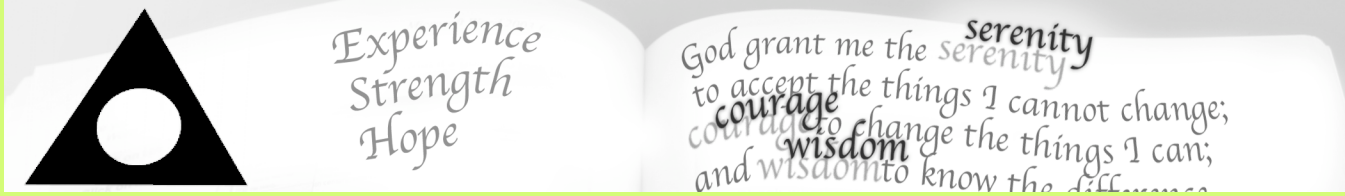


# Hello, Higher Power Speaking.



District 14 Al-Anon Newsletter #5

December, 2007

**Here are your stories. Here is our experience, strength and hope.**

## Change and Willingness

Sometimes, I find a bit of clarity and I can see myself as I am, fearlessly and without judgment. At these times, I can see behaviors that don't serve my serenity and wellness; in fact, they're downright self-destructive. When I recognize this, it is the first step towards becoming willing to change.

Willingness to change can also derive from experiencing pain. When I was about 8, my younger brother caught his first fish. As we walked along the lake's edge, he dragged the fish across dry, rocky, hard-baked dirt, and I noticed that the fish was still alive. Its outer skin became shredded and bloody. I howled and cried and pleaded with my family to put the fish back in the water, but they wouldn't. It was one of the most intense memories of my childhood. When I think of pain, I often flash back to that fish.

For me, the collision of my Higher Power's will and my will is like that fish getting dragged in the dirt. The more resistance I put up, the more pain I experience. I believe pain is my Higher Power's way of redirecting me and making me willing. My choice is either to become willing on my own by working my program, or become willing as a result of pain. When I've chosen to learn the hard way and can no longer tolerate the pain; this is Step One. I then become willing to surrender.

With the help of my Higher Power, I am learning that instead of meeting change with dread, resistance, and negative thoughts, I can open my heart with trust and the knowledge that what is here now, in this moment, is everything I need. I try to remember that the change I'm resisting now may turn out to be the best thing that ever happened to me. The thing is, I don't know. Accepting that I don't know is a step towards humility. The serenity that I get in return is like standing in a wide open meadow above a deep blue sky. I find so much freedom and love in this space. When I feel that, I know I am aligned with my Higher Power.

~ Kim S.

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## Alcohol: for J

This is a mean, ugly death,  
worse than cancer  
and it takes ten times longer  
and you walk through it all alone.  
You've said goodbye to everyone  
a long time ago  
and everyone has pretty well  
written you off too.  
I love you

At least you did what you wanted  
I think,  
or, same thing,  
what the disease wanted.  
I love you

There will be no memorial  
except this  
because no one wants to remember  
except me,  
and the only good thing I can  
say about it  
is that it's over.

I love you

~ Anonymous

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## Space to Breathe

If we get through the moment, the day takes care of itself.

When the uncomfortable feelings of fear, disappointment, or anxiety come up in the course of my adult day, I'm instantly in the position of choosing to respond from a place of childhood insecurity and confusion, or from a place of adult recovery with tools. Growing up with alcoholism, I often felt like a powerless, victimized kid well into adulthood. My recovery through Al-Anon has given me lots of tools to get me out of the "victim position" before I start sliding down that dark, slippery slope.

My favorite tool is the 11th step. "Asking only for knowledge his will for us and the power to carry it out" quickly changes my thinking and then my feelings. I'm no longer alone with a challenging situation. I'm with my Higher Power, in communication, asking for assistance. This changes my childhood position of lonely confusion, opening up the possibilities recovery has given me. I'm no longer powerless and stuck without an escape hatch. I'm tapping into the power that is greater than me, that is constantly available to me now that I have worked the steps.

But most of all, doing the 11th step under duress gives me space to breathe. I remember that I am an adult with re-

covery. I have options. I can relax. I don't have to figure everything out alone. I can let go and let God and move on to the next moment of my day. When I say the 11th step, it reminds me of all the situations that I thought were hopeless, but instead miraculously worked out when I let go and asked for help from my Higher Power. This opens up room for that sneaky gratitude. It completes the circle of escape from feeling like a powerless child in an adult body.

What a gift the steps are, especially the 11th.

~ **Maureen**

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Feelings are not facts.

~ **The Sloganeer**

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### Ongoing Calendar Events for 2007

**District 14 Speaker Meeting.** 4th Saturday, 6:30–9PM., Refreshments, Birthday Chips & Literature Sales. Walnut Creek Kaiser, Medical Office Building, 1515 Newell, 3rd Floor Oak Conference Room. Contact: Maureen 925/212–4621.

**District 6 Birthday-Speaker Meeting.** Last Friday, 7:00 – 8:15 PM Kaiser Hospital (3rd floor Rooms C & D) Vaca-Valley Parkway, Vacaville. Contact: Carl S. 707–864–1193 or carlsil@msn.net

**District 12 Speaker Meeting.** 2nd Sunday, 7:00 PM. Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church. Diamond Heights @ Addison, San Francisco. Contact: Tom K. 415–759–7404.

**District 15 Fellowship Event.** Last Saturday, 6:30 to 9:30 PM. Pot Luck and Speaker Meeting. AA, Alateen and Al-Anon Speakers. Broadmoor Community Church, 301 Dowling Blvd., San Leandro.

**District 16 Speaker Meeting.** 2nd Saturday, 8:00 PM St. Clare's Episcopal Church, 3350 Hopyard Rd, Pleasanton. Contact Suzzane: suelovinglife@yahoo.com

**District 17 Birthday Speaker Meeting.** 3rd Friday, 5:30 PM Cedar Blvd Neighborhood Church 38325 Cedar Blvd, Fellowship Hall downstairs, Newark. Contact: Jenn H. jennhutchin@comcast.net

**District 26 Open Speaker Meeting.** First Saturday, 6:30 to 8:00 PM. Northbrae Community Church, 941 The Alameda (near

Solano Ave), Berkeley. Gallery Room, upstairs from rear parking lot.

### One-Time Calendar Events for 2007–08

Check web site for a complete listing:  
[http://www.ncwsa.org/cal-2007\\_Events.html](http://www.ncwsa.org/cal-2007_Events.html)

**NCWSA Convention Alateen Fundraiser**  
February 2nd, 2008, 1–4 PM  
Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church  
580 Trinity Drive, Vacaville  
Contact: Darlene 707/494–9682

**District 14 Day in Al-Anon**  
February 9, 2008, 8–5 PM  
San Ramon Valley Methodist Church  
902 Danville Boulevard, Alamo  
Contact: Al D. 925/250–3478

**NCWSA Annual Convention**  
"On the Wings of Recovery"  
Al-Anon & Alateen with AA Participation  
April 4–6, 2008. Beach Resort Monterey  
2600 Sand Dunes Drive, Monterey  
Contact: Kim H., 831/277–3994  
rdrb@mbay.net

**37th Annual Hospital and Institution Conference with Al-Anon Participation**  
April 25–27, 2008. Sheraton Gateway Hotel  
600 Airport Blvd., Burlingame, CA  
Contact: Louise M. Ikmore@earthlink.net  
or call 408/266–4200

### **District 16 Day in Al-Anon**

April 26, 9–4 PM. Workshops, meetings, potluck. Childcare is available. Guest Speaker: Leslie N., Olympia, WA. Trinity Lutheran Church, 1225 Hopyard Road, Pleasanton. Contact: Heidi 925/413–3126 heidramor@yahoo.com; Karin 925/519–6362

### **26th Annual Growing Together Weekend** May 16th-18

Westminster Woods Conference Center  
Occidental, CA  
Contact: Melanie F. 408–309–3623

**Al-Anon International Convention**  
"Connecting People Around The World"  
July 4–6, 2008, Pittsburg, PA. Special series of service workshops. Thu July 3; Space is limited. Registration: \$105 by 12/31/07. \$125 by 5/31/2008. \$150 at the door. See [www.al-anon.org/members](http://www.al-anon.org/members) for online registration.

Please tell us your stories. When we get enough, we'll put out another newsletter. So get crackin'.

Direct any comments, questions, requests for the submission guidelines or excess serenity to your editors: Scott L. and David L. at: **district14newsletter@yahoo.com**

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