

<https://www.alanonsanjoaquinvalley.org/index.htm>

District 18 Newsletter Sept 2025

<https://www.alanonsanjoaquinvalley.org/newsletter.htm>

Asking for Help

I once heard a member say at a meeting, before anyone shared: *“I want to hear it all — the details, the dirt, the deep stuff... because that’s where recovery happens.”*

That night, I finally let it all out — the nitty gritty I had been holding onto. And you know what? He was right. I felt lighter, freer, and I could finally breathe.

So, here’s my share with all of you: I’m going to get real.

I’ve been struggling with the newsletter. When I looked back at the past coordinators’ work, I thought, *Wow... these are amazing*. Honestly, I was scared to even look because I knew it would confirm the voice of my disease telling me: *“You can’t do this.”* (And for me, “my disease” is all those negative thoughts that aren’t facts.)

Right away my mind went to: *“No way can I do this.”* And I carried that around every day. I hold on to things too long, and I wait far too long before asking for help. I let my disease run wild, and my defects came out.

This is what my disease tells me:

“Teri — you’re not smart enough, creative enough, organized enough. You can’t do this.”

So why did I want to take on the newsletter? Because my Higher Power nudged me, through my sponsor. I wanted to give back — because Al-Anon saved me. Saved me from myself.

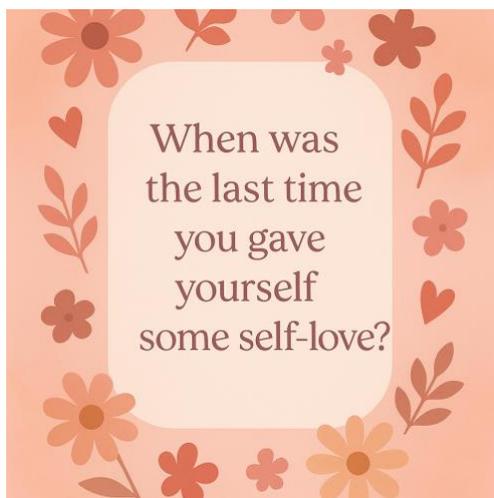
I decided to put my ego aside and start **asking for help**. I reached out to Vicki, the previous newsletter coordinator, and asked if I could use some of the things I liked from her newsletter. She said, “Of course!” We had a wonderful conversation. She understood how I felt, and she shared her own experience with me. I was not alone.

After that, I didn’t feel so alone. I felt lighter, encouraged, and more open to letting my creativity flow. That simple act of asking for help gave me the chance to grow, and to see that I really *can* do this. I kept in mind progress not perfection. I hope you find this newsletter more of what I have been wanting to reflect.

Teri G. ~ Newsletter Coordinator and a grateful Al-Anon Member.



SELF-LOVE



Do you value your talents, feelings, achievement, and desires? In *Courage to Change* page 41, “Creativity is a powerful way to celebrate who we are.”

Make your own self-love list. We are all worth self-love, and we all have talents. Sometimes it takes practice to find them and put them to use. Spend some time and fill out your self-love list.

My Self-Love List

- ❤️ Affirmation of the day: _____
- 🌿 Something kind I'll do for myself today: _____
- ☀️ What I'm grateful for in myself: _____
- 🍷 One boundary I'll honor today: _____
- 🌸 Joyful activity I'll allow myself: _____

Here is mine:

- ❤️ Affirmation of the day: I need never again do anything alone
- 🌿 Something kind I'll do for myself today: Tell myself “I love you” in the mirror
- ☀️ What I'm grateful for in myself: Making progress in speaking kindly to myself
- 🍷 One boundary I'll honor today: Progress not perfection
- 🌸 Joyful activity I'll allow myself: Start my new lego set (The Milky Way Galaxy)

Teri G.

Member Shares



I asked for members to share a letter they would say to themselves as a newcomer, and I want to thank all the members who sent in shares.

Dear me,

It is no coincidence that you are here. Higher power has placed you here to experience freedom, peace and self-love. Don't leave before the miracle happens



~ Terrie S., Modesto

Hi Greg,

Welcome, you have made one of the best choices of your life, coming through these doors. You just may have saved your spiritual, mental and even physical life!!! Take your time! Breath it all in slowly, listen to your heart for suggestions on where to and how to start this journey. There are no musts!!

Strong success in these rooms of recovery have come with some common things done.

Find a sponsor, home group, stay after to chat with your new recovery family, do service (trust me someone will help you with this!!).



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Go through the steps with a sponsor who is actively working a program. Make sure your sponsor has a sponsor they work with. Daily reading of our literature, the daily readers start the day off right. Have a quiet for you and to communicate.

You came here because you finally decided to put you first!!! Your well-being, serenity will bless you as you Thrive in the rest of your life not nearly survive. WELCOME HOME

~Greg Frenandez, Path to Serenity – Home Group

Hold on to HOPE

Definition – HOPE is a feeling that what one desires will happen.

Why should I hold onto HOPE when I have had so many disappointments...

I will hold on to HOPE because even though the family disease of alcoholism has affected my life, if I have no HOPE, I will have nothing to lean on when my life becomes unmanageable with pain, failure, and disappointment.

HOPE is like a cane I depend on to lean on to walk forward in life. If I have no HOPE, I will feel hopelessness which will give me negative desires, motivations, thoughts and words that lead to negative actions.

To resist these feelings and desires – I hold onto HOPE.

Anonymous





As a newcomer, walking into my very first meeting, I would say to myself:

Dear April,

The gifts you will receive from Al-Anon are best shared in the form of gratitude.

You will be grateful for:

A The **Al-Anon** Program – It is a simple program, not an easy program.

B **Balance** – It is not all one way or all another way. You will learn how to have and live with balance.

C- **The 3 C's** – You did not cause the disease of Alcoholism, you cannot control the disease of Alcoholism, and you cannot cure the disease of Alcoholism. You will learn that you did play a part in the family disease of Alcoholism – you did contribute.

D – **Detachment** – You will learn that detaching with an ax no longer serves you. That detachment is neither kind nor unkind. One of your first “aha moments” will be – to detach, you can simply step back.

E – **Effort** - Does not promise instant results. What you put into the Al-Anon program and your personal recovery will return to you many times over – often in ways you cannot see.

F – **Faith** – Is a muscle that must be exercised. If not, it will weaken, fade or fail to sustain you when you need it most.

G – **GOD** – You will call your Higher Power, God. You will hear that as you grow, you will become smaller, and your God will become bigger. You will learn to tell your problems – “I have a BIG GOD.”

H – **Hope** – There is so much hope in the Al-Anon program. As you listen to others share their experience, strength and hope, you will begin to see it, feel it and most importantly believe it.

I – **Insights** – The insights you gain into your spiritual, mental, emotional and physical self will be many and run deep.

J – **Joy** – You will learn joy is not the same as happiness. Joy is sustainable; happiness is a feeling and is fleeting.

K – **Kindness** – You will learn, when in doubt be kind. Not only to others but especially to yourself.

L – **Love** – You will come to understand that you may not like all of us, but you will love us in a very special way, the way we already love you. We will love you until you can love yourself.

M – **My** recovery – You work the Al-Anon program in your own way and at your own pace.

N – **No** – You will learn to say “No”. That *no* is a complete sentence. You will learn it is not necessary to justify, argue, defend or explain why you simply said “no”.

O – **Opportunity** – Your Higher Power, God, will present you with many growth opportunities. You will come to call them “AFGOs” aka Another *F*\$%ing* Growth Opportunity and embrace them. There is no growth in complacency.

P – **Peace** – Peace will settle upon you without you initially knowing it. You will feel it within, and it will become a more natural state of being.

Q – **Quiet** – You will come to embrace the quiet moments – the quiet moments in meetings and the pauses in your day that once felt uncomfortable. The quiet moments will give you space to connect with God.

R – **Relax** – It is ok to rest and to relax. Life will not pass you by if you take a break.

S – **Serenity** – Comes from within and is a feeling like no other.

T – **The Twelve Steps** – Will show you who you are and what you are all about. The good, the bad and the ugly.

U – **Unity** – It is no longer you against the world. Together we can make it.

V – **Values** – The ones you have, the ones you would like to develop and those you see and appreciate in others.

W – **Wisdom** – You will learn wise people (*you*) do not know everything. That humility is at the core of wisdom and being teachable requires humility.

X – **X-citment** – Yes, spelled incorrectly (Yes, cheat, but true - Progress not Perfection – LOL) You will come to appreciate the FUN, the adventurous side of yourself. The spark that reminds you – you’re alive.

Y – **YOU** – Yes, YOU – you will come to love, accept, value and cherish you for exactly who you are – a child of God. YOU are important and YOU matter.

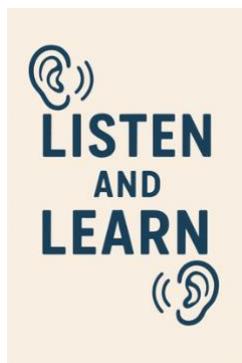
Z – **Zeal** – You will have great energy, passion and enthusiasm as you grow and progress in your personal recovery in AI-Anon.

April, I am glad you are here. I hope you keep coming back!

April M., Modesto

Listen and Learn

When I first came to AI Anon, I was not a good listener at all. I knew the answers on topics that interested me, had made up my mind already and often tuned out from listening to people. Working the steps I realized that self-righteousness and arrogance were one of my character defects. I thought that the alcoholic was selfish and self-absorbed. Slowly it dawned on me that I was just as selfish. I had to admit that I would space out sometimes during a conversation with others just to get back to some of my own thoughts. No wonder I couldn't connect with people as deeply as I wanted to! It was in AI Anon meetings that I began to learn to listen for the first time to what each



person was sharing. There was no cross talking, no advice giving. We just listened. I was surprised how much nicer it felt when I paid attention to everyone's sharing and how something heard at a meeting could make me discover something new about myself. The respect and patience for each other touched me. I had been timid all my life but here, in the rooms of AI Anon I learnt to trust and to share my thoughts and feelings with people I didn't even know. My listening to others improved. I have also learnt to pay more attention to my inner voice nudging me in a different direction or changing my perspective. I no longer feel alone but connected to a Higher Power. It has made me feel much better about myself. My

relationships with other people are so much more enjoyable. I have learnt what makes me feel miserable and I have learnt what makes me feel at peace and happy. I am so grateful for the many wonderful slogans and tools we have in AI Anon. "Listen and Learn "combined with" Let go and let God" point me to the path to serenity.

Mary L.
Riverbank, Ca.

Double Winner.

Before Alanon I was a peace at all costs chronic people pleaser. I was a servant of God

blooming where I was planted. Me and God had helped women in AA recover via the 12

steps for 35 years. Life was great so long as I was faithful to God and put Him first.

I learned in AA that the way to escape my own problems was to work with other

alcoholics. I became addicted to helping others. I was meeting with 7 sponsees weekly

and calls were all day every day. I could not go on like this. I never wanted to say no, I

never wanted to rock the boat, I was terrified of making anyone angry. I gave others grace but expected myself to behave perfectly so that no one would be mad at me.

Aug 1, 2024, my life came to a halt. I had a nervous breakdown. After my nervous breakdown I was on disability for 3 months. I could not drive or work. I had to tell the girls in AA I couldn't sponsor. God put me in a position of having to receive. I had friends bringing groceries, visiting, taking me to the store, caring for me AND I WAS LITERALLY INCAPABLE of giving back. This was uncomfortable. Receiving love was hard. My AA sponsor told me to try to embrace it.

I joined Al Anon in 2022 out of sheer desperation, although I honestly didn't think that there was anything more I could learn from the 12 Steps. I had been working these steps in my life and taking others through them for over 3.5 decades. How conceded I was.

I got a sponsor who had what I wanted. She was grounded, honest, and didn't let others behavior affect her. She said no! She told me that people's feelings are not my problem. She said I was not responsible for other people's feelings, and they didn't cause mine! I



always thought I knew what people and even God were thinking, and it was never good. She told me I was not a mind reader. She told me that I was allowed to change my mind AND I could put myself first. WHAT PLANET is she from? This was so foreign to me. I honestly could not wrap my head around most of the ideas presented in Alanon because I had lived my entire life getting out of myself, pouring myself into others, pleasing others, buying love, fixing fixing fixing. Basically, I thought I was so important that others needed me to stay sober. I was others HP and had “the illusion of control.” Giving up that illusion of control was painful but freeing!

It took me so much longer than I thought it would to wrap my head around the first 3 steps. I am currently on step 4 and taking it slow. My sponsor said it is not a race it is a design for living.

Putting myself first was something I was uncomfortable doing at first but today I love taking myself into consideration. I have so much time now that I am not in everyone business. I have started painting again, I have landscaped my yard, I am reading, I am exercising. I am giving my husband the wife he was without.

I thought I was a very generous person, I gave gifts to others to the point it probably made them feel uncomfortable. I thought it was my “love” language... I loved giving the gifts and I didn't realize there was an underlying motive. After examination via the steps in Al Anon I realized, I was trying to buy peoples love because I felt unworthy My gift giving has drastically decreased since joining Alanon because I check my motives before giving.

I used to live my life for others, say what I though everyone wanted to hear. I don't do that today. I have surrendered to God. I look for God to be my director. His is the boss of my marriage, my social life, my finances, my time.

I still sponsor in my sister program, but my sponsorship has changed. I realized I was

using control and manipulation in the nicest way possible because I knew what was best for these women. Today I realize I don't even know what is best for me, let alone others. I am letting God run my show today and letting my sponsees in AA have their own God. It is so hard not to control and manipulate them into doing what I think is best for them but my sponsor in Alanon assures me they have a higher power, and it is not me. To my dismay, not one of them has relapsed since I have let go and let God.

I am so very grateful for Alanon. I am not so sure my husband is. I say that jokingly, but I have learned to stand up for myself and not allow him to guilt me into things. He is in recovery also; and my sponsor has taught me how to separate the person from the symptoms of the disease. I had ZERO idea that a sober person if not working the steps could have behavior as bad as a practicing alcoholic.

I didn't realize that when Al Anon talked of the Alcoholic, they meant drinking or sober. I wish I had found this program years ago. I did attend a decade ago but thought it boring. It was so quiet. I was not ready.

Today I am all in. I have learned so much that has improved my life. I cannot say enough about how the program has helped me get out of my head and problems and live life courageously. I say no, I consider myself. I give myself grace when I don't behave perfectly and tell myself everyone makes mistakes, and it is ok.

I will keep coming back!

~ Anonymous, Modesto

INSTANT MEETING

Fantasy & Illusions

At a recent Changing Attitudes Tuesday Night meeting, Toni M. led a topic on **Fantasy & Illusions**. It was an inspiring session filled with meaningful shares, plenty of laughter, and a strong sense of recovery throughout the discussion. There are pages in CTC on Fantasy & Illusions.

In CTC (Courage to Change) page 122:

“At a recent Al-Anon meeting we were asked to fill in the blank in this statement: “If only _____ would happen, I would be happy.” (CTC).

Suggested Reflection Questions:

1. What are some “if only’s” that you’ve placed on your own happiness?
2. How does holding onto “if only’s” affect your peace of mind and relationships?
3. What does “accepting life as it is” mean to you personally?
4. How comfortable are you with the idea of surrendering control to a Higher Power?
5. What small change in your attitude could help you experience more happiness today?

Feel like sharing your Fantasy & Illusions click here:

<mailto:newsletter@alanonsanjoaquinvalley.org?subject=Voice of Reason Newsletter Submission>



SERVICE CORNER

Step into Service

Why Is Service Important?

Service is considered a **tool for personal growth and recovery**. It helps members:

- Stay connected and committed to the program
- Step outside of themselves and practice humility
- Develop confidence and leadership skills
- “Give back” after benefiting from the program

It also ensures the long-term sustainability of the group and makes the program accessible to newcomers in need of support.

Day in Al Anon

Lisa Z. is the chair of the Day in Al-Anon. All the positions have been filled, but there is still a need for volunteers to help! If you are interested or have questions, please contact Lisa Z. at 209-402-3470.

The next planning day meeting is:

When: September 28th, 2025

Time: 2 PM to 3 PM

Where: Harvest Presbyterian Church

1813 Moffit Road

Ceres, CA

Who: Everyone!!!

NCWSA Convention 2026

I am the Donations Committee Chair for the 2026 NCWSA Convention, I am looking for a Volunteer to co-chair. Please call or text if you are interested.

Teri G. 209-985-2039

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Topic for Edition 19 Newsletter

Next Edition's Focus: **Slogans**

Deadline: December 1st, 2025

For our upcoming newsletter, we will be highlighting one of Al-Anon's most practical tools: **the slogans**. These simple, memorable phrases—like “*One Day at a Time*,” “*Keep It Simple*,” and “*Easy Does It*”—offer comfort, guidance, and perspective in moments of uncertainty.

We invite members to share how slogans have supported their recovery journey:

- Which slogan do you turn to most often?
- How has it helped you in daily life or in a challenging moment?
- What does it mean to you personally?

Your experiences may be just what another member needs to hear.

 Please send your reflections to [Newsletter Submission](#) by December 1, 2025.

Together, let's explore how these timeless words of wisdom continue to bring serenity, clarity, and hope.

Your submission does not have to be topic related. Consider writing about the Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions, Twelve Concepts, your progress, a quote, picture or whatever is in your heart.



Save the Date: Upcoming Events

Your Essential Calendar for the Season

Every season brings with it a tapestry of events—moments that invite us to gather, celebrate, learn, and connect. Marking your calendar early ensures you won't miss out on the experiences that matter most. Below you'll find a curated selection of upcoming events. Save the dates, and let anticipation grow as these special days draw near.

Why Save the Date?

The world moves quickly, and schedules fill up faster than we expect. A save the date acts as a gentle reminder—an invitation to pause and prioritize what brings joy, connection, and meaning to your life. By bookmarking these key moments, you give yourself and your loved ones the gift of anticipation and, ultimately, participation.

Featured Events

District 18 Business Meeting ~ Hybrid

Date: First Sunday of every month

New Time: 1:30 PM – 3:30 PM

Location: 1425 Standiford Ave, Modesto

Zoom Meeting ID: 838 4051 8924

Password: Serenity

Keeping it Simple AFG - Meeting Change

Date: Started Saturday, August 23, 2025

New Time: 10:00 am

Zoom Meeting ID: 5846466683

Password: 170773

Ceres AFG Speaking Meeting & 🎈 Al-Anon Birthdays 🎈

Date: Monday, September 8, 2025

Time: 6:30 PM

Location: Harvest Presbyterian Church 1813 Moffet Road, Ceres

Description: Speaker Meeting with Teri G. (from Changing Attitudes AFG) & Celebrating Al-Anon birthdays for July, August and September.

District 36 CNIA Unity Day

Date: September 14, 2025

Time: 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM

Location: Yosemite Lake, Veteran's Cove, 5714 Lake Road, Merced, CA

17th Annual Alateen Sponsors' R&R

Date: September 19-21, 2025

Location: Westminster Woods, 6510 Bohemian Hwy., Occidental, CA.

Late Registration Deadline: September 5th, 2025

<https://form.jotform.com/251207818138154>

Planning Meeting for The Day in Al-Anon

Date: Sunday, September 28, 2025

Time: 2:00 PM to 3:00 PM

Location: Harvest Presbyterian Church 1813 Moffet Road, Ceres

Chairperson: Lisa Z. 209-402-3470

Changing Attitudes AFG Speaker Meeting

Date: Tuesday, September 30, 2025

Time: 6:45 PM

Location: Davis Park Church (In the back) 901 W Rumble Road, Modesto

Description: Speaker Meeting with Wanda C.

NCWSA Convention 2026

Date: March 6, 7 and 8, 2026

Location: Maidu Community Center, 1550 Maide Dr., Roseville CA

In need of a meeting, click the link below for District 18 Meetings:

<https://www.alanonsanjoaquinvalley.org/meetings.htm>

AL-Anon Resources

District 18 Website:

<https://www.alanonsanjoaquinvalley.org/index.htm>

Northern California World Service Area Website (NCWSA):

<https://northerncaliforniaal-anon.org/>

NCWSA calendar:

<https://northerncaliforniaal-anon.org/calendar/>

World Service Office (WSO):

<https://al-anon.org/>

Online Bookstore:

<https://ecomm.al-anon.org/>

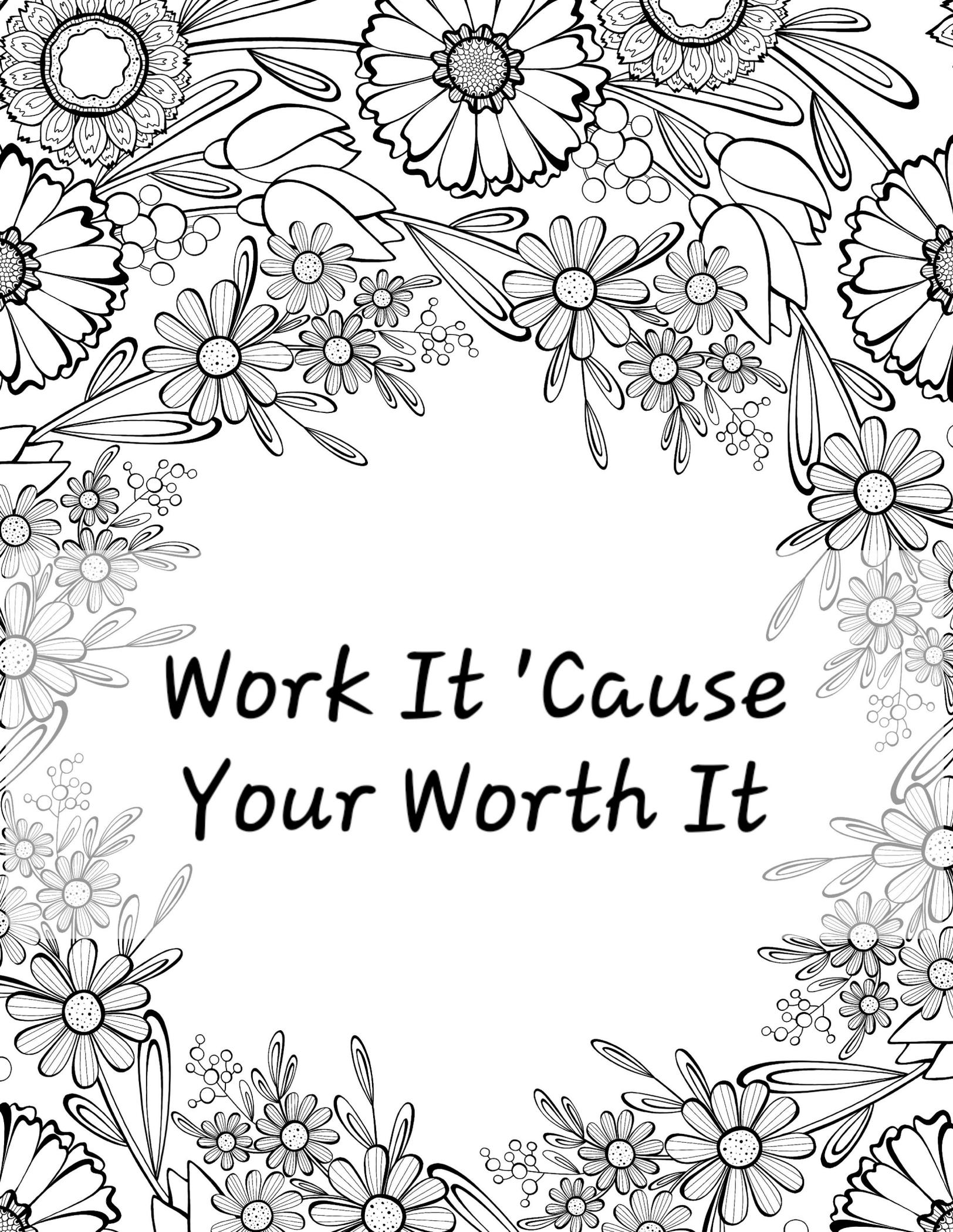
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<https://ecomm.al-anon.org/forum - vaff>

Convention 2026:

<https://northerncaliforniaal-anon.org/convention-2026/>



*Work It 'Cause
Your Worth It*