grateful for the opportunity to broaden my own perspective on this important subject. The diversity of those sharings left me wondering how we can keep our meetings safe for everyone. Our District Safety Committee met several times to ponder that idea.

Luckily, I learned that the tool *Let's Talk about Safety in Al-Anon Meetings!* had just been published by the World Service Office (WSO). To keep the message consistent, we encouraged all members of our District to refer to it, regardless of what safety issue confronted them, or how long they had been attending Al-Anon meetings. What the KBDM exercise taught me was that safety truly *is* in the eye of the beholder. While each group is autonomous, and no perfect solution exists for every situation, I have learned the importance of talking to each other and reasoning things out. *Let's Talk about Safety in Al-Anon Meetings!* can serve as an icebreaker. With the advent of COVID-19 last year, the word "safety" continues to be redefined for us all! The pandemic caused members to consider the physical safety of in-person meetings—now and in the future—in ways that would have seemed unthinkable two years ago. Some of the other concerns that have come to our attention at the WSO have to do with keeping electronic Al-Anon and Alateen meetings safe and welcoming all around the globe, free from disruption or outside influence. If we keep a dialogue going about uncomfortable topics, such as the safety of our members, and resist going into denial about them, I believe the will of the group's Higher Power can be expressed in a way that is best for all.

By Natalie M., Associate Director—Administration & Strategies The Forum, July 2021

(Reprinted with permission of The Forum, Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc., Virginia Beach, VA.)

\$ HOW YOU CAN HELP RIAFG AND WSO \$

A beacon in a dark night



**TRADITION SEVEN: EVERY GROUP OUGHT TO BE FULLY SELF SUPPORTING,
DECLINING OUTSIDE CONTRIBUTIONS.”**

Thank You for your continued support during these unusual times!

Whenever possible, please send donations to our RIAFG and WSO
It takes all of us to keep the “doors” of Al-Anon open to all who need it.
Donate either personally or through your home groups.

Send donations to RIAFG: ******When you send in donations from your group, include the group number or the group name.*****

**RIAFG
106 Rolfe St.
Cranston, RI 02910**

Make a donation to the World Service Office online at

<https://al-anon.org/contributions/>
or by sending a check to: **AFG Inc.
1600 Corporate Landing Parkway
Virginia Beach, VA 23454**

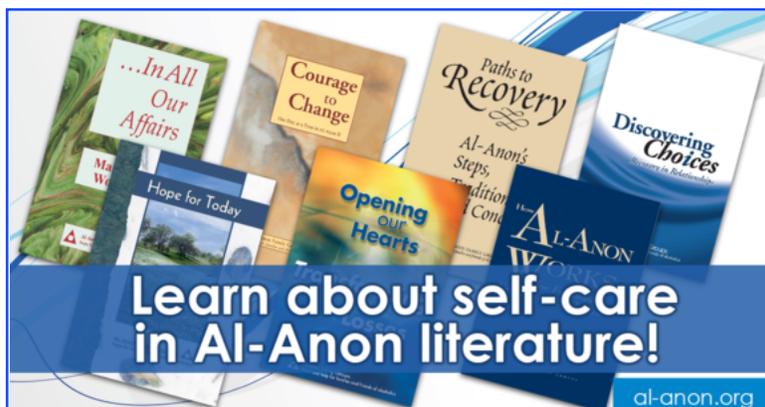
NEWS FROM THE WSO:

How Has Al-Anon Literature Helped You?

Please share how *Discovering Choices - Recovery in Relationships (B-30)*, *Opening Our Hearts, Transforming Our Losses (B-29)*, or *From Survival to Recovery (B-21)* has helped you. Send your sharings by **August 15** to *The Forum*, 1600 Corporate Landing Parkway, Virginia Beach, VA 23454-5617, Attention: "CAL Corner"; to wso@al-anon.org with "CAL Corner" in the subject line; or at al-anon.org/forumshare.

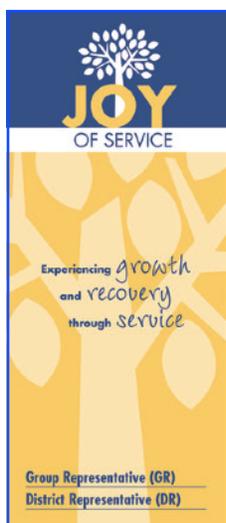
Please Consider Submitting Your Legacy Sharings!

Please help eliminate the need for *The Forum* to use reprints in the "Our Three Legacies" section of the newsletter. Consider submitting your own experience, strength and hope about how you practice one of the Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions, or Twelve Concepts of Service. Submissions should range from about 150 to 450 words. Send your articles to *The Forum*, 1600 Corporate Landing Parkway, Virginia Beach, VA 23454-5617; to wso@al-anon.org; or at al-anon.org/forumshare.

**Where to Read about Taking Care of Myself**

The following materials can provide helpful information about self-care:

- *...In All Our Affairs: Making Crises Work for You (B-15)*: Chapter Seven (pages 143–156)
- *Courage to Change—One Day at a Time in Al-Anon II (B-16)*: pages 21, 38, 56, 198, 229, 290, 342, 354
- *Paths to Recovery—Al-Anon's Steps, Traditions, and Concepts (B-24)*: page 175
- *Hope for Today (B-27)*: pages 96, 110, 162, 232, 245
- *Opening Our Hearts, Transforming Our Losses (B-29)*: Chapter Eight (pages 139–164)
- *Discovering Choices (B-30)*: pages 59, 122–3, 174–5, 304–5
- *How Al-Anon Works for Families & Friends of Alcoholics (B-32)*: Chapter Twelve (pages 81–93)

**Experience the Joy of Service!**

Would you like to experience more growth and recovery? Service activity connects you with people who have experienced recovery at another level. Check out Al-Anon's *Joy of Service (S-57)* leaflet. It describes the growth and recovery that can occur through serving as a Group Representative and District Representative. Order a copy (10¢) or download for free through the Al-Anon Online Store.



What Happened at the 2021 World Service Conference?

The 61st World Service Conference (WSC) took place virtually/electronically the week of April 12, 2021. Each year, following the WSC, the World Service Office compiles *Highlights of the World Service Conference*, which provides brief reports of several Conference sessions. The 2021 Highlights are posted at al-anon.org.



The World Service Office's Trilingual Annual Report Is Available

How is the WSO sharing its message of help and hope? Read all about it in the 2020 World Service Office Annual Report, published simultaneously in English, French, and Spanish. The Annual Report provides insights into the work completed on behalf of the fellowship by the Board of Trustees, Executive Committee, At-Large committees, and WSO Staff throughout the year.

STEP EIGHT: Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.

TRADITION EIGHT: Al-Anon Twelfth Step work should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers.

CONCEPT EIGHT: The Board of Trustees delegates full authority for routine management of the Al-Anon Headquarters to its Executive Committees.

WEB Sites, Addresses and phone numbers:

**RI AFG: www.riafg.org Office: 106 Rolfe St., Cranston, RI 02910
Telephone:401-781-0044. Office hours available by calling this number.**

**WSO: al-anon.org. Office: 1600 Corporate Landing Parkway, Virginia Beach,
VA 23454, Telephone: 757-563-1600**

*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*



Wickford Harbor