

Keeping Calm with the “Conflict Resolution Kit”

I once thought of Al-Anon as a perfect, safe, and happy place—one big happy family. I naively believed that our admission of powerlessness in Step One meant that we relinquished control or domination over others. It shocked me to learn that there are times when it is necessary to apply the principles of our program to other Al-Anon members, as well as to my family of origin. For example, I noticed that some members would stop attending the group when a member was disruptive at a meeting. They went to other meetings instead. I also heard members say, “I can stay at home if I want to argue,” rather than attending a group business meeting or volunteer to be a trusted servant. I learned to share in “I” statements and to lower my voice so that I speak calmly during a discussion with a sensitive topic.

Al-Anon helped me to listen to my voice and improve my choice of words. Group conscience works well when the Chairperson facilitates the meeting by letting each member contribute and be heard in a recovery or business meeting. The same is true for Al-Anon service arms. Members can come to great ideas and better solutions when we feel free to speak and listen to others. Sometimes, it is necessary to agree to disagree, table the discussion for another time, or to make a change on a trial basis for a specified period of time.

I know Al-Anon helped me to develop the communication skills that I did not have before I came to the program. When I became willing and open minded, my tone of voice and choice of words changed. The outcome was that my anxiety and pain decreased, and my serenity increased. Al-Anon’s *Conflict Resolution Kit* (S-73) is a tool for my interactions at group and service arm meetings. The “my way or the highway” attitude is not reflective of the person I want to be. I now state the facts and my views and listen to others in a respectful manner. I am doing my part to keep Al-Anon a safe and loving place. There are three items in the *Conflict Resolution Kit* for personal, group, and service arm discussions:

- *Loving Interchange to Resolve Conflict* wallet card [\(S-71\)](#)
- *Conflict Resolution Using Our Twelve Traditions* [\(S-72\)](#)
- *Talk to Each Other—Resolving Conflicts within Al-Anon* [\(S-73\)](#)

It is never too late for me to learn new skills using Al-Anon’s principles within or outside of the fellowship. I simply have to be willing to do my part.

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