

# Al-Anews

FLORIDA N, AREA 9, DISTRICT 7 (Pinellas County), PANEL 61

JANUARY 2022

## I Kept Coming Back Online

When I began to realize that my husband had a problem with alcohol, I argued with him and cried all the time. My emotions were just uncontrollable. My children noticed before I did that he drank every day. This all started when he retired. He was depressed and lonely, and he drank.

I'd heard about Al-Anon and finally decided to try out some meetings. I found one I really liked and stayed. Everyone seemed so friendly and happy. I probably cried at every meeting for the first two months. People kept telling me, "Keep Coming Back." Then COVID-19 hit, and there were no more face-to-face meetings near me. An Al-Anon member asked if I wanted to try electronic meetings, and I have been going ever since. It's been more than a year.

It's wonderful to attend these meetings and listen to everyone's thoughts and ideas. Talking with others about the family disease of alcoholism has really expanded my outlook on the disease, and I feel very comfortable with this awesome group of people. Ours is a well-organized

and positive group. I even started volunteering—to serve as Treasurer, meeting Chairperson, and Host. I am somewhat of an introvert, and volunteering helped me connect with people better.

Today, our home is much more relaxed and peaceful. Using the slogans and reading the literature has given me the encouragement to continue loving the alcoholic—with detachment. I am enjoying the simple things in life—birdwatching, sunsets, gardening, daily walks. Al-Anon has given me such a positive attitude. I say the Serenity Prayer every night before I fall asleep. I also enjoy reading the daily readers every night. I think I am going to read one page and end up reading five or six pages. I still struggle every day, but now I have more happy days than sad ones.

*By Anonymous  
The Forum, January 2022*

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**Al-Anon / Alateen  
Family Groups**

### District Meeting

(monthly meeting for GRs, District trusted servants, and any interested members)

**Saturday, February 12, 2022, 9 AM ET**

**Meeting ID 992 4877 8742 Passcode 202161**  
[https://zoom.us/j/99248778742?](https://zoom.us/j/99248778742?pwd=ZFRXR3VkTTdjeTZ5S3pQb2ptNk1WQT09)  
[pwd=ZFRXR3VkTTdjeTZ5S3pQb2ptNk1WQT09](https://zoom.us/j/99248778742?pwd=ZFRXR3VkTTdjeTZ5S3pQb2ptNk1WQT09)

## Principles above "Rules"

As I have grown in self-awareness and trust in a Higher Power, I find that I'm more relaxed about making decisions in the absence of strict rules and rigid structure. When I was a newcomer to Al-Anon, I didn't have this feeling of ease and confidence—quite the opposite. Rules were a comfort after growing up in an alcoholic home where there were few rules and no reliable authority figures. It was natural that I made decisions based on them. Today, I am more likely to use ideas, experiences, and principles—like the ones contained in the 36 components of Al-Anon's three Legacies—to make decisions.

In times of fear or uncertainty, I can fall back on my "rules" method. After all, if I make a decision based on the rules and it turns out later to have been a mistake, I can just blame the rules and not take any personal responsibility, right? Unfortunately, no. In Al-Anon, I learned that I am responsible for my decisions regardless of the methods I use to make them. I also learned that I am less likely to regret them if I have taken the time to become informed, to ask my Higher Power for guidance, and to talk them over with my Sponsor or a trustworthy Al-Anon friend.

The same, slightly modified process works in our groups. Lately, I have been asked a number of questions by members who seemed to be trying to rely on rules to determine what they could or couldn't do in their groups. While it is tempting for me to give someone "the answer" because that makes me feel smart and valuable, I must instead encourage members of the group to become informed, invite their Higher Power in, and have a discussion about principles. Principle-based discussions not only help groups arrive at solutions for their problems, but they also demonstrate how we can apply these same ideas to our problems outside the group. I am grateful that the Al-Anon program continues to offer me new insights, new topics for prayer and meditation, and new ways to relate to our Legacies.

*By Kerri K., Associate Director—International  
The Forum, November 2021*

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Forum, Al-Anon Family Group  
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VA.*



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\*Open Position — service opportunity!