
District 18's

Voice of Reason

What is your favorite piece(s) of Al-Anon literature and why?

For me, it's the end of the Just for Today card. I will not be afraid to enjoy what is beautiful, and to believe that as I give to the world, so the world will give to me. Life is really good today. Sometimes it makes me uncomfortable to share that with people. So many things are going on in the world today and so many people are struggling. When I go to the hardware store I am looking for a cake, balloons, and a party hat. I can't find the party supplies at the hardware store either. Some days people are not in a place to hear my happiness and joy over my job and life. What am I looking for by sharing that? Validation? Agreement? That I am right? It can vary by day.

Just for Today bookmark. This is my Covid mantra. I will adjust myself to what is.... When I make choices today that don't work, I can stop beating myself up for it and go on.

Mine is the Just for Today card too. I read it everyday before work. Covid has been really hard for me in my job since it's related to healthcare. I learned here that I can work my program 100% some days and 5% some other days. I just need to suit up and show up. I need to feel my feelings. That's not how I grew up. I hear things every meeting. Sometimes I think that isn't going to work for me right now. Then later I realize it is a tool I can use.

The page on pigeons - people do what they do and I can fit myself to it.

Going to the hardware store for bread page is my favorite. The hardware store is great for hardware but not the other things I am looking for today. I need to remember that people are so much more than that one thing I am looking for today.

The Serenity prayer is my go to. Can I change this? If not, how am I going to let go of it?

When I need to read something, I go to my room and look at the literature I have. Something will reach out to me and I will choose it. Sometimes it isn't exactly right so I will read the pages before or after. I will look in the index for other topics.

I don't have a favorite. I think I will read a page too many times and I get desensitized to it. I prefer the quotes. They are short and to the point. One of my favorites is in ODAT page 165. I don't do it well but I hope to. I can see things as a creation from my HP like food or the sunset. But not always people. I don't see all the pieces of their experiences as creations.

Before Al-Anon I struggled with deep, dark depression. May 18th in CTC is where I go. Recently I was struggling with not feeling well and I wasn't sure why. This page reminds me that I can work my way through it and there will be a gift in it when I get through it. Today I can remember the good things like when they took us to Disneyland instead of all of the trauma. They had no idea what their future would look like when they brought us kids into the world. Today I know that my parents did the best they could.

Page 303 in *Courage To Change* has a quote at the bottom about letting people be themselves. It is my favorite. Now that I've been here a year, I can start setting boundaries. People told me that my dad only contacts me when he needs something. I didn't want to hear that. Today I realized that. He didn't call me on my birthday but did call me on the next day wanting something. I told him it hurts that he only calls when he wants something. I told him I didn't need a cake or anything but I would have liked a call acknowledging my birthday. Things have changed with both of us. I have to love myself in order to love him and anyone else.

From the member's Blog ~

My personal favorite book is ***From Survival to Recovery***. It took me years to be able to read the book through. I cried my way through the pages, realizing that I was not alone, or unique; that there were others who shared my experiences and pain. Those tears were, and are, healing. The sharings revealed to me that I wasn't crazy, or defective but that I had survived a cunning and powerful force that altered my life in ways that the program of Al-Anon has been helping me come to terms with in my recovery. I give this book to others when I recognize that we share a common past because of its healing power. I thank all who had the courage to share their stories so that I could find peace.
Kathy

Al-Anon has so much amazing literature!! My favorite is ...***In All Our Affairs: Making Crises Work for You***. When I first came to Al-Anon, my life was a series of crises, or so it seemed to me. This book helped tremendously in guiding me to get a grip on my life, finding what was mine to deal with and what belonged to others, and how to shrink mine all down to a manageable size by using the Steps, Slogans, serenity prayer, and the experience, strength, and hope I found in this book. I found it hard to share at meetings and I love to read, so purchasing literature seemed the best way to get what I needed. When I had issues to deal with (real or imagined), reading ...***In All Our Affairs*** helped me find answers to what I was dealing with. 3 years after being in Al-Anon, I had a major decision to make about my future. The story on pages 167-168 opened my mind to options I hadn't seen before and helped me make the right decision for me. My copy has bookmarks on pertinent pages, passages underlined and highlighted, and is kept close at hand for when I need it. I take it to meetings with me and share parts with my group.

Melanie

I did not have to think too long or hard about MY FAVORITE Al-Anon book. All the Al-Anon literature has value, but this one touches my heart.

OK—Let’s see who can figure the answer from the clues.

1. First edition was printed in soft back only
2. First edition had no index
3. Came out in hardback in 1990
4. It’s a small book, there are only 273 pages including the index, Steps, Traditions, and Concepts.
5. Final clue and hopefully the giveaway...It is a “collection of sharings on spiritual growth”.

Drum roll..... ***As We Understood***

Linda

I love the 3 readers. Another go-to book is Reaching For Personal Freedom. Learning about the Steps, Traditions and Concepts has been very helpful in dealing with my life in general. Mary L

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

*If the first 5 words of a conversation don't include me, it's none of my business.

*I accidentally backed into my spouses' car. He parked in a different place and I didn't see it. I wanted to blame him for parking in a different place. I read in a daily reader that I need to try listening. I decided to try it. When I talked with him later, he mentioned he was worried when I backed out. He said that I never look as I back out. I realized he was right - I don't look. I was in a hurry that day but I realized I don't remember to look for the first few feet. I realized that I can't blame him for something I did.

*My boyfriend has an addiction problem. I was obsessed by everything him. I was depressed. Now I'm empowered. I do things I don't like to do. I expected something for my birthday. He doesn't have a job so I knew he couldn't buy a gift. I was hoping for a card, something. I was upset that I was disappointed. I didn't know how to say how I felt. He asked what was wrong. He can tell I was upset now that he is in recovery. I knew I couldn't just say nothing was wrong. It would be uncomfortable for me to deal with the emotions. I did tell him and it was awkward. I'm not used to it.

*Living in the disease taught me that I can't control anything around me. I try though. Today I try to control it so much that there is no oxygen left for anyone around to breathe.

*If I'm in fear and worry, thinking someone might criticize me, I can address it with the person directly. I don't do it meanly or confrontationally. It helps me address the issue before it gets out of control.

*I am a people pleaser and I want to help everyone not be in pain. I want my decisions to be right for everyone. I want my decisions to be perfect in other words. I think that if say it just right then I can please everyone. But all I can do is the best I can. If they are unhappy, I can try to work it out. I check my motives. Today I don't let other people's feelings and thoughts rule my life.

*If I am people pleasing, I am people worshipping.

*My relationships all have improved since I seriously worked my Al-Anon Program. I'm not so judgmental, and I accept people more for who they are without trying to fix them to be like me. I also leant to be grateful for all the wonderful things I do have now in my life. Like a sense that I am not alone and that I am guided by a Higher Power. Mary L

*I am in a people pleasing industry. I start shaming myself when I lose a client. What didn't I do? What can I do differently? Better? More? I'm a horrible person since I didn't please them. Oh, wait. If I can trace back that reasoning then I can see whether I kept my side of the street clean. I step back from bashing them too. Now it's their fault instead of mine. My HP might be teaching me something: stay in the moment.

*I overheard something at work the other day. With the pandemic, my head went to the possibility of the person in that office being exposed to Covid since I heard a stern "don't go in there". My coworker and I talked about it being a possibility but that it's us guessing right now. If I need to know then I will find out without any extra work on my part. When they tell us, we will know. Losing sleep over it, spending my day or night thinking about the possibility isn't going to change anything or make my guess a reality.

*I was struggling with a relationship where we had very different opinions. Lately I couldn't handle being around people with different opinions. During the meeting I realized that it's ok for my friend to have an opinion I didn't understand. I don't have to understand. What saved me was remembering to stay in the moment and to love my friend. I have an ongoing battle with stinking thinking.

*Tuesday something happened that made me criticize someone. I felt terrible about it after. I realized I don't want to be that way. I decided for that day I wouldn't criticize anyone. It worked. The next day I did the same and it worked. The 3rd day the same thing happened as Tuesday and I made a different choice. I stepped away and didn't criticize her. I talked to my sponsor again about the situation. I texted what I wanted to really say to that person to my sponsor instead to get it out. I was still reliving it when I got home. I took a break, ate, and rested. I was able to let it go after a bit and have a nice evening.

*I was emotionally honest recently and my husband couldn't handle it. I don't know what to do with that. I felt myself spiraling for a couple of days. Why would he feel that way logically? I like logic and I told him it wasn't about him.

*I changed the way I looked at my friend. His negative comments were like advice at first. I use the slogan How Important Is It? I used to think it was about me when he made these comments. It's not.

*I quit trying to change my daughter into what I wanted her to be. When my daughter comes home from work she isn't ready to talk. I need to let her have the time she needs.

*I realised I need to rely on people other than the people in my home.

*I am working on building relationships. Working 10 to 12 hours per day I never had time before. I realised that cultivating relationships means working on me to be a better me.

*I am working on my relationship with my Higher Power. I didn't set out to improve on it this year. It evolved out of need when I lost my job.

*When I am uncomfortable with a topic and there are strong opinions coming up, I back their opinion and right to have it even though it's different than mine

*I am working on listening. I always interrupted because I finally had a person listening to me. I learned that others like to be heard too. So I made a decision to listen.

*Al-Anon has improved many of my relationships. I know how to set healthy boundaries, when it is best to detach with love, and when to admit I need help and can't do everything on my own. In the beginning, each time I set a boundary, walked away from unacceptable behavior, or asked someone for help I expected a negative response. It turned out most of that was in my head. The people closest to me did have to adjust, but they learned I would only do something if I genuinely wanted to, I would walk away rather than engage in the chaos, and I would ask for help when I became overwhelmed. I also had to accept that the person had the right to say no and if they did I would have to accept that and figure something else out. I have learned that I have choices- when someone speaks to me negatively or treats me poorly I can remember that I have behaved that way before to others and choose more wisely how I respond. As difficult as it may be, it is worth it, if it means keeping my serenity. Sometimes, I slip, but I also remember I am in a much better place than I used to be. It's about progress, not perfection and many of my relationships are nowhere near perfect, but they are better than they used to be :)

Shawnelle B



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

*My decisions today will benefit me tomorrow.

*Patience is time-released happiness.

*I learned that when I start to get anxious and start worrying, I can jump into a meeting. I feel better as soon as I see / hear everyone. It gives me peace. If I didn't I would have worried myself to death. I can laugh today but I still went there.

*I learned growing up that taking care of my own needs was selfish. In Al-Anon I learned to step back and look at what is best.

*Patience has to do with being kind, compassionate and loving. Giving someone the space to be themselves. Giving people my attention. Listening. Being present 100%. As much as I love when I am treated with patience I will admit that it's not always easy for me. I may for example obsess with getting too many things done in one day. I find patience when I slow down, get my rest, eat and nurture myself spiritually - either through meditation, being in nature, art work, listening to beautiful music or talking with my sponsor or a friend.

*When I came to Al-Anon I wanted a quick fix. I realized that I lived with active alcoholism longer than I have been in Al-Anon. I need to give myself time.

*My friends and I planned a trip that I was looking forward to for months. Then I got hurt. Everyone told me I couldn't go, shouldn't go. One friend suggested I talk to my doctor. My doctor said I was OK and just needed to take it easy. I get help at home. I am checking one day at a time to see how I feel. I'm not doing the "What if's" which is new. I wouldn't have been brave enough to think about going and trying things.

*I learned that alcoholism is a disease and a progressive one. I would worry about what that would look like in the future. I would have been stressed out about that before. With the help of my sponsor and working the 12 steps, I don't do that anymore. It's hard work to do the steps. I know that the daily readers are full of wisdom. They always speak to me.

*Courage To Change page 315 reminds me things are not urgent. I was compelled to do things. I couldn't let things be. I would start getting anxious days before Friday and the "usual" party. I try not to do that anymore. I need to be reminded though.

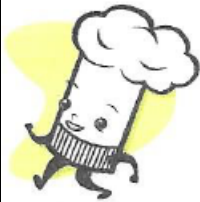
*Sometimes it's one minute at a time. My brain will race at times. I want to plan out all the things that might happen so that I am "ready". I was never ready. When I get spun out, I remind myself to breathe.

*In my house we have 3 days of sobriety. I am proud but need to remember that I need to keep working on my Al-Anon program. I can't direct his life or program. I can tell him how proud I am and leave it at that.

*One day at a time is how I am living my life right now. I lost my job during the pandemic. I've never **not** had a job. I had to file for unemployment and hope I could find a new one. It took months to find another job but it's temporary so I am looking again. I stay in today and keep taking the next step - apply for jobs, follow-up, go to meetings, and talk to Al-Anon friends. I trust that things will work out. I just wish I knew what that would look like!

In 2014 District 18 published a cookbook as a fundraiser.

Here are some of my favorite recipes ~



Nectarine Caprese Salad

Ingredients:

1 ½ to 2 lbs	Assorted heirloom tomatoes	3	Soft-ripe white nectarines (1 ½ lbs total)
10	Fresh mint leaves, whole or thinly sliced	About ¼ c	Small fresh opal* (purple) basil leaves or regular basil leaves
8 oz	Burrata cheese or fresh mozzarella	1 T	Champagne vinegar
½ tsp	Regular or white balsamic vinegar	3 T	Extra-virgin olive oil
About ½ tsp	Flake sea salt such as Maldon	About ½ tsp	pepper

Directions:

Cut tomatoes and nectarines into large wedges and arrange on platter. Tear burrata into large chunks and distribute over the top, along with any escaped cream (but not the liquid from the fresh mozzarella, if using). Scatter basil and mint over salad.

Whisk together vinegars and oil in a small bowl. Drizzle over salad. Sprinkle with ½ tsp each salt and pepper, and add more to taste if you like.

Al-Anon Member submitting recipe: Lindsey T



How to Make Dinner

Be careful what you ask for! I asked this member for a recipe and this is what he sent in.

Directions:

9:00 AM – Grocery store.

10:00 AM – Come out with everything except one key ingredient.

10:15 AM – Be angry in car.

2:00-3:00 PM – Pin “Healthy Dinner Recipes”

3:15 PM – Google “Three Ingredient Dinners”.

5:00 PM – Stand in front of open fridge drinking wine.

5:30 PM – Stand in front of open freezer drinking wine.

6:00 PM – Order pizza.

Al-Anon Member submitting recipe: Dave O



Easy Chili Rellano

Ingredients:

1 Can	Condensed Milk	1 lg can	Ortega Whole Green Chilies
4	Eggs	1 can	Olives
2 T	Flour		
1 lb.	Cheddar Cheese shredded	1 lb.	Monterey Jack Shredded
1 lb.	Colby Shredded Cheese		

Directions:

In a 9 X 13 Baking Dish start with a layer of chilies, cheese, and olives. Make a second layer of chilies, cheese and Olives. Mix eggs in a large bowl, add milk, flour, and salt and pepper to taste. Mix well. Pour over layers, cover with foil. Bake at 350 degrees for 1 hour. ½ hour uncovered or until the top is light to golden brown.

Al-Anon member submitting recipe: Joyce S Northside fellowship



Éclair Cake

Ingredients:

1 lb box	Graham Crackers	3 1/4 c	Milk
2 sm pkg	Instant French Vanilla Pudding	8 oz	Cool Whip
1 can	Chocolate Frosting		

Directions:

Butter bottom of 9x13 pan; line with graham crackers. Mix pudding with milk; beat at medium speed for 2 minutes. Blend in Cool Whip. Pour half of mixture over graham crackers. Then place second layer of crackers over pudding. Pour remaining pudding mixture over and cover with more crackers. Refrigerate 2 hours. Then frost.

AI-Anon Member submitting recipe: Sandy F

Step 12: Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these recipes, we carry these dishes to the table and practice these recipes at all of our affairs.


 A purple rectangular box containing the words "SPECIAL" and "EVENTS" in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters, stacked vertically.

The 7th International Al-Anon Convention in Albuquerque, New Mexico. June 29, 2023 - July 2, 2023.
- 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/>

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Want to subscribe to the newsletter? Send me an email using the email below. It's free!
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.](#)

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