

LIFELINES JULY 2020



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This Month's Step, Tradition and Concept

Photo by T.H.

Editor's Corner:

Step Seven: Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.

I have a hard time letting go and letting God. I can decide that something is not important enough to bother my Higher Power with. I can rationalize that I am justified in hanging onto something, like an old resentment. I can pretend I have really let go of something this time, but my mind is like two sided tape — stuff sticks to it.

I have read in our literature that if I am not ready to have a shortcoming removed, what is my benefit from keeping it? Resentments, ridiculous as my head finds this, can be an enjoyable hobby and a pseudo ego booster. I still have that old thought that a resentment puts me a little above the person I resent. I am a little bit better because I have experienced someone else's character defect. It has affected and affronted me. I have every right to chew on, and even cherish chewing on, the resentment. My head knows that any resentment only hurts me. It holds me back from making progress in my process of recovery. It keeps me stuck in the false beliefs that I grew up with. As a child, I heard the adults in my life say, "I can forgive, but I will never forget."

What a message! First and foremost, with this attitude I get to play God. I have control over someone when I am magnanimous enough to forgive them. I possess the power to release them from their "sins." I have the power to assuage their guilt.

Looking at the above in print makes me pause. Do I want to keep the illusion of that kind of power? If I could have that kind of power, I would certainly make sure that no one hurt me in any way, and I would ensure that things always went in a way that benefited me.

Thank God for Al-Anon. I am released from this fantasy of control. I am powerless over people, places, and things. And powerlessness is a good thing because it right-sizes my ego. Like the alcoholic, I can be an egomaniac with an inferiority complex. I need divine intervention so that I can be released. This is a gift that I only have to ask for and then do my part, not God's.

I don't have to forgive or to condone or to minimize something to let go of it. I only need to pass it over to my Higher Power, ask for the strength to release it, and mind my own business.

Gratefully in service,

Elaine H., Lifelines Editor

If you are able to, please consider making a donation to our RIAFG and to our WSO. Our new virtual meeting world has had a serous impact on their finances.

Now could be the time to finally write and submit your recovery experience to Lifelines and *The Forum*.

***DEADLINE FOR THE AUGUST ISSUE IS JULY 28TH.**

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's" so your anonymity is protected.

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

\$ HOW YOU CAN HELP RIAFG AND WSO \$

The Sun Does Not Set on Being Self-Supporting



TRADITION SEVEN

“EVERY GROUP OUGHT TO BE FULLY SELF-SUPPORTING, DECLINING OUTSIDE CONTRIBUTIONS.”

Our responsibility to be self supporting continues. Many of our groups, the Rhode Island Area Al-Anon/Alateen Family Groups, and the World Service Office **continue to have operating expenses that must be paid.** Here are some ways you can continue to support Al-Anon through your voluntary contributions.

- Make a personal donation to the Rhode Island AFG by sending a check to:
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
- Some groups members are choosing to create their own personal *7th tradition envelopes* for their weekly donations and either send their donations to the group treasurer once a month or save their donations and give them to the group treasurer when they resume meeting face-to-face.

Whatever method you choose, it is important that we continue to support our groups, Area, and WSO.

*Let it Begin with Me.
When anyone anywhere reaches out for help, let the hand of Al-Anon and
Alateen always be there, and - Let it Begin with Me*



Photo by TH

AREA WORLD SERVICE COMMITTEE NEWS:

FACE TO FACE MEETINGS:

As we continue to go through the Rhode Island phases of reopening, many groups are discussing how and when to go back to face to face meetings. **The AWSC has formed a committee to put forth "Things to Consider" as this transition takes place.** This information will be available for the August issue of Lifelines, so please stay tuned for some of the suggestions to consider while your group discusses these changes.

AREA FORUM COORDINATOR:

Trivia Anyone???

Yes, this could be your lucky "Forum" day!
Just be the first to respond to the following question:

In 1949, what was the original title of the "Forum"?

The first email received at forum.riafg@gmail.com wins!!!!

Ann H.
Area Forum Coordinator

MEMBERS SHARE:

Progress Note

In July 2017, I couldn't sleep, afraid of receiving a call from a doctor or the police saying, "Sorry to inform you that your son is dead."

I know there are many parents out there with a similar fear. Because he was then homeless, had lost all his belongings and all his identifying information and was in danger, I let go of a ton of anger and disappointment and invited him to stay in my house. Two rules: no alcohol and drugs, and violent behavior would be responded to by my calling the police.

When he arrived, he said, "This is the last place I want to be, with my mother, the autocrat."

By faithfully attending Alanon meetings I learned that the person who needed to change was me, who for many years demanded that friends and family do things my way because my way was the right way.

For two and a half years I have been practicing newly learned behaviors: stop asking questions, stop giving advice, keeping quiet, just listening. My son found his way to mental health treatment, sobriety, living independently and work. What I had lost hope for has now come to be. I am no longer worried about the future because whatever it is, I have no control over it. Today, still practicing, I have serenity.

by Nina F.

MEMBERS SHARE:

I love the realizations I receive in this program.

I was in pain for a year. Now I find I am angry with myself for not being out of pain two weeks after major surgery. I was sharing this with a friend who is not in program and her response was, "Well, THAT'S stupid!" I found myself chuckling that I was not only a slacker for still being in pain, and a drama queen for talking about it, but stupid as well. These are old messages I practiced throughout most of life as I struggled to "earn my place" on the planet. Before program, I thought that being an example to others meant I always had to have my nose to the grindstone, that I could never let up.

Yet new messages are all around me: in the surgeon who tells me that my job is to rest and let my body heal; in the physical therapist who says she would rather I do less than the prescribed number of reps than more, and to back off when they hurt; in my loving program friends who are gentle with me and remind me to be gentle with myself. Today I choose to listen to these voices, and to rethink when I slide back into less-than-healthy ways of approaching recovery. Now, being an example of Al-Anon recovery is leaning back into the care of my higher power and the wisdom of my program friends. As I write this, I receive a text from a fellow traveler in the program to: rest, nap, heal, heal, heal. And that's exactly what I am going to do!

By Anonymous



The above is a sunset photo at Watch Hill. I feel right sized when I look out at the beauty of the ocean. I am one of many.

I love this quote from our *One Day at a Time* daily reader page 310:

"There are, it may be, so many kinds of voices in the world, and none of them is without significance." ...'Answers can be found from uncritical listening.'"

I'm grateful for our miraculous Al-Anon fellowship.
by Jackie W.

FORUM ARTICLE:**Finding My Way in Al-Anon**

Over the course of a few years, my family's life seemed to spiral out of control. Solutions I thought should work didn't. I was worn out, and I was out of ideas. I finally took a friend's advice and came to an Al-Anon meeting. With grandchildren now in the mix, I somehow sensed that I might be facing some life-long challenges. At meetings, I couldn't believe anyone was going through anything as bad as I was. That's because the others seemed happy. They were smiling and making jokes. I wrongly concluded that their problems were solved and that the main reason they attended meetings was because they were so grateful to Al-Anon for what it had done for them.

In time, I learned that other members were going through serious problems too, but unlike me, they took better care of themselves. I also saw other newcomers improving. I could see how I had been stuck in a rut — emotionally reacting to every new crisis and spending time examining and regretting the past. I needed help to recognize my feelings, accept reality, and move forward. My load lightened up a bit when I made a friend in the program to talk with. I'd already received plenty of advice from family and friends, but hearing my new friend's experiences in detail gave me a new and different perspective.

She let me make my own decisions. But even today, when I need to make a decision, I often think of some of the experiences she had and how she handled them. Looking back, my first decisions early in the Al-Anon program seemed so big, and they were. I am thankful to Al-Anon for pointing the way towards a happier and healthier way for me to live.

by Gina B., Arkansas

(Reprinted with the permission of *The Forum* (June 2020 issue, page 10), Al-Anon Family Groups, Virginia Beach, VA)

2020 EVENTS CALENDAR:

(At this time, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, please check the riafg.org website for updated information.)

July 22 AWSC meeting from 7 PM to 9 PM. Zoom information will be forthcoming.
 October 3 AWSC meeting from 10 AM to Noon. Location TBD
 November 14 Rhode Island Area Assembly. Information to follow in the upcoming months.

MEETING NOTICES:

*****While we are still not meeting face to face, please see riafg.org for meeting information regarding temporary cancellations, conference bridge meetings and zoom meetings.**

*****For the WSO meeting list, please refer to <https://al-anon.info/MtgSearch/PhoneMeetings.aspx?language=EN>**

Zoom meeting update:

**Wednesday night Let Go and Let God group now meets on zoom at 7:00 PM. ID# 88189707610
 Password is 483079**

Holiday Notice:

The **North Providence Step Meeting will not** be meeting on **any holiday** that falls on a Thursday.

Meetings that have Closed:

Let it All Go AFG, Tuesday 7:30 PM, N. Kingstown Methodist Church, 450 Boston Neck Rd., (Rte 1A)
Hope for the Family Disease meeting Friday at 7:30PM in Tiverton at St Theresa's Catholic Church has closed.
First Things First AFG meeting on Monday at 7:00 PM at VA Medical Center, Providence.
The Serenity AFG meeting on Thursday at 8:30 AM at St. Andrew's Church Hall, 183 Willow Ave, Little Compton has closed.

DISTRICT 2 NEWS:

What's NEWS in District 2 – May 2020 Meeting Report

Once a month, District 2 meets for about an hour at a named location to unite the individual groups within the district. Topics range from informing groups about Area or World Service news to planning program related events. District meetings also coordinate service and public outreach projects and as such are a great way to see the program in action and get involved in service.

The May 2020 District 2 Meeting was held via Zoom and was one of our best attended district meetings to date. We opened the meeting with the serenity prayer, introductions, and reading the Tradition & the Concept of the Month. The minutes from March & April were then read and accepted.

The two main topics discussed at this meeting were: (1) how to handle the 7th Tradition and (2) how to best meet the needs of newcomers during these COVID-19 times. For the 7th Tradition, some groups have been mailing their donations to their group's treasurer at the end of each month and deciding how to disperse the groups monies from there. Others have been encouraging their members to put their weekly contributions in an envelope and to set it aside until they could meet again in person. Still other groups have updated their opening to read that contributions can be mailed directly to the Area via check or made directly to WSO online. It was mentioned that at the state level, RIAFG had received ZERO donations in March. That being said, at the end of the day, it didn't seem to matter *how* each group handled the 7th tradition during this time; rather it was most important *that* they did it.

Group representatives (GRs) and members present also shared how they were trying to best meet the needs of the newcomer while meetings are being held virtually. Some groups have a book; newcomer's packet; phone and/or meeting list they give to newcomers at their first meeting. In many cases, groups haven't had access to these resources since things were shut down. However, in such cases where a group had access to their resources, the group's treasurer mailed the literature out to the newcomer and the group covered the shipping. The Area currently is also providing newcomers with a complimentary newcomer's packet and emailing them information and resources about the AI-Anon program. In addition, groups have been staying after their virtual meetings to offer fellowship and support to the newcomer. One additional suggestion brought to the table was to possibly offer a virtual meeting specifically for the newcomer; however since we as a fellowship have been working on welcoming the newcomer without singling them out, further discussion about this did not ensue.

Alateen needs and a task force update were also given, and the discussion around safety at meetings was briefly recapped. As a reminder, there is a resource available on www.riafg.org specifically about safety in meetings. It can be found under "About Us" —> "Area Business" —> "Area Policies, Procedures, and Guidelines/Suggestions" OR by [clicking here for the Rhode Island AI-Anon Family Group Meeting Safety Suggestions](#).

That's all for this month's report. Our next district meeting will be held on Tuesday June 30th at 7pm via Zoom. All are welcome to attend. To Join our Zoom Meeting simply click the following link or copy and paste it into your browser - <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84739002298?pwd=MUNwVVFVaktCRE9qRDFDU0owSU6UT09> OR enter the Meeting ID: 847 3900 2298 and Password: 417082. Hope to "see you" at our next meeting!

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AI-Anon Declaration: Let it begin with me.

When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help,

Let the hand of AI-Anon and Alateen always be there,

And let it begin with me.

Links of Service

Member + Member = **Group**

Group + **Group** = **District**

District + **District** = **Assembly**

Assembly + **Assembly** = **Conference**

NEWS FROM THE WSO:**Attention: All Trusted Servants for Alateen**

Please be aware that due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2020 Area Alateen Recertification deadline has now been extended to **August 15, 2020**.

- If you are interested in initial certification or recertification, please reach out to your Area Alateen Process Person or Area Alateen Coordinator for details relating to your Area process.
- All currently certified AI-Anon Members Involved in Alateen Service (AMIAS) will remain certified during this extension period.

Do not hesitate to reach out to your local links of service for details and support!

For Rhode Island, email the Process person at aapp.riafg@gmail.com and the coordinator at alateen.riafg@gmail.com.

WSO's Website: A Blog for Members!

AI-Anon hosts a blog for members to share their experience, strength, and hope on a variety of topics. New topics will be added each month.

June's topic was "How do you express gratitude today?" **The topic for July will be in the July issue of *The Forum* and on the Blog.** Visit al-anon.org/member-blog for more information. Member sharings on the Member Blog may be used in future AI-Anon publications.

What's Your Story?

Your sharings about your journey through recovery from the effects of the disease of alcoholism are needed for *The Forum*. These sharings focus on what brought you to AI-Anon and what keeps you coming back. Here are some things to think about when writing:

- What was your life like before coming into AI-Anon?
- In what ways were you affected by someone's drinking?
- How did you hear about AI-Anon?
- What were your first meetings like?
- What is your life like now? In what ways has the program benefitted you?

Submissions should range from about 700 to 1300 words. Remember — don't worry about spelling and punctuation. Your sharing will be edited before publication. You can inspire readers by sharing your own experience, strength, and hope. Please submit your sharings to *The Forum*, 1600 Corporate Landing Parkway, Virginia Beach, VA 23454-5617; to wso@al-anon.org; or to al-anon.org/forumshare.

Hope for Today

The latest CAL, *Hope for Today* is now available in eBook format. Our newest release includes the index complete with links to each reading. *Hope for Today* is a daily reader written from the perspective of members who grew up in an alcoholic home. This book is for anyone who wants to grow in acceptance, compassion and understanding. Find out where to find it at <http://al-anon.org/b27>.

Want to Experience Growth and Recovery?

The *Joy of Service* (S-57) leaflet describes experiencing growth and recovery through service.

“Your fears will diminish, you will reap the benefits of giving to others, and you will learn that by placing our common welfare first, you will receive much more than you give.”

Download this leaflet for free at al-anon.org/onlinestore.

Links of Service — What are they?

Links of Service (S-28) provides a clear and simple depiction of Al-Anon’s World Service Conference Structure including members, Group Representatives (GRs), District Representatives (DRs), Area Delegates, group meetings, District Meetings, Area World Service Committee (AWSC) meetings, Area Assembly meetings, and the World Service Conference (WSC). Download this leaflet for free at al-anon.org/onlinestore.

Feeling Isolated Because of Social Distancing? You Have Options

Summer has long been a good time to check out alternative ways to get our recovery “fix” —just as when we take vacations and often find ourselves in places that don’t have face-to-face meetings. Now, as we deal with the COVID-19 pandemic, the need for alternatives is even more pressing. Some options you may not know about include the World Service Office (WSO) social media profiles and electronic meetings:

WSO social media profiles post content every day so that we can all get a much-needed daily dose of encouragement! Electronic meetings are accessible on multiple online platforms, as well as telephone, and are available in multiple language and day/time options, with some meetings available 24/7.

Providing Hope for Parents & Grandparents

The *Hope & Understanding for Parents & Grandparents* (P-94) pamphlet contains 24 pages of insight and experience from parents and grandparents of problem drinkers who share how Al-Anon helped them face and recover from the effects of a child or grandchild’s alcoholism.

Remember—when you buy from your local Literature Distribution Center (LDC), you support your local services.

How Has Conference Approved Literature Helped You

Please share how *How Al-Anon Works* (B-32); or *As We Understood* (B-11) helped you. Send your sharings by **July 15** to *The Forum*, 1600 Corporate Landing Parkway, Virginia Beach, VA 23454-5617, Attention: “CAL Corner”; at wso@al-anon.org with “CAL Corner” in the subject line; or at al-anon.org/forumshare.

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

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 the legal rights while the rights
of the Conference are traditional.*

*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.*

Photo by T.H.

