

# SUNSHINER



The newly revised  
Service Manual is  
posted on

[al-anon.org](http://al-anon.org)



## Area 10 Reports

Please go to the  
following link to see  
all reports for all  
Area Meetings

[http://  
www.southfloridaal-  
anon.org/  
servicemainpage/  
members-documents/](http://www.southfloridaal-anon.org/servicemainpage/members-documents/)



## Gratitude and Love

I signed my oldest son's birthday card with a "Love you all". I did not know it would become a traditional salute from me to my children, or some of them. I received a mother's day gift from my youngest daughter; a robe with the "Love you all" stitched on it, I was speechless; I cried tears of joy. I always questioned the love of my children to me even though they have been offering me their love; the way they learned how to show love. I started attending Al-Anon when they were young. I went to meetings almost every day, I got a sponsor who kept reminding me that I was the captain of the ship. She was referring to keep going with the family, do not despair, the miracles are coming. she knew how important my family was to me. I was frustrated because I did not know how to balance raising them while growing up myself. Some of them tried Alateen, but sadly, they did not stay. This is a family disease, I know it brings lots of broken dreams and broken families. I worked on my steps and traditions. I made my amends to every one of my children and I changed the behaviors that caused them sadness and frustration. My oldest son has broken family ties. He is not emotionally available to us, I hope and pray for it one day, on my higher power's time, not mine; I put him on God's hands. I kept the ship afloat for as long as I could with the love, peace and understanding that my program has offered me. Love you all!

Belkis T.—Dist 189

## A woman named Lois

I didn't arrive at my first Al-Anon meeting in a traditional way. I was actually duped into attending under the ruse that it would "really help my wife's program if I attended some Al-Anon meetings." Boy did I take the bait.....

When my wife first got sober, I thought all our problems had been solved. I was so certain of it that I decided to "take an active role" in her AA program. I kept track of the number of meetings she went to and how often she spoke to her sponsor. I would often "help" by suggesting that she

call her sponsor or go to a meeting when I observed behaviors that I felt warranted it. I was very "helpful."

One day while meeting with her sponsor Lois, my wife lamented that I was very much in her business and was really driving her nuts. Her sponsor suggested they utilize my need to "help" as a way to get me into Al-Anon and off of her back. When my wife came home that day she said to me, "I think it would really 'help me' if you would go to some Al-Anon meeting.s" My response was immediate, "Of course I'll go to some meetings if you think it will help YOU."

In Al-Anon, I discovered that my "help" was really a form of control and driven by my fear of her drinking again. I learned that I was powerless over the alcohol and that no amount of "helping" on my part was going to do one thing to prevent my wife from drinking again. Instead, I learned to focus on me and my own behaviors. When I started to look at myself and my role in our relationship, it was quite an eye opener. Not only was I not helping her, but I had certainly been contributing to her issues for a very long time.

I have now been in Al-Anon for a while now and have discovered a life more beautiful than I ever dreamed of. Keeping focused on me and the things I actually have any control over (my words, deeds and reactions) has allowed me to grow in ways I could have never predicted. Working my Al-Anon Program and allowing my wife to work her AA program has brought us closer and healed our lives.

My wife and I had lunch with Lois and her husband a few weeks ago and we were laughing at the trickery they used to get me into Al-Anon. Between chuckles at ourselves and how far we have come I took the time to thank Lois for giving me such an amazing gift. Al-Anon is the greatest gift anyone ever gave me. How ironic that a woman named Lois was responsible for me coming to Al-Anon.

Mitch H. Dist 150



The opinions expressed in this newsletter are strictly those of the person who gave them.

Take what you like and leave the rest.



## Get To Know Panel 58



### STEP 6 SHARING

Step 6 made the most practical changes in my life and truly made me ready to have God remove my defects of character. For these changes, I am truly grateful for step 6.

Since I was a child, I had always been messy, really messy, not in my appearance, but in my living spaces. However, I wasn't a kid that didn't clean. Quite the contrary. As the story goes, there was a time that my father told my mom she was not good housekeeper, so she developed a resentment and the cleaning fell to me. She cleaned the kitchen as she was always a cook, but the remainder was me, bathrooms, upstairs, downstairs, etc. So for me, keeping my room messy was my way to control something and a way to thumb my nose at my parents for the work I had to do.

Unfortunately, I carried this terrible habit through my schooling and into my marriage. Also unfortunate, when I met my husband, I met my messy match, and the mess came to another alcoholic household, growing new resentments between my husband and me and causing our son, and later sons, to live in a completely messy house.

As I started working through this step, I started to feel compelled to clean and organize. As happens with all the steps as I work them, I also began to have a visualization of a drain with water going down it. At first, this visualization scared me as I originally thought and felt that it was me, my life, going down the drain as we were having terrible financial difficulties and my husband was again in early sobriety due to a relapse about a year earlier. But somehow, it got me to the sink and I started doing the dishes every night, which was no easy feat. It would sometimes take until 12 or 1 o'clock in the morning, mentally forcing myself to physically do the work, praying as I went, listening to Al-Anon speakers as I went, telling myself "first things first", to keep picking up and washing 1 dish after another, doing whatever it took to clean those dishes and clean the table and counters. After I was able to do that consistently, I was able to start working in the living room and other areas of the house.

During this time, I was careful to not force any of this on my husband and son so as to not allow any resentments affect my progress, even as the effort appeared to be ignored by my husband. As I started to achieve cleanliness week after week, the mysteries of step 6 revealed themselves to me and I was able to work through the step. I have come to understand my visualization of a drain had both practical and literary meaning, I needed to stare at that kitchen drain, washing those dishes, doing the work and symbolically, I needed to wash this habit out, down the drain, to move forward.

By the time I finished the work on this step, I had finally become ready to have God remove all my defects of character. This is reflected in my answer to one of the questions in *Paths to Recovery*, that asked: "How can I look at all these characteristics from a fresh point of view today?" To which I answered, "If I can keep the house clean, I can do and recover from anything."

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### **My sponsor *ALWAYS* says...**

- ◆ Record a message on your phone from your "recovering you" to your "struggling inner child" of the past. Let her know you and your HP will always be there.
- ◆ Breathe First! How important is it? Then do a gratitude list.
- ◆ "If you spat it, you got it is for the positive attributes too, not just the negative ones!
- ◆ "Facie it, trace it, erase it."
- ◆ "Keep it simple"
- ◆ "More will be revealed"
- ◆ Be obedient to Al-Anon principles and live with slogans that apply to your issues, one day at a time.
- ◆ "Acceptance."
- ◆ "Always keep it in the I."
- ◆ "Be kind to yourself."
- ◆ I've learned that things do not happen to me, they happen for me.
- ◆ Unrealistic expectations are not unrealistic because they are not good, they are unrealistic because the other person is not capable of fulfilling that expectation.
- ◆ "When I got busy, I got better." Leaning the Al-Anon way has given me more peace and gratitude than I would ever found if I had stayed "out there." Service is the tool that I latched on to. My sponsor continues to support and encourage me, saying, "carry the message and it will carry you."
- ◆ Just keep trying and attending meetings. It takes time but it will get better.
- ◆ Stand for any position that I am eligible for, my HP will decide for me.

*Those golden words of wisdom, which at times, you may think your sponsor actually has on a tape recorder.*





## Participation is the Key to Harmony

### Panel 61 is right around the corner:

What service position is your Higher Power calling out to you

Group elections should be in August, District elections should be in September, Area elections will be held in October—will you be the new incoming Group Representative

Check out the Area Website for information about up-coming positions at [www.southfloridaal-anon.org](http://www.southfloridaal-anon.org)

Any questions ask your current Group Representative, District Representative or email one of the Area Coordinators or Officers.



### Announcements

**Al-Anon's First Official Mobile App!!!** - visit [al-anon.org/mobileapp](http://al-anon.org/mobileapp): social app, platform, electronic meetings, keep Al-Anon Journal and information from WSO

**Sharings Needed:** WSO is in need of sharings for the *Forum*. Send all sharings to WSO.

**WSO Needs Help:** WSO is looking for an Al-Anon member with professional Spanish copyediting and translation experience. Please contact WSO.

## *Calendar of Events*

- ◆ August 15, 2020 **Summer AWSC Meeting**

Via Zoom

- ◆ October 16-18, 2020 **Fall Assembly/Election Meeting**

Embassy Suites Fort Myers 10450 Corkscrew Commons Dr Estero FL 33928

- ◆ November 14, 2020 **Turnover Meeting**

Embassy Suites Fort Myers 10450 Corkscrew Commons Dr Estero FL 33928

- ◆ August 20-22, 2021 **South Florida Al-Anon Convention**

Bonaventure Resort & Spa 250 Racquet Club Rd Weston, Florida 33326





## CAL Corner:

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And, that statement remains true today. I still keep the house clean, washing the dishes every day, with exceptions that I no longer beat myself up about.

The status of the dishes is now a guidepost to me, if the sink is full and I am not feeling like doing them, that is when I need to focus and wash them and see what is going on that has broken my routine. I also view these cleaning habits as part of my amends to my husband and children. It is a symbol of my progress and making a clean, healthy space for them to grow, play and work on themselves as we work together as a family.

Virginia G., Dist. 180,



### **Concentrating on the Positive**

It is possible for a person to change one's attitudes, behavior and action whether or not the alcoholic is sober. The desire to improve has to come from within the individual. However, I think this is far easier when the alcoholic is also in recovery. Self-inventory is not easy. I'd tried for years to climb out of my familiar rut. I'd been in it for so long it had actually become almost comfortable and I kept slipping back down, repeating the same old habit again and again. Sometimes I wondered if getting out was worth the effort. However, little by little, I gained ground and was heartened.

Brief respites of sobriety amid endless years of drinking lifted my spirits temporarily, only to be dashed when drinking resumed. Discouraged by my failure to change him, I finally heard what my Al-Anon friends had been saying all along. I must throw in the towel, confess that I was powerless over everyone but myself and, with the help of my Higher Power, start working on me. I discovered I had influence over my own attitudes which didn't necessarily have to correspond with anyone else's. I tried to detach though at first I was clumsy and didn't do it in a loving way. Eventually I acquired the knack and was able to become much more composed, even when situations seemed overwhelming.

In time, I came to realize my justifications had only been excuses to do things my way and that my way wasn't always the right way! Soon after, I discovered I was occasionally having periods of serenity even when things were actually rather hectic all around me. I almost felt ashamed, yet would remind myself he had a choice as well as I, and that I didn't have to feel miserable just because he wasn't yet ready to seek help. Attending as many Al-Anon meetings as possible helped. As I detached from the alcoholic's actions, my attention centered more on our children and myself. I began listening to them, attempting to refrain from the screaming which had become a part of me for far too long. Beginning to interact in a more loving, positive way, planning and doing things together was good for us. I no longer focused our entire family's attention on him. As the children joined Alateen, we were growing together and many times we'd remind each other of pertinent slogans or phrases that fit the occasion.

I never tried to exclude my spouse. Before leaving on an outing, he was invited to join us. Sometimes he did but more often than not he declined and we just went and enjoyed ourselves. I concentrated more on the positives and our many blessings. We had seven healthy children. He'd been there to take me to the hospital when each was born, and he'd been present at each high school graduation. It wasn't necessary to remember all the negatives. When I did that, I was just reliving them; confronting them once had been bad enough!

Our children are now all grown and have been out of the home for many years. My husband has been sober nearly two years. It was a long wait but it's been well worth it! I believe that Al-Anon, a God-given program, helped me in raising my children. Learning I had choices both in word and thought, as well as in action, was a revelation. I feel good about myself most of the time. I know I'm growing and will be as long as I live. I'm not afraid to express my thoughts; they don't have to correspond with everyone else's—they're mine. I have countless blessings and thank God each day for His many gifts!

Anne R., New York

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## **Big Island of Serenity Convention has been postponed to August 20-22, 2021**

South Florida AFG members.....mark your calendars! Florida South will be hosting a convention on August 20, 21 and 22, during 2021.

We can begin to anticipate an even better and bigger convention in 2021. That's right, the Big Island of Serenity has and will be planning a fantastic convention next year.

The executive convention committee thanks all the sub-committee chairs for the service they have provided in the last six months and we are pleased that most will continue their participation at our 2021 convention.

The convention executive committee has successfully re-negotiated a new contract with the Bonaventure Hotel & Spa in Weston Florida. All registrations are brought forward to the forthcoming convention. Please cancel your hotel registration to make sure you will not be charged.

A new flyer will be forthcoming and will feature our Saturday meal plan and all the amenities that we had planned for 2020.

We appreciate all the time and interest of everyone involved and to HP for guiding us along this rocky path. There will be an even better convention next year to look forward to. Please plan to join us.

Yours in Service  
Big Island Of Serenity Convention Committee





Area 10 Mailing Address:  
 Florida South Area 10, Inc.  
 Po Box 1676  
 Jensen Beach, FL 34958-1676  
 Website:  
[www.southfloridaal-anon.org](http://www.southfloridaal-anon.org)

Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc.  
 1600 Corporate Landing Parkway  
 Virginia Beach, VA 23454-5617  
 Phone: (757) 563-1600

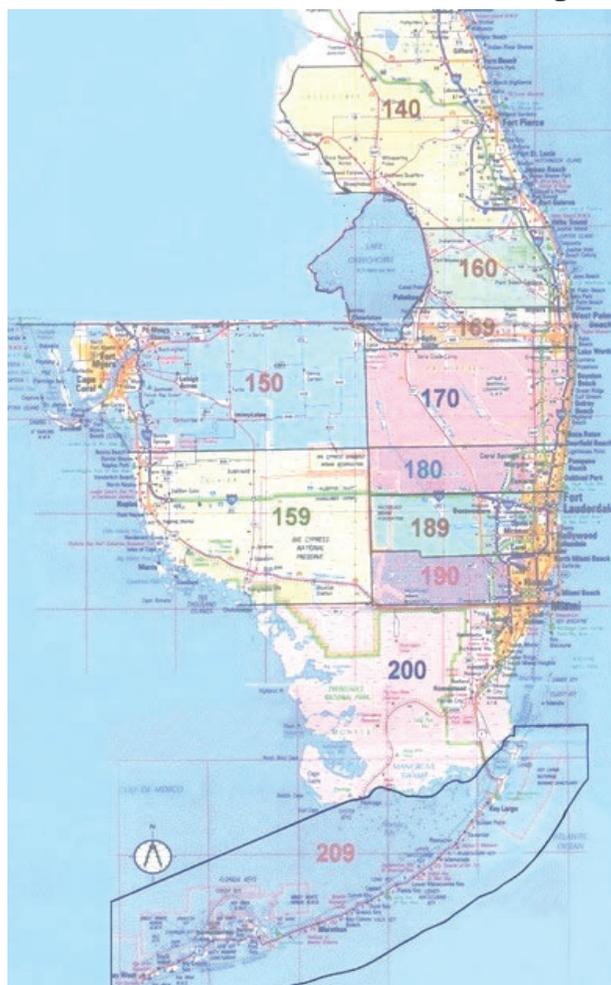
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 answers to questions, quotes your Al-Anon  
 Sponsor always says, comments, feedback,  
 and suggestions to:



[newsletter@afgfls.com](mailto:newsletter@afgfls.com)

Next deadline October 1, 2020



The opinions expressed here were strictly those of the person who gave them. Take what you liked and leave the rest.

## Panel 58 Officers & Coordinators

Chair	Pat K.	<a href="mailto:chair@afgfls.com">chair@afgfls.com</a>
Delegate	Cheryl A.	<a href="mailto:delegate58@afgfls.com">delegate58@afgfls.com</a>
Alternate Delegate	Diane B.	<a href="mailto:altdelegate@afgfls.com">altdelegate@afgfls.com</a>
Secretary	Juliette L.	<a href="mailto:secretary@afgfls.com">secretary@afgfls.com</a>
Treasurer	Kathy D.	<a href="mailto:treasurer@afgfls.com">treasurer@afgfls.com</a>
AAPP—Interim	Kathy H.	<a href="mailto:aapp@afgfls.com">aapp@afgfls.com</a>
Immediate Past Delegate	Pat K.	<a href="mailto:delegate55fls@gmail.com">delegate55fls@gmail.com</a>
Alateen	Stu D.	<a href="mailto:Alateen@afgfls.com">Alateen@afgfls.com</a>
Archives	Kathleen L.	<a href="mailto:archives@afgfls.com">archives@afgfls.com</a>
Group Records	Andy M.	<a href="mailto:grouprecords@afgfls.com">grouprecords@afgfls.com</a>
Literature	Laura B.	<a href="mailto:literature@afgfls.com">literature@afgfls.com</a>
Newsletter	Nadine A.	<a href="mailto:newsletter@afgfls.com">newsletter@afgfls.com</a>
Public Outreach	Norma P.	<a href="mailto:publicoutreach@afgfls.com">publicoutreach@afgfls.com</a>
Spanish	Terri M.	<a href="mailto:spanish@afgfls.com">spanish@afgfls.com</a>
Web	Scott B.	<a href="mailto:webmaster@afgfls.com">webmaster@afgfls.com</a>
2021 Convention Chair	Debbie V.	<a href="mailto:bioschair@gmail.com">bioschair@gmail.com</a>