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*District 18's*  
*Voice of Reason*

### **NCWSA Convention 2021**

I am on a pink cloud right now, sitting in my backyard recalling the wonderful day & a half of the 2021 NCWSA convention that just ended. It has been a while since I did service on a convention committee. God showed love to me by encouraging me to join the planning committee last year. What a marvelous gift to meet and bond with Al-Anons of all ages across Northern California, to work together, and produce a weekend that so many enjoyed. It was a great experience that added to my recovery by delivering on the theme of Growth Through Unity.

I encourage you to consider taking part in planning for next year.

Nancy T, Ceres

My sponsor told me that being of service would help me grow. I have always enjoyed conventions. I have very fond memories of sharing rooms with 2, 3, up to 6 other people all over Northern California. Speakers always seemed amazing and the workshops were very interesting. I looked forward to the convention every year. The year we stopped was before the pandemic so that wasn't the reason. It was a lack of people willing to be of service.

I have enjoyed being part of convention committees in the past so when an Al-Anon friend asked me about being of service I was excited to have the convention back. I decided to help and joined the committee last year. Even though we had to change it to completely virtual at the last minute, I knew the speakers were still going to be amazing. Ken C. had a great analogy about putting together a puzzle. He said that he starts with the straight edges first. The straight edges on the top are like the Steps. The straight edges on the side are like the Traditions. The straight edges on the bottom are like the Concepts. The straight edges on the last side are like Service. He said that he works on his own puzzle and not the alcoholic's puzzle. He said that sometimes he tries to force 2 pieces of the puzzle together. They look like they go together; they are similar colors. But they really don't go together. His sponsor helps him see that they don't really fit. He summarized the program in a way I had never heard and completely understood. All of the other speakers and the panel were amazing - just as I had hoped. There is talk about a convention next year. Are you willing to be of service?

**Vicki B**

## ~ Step 1 from the Newsletter archives ~

When I admit I am powerless over alcohol, I realize I have acceptance - acceptance for my Mom and her active addiction and acceptance for my husband's one day at a time recovery. When I came into Al-Anon nearly 3 years ago, I quickly learned I was powerless over my Mom and her teeter-totter behaviors. I walked through these doors to fix my husband and mend our marriage. I realized very quickly that Al-Anon was about making a clear decision to be happy. That's it. To work on me, to look at me. WOW there was more there than I knew.

So I came here to fix others and to mold them into the happy ending I expected. I'm now learning that the happy ending was always there. I just had to let go of the expectations part. Since I've embraced the fact that I'm powerless over my Mom, I can simply love her for who she is. She gives of herself to my sister and I whenever she can. We are her whole world. I let her go on and on about whatever the topic might be, and I really try to just listen. I do not say "Well that is crazy, what are you thinking??" Sometimes my Mom cleans my house just to be nice and when she rearranges my things EVERYTIME I can stop and think that maybe she is right, it does look better there. In the past that would have driven me crazy! My Mom has a drinking disease. I have a thinking disease and maybe a few control issues. Ok, a LOT! Al-Anon helps me put into perspective what she might be feeling and that my Higher Power does not make mistakes. He chose her to be my Mom and what a BEAUTIFUL woman she is. Being powerless over alcohol. I'm glad because I don't want to control or think about it. I have my life, my actions, my marriage, work, school, baby, one the way - that is enough on my plate. When I stopped worrying and obsessing, I got to start loving. Really loving not just saying I love you, truly meaning it! So when I admit I'm powerless over alcohol, to me I'm saying that I'm only in charge of myself and my feelings. I choose to be happy, just as I choose to be mad. I love it here! I love learning each time I walk through the doors of Al-Anon.

2009 - by Holliday C.

### **Taking the first step**

I came to Al-Anon about 12 years ago, and thought, "The 12 Steps. I can do this at home!" I came back in 2012. With Al-Anon, the little I have, I have learned to walk things through and think before talking. I'm not saying it is easy. I still have some more issues to address but I know to take it "One day at a time." I will keep coming back. I used to look at Al-Anon members funny when they would say that to me, but I now understand it.

2014 by Carol W.





### Step One

Powerless over an object? Alcohol. At first it was hard to understand, but eventually I came to understand it. I was free to stop trying to control so many things related to drinking. I came to understand it's a disease that makes her drink and lead to our crazy life. It was a freeing experience and literally was my first step to recovery and serenity. Just as a 1000 mile trip starts with the first step, my new life journey started with Step one.

2014 by Larry B

The first time I considered the first step I said to myself, "That is really great for the alcoholics", but I did not see how powerless and unmanageable my own life really was. Or to put it another way, I really did not see a need for a personal relationship with a Power greater than myself or to continue on working all 12 Steps. Ironically it was the combination of enough pain in my life to continue with the rest of the steps that I started to see the importance of the first one.

Like most of us, I did not get to Al-Anon on a winning streak. The way I viewed myself, others, the world, etc is what led to my powerlessness and unmanageability. If I was going to get help, I needed to try some things I did not understand and do some things that I did not want to do. In other words, I surrendered. I had to be out of ideas. I needed to just follow and not try to beat the system. I had to realize that I had not done such a good job of managing my own life and not everything I was doing (over and over) was not even in my best interest. My ego was blocking me from this Higher Power. The important thing for me to remember about this power is that it is not me!

Continuing with the steps today I do have a relationship with a powerful manager in my life that I surrender to on a daily basis. This power has given me a path in life that has meaning and purpose one day at a time. With this foundation I am in a much better condition to make decisions that honor myself and others and lead a life that is hopeful and fulfilling even when times are tough. It is not perfect, but it is better.

Anonymous

I am powerless over:

- The alcoholics in my life.
- My kids and their lives, choices, and relationships.
- My career / job and what it will look like.
- My cat, who hides at night so I don't put her out. 🐱

\*Work has been difficult recently. I've turned it all over to my HP. It's hard to do when you don't know what is going to happen. My HP hasn't failed me yet. His imagination is much better than mine - and mine is pretty good!

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\*Page 4 in Hope For Today - I went through all of these feelings and thoughts on this page. I thought I must be broken and low when I came into Al-Anon. My family "seemed" perfect but it wasn't. If you looked inside it was emotionally bankrupt. I learned to hide everything. I didn't want people to think I couldn't handle life. I beat myself up a lot because I picked people who had "problems". I thought I must be an idiot for marrying an alcoholic.

\*Today, the illusion of control will come back, but I am powerless over everything but my own reactions. I'm OK with being a human today. it is so much freer than trying to be uber perfect.

\*I need to let it be. I need to get up, get dressed, and show up.

\*I need to connect with my HP in the morning, even if it is for a few minutes. It reminds me that I am powerless and it's OK.

\*I used to think I was strong and tough. I thought I could handle anything, including the alcoholic. I am starting to think otherwise. It's hard to communicate when he starts drinking. I am acknowledging that I have been profoundly affected by alcoholism.

\*I have noticed that we both interfere in each other's business, thinking it is caring when it isn't. I am more aware of that now.

\*I have been hiding something most of my life and didn't realize it. I wanted to look perfect, but I didn't have any self-esteem. I drifted most of my life, not knowing what I wanted to do in my life. I am seeing powerlessness as a stepping stone to my HP. When I say I don't have power, that gives me hope. It makes me a blank canvas for my HP and my day.

\*I always thought I could "figure things out". Sometimes I did, sometimes I made things worse.

\*My childhood home is chaotic. Things are everywhere. I spend my time trying not to have a messy house. I try to control the chaos this way.

\*Page 284 in Hope For Today reminds me that I need to work this step backwards. When I feel insane, I realize that I am trying to get my way.

\*I made only 75% of my productivity one day. It makes me crazy since my goal is 100%. The next day I still can't get there. By the end of the week, I am exhausted. I am trying to make it work and holding onto it. The Just for Today card reminds me to save myself from hurry & indecision. These are why my week has been chaotic. I don't really know why last week was fine and this week isn't. I don't know why this week is different. I do know that if I do what the program tells me, things will work out.

\*Living with active alcoholism is hard. The alcohol is talking, not my loved one. I do have a program. I use Steps 1,2, & 3 everyday.

\*I am impatient. When I am ready to do something like ask God to remove a defect, I want him to do it now. I can't force things. I still need to be patient. I have to trust that it will happen in God's time.



## Do you have hope? Why or why not?

I could not see clearly when I made the decision that I needed help. Realizing I could not deal with my life on my own, I came to Al-Anon. I've been here a short time and life is still difficult. What I have today that helps me the most is hope. Hope that I will recover from the hopeless state I felt I was in. Going to meetings and working with a sponsor has opened my eyes a little bit. I have even gone out of town with some members for a team meeting day. Out of the hope, I have found in coming to Al-Anon I am finding willingness to do whatever is needed to recover. Just recently, I have found service work to be of maximum benefit to my recovery. I still feel I have a long way to go and am glad I made a beginning. Thank you Al-Anon.

Anonymous

### Finding Hope Again

I have been feeling a bit low lately so I decided to increase my attendance at Al-Anon meetings. The funny thing about Al-Anon, when you least feel like going to meetings is most likely the time when you need the meetings the most. So today I went to a meeting and there were lots of people. The topic was "pain". There it was - my secret - someone else was feeling pain too!! For some reason, after I heard this topic person share, I suddenly felt it was now okay to be open about how I felt. There are many types of pain in life, but for some reason this gave me the green light to open up (again) and continue with my struggles with finding a way to live a meaningful, healthy life.

For me, where I am at now, depression and isolation seem to be my biggest obstacles. My latest low feeling had me convinced I was sick and tired of Al-Anon and it just was not going to help me at all. I would rather stay in bed and not take the effort to get myself ready and drive to a meeting. It seemed to take so much effort and it really didn't seem worth it. But I realized I didn't have a lot of choices. I realized I am worth it! Not every day or week is going to be easy and pain free. I know I have to work on making myself do things, I have to fight the depression, I need to keep attending meetings, and keep sharing with others.

2009 Anonymous

\*If I keep working my program and going to meetings like my life depends on it, I have hope. More meetings have eased my fears. It's becoming more comfortable and that's a miracle.

\*When I first got here, I didn't have a lot of hope. I had expectations that didn't get fulfilled. I'd be crushed but I would go right back to expecting things.

\*My family all lives out of the area. They don't come visit me even though I ask. I used have hope that they would stop on their way past me to somewhere else. I can have realistic expectations like the alarm clock going off. Them coming to visit isn't a realistic expectation. I have choices like I can visit them on my terms. I've learned to be flexible - and have a plan B. (pg 258)

\*I have hope today. Things happen exactly the way my HP wants them to.

\*I know it's OK to have hopes and dreams today. I have met people and have done things I never would have done before coming to Al-Anon.

\*I have hope because I am experiencing growth. I always thought things were going to be the same, status quo. Nothing stays the same it turns out! As I grow and change in a positive way, I can see that the tools are working.

\* I have dreams / hopes of how I want things to go. I'm learning that I have options. I can find other ways to still achieve that dream.

\*Page 265 in Hope For Today tells me to persistently move forward. The best way out is through. I am persistently moving forward. Now that my mom is gone, things have changed. My sisters and I don't see each other as often as we used to. I have hope we will keep in contact. I don't have expectations of whether they will invite me over, to reach out to me, or anything. I know I'm not ready so I will wait for my HP to let me know I am ready.



\*I have hope that my injuries will get better. I have hope that I will be able to take a vacation next year, and more!

\*Hope is a double edged sword - I believe the 12 steps work. I can use the steps for anything in life. My sister has cancer right now. I have hope today that I can be the best part of me. I feel hopeless too. She doesn't have a HP right now. It's overwhelming right now.

\*I decide which hand I am going to follow each morning when I wake up - the hopefulness or the hope.

\*I still find I want to control the alcoholics or the future. I have started to see it now which is new. The thing that is shaking my hope right now is that I can't control my mom or do things for her. I'd love to be able to save her but I can't.

\*I am holding on tight to the steering wheel right now. Hope ebbs and flows for me. I'm in the middle of a breakup right now. I have hope for the future. It's hard to fail in a relationship. Feeling rejected, feeling hopeless. I find hope in the steps. There is a power greater than me. I miss opportunities if I am just projecting into the future. I am trying to sit, listen, keep it simple. Things will reveal themselves.

\*I have hope when I remind myself that I have a HP that loves me. It's hard to deal with emotions and feel my feelings. Don't try to run from it because it will just repeat until I do.

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- \*My hope has ebbed & flowed in the program based on my qualifiers. I was too busy hoping for them and not for me. I had to get out of that loop. I need to keep the hope focused on me.
  - \*Getting into a meeting when I am low gives me hope. I always feel better.
  - \*I can't hope or not hope for my qualifiers. I have a life and all I can do is take care of me.
  - \*Hope is hearing other people's experience. I'm not alone in this journey of life. I came to the program a total wreck. Other people have been where I've been. I just kept coming back. I have hope because of this program. I go to any lengths for my program.
  - \*I have hope as a result of this program for myself. I struggle some days. I am a double winner and had to relearn how not to help everyone I meet in a meeting. So many people all in 1 place that need my help! Yikes! But I am learning.
  - \*Honor how I feel but not drown in it. I have a friend at the end of her life. My friend was in the ER and it broke me. I had to feel my feelings. I saw a way that I can help without controlling her. That is hope to me today.
  - \*God has a plan for me. I forget that!
  - \*I was desperate when I got here. I have hope because I am willing to do the work my sponsor suggested.
  - \*I have tremendous hope. I gave up the hope for my wife and I to reconcile. It might happen, I really don't know. Hoping for it doesn't work for me today so I let it go.
  - \*I want to change careers. I have hope that it will work out. She has no hope for it to work. I have hope and it doesn't matter whether she does or doesn't.
  - \*Hope is an action step. I can hope that I will win the lottery but I have to DO something. I have to get off the couch and go get a ticket or it is not going to happen. I'm on Step 6 now. God has to remove these defects - not me. I can do some work like buying the ticket but he has to actually pull those numbers.
  - \*I hope it works out the way I want. If not, I hope it works out the way my HP wants it to.
  - \*Today I look to see if I can handle something from yesterday better.
  - \*I don't *have to* do anything alone. I can lean into the program and my Higher Power.
  - \*Each hour at a meeting is an hour practicing relationships.
  - \*Me, myself and I talk to ourselves and agree that I am right. But then I share it with my sponsor.....
  - \*I never got a manual for life from the family. I just knew that my family sucked at being good role models. Now I have one and it has numbers!
  - \*If the instructions for survival fell out of the sky, we would pay attention. That's what the Traditions are for me.

## *Short Twelve Steps*

1. I Can't
2. God Can
3. Let God
4. Look Within
5. Admit Wrong
6. Ready Self For Change
7. Seek God's Help
8. Become Willing
9. Make Amends
10. Daily Inventory
11. Pray and Meditate
12. Give it Away

## *Short Twelve Traditions*

1. All For One, One For All
2. We Have But One Boss - A Loving God
3. Relatives of Alcoholics Help Others To Help Themselves
4. We Run Our Own Affairs That is Enough For Most of Us
5. We Have But One Purpose - That's a Full Time Job
6. We Tend To Our Own Business
7. We Pay Our Own Way
8. We Hire People to Do Things We Cannot Do
9. We Don't Organize, But We Make Some Arrangements
10. We Stay Out of Squabbles - We Might Fight Dirty
11. We Let People Know We Exist - Politely and in Good Taste
12. Anonymity is our Cloak of Protection. It Protects Us, It Does Not Hide Us

Copied from the Alateen Talk 1987 - Short Twelve Steps. Commonly used by Alateens for younger members who are pre-teens ages 6-12 and who sometimes call themselves "AlaKids"



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Topics for the next Newsletter **Due 12/1/2021**

1. What is your favorite piece of Al-Anon literature and why?

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2. What does patience mean to you? How do you find patience?

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3. What are some ways Al-Anon has impacted your relationships?

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You can type your response in an email to [Newsletter Coordinator](#), [click on this link for a form](#), email a picture of this page filled out or print and mail it to D18-Newsletter, PO Box 579491, Modesto, Ca 95357-9491



## ***Being a Group Representative (GR)***

### **How to Survive an Assembly**

- Before you arrive, read the service manual and bring it with you.
- Introduce yourself to others. Fellowship is an important part of Assembly.
- Take notes. Your group needs to be informed of NCWSA business.
- Be considerate. If you need to talk to your neighbor, write a note.
- Be engaged. Ask questions about the topic of discussion or use the “Ask It Basket” form for any other questions.
- Listen to others. Please don’t repeat a comment already said at the microphone.
- Be respectful. Whether you agree or not, don’t applaud or make noises after someone has spoken at the microphone.
- Represent your group’s conscience, but “Keep an Open Mind” as additional information may change your vote. Our Higher Power is in charge and is expressed through our “informed” group conscience.
- Practice “How Important Is It?” Sometimes we make mistakes, and we can recognize them and change our mind later.
- Help keep Assembly safe for everyone. We are all doing our best for the common good, but may have different approaches on how to achieve those goals.
- Recognize when your buttons are pushed. “Principles Above Personalities” means instead of reacting to the personality, you objectively listen to what principles are being discussed.
- Respond to what someone else has said with courtesy and love. Your participation in the discussion is highly encouraged!
- Practice self-care. Breathe. Hydrate. Take a break. Stand up and stretch. Bring something to do like knitting or coloring that allows you to pay attention, yet helps pass the time.
- Fill out an evaluation survey online at [www.ncwsa.org](http://www.ncwsa.org) so Assembly will be even better next year.
- Congratulate yourself! You are Al-Anon in action!

Additional information: <https://northerncaliforniaalanon.org/groupreps/>

## Sponsor's Corner

You see things were not always this way  
 But they are the way they are today  
 I have regrets for some choices made  
 And resentments for the price I paid

I thought that if I could manage  
 To clean up or fix all the damage  
 Then no one would ever see  
 My fears and vulnerabilities

I feel as if I should have known  
 How to do all this on my own  
 Cause if the tough get going when the going  
 gets tough  
 Then maybe I'm just not tough enough

You said that sponsorship is what I need  
 Someone's help with the Al-Anon creed  
 Not too sure who I should ask  
 It seems to be an enormous task

What if you reject me  
 What if you expect me  
 To speak of feelings that make me queasy  
 Those conversations will not be easy

It's like asking you to be my friend  
 But that is not my purpose or end  
 Just be someone to illuminate  
 A better way a better fate

I think I'll ask and then I'll see  
 If you are willing to work with me  
 Perhaps a coffee or cup of tea  
 Just conversation you and me

I am so happy you said yes  
 There's no way I could ever guess  
 That you would respect me  
 That you would accept me

For who I am and what I've done  
 I feared that you would cut and run  
 But no you said we've just begun  
 Some days may be sad some days will be fun


My burden is now much lighter  
 And my days they're getting brighter  
 Sponsorship was what I needed  
 Keep coming back is what I heeded

by Ken C District 6 Alternate Representative

# Games

## Slogan Word Scramble

Put the letters back in order to find your favorite Slogans!



1. ETL OG NAD LTE DGO \_\_\_\_\_
2. SYAE ESDO TI \_\_\_\_\_
3. VIEL DAN LTE EIVL \_\_\_\_\_
4. WHO NTTAOIMRP SI TI? \_\_\_\_\_
5. TISLNE ADN NELRA \_\_\_\_\_
6. TIRSF HNGTIS FSITR \_\_\_\_\_
7. TEHTGOER EW ACN KMEA TI \_\_\_\_\_
8. PEKE TI PESMIL \_\_\_\_\_
9. EON YDA TA A MITE \_\_\_\_\_
10. KHTNI \_\_\_\_\_
11. TLE TI NBGIE IWHT EM \_\_\_\_\_
12. SJUT ROF YDOTA \_\_\_\_\_

# SPECIAL EVENTS

- Day in Al-Anon is Oct 23 from 9:00-4:00. It will be at New Beginnings: 1425 Standiford Ave, Modesto (behind Fleet Feet store). The suggested donation is \$5.
- Save the date!! June 29, 2023 - July 2, 2023. **The 7th International Al-Anon Convention** in Albuquerque, New Mexico - More to come!

Check the calendar on the District 18 website for more events including speaker meetings:  
<http://alanonsanjoaquinvalley.org/events.htm>

Check the NCWSA calendar for events in other districts:  
<https://northerncaliforniaal-anon.org/calendar/>



**Why me?**  
 is not a  
**Spiritual**  
**Question.**

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## Getting & Staying Connected

Can't find a newsletter?? You can log into our website and go to the Newsletter tab to find it or click on this link: <http://alanonsanjoaquinvalley.org/newsletter.htm>

**Want to subscribe to the newsletter?** Send me an email using the email below. It's free!  
[newsletter@alanonsanjoaquinvalley.org](mailto:newsletter@alanonsanjoaquinvalley.org)

### District Meetings:

**When:** The 1st Sunday of every month from 1:30-3:30 (new time)

**Where:** New Beginnings: 1425 Standiford Ave, Modesto (behind Fleet Feet store)

**Who:** Open to everyone!

### In The Loop News from the WSO

To sign up to receive the monthly emails from the WSO, click on the link below, fill in the following fields and click on Submit.

[In the Loop Sign-Up](#)

Did you know that the WSO has a blog where you can share on the current topic? Here is the website: [Member's Blog](#). October's topic is, "*How do I practice acceptance when I wish things were different?*"

Free downloads from WSO: [Free information](#)

For newcomers. Enter your email and receive a welcome email: [al-anon.org/welcome](http://al-anon.org/welcome)

Young Al-Anon Members Meeting list: [Young People Focus Meeting List](#)

Alateen meeting list: [Alateen Zoom list](#)