

The ALANEWS

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Thought from new ALANEWS Coordinator

I apologize for the late issue of this quarters ALANEWS.

I appreciate the articles I received. Please feel free to submit any articles to grandmaby@hotmail.com

Please list in the subject ALANEWS or AL-ANON.



From our just for today bookmark.

Just for today

I will be happy. This assumes to be true what Abraham Lincoln said, that "Most folks are as happy as they make up their minds to be."

Upcoming Events

Holiday Boutique December 5, 2020

This event will be held in Zoom. Volunteers needed.

UTAH AREA AL-ANON FAMILY GROUPS FALL ASSEMBLY

SEPTEMBER 18 – 20, 2020

. Friday evening session:

1. Al-Anon Jeopardy Activity, Ked K. Leader

An activity setup like the TV Gameshow covered topics of CAL books and pamphlets, Alateen Literature, Anonymity, The Forum, The Concepts and the Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual. Fellowship/Sharing Meeting, Celestia G, Leader

Saturday session: Highlights from the assembly. Full notes will be posted to the website.

Reports were given by all district and area officers.

Delegate Report:

2021 theme for the World Service Conference has been announced as

2021 – Moving Forward With Unity, Courage and Perseverance.

Step 9: A Portrait of Forgiveness Nichole G

Three years into my sobriety and recovery from alcoholism in Alanon, I finally reached Step 9 and began making amends to the people I had harmed. Most of my amends were pretty straightforward and I was able to complete all but two: My parents.

As a child growing up in an alcoholic home, what did I have to make amends for? Hadn't I suffered enough violence, chaos, confusion, manipulation, shaming, blaming and control? Wasn't I the victim in all of this?

As I reflected on my own behavior, my Step 9 amends and all of the generous people who responded to me with forgiveness, a clearer picture of my own experience with alcoholism began to emerge. For years I had no awareness of how the effects of my drinking hurt the people I cared about. If I were asking all of these people to forgive my behavior before I had the gift of recovery, wouldn't it be hypocritical to continue to hold my parents' disease against them?

For no particular reason, I began to think about Norman Rockwell, *The Saturday Evening Post's* most famous illustrator and one of America's greatest artists. He was a master storyteller who painted snapshots of the ideal American life.

To better understand my parent's disease, I thought to myself, "If Norman Rockwell were to paint a picture of the disease of alcoholism in my childhood home, what would it look like?"



I began to make two lists. First, I listed snapshots of painful experiences that I could recall from childhood: instances of violence, leaving mid-hockey game to go to the bar, brushing over trauma and shaming me for my sensitivity. This picture was familiar and didn't seem to bother me.

I then made a second list of all of the moments I felt loved by each parent: Sunday walks to get the newspaper, dancing around the kitchen, going out for ice cream, decorating our holiday tree and fitting me for hockey skates. These long forgotten memories and feelings flooded into my chest and I began to break down and sob.

In the decades of my disease, I had only been able to see my parents as monsters and had forgotten that they were human beings, capable of kindness, love and generosity.

Putting together the two lists, I was able to make the distinction between the disease and the human being for the first time in my recovery, just as I was asking the laundry list of people I had hurt to do for me in my Step 9 amends.

Thinking back to Norman Rockwell, I realized that I have hurt my parents in a way that never occurred to me before. I caused a great deal of my own suffering and likely deeply hurt them by creating an impossible ideal for them to live up to and resented them each time they failed to meet my lofty expectations. For decades, I expected healthy responses to devastating situations from two people who are just as sick as I was.

I am grateful to my Higher Power for the forgiveness that came from my Step 9 and for blessing me with the gift of empathy for my parents, something I felt until now, to be impossible.

I'm especially grateful to my sponsor for suggesting I write this, as it's as close to a Step 9 direct amends that I am able to make to my loving, generous parents.

Carrying Al-Anon's Message of Hope

Next month, many people across the United States and Canada turn their focus to the world of recovery. It's a unique opportunity to shine a bit of the spotlight on Al-Anon recovery. As our loved ones are either living with active alcoholism or living in sobriety, we owe it to ourselves to celebrate our own serenity.

Before Al-Anon, I didn't truly understand this serenity thing. The Serenity Prayer was just something we said at meetings but remained a mystery to me. I want to say I had this big *aha moment*, but it just kind of snuck up on me. As a son of an alcoholic, I grew up to be somewhat obsessive-compulsive. I started to notice that some of the little things that would annoy me no longer did. Now, the toilet paper still needs to go on the correct way; but I found I was able to recognize, and not stress over, the things I didn't have control over much more quickly. This led me to a place of inner peace that I don't remember ever feeling before—a calm I had never experienced. Next month, I will celebrate my recovery and the serenity I have been so blessed to experience.

The way I plan to celebrate this is by practicing the Twelfth Step and carrying this message of hope out into the world so that others can experience the same feelings that I have. Reaching out to others in need of help is made easier with many of the available public outreach service tools. The [Outreach Bookmark \(M-76\)](#) was redesigned recently and is available for free. The 20 questions pamphlets, [Are You Troubled by Someone's Drinking? Al-Anon Is for You! \(S-17\)](#), [Has Your Life Been Affected by Someone Else's Drinking? Alateen Is for You! \(S-20\)](#), and [Did You Grow Up with a Problem Drinker? Al-Anon Is for You! \(S-25\)](#) are also great resources for those who may not yet believe Al-Anon is right for them. They can be downloaded for free or purchased for three cents. Of course, there is always our public outreach magazine, [Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism](#), which is much more comprehensive, filled with sharings from members and professionals. All of these tools can be found on the Al-Anon online store or by contacting your local Al-Anon Literature Distribution Center.

Our message of hope is too precious to keep to ourselves. Celebrate your recovery by helping others find theirs.

By Scot P., Associate Director—Digital Strategy

The Forum, August 2020

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Hello, ODAT, trusted friend. Can we talk?

I have spent more time recently with my ODAT (One Day At A Time in Al-Anon, B-6). We have history! We have a good relationship, but I suspect I have sometimes taken it for granted; I think I know what ODAT will tell me or that it will say the same thing – because I am thinking/feeling/doing the same thing – but I am more willing right now to listen.

Whoa! Too much information!

The current health concerns overflowing into all our lives has many of us looking to long time remedies to day to day problems of living and working with others. So, I reach out to trusted friends – including my shelf of Al-Anon literature (CAL).

What will I find in my One Day At A Time?

It is held together by a cloth cover with a Polynesian print. A love gift. Perhaps from a regional event. Tucked into the inside flap are phone lists from the various meetings I attend – or have in the past: one shows Ruth K, a long-time member in my district who passed away over a decade ago. I keep that list as a reminder that someone was there before me and walked with me as I learned the program.

On the fly leaf is written March 15, 1986, the day I bought the book at the Alumni Group in South Ogden. That group has disbanded. My first meeting was the Wednesday prior. Now it shows the use!

Sometimes I will come upon a page with no marks or thumb stains on the corner. I will say out loud, “I have never seen this page before! There are ODAT elves that put it in overnight!”

March 15. I have to smile when I read that page today. I suspect it meant something different then. Two different ink colors indicate an ever-greater perspective of my meetings and my reasons for seeking Al-Anon.

Other pages are worn, marred and brittle from return visits. Some I can turn to quickly knowing their balm for my thoughts and feelings. I think about March 26 quickly, but sometimes need to remember March 27. Sometimes for the same “concern” that pesters me.

I find many different items used as bookmarks. Some are obvious choices: THINK from the 2008 International in Pittsburgh, the twenty questions: Did You Grow Up With A Problem Drinker? A transit ticket and a note pad sheet from the Holiday Inn and a visitor badge from the Hawai'i School for the Deaf and Blind which I visited during SWRSS. Bookmarks tell the places that Al-Anon has allowed me to go, having first given me the sense of freedom needed to do so.

In December of 1986 I took Amtrak to Montreal, Canada. I attended meetings in Illinois, Massachusetts and Quebec. Everywhere, I was welcome based only on being a member of Al-Anon.

This year seems as urgent as it did in 1986. Notes on some pages send me elsewhere for further suggestions, for instance on April first I am sent to September 2 - I no longer growl about why attitude comes up so often, another sends me to June 8 and from that page to June third.

Even in when I do not visit my ODAT daily the index has carried me across many turbulent waters. At the top on the first page of the index I see a note to read and recall pages 297, 235 and 86. Curious, I read them again.

ODAT has continued to be such a valuable friend. I came to Al-Anon for that one elusive answer and I received much, much, more. I received fellowship so that I am never alone; I received thoughtfulness so that I need never panic over tomorrow; I received steps to take toward my freedom from despair.

Ked K

