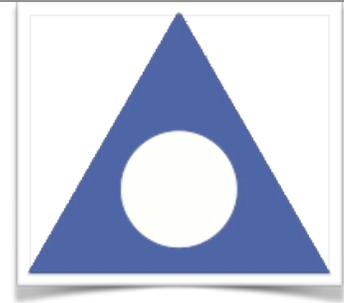




One Day at A Time

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



IN THIS ISSUE

A Miracle	1
12 Steps & Gender, pt. 2	2
Living a Perfectly Imperfect Life	3
News	4



A Miracle

By Carol, April 20, 2013

When I first came to Al-Anon, I had no belief in a power greater than myself. Although I had grown up in a religious family, I abandoned God when events happened that I took as evidence that no power in the universe cared about me.

When my daughter was six weeks old, I took full responsibility for our lives when I realized that my alcoholic husband wasn't going to change. I remember looking at her and saying, "Don't worry. **I'll** take care of you." I relied on no one but myself, and I lived my life in fear for the next 30 years.

I came to Al-Anon almost 5 years ago because my beautiful daughter was addicted to alcohol and prescription drugs. I **finally** faced the fact that I couldn't go it alone.

As a newcomer I shared often that I had a problem with the idea of a Higher Power. One day one of the members looked at me and asked, "Well, Carol, do you think you're God?" That one question got my attention.

First the group became a power I relied on because I always heard just what I needed to hear. I found a sponsor and told her about my lack of faith. She laughed and told me how her sponsor had once called her "God's West Coast Representative" and asked if I wanted the job. She kept **encouraging** me to pray for **willingness**.

Day after day I wrote in my journal the words TRUST, FAITH, TRUST, FAITH. By plugging along I finally developed a relationship with my Higher Power. And because of that trusting relationship, I let go of my loved ones and turned them over to their Higher Power — first my daughter and then my six-year-old granddaughter. That is a miracle.

By turning away from self-will and toward a spiritual path, I have come to have trust, faith, and tremendous gratitude for the force in my life that sustains me through difficult times.

The Twelve Steps and Gender; Standing on Common Ground

By Tim C

The Twelve Steps, written in 1939 by Alcoholics Anonymous and adopted by Al-Anon in 1951, provide the wisdom needed to find freedom from suffering caused by alcoholism. This wisdom is ancient and universal, but its condensation into twelve practical stepping-stones toward spiritual awakening and recovery is a gift from the hard won experience of a small group of "hopeless" alcoholics.

When AA recorded their path to recovery over 75 years ago, referring to God as a male figure was considered normal. This perspective has changed for many people in the years since. Today, many women are discomforted by referring to God as "Him", just as many men would not relate to calling God "Her". Still others are uncomfortable assigning any gender to their Higher Power.

Tradition One states that our common welfare should come first, so Al-Anon invites every member to "Take what you like and leave the rest." Everyone is encouraged to find a relationship with the God of his or her own understanding and not to be distracted from recovery by ideas that do not feel right. The spiritual principles of inclusiveness are taken very seriously. Al-Anon endorses no sect or specific religious tenets. Each individual is responsible for finding his or her own definition of God. This is the essence of recovery - finding the freedom to develop a personal connection to our own Higher Power.

It is unfortunate that the male gender used to refer to God in the Twelve Steps is a barrier for some members, but it is part of the historical legacy that Al-Anon honors. We recognize that times have changed, and so have people's sensitivities. We hope that the meaning of our original language can be redefined in each person's mind and heart to be as inclusive as possible. In line with Concept Four - Participation is the key to harmony - Al-Anon has made a commitment to gender neutrality in all future literature.

As for the past, we will respect the historical record for the roll it played in giving birth to both AA and Al-Anon. We look upon it as important progress, not perfection, and invite all members to participate in an ongoing dialogue to grow together as a community of fellowship and sister-ship.



With only 30% of members at Area concerned about Gender Neutral Language, the NCWSA Task Force decided to table the discussion and disband the Thought Force on Gender Neutral Language. The next step, if this issue is to continue, will have to come from groups.

District 11 encourages every group representative to educate his/her group regarding this issue, and invites all members to review the information and their concerns. Members must let group representative know if they want the District to pursue their concerns at Area, then WSO, level. District Meetings (4th Tues./month) are open to all members and individuals are welcome to attend and share their concerns.

The survey is still on and members are encouraged to share their thoughts at:



[NCWSA.org https://www.ncwsa.org/gender-neutral-survey/](https://www.ncwsa.org/gender-neutral-survey/)



Tim's article regarding the pros/cons and other specifics can be read in the D - 1 1 October ODAT. The Thought Force Pros/Cons will be on [NCWSA.org](https://www.ncwsa.org), as well.

We hope you KEEP COMING BACK. IT WORKS. <https://www.ncwsa.org/surveys/>

Editor



Living a Perfectly Imperfect Life

By Darlene O.

I grew up relatively a happy child. Steeped in Italian traditions. Basically, I was raised by a village of aunts and uncles alike. Love was felt through kisses, cheek pinches, and hugs, as well as many a happy and delicious meal.

I'll begin with my father who lost his dad at the age of 3 and was taken from his mother who lacked the ability to speak the English language. He was raised by nuns in a catholic orphanage in New York. His siblings followed the same course. He was well educated, smart, a sharp business man and had no time for gossip. He suffered from the addiction of perfectionism. No surprise, he demanded the same perfectionism from me and it took on many different forms in my life as well. I never remembered him being affectionate toward me and our relationship was strained until I turned 18.

My mom is a 4'11 and 3/4 " spit-fire of a woman. We call her "fun size". She was my nurturer which made up for the lack there of from my father. Mom had little education and was quite bitter about that. The bitterness had spilled over to other areas of her life and controlling became her middle name. I guess that's how she coped from her low self-esteem. Being the youngest of her siblings she was left behind. Today she is an independent, surprisingly healthy 92 year old fashion plate; and my greatest challenge. I guess I will always be her baby. Currently I'm working on accepting our perfectly imperfect ways with each other. My half-sister is nine years my senior. She was my rock when I was growing up. She was comforting, supportive, and my biggest cheerleader. She gave me what my parents couldn't.

At 24 I married the man of my dreams who I had spied from the age of 16. I thought I had landed my catch, the love of my life. He was so kind and giving. Shortly after we married I realized he was an alcoholic. I felt used and abused, frustrated and angry. I thought of myself as a failure, and "oh my" what would my dad think of me... I wasn't perfect anymore. My 5 year marriage was a mess. I made the family call and a family intervention took place. Little did I know what an intervention was at the time. My husband agreed to get help and 28 years later he never looked back.

We had a daughter and a son following 3 years of sobriety. Our daughter, the "perfect" child, went to college, got her career, married, and blessed us with grandchildren. Our beautiful son grew up healthy, centered, and focused until one day I didn't recognize his wonderful qualities any longer. I was confused and in denial until it hit me right up the side of my head. DRUGS!!! It took a while to understand our powerlessness. My husband and I could have won an academy award for codependency. We projected to the outside world that we were "a nice, normal, family," when in reality life was crumbling around us. In an 8 year period of time we sent our son to behavioral school, several rehabs, and therapy. Nothing was working because we were standing in God's way and didn't realize it. I was exhausted, fatigued, and hit bottom... my ground zero. I began to work my program, Al Anon, which I was introduced to through my son's rehab. I understand my powerlessness and this is truly a God given moment .I begin to cling to my Higher Power who provides me the strength to detach from my son.

Today my son is clean and sober. He has his Higher Power. He is steeped in a 12 step program with a sponsor who is perfectly perfect for him. I am experiencing a sincerely focused young man who is living life deeply. He has made a clear shift in his personality, choices, goals, Physical health, and communication. It's not perfect, but then again what is? I recently texted my son to thank him for all he has given me, beyond what he could ever imagine...My program, my life. His reply was "No thank you for everything you did, even when you were not in my life it helped me to the place I am today". Wow!!!

Today I'm working on me and my challenges. I realize my family does not define me. They are merely an extension of who I am. I have learned to love myself just as I am, and to draw boundaries that protect my peace and serenity. Today I realize I am truly blessed and I am very grateful for all God has provided me.

With Gratitude, Your Al Anon Sister.

News/Alerts

- Elections were held! D-11's new Admin. team begins in 2015 with our **New DR — Congratulations, Darby!**
- Low attendance at the **SR Monday night** topic/literature/discussion group voted to have a **speaker on the 3rd Monday of every month.** We hope to inspire beginners to stay and listen and you to attend.
- SAVE THE DATE April 17th-19th, 2015**
Al-Anon NCWSA 2015 Convention
"Color My World with Recovery"
Doubletree Hotel Modesto. Want to help? Lots of help will be needed during the event and YOU can volunteer. Coordinators to call: Donation Draw Marie 209 579-7747 Greeters/Newcomers April 209 993-1872 Hospitality Line 209 484-0748 Registration Michelle 209 595-7554
- Plan Ahead! May 15 -17, 2015**
33rd Growing Together Weekend!
2015 Westminster woods, Occidental. **GTFW2015@gmail.com** Abides by the NCWSA requirement for Alateen safety

Ways to Connect

- Alcoholics Anonymous** (S.F. & Marin 24-hour Hotline (415) 499-0400 or help@aasf.org Website: www.aasf.org
- Al-Anon Phone Meetings:** 712-432-8733 - code 52639# or www.phonemeetings.org/
- Electronic Al-Anon meetings** Try e-mail, or chat @ <http://www.al-anon.alateen.org/electronic-meetings>
- El grupo "Nuevo Amanecer"** Domingos 9:30-11:00 Mercedez 415-892-6031
- General Al-Anon Web** - <http://www.al-anon.org/>
- Members' Web** - <http://www.al-anon.org/members/> for CAL publications, The Forum, Calendar, blogs, WSC Summary, Service Manual, other newsletters,
- WSC Meeting Information:** (888) 4AL-ANON [425-2666] (8am-6pm Eastern Time M-F)

Public Outreach

The Public Outreach site (www.al-anon.org) and the Members' site (<http://www.al-anon.org/members/user-login>) post a sample chapter of CAL. On the website you will see links to other CAL on current and other topics. If you ever wanted to be a published writer now is the time to write! Every month the Forum features members' shares on how a particular piece of literature has enhanced their recovery, and is asking you to share how your group is using the new soft cover edition of How Al-Anon Works.

Do you prefer a keyboard over pencils? I have 3 words for you: blog, blog, blog. The Member's site has three Legacy blogs that are open for posting, and all postings will be considered for use in the new Legacy workbook currently in development. The blogs are about using Al-Anon's Steps, Traditions, and Concepts in our personal lives. Warm up those fingers and start blogging today!

The Forum can also use some financial support. These are hard economic times but where else can you share 'Recovery, Unity, and Service' right to your doorstep for only 90¢ a month!

Yours in gratitude and service,

Veronica E. - Area Forum/Literature Coordinator

D-11 OPEN SERVICE POSITIONS

