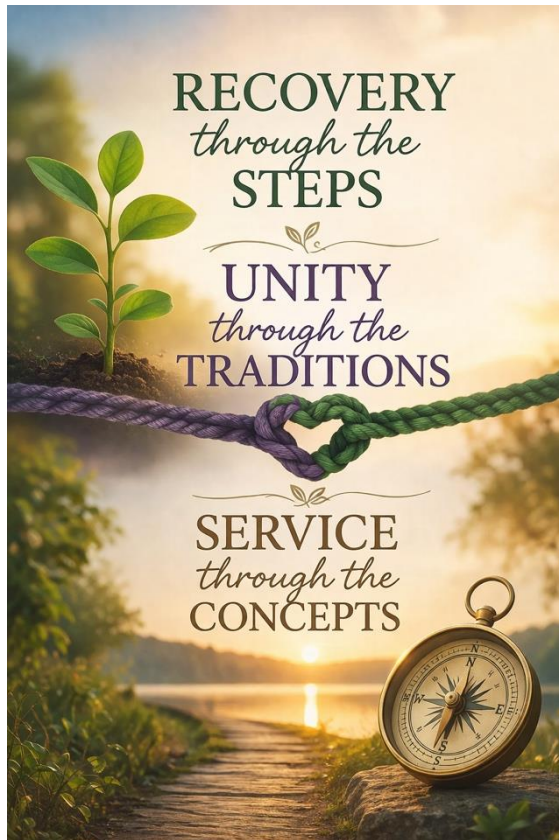


<https://www.alanonsanjoaquinvalley.org/index.htm>

Steps, Traditions, and Concepts 1,2,3



In the beginning of our recovery, we are asked to do something both simple and profound: surrender. **Steps One, Two, and Three** teach us to admit our powerlessness, to believe in hope, and to trust a Higher Power with our will and our lives. But surrender is not only personal — it is transformational. The humility that heals us individually is the very same principle that holds our groups together and guides our service structure. From surrender to service, a spiritual thread runs through it all.

Traditions One, Two, and Three remind us that unity is not something we can force, but something we protect through spiritual principles. Tradition One calls us to place our common welfare before personal desires, recognizing that recovery flourishes in an atmosphere of unity. Tradition Two gently reminds us that there are no leaders, only trusted servants, and that a loving Higher Power expresses itself in our group conscience. Tradition Three keeps the doors open to all who seek help, asking only a desire for recovery. In this way, the humility and trust we learn

in the Steps become the very foundation that holds our groups together.

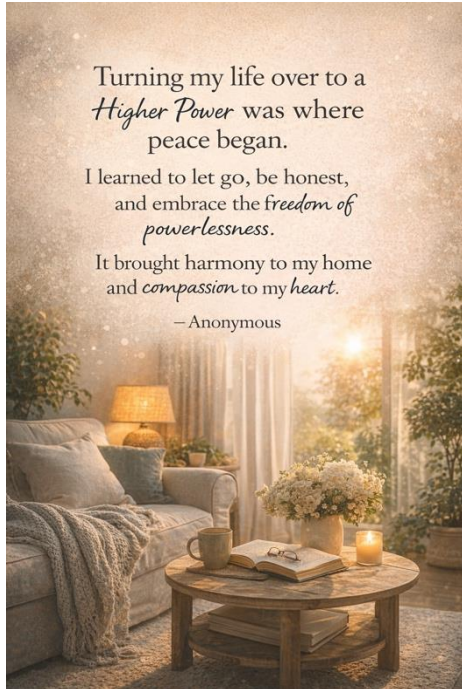
As unity takes root in our groups, it naturally calls us into service. The Concepts of Service help us carry forward the same surrender and trust into how we serve Al-Anon as a whole. **Concepts One, Two, and Three** remind us that service is not about control, but about responsibility, trust, and spiritual guidance. Concept One assures us that ultimate responsibility and authority rest in a loving Higher Power, not in any individual. Concept Two shows us the wisdom of shared leadership through delegated authority, reflecting our willingness to trust others as we have learned to trust God. Concept Three gives us the “right of decision,” encouraging us to act with faith and responsibility rather than fear. In this way, service becomes a living expression of surrender—where we release the need to control outcomes and instead participate faithfully in the work we are given.

Teri G.
Newsletter Coordinator and grateful Al-Anon Member

Member Share

Steps 1, 2 and 3

Initially I resisted the idea that my alcoholic partner has a disease that he has no power over. He told me he is more at ease when he drinks. He is having fun, enjoying life. No way I can talk him out of it!



Turning my life over to a
Higher Power was where
peace began.

I learned to let go, be honest,
and embrace the *freedom of*
powerlessness.

It brought harmony to my home
and *compassion* to my heart.

— Anonymous

With each day and each year I get to wrap my mind around that fact and accept that I am powerless over alcohol, over other people, places and things. I am powerless over so many things! Today I know I am powerless over whether or not someone likes or loves me. There is a lot of freedom in that. I have learnt to be myself and relax. Letting go of needing to be perfect or act a certain way has made me connect with others more. There's harmony in my home now. I have learnt so much from my Sponsor and other members, reading my AI- Anon books, and working on the Steps, Traditions and Concepts on a regular basis.

I realize that dealing with this difficult disease has led me and my partner to be busy most of the time, I believe it's a way not to feel the truth...not to feel the pain, the emptiness and loneliness. Our compulsive behaviors, his drinking, and my stinking thinking that still pops into my mind from time to time and compulsive busyness is evidence of the disease. When I overdo things, don't rest and keep pushing

myself to accomplish more than I have energy for I completely lose my serenity and my life is unmanageable once again. The brightest experience working my program came working Step 5 where I admitted to God, to myself and another human being the exact nature of my wrongs. That day I discovered that I wasn't really so different from the alcoholic at all. And even more important I sensed that there was something higher out there, something that knew all about me and loved me anyway. I didn't have to hide any longer. I could finally fess up and be honest about not having been in control over my own life. Hiding a secret made me feel isolated and desperate all the time. With the kind help from my sponsor I connected to the infinite love of this power. I felt compassion for myself as well as others from that point on.

Some time last year my partner asked if I could help him with his drinking problem. It took me by surprise. I told him we were both powerless over alcohol and alcoholism. That he couldn't deal with it by himself, that he needed to ask for help. That we both needed to be willing to turn our life over to a Higher Power. My friend doesn't have a program but I do and am so grateful because it has made our relationship and our life together a lot better.

Anonymous

Member Share

Step 3

The impact we have. This is relevant to yesterday's meeting. Thank you for participating in recovery.

Today I'm grateful that the senses of anxiety and panic that were so common years ago when plans went awry, didn't appear. And it's such a relief!

A week prior to Unity Day, I'm informed that our Al-Anon speaker is ill, and she won't be able to speak. Pneumonia.

And I set that down, texted my partners, and picked up my granddaughter. While I was waiting, an idea was gifted to me. A man that I've partnered with at a recovery center to speak to the families came to mind. So I asked for his number and called and left a message. When he called me back, he agreed to be the speaker.

I say gifted. Yesterday the topic at an Al-Anon meeting was Step 3. And I realize that what was shared at the meeting made a difference from past me and now me. The idea came softly and gently, just like what someone who shared said her messages from her HP come to her. And that's how it works for me. I'll call this one a spiritual awakening.

Pat W



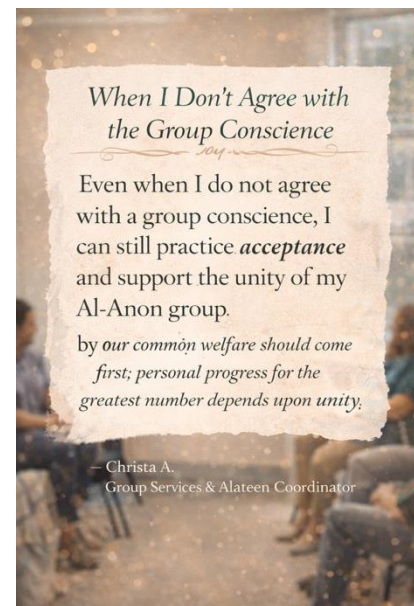
Member Share Tradition 1 and 2

When I Don't Agree with the Group Conscience

Two years ago, my group decided to extend the meeting time from 60 to 90 minutes. I never liked longer meetings, but I wasn't at the business meeting that voted for the new time. Because many meetings nearby met for one hour, newcomers or visitors would often interrupt to ask when the meeting would end. Some members arrived late, some left early, and some got up to stretch in the middle of the meeting. In my opinion, it was all very disruptive.

The upcoming business meeting was announced well in advance, and I had plenty of time to clear my schedule to attend. The agenda included the topic of changing the meeting back to 60 minutes. When the business meeting began, I was surprised that so many members were not interested in returning the meeting to its original duration. I presented all the reasons I wanted the meeting time to change and proposed solutions to address any objections.

Members shared how relaxed they felt not having to rush through the Suggested Opening and Closing, noted that there was time to answer questions about announcements, and pointed out that the disruptions that bothered me so much also occurred in many shorter meetings. None of this changed my position, and my stance didn't change the position of the other members.



Now that the group had made the decision to keep the meeting at 90 minutes, even though I disagreed, I had to reconsider my choices. One extreme option would be to leave my home group and find a different one; another would be to attend and pout and sulk about the things that bothered me. Given these extremes, I set out to find a middle ground.

I reminded myself that I am in this Al-Anon program to recover from the effects of someone else's alcoholism, not to nurture the impact of the disease on my life. So, I called my Sponsor to discuss the [Traditions](#). Traditions One and Two reminded me that it's not "my" common welfare, but "our" common welfare, and that a Higher Power—greater than me or the group—guides the decisions. As stated in the "[Groups at Work](#)" section of the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27), while [Concept Five](#) grants us the right of appeal, once the group hears the appeal, regardless of whether the decision is maintained or altered, the individual accepts the group conscience. My Sponsor encouraged me to examine my motives and assess how important this was to me and the group. What started as an attempt to have my voice heard ultimately became a thorough growth opportunity. I thought I knew what I wanted and believed it was best for the group. When I was able to get to the bottom of what was truly important to me and the group, I was able to join in supporting Al-Anon's purpose and uncover opportunities to participate in the group's unity by practicing tolerance and acceptance. I was able to appreciate my home group.

By Christa A., Group Services & Alateen Coordinator

The Forum, November 2025

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Virginia, USA.**

Member Share

Concepts One, Two, and Three

Changed Attitudes Can Aid Leadership

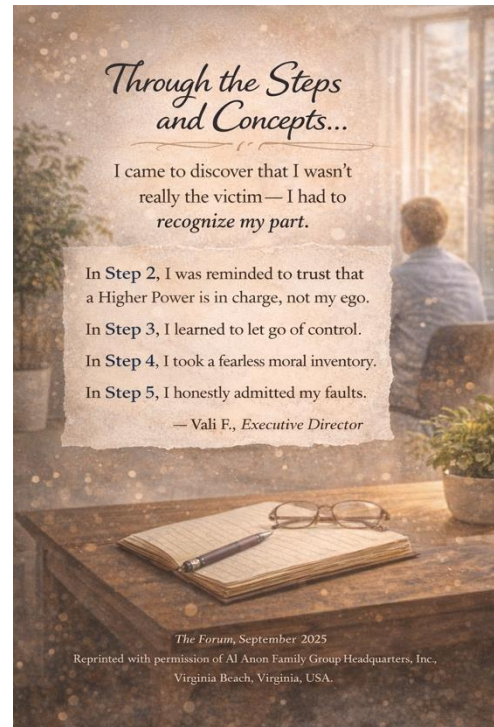
I had only been in the program for seven years when one of my employees took me aside to let me know that my boss had declared he wanted to fire me. Wait, what?! I was shocked. In our weekly meetings, my boss and I disagreed about product design, but he had never said that I was not performing. My team and I had good working relationships, and I knew the president of the company respected me. Clearly, my boss had to be wrong!

He was the problem, not me! My brain circled around and around in my disease, focusing on my boss, what he had done wrong, and how I was the harmed victim.

Thankfully, once the shock wore off and I had talked with my Sponsor and other trusted friends, I realized this was *my* disease, and I needed to practice my program. I started by rereading [Concept Nine](#) on good personal leadership.

Then I leaned into the faith and commitment to my Higher Power found through [Steps Two](#) and [Three](#), and I took

[Step Four](#). By taking a fearless moral inventory and sharing it with God and my Sponsor ([Step Five](#)), I reluctantly came to recognize my part. I realized I was demonstrating a disrespectful attitude toward my boss, both privately and through my tone during our conversations. I recognized I was taking *his* inventory (assessing his motives), and I was violating [Concepts One](#),



[Two](#), [Three](#), and [Five](#)! After all, the president had the ultimate authority and responsibility in our workplace; he had delegated certain responsibilities to my boss (not me, who knew?), and that gave my boss the right of decision. Although I had the right of appeal, that didn't mean my boss's decision had to change, and regardless, I had a responsibility to honor that delegated group authority. With my changed attitude, I was able to maintain serenity regardless of my boss's decisions or actions. I behaved respectfully, which ultimately contributed to the organization realizing there was indeed a problem, and my boss left the company. At the World Service Office (WSO), I have witnessed similar scenarios play out. When communication is lacking, whether from the WSO or trusted servants, the family disease assigns motives and blame to the other. Thankfully, I have also observed WSO Staff, Volunteers, and the organization practicing the program by listening, inventorying, and changing what we can. The lack of qualified applicants for Trustee is one example of these principles in action. Initially, when few members were applying to serve, the natural inclination was to look outward to understand how to change "them." In applying the program, however, the Board recognized the need to examine *its* process and discovered that its uncommunicated expectations were causing significant frustration and mistrust among applicants. The Board consulted widely with the Conference and professionals for ideas and suggestions before updating the process to include role descriptions as well as clear explanations for those applicants who were not selected so that each could learn and grow. The Board's actions led to an increase in applicants and overall satisfaction with the process. What a gift for Al-Anon and each of those involved. *By Vali F., Executive Director*

The Forum, September 2025

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A person is sitting on a wooden bench in a field of flowers. The scene is bathed in a soft, golden light, creating a bokeh effect with many out-of-focus light spots. The person is wearing blue jeans and is barefoot. The overall mood is peaceful and nostalgic.

JOY COMES BACK

Donna Ashworth
From Growing Brave

When you finally realize that joy
is less fireworks
more firefly
less orchestra
more birdsong
she will come back much more often
for joy will not fight
with the fast pace of this life
she is not in the shiny or the new
she breathes in the basic
shimmers in the simple
and dances in the daily to and fro
joy has been beckoning you
for many a year my friend
you were just too busy doing, to see
the very next time joy wraps
her quiet warmth around you
as the garden
in the garden embraces your weary body
in its wildness,
tip her a nod
you cannot force her to stay
but if you are a gracious host
joy comes back

Poem submitted by Antonia M

Join the Next District 18 Panel

This is a gently friendly reminder that this is the last year for the current District 18 panel.

If you have not attended a District Meeting it is an amazing way to see the steps, traditions and concepts in use. My sponsor gently nudged me for about six months to go to a district meeting. I had only been in the program for about eight months, I was still in shock and fear over my personal life being turned upside down in what felt like in a blink of an eye, but it was years of living in the disease of alcoholism.

I believe my Higher Power used my alcoholic to get me to Al-Anon. It wasn't until he said he was an alcoholic and he was going to AA, and with outside help I found myself in Al-Anon. Even though there was no longer active drinking there were still the "isms" in my life. When the alcoholic in my life stopped going to AA, I was scared out of my mind, I asked myself "What does this mean?", "Will he start drinking again?", "What does this mean for me?" With the help of my sponsor, meetings and the program I realized his recovery is not my responsibility and to keep the focus on me. I even asked myself should I stop going to Al-Anon and my Higher Power said "ABSOLUTELY NOT!", there was no way I was going to stop going to Al-Anon, I had moments of peace in the rooms of Al-Anon, which now I see was my Higher Power doing for me what I could not do for myself. All I knew is I wanted to laugh again instead of crying. Members were laughing in meetings, and they said out loud what I was thinking or feeling inside. I kept coming back because I wanted to hear what members had to say. I remember around my one year, I shared and another member said to me after the meet, "Teri, you shared without crying!" I thanked my Higher Power for that; He spoke through that member. I had not realized I had not cried. Soon after I started laughing again. I started to feel



Join the Next Panel!

District 18 Needs Trusted Servants

— * —

This is the last year for the current panel.

Explore service and share your experience, strength, and hope.

Talk to your group's GR or attend the next District Meeting to learn more.

peace and not alone. I had found my people, people that understood my pain even when I couldn't find the words.

I never wanted my alcoholic to be uncomfortable and me going to a business meeting on a weekend and on a Sunday, there were going to be some uncomfortable feelings, me doing something for myself. In June of 2024 I went to a business meeting, scared out of my mind, not only because I was new and did not know how the program worked, but also what I was going to deal with when I got home. I remember being in awe of a group coming together for the greater good and reasoning things out, having an open discussion where everyone could share their own opinions, and then take a group conscience if there was something that needed a vote. Absolutely mind blowing. I am not joking. I never witnessed this; I grew up in an alcoholic home and then married an alcoholic. All I knew how to do was yell and scream when I felt I was not being heard or just keep quiet because I was told I was wrong. It's still hard for me to voice my opinion, but I am finding my voice more often now. I still have not voiced my opinion yet at a business meeting and that's okay, I am learning a lot and when the time is right my Higher Power will be there to guide me.

I hope to see you at an upcoming business meeting— all positions will be open for the 2027 Panel. District 18's business meetings are hybrid, so you can also join us via Zoom.

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.

District 18 Positions

There are two service positions open within District 18:

- Hispanic Liaison/Diversity
- Public Outreach

If you are feeling a nudge please come to the next District 18 Meeting, the first Sunday of every month to learn more about these positions. (See Save the Date section for time and location)

[District 18 Events](https://alanonsanjoaquinvalley.org/events.htm) (<https://alanonsanjoaquinvalley.org/events.htm>)

District 18 Outreach Committee

Will have a booth at the Ceres Street Faire!!

May 2&3, 2026 From 10-6

They need help with: Setting up tables, talking to people, and packing at the end of the day.

If you can help, please call or text:

Vicki @ 209-480-4820

April @ 209-993-1872

Diana @ 209-981-1930

*NCWSA 2026 Election Assembly Planning Committee
District 18 is hosting the Election
At the Doubletree Hotel Modesto
October 16-18, 2026*

Committee Chair: Vicki B. 209-480-4820
Next Committee Meeting: May 31st, 2026, at 4:00 pm
Join Zoom Meeting:

Meeting ID: 816 524 6871

Passcode: Serenity18

NCWSA Convention 2027

I am the On-site Registration Chair for the 2026 NCWSA Convention, I am looking for Volunteers who like to be of service. Please call or text if you are interested.
Teri G. 209-985-2039

The NCWSA Convention Chair is Paula H from District 5. If you would like more information, please reach out to Paula H. at convention@ncwsa.org

As of April 9th, 2026 these are the positions that are still in need:

A Treasurer - Very Important! - they will need to be interviewed by the EC Committee
Ways & Means Chair
Flyer maker for our first Save the Date flyer

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
Time: 1:30 PM – 3:30 PM
Location: 1425 Standiford Ave, Modesto
Zoom Meeting ID: 816 524 6871
Password: Serenity18

Just For Today AFG ~ How AI Anon Works Book Study

Start Date: April 9th, 2026
Meeting Format:
 Book Study Meetings: 2nd & 4th Thursdays
 Topic/Participation Meetings: 1st, 3rd & 5th Thursdays
Time: 6:00 pm to 7:00 pm
Location: Harvest Presbyterian Church 1813 Moffett Road, Ceres CA

Ladies Luncheon

Date: April 25, 2026
Time: 11:00 am to 3:00 pm
Location: Ravello's Restaurant 560 W. 18th Street, Merced Ca
Questions: Antonia M. 209-850-5663 or email antoniam@kw.com

Open Hand AFG Speaker Meeting

Date: Wednesday, April 29th, 2026

Time: 6:00 pm – 7:30 pm

Speaker: Debbie O.

Zoom: 892 0653 9123

Passcode: 258880

May 2026 NCWSA Assembly

Date: Saturday, May 23 and Sunday, May 24, 2026

Agenda: [NCWSA Assembly Agenda](#)

Location: Wyndham Sacramento, 5321 Date Avenue, Sacramento CA 95841

Phone: (916) 338-5800

2 steps to completing registration for those staying at the hotel:

1. Assembly Registration link; <https://pci.jotform.com/form/260524817458261>
2. Hotel Registration information is at <https://northerncaliforniaal-anon.org/assembly/>

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/>

eBooks:

al-anon.org/digital-products

Subscribe to The Forum:

Al-Anon's monthly magazine.

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

Topic for Edition 19 Newsletter

✎ Next Edition's Focus:

Steps Four, Five & Six
Traditions Four, Five & Six
Concepts Four, Five & Six

Deadline: June 15th, 2026

As this is my final year serving as newsletter coordinator, I've been spending time asking my Higher Power for direction and guidance. While doing that, I found myself browsing the WSO website and The Loop, reading through Al-Anon literature. I picked up *The Forum*, and the page I opened to was titled “**What's Your Recovery Resolution?**”

That moment felt like a nudge. My recovery resolution is to give the 2026 newsletter a unifying theme—and what better way than to walk together through the Steps, Traditions, and Concepts.

The next *Voice of Reason* will be sent out at the end of March. I invite you to submit your experience, strength, and hope on **Steps, Traditions, and/or Concepts One, Two, or Three**. Please remember, this is *our* District's newsletter. Submissions of any kind are always welcome, regardless of topic. A single sentence, a photo, or a simple thought may be exactly what someone needs to see.

On the next page, you'll find prompts to help get you started if needed.

Thank you for being part of this fellowship. Whether you shared your experience or quietly reflected, you are not alone.

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

✉ Please send your reflections to [Newsletter Submission](#) by June 15, 2026.

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 your progress, a quote, picture or whatever is in your heart.

Al-Anon *Voice of Reason* Submission Prompts

Steps, Traditions & Concepts Four, Five and Six.

These prompts are offered to inspire personal sharing for the **Voice of Reason**. Reflections may be short or long, written from any stage of recovery. You don't need to be an expert—your lived experience is what matters.

Submissions of any length are welcome.

Thank you for being part of our fellowship and for helping carry the message. 

All voices are welcome—newcomer or long-timer. Your experience may be exactly what another member needs to hear.

Share Your Experience • Strength • Hope

We are preparing our next newsletter about
Steps, Traditions, and Concepts 4, 5, and 6.
Please consider sharing:

Step 4 (Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves)

- What was your experience beginning Step 4?
- What fears or hesitations did you have, and how did you move through them?
- What did you learn about yourself?

Step 5 (Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being...)

- What was it like to share your Step 5?
- How did it impact your relationship with your Higher Power, yourself, or others?
- What freedom or relief did you experience?

Step 6 (Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character)

- What does “being entirely ready” mean to you?
- How have you faced challenges in letting go of character defects?
- How do you practice willingness in your daily life?

Tradition 4 (Group autonomy)

- How have you seen your group exercise autonomy?
- How do you balance group freedom with responsibility to Al-Anon as a whole?

Tradition 5 (Primary purpose)

- What does carrying the message mean to you?
- How has your group stayed focused on helping families and friends of alcoholics?


Tradition 6 (Outside issues)


- How do you keep the focus on Al-Anon principles rather than outside matters?
- Why is it important to avoid endorsement or distraction?

Concepts 4, 5, and 6 (Participation, Right of Appeal, Minority Voice)

- How have you experienced participation in service?
- Have you ever shared a minority opinion? What was that like?
- How do these Concepts support unity and trust in service?

Submissions of any length are welcome.

Thank you for being part of our fellowship
and for helping carry the message. 



*Powerless Over
People, Places
and Things*