



THE RAP

January 2017

Reaching Al-Anon People

The Al-Anon/Alateen Newsletter of the Delaware Valley

Step One

We admitted we were powerless over alcohol—that our lives had become unmanageable.

Tradition One

Our common welfare should come first; personal progress for the greatest number depends upon unity.

Concept One

The ultimate responsibility and authority for Al-Anon world services belongs to the Al-Anon groups.

Al-Anon is not allied with any sect, denomination, political entity, organization, or institution; does not engage in any controversy; neither endorses nor opposes any cause. There are no dues for membership. Al-Anon is self-supporting through its own voluntary contributions.

Al-Anon has but one purpose: to help families of alcoholics. We do this by practicing the Twelve Steps, by welcoming and giving comfort to families of alcoholics, and by giving understanding and encouragement to the alcoholic.

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Practicing Step 1

I first came to Al Anon because I wanted to help my qualifier with their recovery from alcoholism. I didn't just want to help—I wanted to be **indispensable** to their recovery. I wanted to **be** their recovery. And when I heard it suggested in our opening that, "the family situation is bound to improve as we apply the Al-Anon ideas", I became convinced that my working the Al-Anon Steps would help my qualifier. Some helpful members encouraged me to consider putting the focus on myself, but I thought, instead, I would take what I liked and leave the rest.

So I decided to help my qualifier. I would say "yes" to the Steps. No one would catch me doubting, hesitating, or resisting. I needed to set an example for my qualifier to follow. When I began to work Step 1, I said yes to my life being unmanageable. I said yes to the idea of acceptance. However, the only thing I was really willing to "accept" was that I needed to work the Steps to develop the power to help my qualifier. I was still convinced it was going to be my own power that restored them, and then me, to sanity.

I often hear a longtime member say, "Don't worry about getting the program—it will get you!" I liked the sound of that idea, even as I dismissed it, when it came to me. I thought I **did** get my program. I thought I understood it. I was going to get better, and that would fix my qualifier. I drew great comfort from having an understanding of my program that fit my distorted, other-focused perspective. It gave me a sense of control.

But, what that longtime member was trying to tell me, and what my higher power eventually showed me, was that I was already loved unconditionally, despite my flaws, despite my distorted perspective, despite my lack of humility, and despite my failure to grasp the meaning and importance of Step 1. My Higher Power's unconditional love meant that the program **was** going to get me, even if I was more than happy not being gotten.

But, of course, I wasn't really happy. My obsessive other-focus was all I could do to mask the sadness and loss I felt inside from my exposure to the family disease of alcoholism. I couldn't know that I was unhappy until my Higher Power gave me the courage to put the focus on myself and experience the feelings I had been running from my whole life. That took many, many weeks, months and, even, years of regular meeting attendance. It's a process that continues, even today. Every day, I pray for the courage and willingness to be present for what it feels like to be me. That's acceptance for me today.

But, at the very beginning, I wasn't interested in true acceptance. I couldn't be. I didn't have the help I needed yet. So, I just went along and said "yes" to everything—so everyone would know I "got" it and wouldn't kick me out of the Al-Anon club. And maybe—more importantly—my qualifier would see my effort and decide that their recovery was worth it. At the time, I honestly thought the word "yes"

(continued on pg. 3)

A publication of... AISDV

Al-Anon Information Service of the Delaware Valley

aisdv.org • 4021 Walnut Street Philadelphia PA • rap@aisdv.org • 215-222-5244 (voicemail)

AL-ANON NEWS AND EVENTS

AISDV Valentine's Dinner Dance Fundraiser

*Join us for food, fellowship and fun as
we eat and dance the night away!*

Al-Anon, AA and Alateen Speakers!

50/50, Raffles & Give-a-ways!!!!

Tickets: \$40

NO TICKETS SOLD AT THE DOOR

Baskets or monetary donations
greatly appreciated!

**Cannstatters Hall
9130 Academy Rd Philadelphia, PA
Saturday, February 11th 6-10 PM**

Register online at:

<http://whoscoming.com/aisdv/AISDVValentinesDayFundraiser.html>

Send your check payable to AISDV
to 4021 Walnut Street
Philadelphia, PA 19104

with your name and contact information
and Dinner-Dance in the memo line

Call Janeal @ 215-571-9458 or Naima @
215-873-9681 for more information

Al-Anon's 45th Annual PA Convention

June 2-4, 2017

Susquehanna University
Selinsgrove, PA

*Al-Anon and AA Workshops,
Speakers and Fellowship!*

Al-Anon and AA Meetings

Registration Opens in February

Save the Date Flyer:

<http://aisdv.org/flyers/SavetheDateFINAL45thAnnualPennsylvaniaAFConvention7.pdf>

Subscribe to the RAP!

*Text or e-mail your name, group name
and phone number to rap@aisdv.org
or 267-535-0945*

Save the Date!

**Al-Anon/Alateen International
Convention—July 5th -8th 2018 in
Baltimore, MD**

Don't Miss It! Only Once Every 5 Years!

Districts 4 & 5 2017 Spring Workshop

**Great Workshops with
Great Speakers!**

Don't Miss It!

Lima United
Methodist Church
209 N. Middletown
Road, Lima, PA

Saturday, April 1st 2017
8:30 AM to 1:00 PM

Planning Meetings

Sunday, Jan 29th 2:00-3:30 pm

Sunday, Feb 26th 2:00-3:30 pm

Sunday, Mar 19th 2:00-3:30 pm

Sunday, Mar 26th 2:00-3:30 pm

**Set Up: Friday March 31st at
7:00 pm**

Can you think of three different ways Al-Anon has helped you this month? ...this week? ...today?

*Help us get the message out to those still struggling
who don't know that Al-Anon can help!*

Consider making a contribution to AISDV today.

Al-Anon Information Service of the Delaware Valley

Send your check to: AISDV 4021 Walnut Street Philadelphia, PA 19104 OR Go to: aisdv.org and click on: Contact Us/Donate

*Contributions go towards advertisements, public service
announcements and towards literature used at treatment
facilities, sent to doctors and distributed at
public outreach events.*

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Upcoming Anniversaries and Special Meetings

AA and Al-Anon Speakers! Fun, Food and Fellowship!

You're Not Alone AFG Anniversary

St. Gabriel's Church-St. Thomas Room
233 Mohawk Avenue, Norwood, PA
Friday, January 20th 9:00 AM

Ambler AFG 43^d Anniversary

Upper Dublin Lutheran Church
Butler Pike and Susquehanna Rd, Ambler
Friday, January 27th 7:30 PM

New Beginnings AFG Candlelight Mtg

Greentree Church of the Brethren
1078 Egypt Road, Oaks PA
Sunday, January 29th 6:45 PM

Far Northeast AFG Anniversary

Our Lady of Cavalry Church
11024 Knights Road, Philadelphia
Sunday, January 29th 7:00 PM

God As I Understand Him Meeting and Cookie Swap

Sponsored by: Fresh Start AFG
All Saints Episcopal Church
1811 Loney Street, Philadelphia
Monday, February 27th 7:00 PM

Practicing Step 1 (cont. from pg. 1)

was synonymous with acceptance. Do I believe alcoholism is a disease? Yes! Do I believe it made my life unmanageable? Yes! Do I accept that my qualifier has a disease that they have no power over and that they must turn over to their Higher Power? Yes! If I kept saying yes, I thought everything would happen the way I expected. I was wrong. Because, for me, "yes" was not the same as acceptance. I had to look closely at the first step to realize, that what I was supposed to acknowledge, was that I was powerless. My enthusiastic "yes" was not an admission of powerlessness. It was my attempt to stay ahead of the game and not have to give up being in charge. What I needed, more than anything, for Step 1, was the word "no." I didn't realize this until God gave me an experience that changed my perspective.

I was at an open meeting with my qualifier, and to my surprise, they raised their hand to share. They said their name, and, in the moment before they announced that they were an alcoholic, I was overcome by a strange feeling. I felt agitated... trapped... panicked. I realized that I desperately wanted to leave before they finished their sentence. And in the moment that they said the words, "...and I'm an alcoholic," I prayed in a way I'd never heard myself pray before. I said, "Please. God, No. I beg you, please! Don't make them an alcoholic."

It was such a surprising thing to hear me say...of course, they were already an alcoholic! God couldn't change that. And I already knew this. I'd known it for years. I'd already said yes to it. It shouldn't have been a shock or surprise. And, yet, I was surprised. I was surprised by the extraordinary release of grief that I didn't know I had. I was surprised to say, "No. Please God No. I Do Not Accept." In that moment, I admitted my powerlessness. Oh, how I didn't want to! How I didn't want anyone, especially God, to know how upset I was that I was truly powerless. But God does for me what I cannot do for myself. And, sometimes, God works my program for me, when I cannot, or will not. I don't need to get the program. The program will always get me. Eventually.

Today, I understand that acceptance, for me, begins with self-acceptance...with admitting my own feelings about my unmanageable life—even when I think those feelings aren't right, aren't productive, or don't reflect the idea of recovery that I think I should have. And, often, that starts with allowing myself to say no. To say to God, "Please No." To admit that the word, no, is all the power I have—all the power I ever had—that there wasn't ever anything else I could have done. In acknowledging that, I feel so sad. By admitting that, I let God in to help.

-Anonymous

Strengthen Your Recovery Through Service!

Do You Want to Speak at the Women's Prison?

*This is a great opportunity for service
and to carry the message to
those who most need it!*

*Would your group like to donate
literature or money for literature?*

Contact Dawn at district1dawn@verizon.net for more info.

Spread the Message of Recovery to the Delaware Valley!

*Are You Creative and
Passionate about Al-Anon?*

Join the Fundraising Committee of AISDV

Contact Janeal at 215-571-9458 or
janeal215@gmail.com

Does Your Group Have an Information Service Rep (ISR)?

*You Might Be Missing Out on Some
Great Opportunities to Spread the
Message!*

ISRs attend six meetings a year and bring information back to their group.

Contact chair@aisdv.org for more info
or just show up at the next AISDV
Meeting—see pg 4 for details!

Group/Individual Donations

World Service Office

Payable to/Mail to: AFG Inc.
1600 Corporate Landing Parkway
Virginia Beach, VA 23454-5617

PA/State

Payable to: PA A Assembly
Mail to: Stephanie M.
5594 Fairway Dr W
Fayetteville, PA 17222

Al-Anon Information Service of the Delaware Valley

Payable to/Mail to: AISDV
4021 Walnut St Phila, PA 19104
or go to aisdv.org and click on
Contact Us/Donate

Alateens/NOMAAC

Payable to: NOMAAC
Mail to: Scott L. 5320 Little Gap
Road/Kunkletown, PA 18058

**Please write your Group Name
and WSO ID# on all checks
and include a return address
on the envelope.**

*Many thanks to my
Anonymous writers for this
month's issue!*

Working the First Step

Step One: We admitted we were powerless over alcohol—that our lives had become unmanageable.

I am so grateful for Al-Anon.

I have tried for so many years to control. As a child, I thought that if I just could get the alcoholics to not act a certain way, not do certain things, or not say nasty things, then things would be different. If I could get the other people, the non-alcoholics, the ones that were obsessed with the alcoholics, to not act a certain way, not do certain things, or to stick up for themselves, then things would be better.

In Al-Anon, I hear and really listen to people work a program to let go of the illusion of control. I am learning that I am absolutely powerless over people. I am learning that I cannot change anyone. That a person's behavior reflects on that person, not on me. I am also learning that my behavior reflects on me, not someone else.

Working the first step, to me, is admitting that I have created a faulty house of cards in my mind. The idea that I can coerce, manipulate, shame, charm, fool, outwit, trick, demand or force anyone into doing "it" my way has to be smashed. I will never be one step ahead of alcohol or alcoholism. Owning this in my core is working this step.

Then there is the dash in the step (read the step again; you will see the dash). That dash is like a sliding board. The more I try to control—the more I slide into unmanageability. I am one of those people that is obsessed with the alcoholics in my life. The more I focus on coercion, manipulation, shame and the like to gain control over what I am absolutely powerless over, the more my life falls apart. I pour so much energy into my illusion, into trying to prove how bad I have it, how others are not doing "it" right, that I cannot live up to my own responsibilities. I do not show up for my own life. That is unmanageability.

Working the first step over and over is the only way to freedom that I have found. I must admit, deep in my soul, that I am powerless over alcohol—that my life has become unmanageable. The first step is a paradox, and the last thing that seems like the answer to my problems. Surrendering the whole shootin' match is an act of humility, and truly, the only way out of my own house of cards.

In grateful service,
Another Member of Al-Anon

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Contact Joe T. at
610-522-1359
or e-mail him at
directory@aisdv.org
for more information

Write for The Rap!

It's your newsletter!
Send your contributions,
concerns, comments and
event notifications to:

rap@aisdv.org
or The RAP c/o AISDV
4021 Walnut Street
Philadelphia, PA 19104
(or to get a free copy of the
Rap sent to your group)

Get Involved!!!

The next AISDV
Meeting is:
Thurs, March 16th @ 7:30
The Reformed Church
of the Ascension
1700 W. Main Street
Norristown, PA
All are Welcome!

**Need to find a
meeting???**

Go to aisdv.org and
click on Meetings