

# Suggested Meeting Readings

*This format is printed for your convenience. While not every group chooses to plan its meeting in this way, many find a general outline helpful.*

See also the pamphlet *This Is Al-Anon* (P-32).

## Meeting Opening

Most groups open with a moment of silence followed by the Serenity Prayer.

## The Serenity Prayer

Chairperson: Will you join me in a moment of silence, followed by the Serenity Prayer?

God grant me the serenity  
To accept the things I cannot change,  
Courage to change the things I can,  
And wisdom to know the difference.

## Suggested Al-Anon/Alateen Welcome

*(choose "Al-Anon" or "Alateen" as applicable)*

We welcome you to the \_\_\_\_\_ Al-Anon/Alateen Family Group and hope you will find in this fellowship the help and friendship we have been privileged to enjoy.

We who live, or have lived, with the problem of alcoholism understand as perhaps few others can. We, too, were lonely and frustrated, but in Al-Anon/Alateen we discover that no situation is really hopeless and that it is possible for us to find contentment, and even happiness, whether the alcoholic is still drinking or not.

We urge you to try our program. It has helped many of us find solutions that lead to serenity. So much depends on our own attitudes, and as we learn to place our problem in its true perspective, we find it loses its power to dominate our thoughts and our lives.

The family situation is bound to improve as we apply the Al-Anon/Alateen ideas. Without such spiritual help, living with an alcoholic is too much for most of us. Our thinking becomes distorted by trying to force solutions, and we become irritable and unreasonable without knowing it.

The Al-Anon/Alateen program is based on the Twelve Steps (adapted from Alcoholics Anonymous), which we try, little by little, one day at a time, to apply to our lives, along with our slogans and the Serenity Prayer. The loving interchange of help among members and daily reading of Al-Anon/Alateen literature thus make us ready to receive the priceless gift of serenity.

Anonymity is an important principle of the Al-Anon/Alateen program. Everything that is said here, in the group meeting and member-to-member, must be held in confidence. Only in this way can we feel free to say what is in our minds and hearts, for this is how we help one another in Al-Anon/Alateen.

*At this point in the meeting, many groups have the Chairperson say if the group meeting has a special format (Step-study, speakers, or discussion group), has a specific routine for calling on members, asks members of other anonymous fellowships to remain anonymous and focus on the Al-Anon program, and clarifies if the meeting is open\* or closed.\*\* Members are also told how they can obtain Al-Anon and Alateen Conference Approved Literature.*

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\*This is an open meeting; we welcome visitors seeking information about Al-Anon, as well as newcomers and members of Al-Anon

\*\*This is a closed meeting for Al-Anon members and prospective members only. Anyone who believes they have been affected by someone else's drinking is welcome. See also "Open/Closed Meetings."

## **Suggested Al-Anon Preamble to the Twelve Steps**

The Al-Anon Family Groups are a fellowship of relatives and friends of alcoholics who share their experience, strength, and hope in order to solve their common problems. We believe alcoholism is a family illness and that changed attitudes can aid recovery.

Al-Anon is not allied with any sect, denomination, political entity, organization, or institution; does not engage in any controversy; neither endorses nor opposes any cause. There are no dues for membership. Al-Anon is self-supporting through its own voluntary contributions.

Al-Anon has but one purpose: to help families of alcoholics. We do this by practicing the Twelve Steps, by welcoming and giving comfort to families of alcoholics, and by giving understanding and encouragement to the alcoholic.

## **Suggested Alateen Preamble to the Twelve Steps**

Alateen, part of the Al-Anon Family Groups, is a fellowship of young people whose lives have been affected by alcoholism in a family member or close friend. We help each other by sharing our experience, strength, and hope.

We believe alcoholism is a family disease because it affects all the members emotionally and sometimes physically. Although we cannot change or control our parents, we can detach from their problems while continuing to love them.

We do not discuss religion or become involved with any outside organizations. Our sole topic is the solution of our problems. We are always careful to protect each other's anonymity as well as that of all Al-Anon and A.A. members.

By applying the Twelve Steps to ourselves, we begin to grow mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. We will always be grateful to Alateen for giving us a wonderful, healthy program to live by and enjoy.

*Many groups choose to have a member read one or all, of the Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions and/or Twelve Concepts of Service.*

## Our Three Legacies

**RECOVERY**  
THROUGH  
THE  
STEPS

**UNITY**  
THROUGH  
THE  
TRADITIONS

**SERVICE**  
THROUGH  
THE  
CONCEPTS

The threefold guides of Al-Anon point the way to a normal, useful life for the individual. They are also a framework within which the groups can carry on their affairs in harmony.

## Twelve Steps

Because of their proven power and worth, A.A.'s Twelve Steps have been adopted almost word for word by Al-Anon. They represent a way of life appealing to all people of goodwill, of any religious faith or of none. Note the power of the very words.

1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol—that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God *as we understood Him*.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.

11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God *as we understood Him*, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to others, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

### Twelve Traditions—Al-Anon

The Traditions that follow bind us together in unity. They guide the groups in their relations with other groups, with A.A. and the outside world. They recommend group attitudes toward leadership, membership, money, property, public relations and anonymity.

The Traditions evolved from the experience of A.A. groups in trying to solve their problems of living and working together. Al-Anon adopted these group guidelines and over the years has found them sound and wise. Although they are only suggestions, Al-Anon's unity and perhaps even its survival are dependent on adherence to these principles.

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal progress for the greatest number depends upon unity.
2. For our group purpose there is but one authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants—they do not govern.
3. The relatives of alcoholics, when gathered together for mutual aid, may call themselves an Al-Anon Family Group, provided that, as a group, they have no other affiliation. The only requirement for membership is that there be a problem of alcoholism in a relative or friend.
4. Each group should be autonomous, except in matters affecting another group or Al-Anon or AA as a whole.
5. Each Al-Anon Family Group has but one purpose: to help families of alcoholics. We do this by practicing the Twelve Steps of AA *ourselves*, by encouraging and understanding our alcoholic relatives, and by welcoming and giving comfort to families of alcoholics.
6. Our Family Groups ought never endorse, finance or lend our name to any outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property and prestige divert us from our primary spiritual aim. Al-

though a separate entity, we should always co-operate with Alcoholics Anonymous.

7. Every group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
8. Al-Anon Twelfth Step work should remain forever non-professional, but our service centers may employ special workers.
9. Our groups, as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.
10. The Al-Anon Family Groups have no opinion on outside issues; hence our name ought never be drawn into public controversy.
11. Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, films, and TV. We need guard with special care the anonymity of all AA members.
12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles above personalities.

### **Twelve Traditions—Alateen**

Our group experience suggests that the unity of the Alateen Groups depends upon our adherence to these Traditions.

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal progress for the greatest number depends upon unity.
2. For our group purpose there is but one authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.
3. The only requirement for membership is that there be a problem of alcoholism in a relative or friend. The teenage relatives of alcoholics, when gathered together for mutual aid, may call themselves an Alateen Group provided that, as a group, they have no other affiliation.
4. Each group should be autonomous, except in matters affecting other Alateen and Al-Anon Family Groups or AA as a whole.
5. Each Alateen Group has but one purpose: to help other teenagers of alcoholics. We do this by practicing the Twelve Steps of AA *ourselves* and by encouraging and understanding the members of our immediate families.

6. Alateens, being part of Al-Anon Family Groups, ought never endorse, finance or lend our name to any outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property and prestige divert us from our primary spiritual aim. Although a separate entity, we should always cooperate with Alcoholics Anonymous.
7. Every group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
8. Alateen Twelfth Step work should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers.
9. Our groups, as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.
10. The Alateen Groups have no opinion on outside issues; hence our name ought never be drawn into public controversy.
11. Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, films, and TV. We need guard with special care the anonymity of all AA members.
12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles above personalities.

## Twelve Concepts of Service

Carrying the message, as suggested in the Twelfth Step, is Service, Al-Anon's third legacy. Service, a vital purpose of Al-Anon, is action. Members strive to *do* as well as to *be*.

Anything done to help a relative or friend of an alcoholic is service: a telephone call to a despairing member or sponsoring a newcomer, telling one's story at meetings, forming groups, arranging for public outreach, distributing literature and financially supporting groups, local services and the World Service Office.

1. The ultimate responsibility and authority for Al-Anon world services belongs to the Al-Anon groups
2. The Al-Anon Family Groups have delegated complete administrative and operational authority to their Conference and its service arms.
3. The right of decision makes effective leadership possible.
4. Participation is the key to harmony.

5. The rights of appeal and petition protect minorities and insure that they be heard.
6. The Conference acknowledges the primary administrative responsibility of the Trustees.
7. The Trustees have legal rights while the rights of the Conference are traditional.
8. The Board of Trustees delegates full authority for routine management of Al-Anon Headquarters to its executive committees.
9. Good personal leadership at all service levels is a necessity. In the field of world service the Board of Trustees assumes the primary leadership.
10. Service responsibility is balanced by carefully defined service authority and double-headed management is avoided.
11. The World Service Office is composed of selected committees, executives and staff members.
12. The spiritual foundation for Al-Anon's world services is contained in the General Warranties of the Conference, Article 12 of the Charter.

### **General Warranties of the Conference**

In all proceedings the World Service Conference of Al-Anon shall observe the spirit of the Traditions:

- (1) that only sufficient operating funds, including an ample reserve, be its prudent financial principle;
- (2) that no Conference member shall be placed in unqualified authority over other members;
- (3) that all decisions be reached by discussion, vote and whenever possible by unanimity;
- (4) that no Conference action ever be personally punitive or an incitement to public controversy;
- (5) that though the Conference serves Al-Anon it shall never perform any act of government; and that like the fellowship of Al-Anon Family Groups which it serves, it shall always remain democratic in thought and action.



## Optional Readings

At this point in the meeting, groups may choose to read one or more of the “Optional Readings” (pages 21-25) or other selections from Al-Anon Conference Approved Literature.

## Introductions

The Chairperson invites members to introduce themselves. Members may choose to use their first name only or their entire name, according to their personal preference. The Chairperson may ask newcomers to identify themselves and welcomes them. (See “Welcoming New Members.”)

## Announcements and Reports

This is a time for announcement of local Al-Anon events, service meetings, and other group business, including day and time of business meetings, Treasurer’s report, and mail from the District, Area, or World Service Office. Reports may include:

- Group reports (Secretary, Treasurer, Group Representative, Intergroup Representative)
- District, Area, World Service Office
- Other Al-Anon/Alateen-related announcements

## The Meeting Program

Some groups have a Program Chairperson who presents the topic for group discussion; otherwise, the Chairperson introduces the speakers or the subject to be considered. (See “Meeting Ideas.”)

Large groups may divide into smaller sessions for the meeting discussion and come back together at a given time for the “Suggested Al-Anon/Alateen Closing.”

## Passing the Basket

*At some point during the program, voluntary contributions are made, following this statement by the Chairperson or Treasurer:*

“We have no dues or fees; according to our Seventh Tradition, ‘Every group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.’ We do this through our own voluntary contributions by passing the basket to cover group expenses, including rent, purchase of literature and support of our service arms. We contribute in gratitude for what we have received from Al-Anon.”

## Suggested AI-Anon/Alateen Closing

In closing, I would like to say that the opinions expressed here were strictly those of the person who gave them. Take what you liked and leave the rest.

The things you heard were spoken in confidence and should be treated as confidential. Keep them within the walls of this room and the confines of your mind.

A few special words to those of you who haven't been with us long: Whatever your problems, there are those among us who have had them, too. If you try to keep an open mind, you will find help. You will come to realize that there is no situation too difficult to be bettered and no unhappiness too great to be lessened.

We aren't perfect. The welcome we give you may not show the warmth we have in our hearts for you. After a while, you'll discover that though you may not like all of us, you'll love us in a very special way—the same way we already love you.

Talk to each other, reason things out with someone else, but let there be no gossip or criticism of one another. Instead, let the understanding, love, and peace of the program grow in you one day at a time.

Will all who care to, join me in closing with the \_\_\_\_\_ prayer?

***It is suggested that groups close in a manner that is agreeable to the group conscience. Many groups say the AI-Anon Declaration after their closing.***

## AI-Anon Declaration

*Let It Begin with Me*

When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help,  
let the hand of AI-Anon and Alateen  
always be there, and—*Let It Begin with Me.*