

Hello, Higher Power Speaking.



District 14 Al-Anon Newsletter #10

Dec, 2008

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

Countering HALT

I'm often reminded of the importance of self-care. During those years living with alcoholism, I didn't consider it very important. Al-Anon has taught me that I am responsible for myself and not others. I have become better at self-care. Now when I'm feeling funky, I can ask myself: am I hungry, angry, lonely or tired?

Here is my list of things I do in order to stay balanced and out of HALT:

- Eat health foods.
- Get enough sleep.
- Connect to people in the fellowship, and invite new people in.
- Exercise (I find rides on my bike to be wonderful).
- Spend more time taking care of the affairs of my household.
- Eliminate energy drains – things I want cleaned up but never seem to get to.
- Focus on the things I can change.
- Have hobbies (like a good book to read), especially things I can do by myself. This reinforces my ability to be comfortable alone, which is part of my recovery.
- Learn new things.
- Connect with my HP; take the time each morning to invite God into my day and ask for guidance. As I become more dependent on my relationship with my Higher Power, the blessings that come from this approach have been many.

When I take better care of myself, I feel greater self-worth, and with that comes more dignity, clarity and serenity. In *Hope for Today*, it says, "...Serenity often comes and goes in my life depending on the effort I put into welcoming it or pushing it away. I can't will serenity, but I can create an environment where it's more likely to blossom."

~ Kim S.

Attitude

One of the wonderful gifts of this program is learning

that only I can control my attitude. I can choose to be sul- len, angry, cheerful or empathic and no one else has the capacity to cause me to choose how I may feel at any given time. I can also learn to laugh at myself.

One stormy morning I had to get up quite early to catch the first train to Bakersfield. Getting up early is not a wonderful part of the day for me, and I was automatically cranky. My attitude was the polar opposite of cheerful. Then it was off to a restaurant for breakfast in driving rain. My eggs were overcooked, the toast cold and the coffee tepid. I did not have enough time to have them try again, so my grumbling accelerated. My muttering continued all the way to the station in Martinez.

The train came in and I looked for a seat on the right side facing forward – nuts. They were all taken. Muttering and grumbling continued anon (not Al-Anon, just anon). Growing up, it was my practice to blame others for my problems. Even after twenty-one years of working the program, this strong imprint can erode my attitude if I let it.

Suddenly, I began to feel my Al-Anon program trying to kick in, and I was torn between feeling sorry for poor me and realizing that this is not the end of the civilized world as I knew it. Still, I wanted to blame others for my problems.

As I travelled along on the train, the first glimmers of program came to me and I began to question my sour mood. I noticed that small rays of sunshine began to creep out from beneath the rainy, overcast sky. The stormy weather and intermittent light perfectly captured how I was feeling at that moment. Then I noticed something extraordinary.

As I looked to the north, two gorgeous rainbows appeared in the increasing sunlight. They were brilliant and I could easily follow both arcs. Then it hit me – my Higher Power was sending me a message: "Gene, you can be sour if you want to, but why not look at this beauty and reconsider how you wish to feel?" It was an invitation I have had before, one I have learned to recognize. It was one of those moments when I laughed at myself for feeling so much self-pity. I was able to set all it aside and celebrate the beauty of the moment. The rest of my journey that day

was beautiful, and as I travelled south, the clouds gave way to sunshine and warmth. As a friend of mine says, "Welcome to another day in paradise".

My attitude is truly something only I can control. When I feel the need to blame others or let insignificant issues crowd out the real beauty in my life, I just need to open myself up to messages like the one I had received on the train. It is what I tell those I sponsor – learn how to "tune in." Next time you are feeling inclined to blame others, you may wish to look around and tune in as well.
~ Gene

Believing In Miracles

I almost stopped believing in miracles. The pieces of my life were crumbling in front of me and my mind was clouded with worries and resentments. There was no serenity in my life. I was losing my marriage and I couldn't see that I was a part of the problem. It was then that I found Al-Anon.

I had gone reluctantly to see what they offered, but I was still dubious about what they had to say. Many had

suggested to me that I would find help there and I wondered how this could be. I had tried so hard to control things in my marriage so my qualifier wouldn't use but the results were always the same. I had no control and I was powerless. That was a humbling feeling.

I had no expectations for saving my marriage when I came to Al-Anon. I came only because I was in pain and I sought the support of others who were also suffering. Something happened when I got to Al-Anon. It was a wakeup call that changes needed to start with me. The Do's and Don'ts list became my bible and I began to focus on myself.

Changes didn't happen overnight. Gradually, things started getting better. I wasn't constantly monitoring my qualifier. Instead, I was busy going to meetings, getting a sponsor and working the Twelve Steps. I realized I could not stop my qualifier if he wanted to use, and so I let go. That's when the miracle happened. As I began changing, I noticed that my qualifier started becoming better also. Today, after 2½ years in Al-Anon, I can thank the program for giving me all the tools to help save my marriage.

~ Joan R.

Ongoing Calendar Events for 2008

District 14 Speaker Meeting. 4th Saturday. 6:30–9PM., Al-Anon, Alateen and AA Speakers. 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. 707–631–9171 or carlsilva@comcast.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. Contact: Terry vE. 510–276–2302.

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 Saturday. 5:30 PM Cedar Blvd Neighborhood Church 38325 Cedar Blvd, Fellowship Hall downstairs, Newark. Contact: Jenn H. jennhutchin@comcast.net

One-Time Calendar Events for 2008

Check web site for a complete listing:
http://www.ncwsa.org/cal-2007_Events.html

District 23 Holiday Luncheon & Crafts Faire. "A Cup of Comfort." December 6, 8–5 PM. The Live Oak Grange. 1900 17th Avenue, Santa Cruz. Event Chair: Adreinne M. 831/688–0266.

NCWSC Committee Meeting
February 6–7, 2009. Courtyard Marriott. 175 Railroad Street, Santa Rosa. 800/321–2211 or 707/573–9000. Use code "NCWNCWA" for double doubles. Use code "NCWNCWB" for king beds. \$99 per room plus 11% room tax thru 1/6/2009.

District 14 Day in Al-Anon
with AA and Alateen Participation. "Serenity In Motion". A Day of Sharing and Caring. February 14, 2009, 8–4:30 PM. San Ramon Valley United Methodist Church. 902 Danville Blvd, Alamo. Potluck Lunch, Entertainment, Donation Raffle, Fellowship; Childcare provided. For more info or service opportunities. Contact: Bill G. 925/864–2343. Scott L. 510/812–1699. This event meets NCWSA Requirements for Alateen Member Safety.

XV Reunion Nacional Al-Anon
Para Hijos Adultos en USA. "Escalando hacia la cima de la recuperacion". En Español, 27–29 de Marzo 2009. Radisson Hotel Denver, Stapleton Plaza. 3333 Quebec St., Denver, CO 80207. Menciona Al-Anon Hijos Adultos para descuento especial costo. regular 2 camas \$99.00

Fetcha limite de registracion 10 de Marzo 2009.

Pacific Region Alcoholics Anonymous Service Assembly (PRAASA) 2009
with Al-Anon participation. March 6–8, 2009 Marriott City Center Hotel. 1001 Broadway, Oakland, CA. www.praasa.org

27th Annual Growing Together Weekend "Together We Can Make It". May 15–17, 2009. Westminster Woods Conference Center. Occidental, CA. Contact: Jeff G., 925/846–8979 or jeff.g.2009.gtw.chair@comcast.net. This event meets the NCWSA Requirements for Alateen Member Safety.

38th Annual AA Hospital and Institution Conference with Al-Anon Participation. May 29–31, 2009. Littleton Civic Center. 420 Civic Dr., Galt, CA. Contact: Louise M. 408/266–4200

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:
district14newsletter@yahoo.com

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