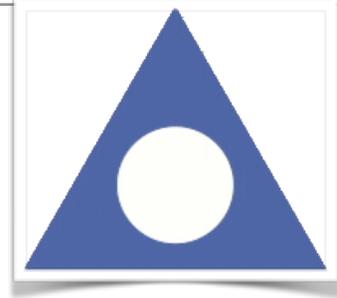


One Day at A Time

Stories of recovery, news, and fun in the Marin County Fellowship



A SPECIAL Gift — District 11 Shares from the 2014 Spring Retreat

In This Issue

<u>Treating Myself Lovingly</u>	1
<u>The Only Difference...</u>	2
<u>April 12, 2014!!!!</u>	3
<u>Those \$#@ Letters</u>	3
<u>The Essence of My Recovery</u>	4
<u>News</u>	4



Treating Myself Lovingly

by Stella

Looking back over the past year, I realized that my first stumbling block actually showed up right on the parking lot outside at the end of the last retreat.

I was rushing to get ready for home. I dropped my luggage into the trunk and along with it the key to the car, which belonged to a fellow member who had kindly offered me and two others a ride. AAA came and could open the car, but not the trunk. I scrambled to flip through the yellow pages calling all the dealers but none were open on Sunday. All along, there was a voice in my head, "You are so stupid." My fellow riders were very calm. There was no blame, not even the slightest unhappiness or impatience. One of them was able to find a service guy who could come from San Jose. Everyone else was waving goodbye. We were sitting in the car, chatting away, exchanging car stories and bursting out laughs. An hour later, the guy showed up. It took him a minute. We were on our way and the beautiful sunset escorted us home.

Growing up in an environment full of criticism and self-criticism, such became my way of living. This was a new experience for me. My fellow members showed me a different way of handling life's challenges: a gentle and loving approach. I liked it and I wanted it.

Lovingly continues on p. 2

Are You Registered?
DAY IN AL-ANON
Saturday June 14.
Deadline for dinner is June 6.
\$20 to Marin AFG
249 Humboldt St. San
Rafael, Ca 94901





Photo courtesy of Patty T.

The Difference Between Stepping Stones & Stumbling Blocks? The Way We Use Them.

by Dalit B.

I call this past year my year of the 3 Cs — challenges, courage, and conquering. This past year I have travelled by myself to the other side of the world and was on my own for a couple of weeks. I have set hard boundaries with my family of origin, and today our relationship couldn't be better. But the most challenging and painful was my ending

a friendship of many years. I had been hanging on to this relationship out of fear. Fear of being lonely, and unloved, and not included. It's been a fear that goes beyond ending a relationship because this person has been a connection to my country and my heritage. I was afraid to lose that as well. Who would I belong to? It wasn't just losing a friend; it was losing one of my identities. The process to healing is long, raw, and painful. Each is a stepping stone towards healing. At times, it seems my stepping stones have been facing the opposite direction I want to take. Sometimes I step onto a slippery one, and I stumble and fall. Sometimes I must come down from a mountain, into the valley, just so that I can climb a higher mountain.

However, I know that my Higher Power has strategically placed each stepping stone in order. The plan for my life has been laid out. I may not see tomorrow, next year, or 20 years from now, but my Higher Power does. Just as he brings promotions, good breaks, and the right people to my life he also uses adversities, disappointments, and closed doors. He wouldn't do it, unless he had a specific purpose for each stepping stone.

This program, Al-Anon, reminds me of who I am and where I want to go. The trip itself, the steps I travel, offer me daily satisfaction moment by moment if only I would but realize it. Often I keep my sight on the goals, and don't get me wrong. Keeping my eyes on dry land/the destination is not bad, but what about the process? The day-to-day living that makes the completion possible. Those stones we step on while crossing rushing waters towards land. Today, I am still struggling in taking the next step, but God is holding me up on one side, and Al-Anon on the other. I wholeheartedly know that even when a stepping stone is facing the wrong direction, it's strategically placed there as part of the bigger picture.



Lovingly from p. 1

It took conscious efforts to let go of the harsh and rigid thoughts which were like solid rock — hard to be removed. Yet, every bit I could let go, it came with a reward. The rock got turned and paved the way for my next step. I made a change leaving my last job of 10+ years which was prestigious but stressful, and joined a local company that is more relaxed. It's a gift I gave to myself. All of these years, I drove myself to achievement out of fear, out of perfectionism. Now I give myself the time and space to nurture my emotional growth, to laugh and enjoy the beauty around me.

This year, I gave my husband, my qualifier, a birthday card, which describes his many strengths. He kept it to his heart. For him, it's probably a gift of change from many years of begging and blame. For me, if there is a stumbling block there is another opportunity for growth.

April 12, 2014 ! ! ! ! !

by Carol D.

Like so many I can't believe all that has happened this year — both around me and in me.

My older brother who suffered from mental illness committed suicide and my daughter told me she was addicted to heroin. Those were major stumbling blocks for me, but it was seeing the effects of the disease on my 7 year-old granddaughter that brought me to my knees. Filled with fear about her well-being, I was lost in obsession. My mind kept twisting to come up with a solution. My fists were clenched trying to control everything.

Finally in the wee hours one morning, I turned over my daughter, my granddaughter, and myself to my Higher Power. I'd done that many times before, but somehow it was different this time. I was so exhausted and desperate, so ready and willing when I asked God to take all of it.

Over the next couple of days my spirit awakened. I swear the sun was brighter, the leaves on the trees shimmered like silver coins. I felt light and free and joyous. I felt like myself again. I loved that feeling.

So many simple things went from my head to my heart, like judging and criticizing the behaviors and decisions of others keeps me tied to bitterness, resentment, and victimhood. My pride — that I know what is best for everyone — keeps me from the humility I need to be close to my Higher Power. If I turn things over to my Higher Power and then take them back, I lack absolute confidence in that 'Power greater than myself'. Peace is only possible when I accept myself and others. Many things were so clear. Days after all of these epiphanies, I found myself clenching my fists to hold on to that elated feeling I had earlier, and THAT desire to control serenity was destroying my serenity. It truly is progress, not perfection.

Because of what we learn in the FELLOWSHIP of Al-Anon, we can change stumbling blocks into stepping stones. We can open our minds, open our hearts, open our clenched hands, and let "it" go and be in that peace and harmony — just for today!



*Everything you always wanted to know about those *#&@ letters*
Service Positions

THIS:	MEANS:	REFERS TO:
AAPP	Area Al-Anon Process Person	Processes AMAIS applications, background checks and training records; processes Alateen meeting information
AMIAS	Al-Anon Member Involved in Alateen Service	AFG members who make a commitment to train to become and service as sponsors for Alateen members.
DR & ADR	District Representative Alt. District Rep	Oversees an established district in the area. Runs District Meetings regularly, attends the AWSC, and carries the message of Al-Anon from the WSO and Area to the groups through the GRs.
GR & AGR	Group Representative Alt. Group Representative	A member of a meeting who represents the group at the district level and attends District Meetings and Area Assemblies.
IR	Intergroup Representative	Similar to an AGR, but represents the intergroup in the area served — districts 6-10, (greater Sacramento), in Northern California Area.

News

- ◆ **Day in Al-Anon — June 14**
San Rafael Community Center
Brenda G. — 415 577-7163
- ◆ **Clear Lake Nocac Bash**
June 20 to June 22
Nocacchair@ncwsa.org
Darrell R. at 925 895-5028
- ◆ **Pre-Alateen! Kids 8-12 yrs.**
AMAIS (sponsor) adults only.
Saturdays 10:00 — 11:00 a.m.
M.V. Methodist Church.
- ◆ **CHILDCARE IS BACK.**
Corte Madera's room is clean.
Friday 10:00 a.m.
- ◆ **"Open" or "Closed"?** Check it out: <http://www.marinal-anon.org/pages/meetings/what-is-a-closed-meeting.php>

Open Service Positions

D-11 Website Coordinator.

Take a risk! Tim — 415 328-6100
Work with a team to assist in maintenance of D-11 site.

Book Depot Position opens in Sept..

Try it with hands-on test/training
Dalit — 415 233-0013.

- 3 year commitment, yes, but only once/month for 2 hours.
- Requires person who can lift & carry boxes.
- Great for a newbie to meet others.

ELECTRONIC
AL-ANON MEETINGS
ARE AVAILABLE ON
THE INTERNET AND VIA
TELEPHONE. TRY THEM IN
E-MAIL, CHAT, BULLETIN
BOARD, OR TELEPHONE
FORMAT.

<http://www.al->

The Essence of My Recovery in 2013

by Verena

Looking back -- 15 years ago last month, I was forced to come to Al-Anon. I was spiritually bankrupt, angry, raging, and full of fear. The last thing I wanted to hear is that I was sick and that my sickness is called "Co-Dependency". Wow!

Today I am a new woman. I have worked hard; I have found what it takes to become grateful, confident, passionate, and kind. If you had told me even five years ago that my Higher Power, my committee, and I would be in charge of an event for 71 women in Santa Cruz, I would have died laughing!

Today I am here with my Higher Power to overcome many of my fears — fears of speaking in public; fears of being a leader; fears of both success and failure; and fears of being myself. This weekend is definitely the weekend for me to put into practice my deepest trust and faith in God, in all of you, in the fellowship, and into myself that everything is and will turn out just as it is meant to be....

Working with my committee, I am practicing the first and second Traditions -- there is but one Authority -- it is a loving and kind Higher Power who is in charge and He needs to be on top of my Triangle of Recovery and at the Rudder of my sailboat at all times. If he is not at the top or at my rudder I am in deep trouble, my life is unmanageable, and I have to make major attitude adjustments. I have learned that life is 10% about what happens to me, and 90% my attitude.

As it says in the Al-Anon opening -- CHANGED ATTITUDES CAN AID RECOVERY! Thank you so much for being here;

I love you all.



Day in Al-Anon June 14 — Schedule of the Day

12:30	Registration Begins
1:00-2:00	Introductions and Speaker
2:15- 3:15	Improvisations Wkshp. I (Club Room 2 & 3)
2:15-3:15	Beginning Meditation (Club Room 5)
2:15-4:15	Discussion, Al-Anon, AA, & Alateen, Drop-in "Steps & Fear: the Nitty Gritty of My Program"
2:15-4:30	Art Room (Club Room 4), Drop-in
3:30-4:30	Improvisations Wkshp. II (Club Room 2 & 3)
3:30-4:30	Advanced Meditation & Yoga (Club Room 5)
5:00-5:45	Dinner