

Green Mountain Sharings

The Bi-Annual Newsletter of Vermont's Al-Anon Family Groups
Vermont's Al-Anon/Alateen Information Center
Spring 2014 Issue

Let's Grow in the Program Together!



Spring into Serenity

"Serenity...is one of the goals we seek for ourselves in Al-Anon.....By practicing the principles of our program, we can achieve inner peace and become capable of realizing far more than we ever imagined." (*How Alanon Works, pgs. 80-81.*)

Sometimes serenity presents as an "AHA" moment, sometimes it slowly creeps up on you. After this challenging winter, please enjoy these stories of experience, strength and hope.

Jo S., GMS Editor

Listening

I have spent a lot of time and effort recently in an attempt to listen more and talk less. I find I enjoy my day and have more serenity when I don't offer my opinion. It is amazing just how much energy I have for myself when I am focused on myself. I ask myself if I really need to express my opinion before I open my mouth. Generally my opinion only muddies the water and has the potential to drown my serenity.

Asking myself how important is it helps me stay on my path to serenity.

Anonymous

GMS Editor: Jo S



Sugar Moon

Sap kicks the bucket
with ancestral pangs,
migration chants,
or pulses, tap to cistern,
in a stream
of consciousness
diffusely sweet.

Our hills stretch
and scratch
their backs on sky.

Thaw draws
the soul through
thick and thin.

Levels shift and
settle. Crows
listen to the sough
in snow and laugh ---
all faults forgiven.

Underfoot,
life softens.

Verandah P.

Contact brings Serenity

When I first came to Al-Anon I didn't think I could ever achieve a level of serenity. One of the first tools I learned was attending meetings on a regular basis. After attending a couple of meetings, THEN I was certain I would never achieve anywhere NEAR the serenity other members shared!

One day I had to call a member for information. Of course I needed a reason to call; I couldn't just call because I was thinking of her; I couldn't just call because I needed or wanted to hear a friendly voice, or needed support or understanding. I needed a concrete reason.

This phone call turned out to be a turning point in my program. I learned that I wanted to reach out more often. It felt good to have contact with another member, someone who understood what I had been through - it actually felt better than the ISOLATION I had become so very good at!!

During one particular conversation she said "read, write, pray, talk". I wrote this on a sticky note and hung it on my desk - where I read, think AND talk on the phone.

While each of these are important, writing and praying seem to be the best tools for keeping me connected to my HP, writing and praying help me keep my priorities in order. For me they form a "unit", a single thing and have helped me achieve a level of serenity I never thought possible. I still have a long way to go, but I am very grateful to be here, and very grateful for this Program.

Anne



GMS Editor: Jo S.



I'm Learning to Adjust my Sails

"I can not control the winds but I have learned to adjust my sails".

In Al-Anon FG I have come to realize that serenity doesn't mean controlling everything outside myself. It does reveal that through caring for myself daily, reaching to my HP, practicing my steps, connecting with meetings and friends that my reaction to unsteadiness or pain in my life has considerably changed. Now, I recognize that I need not join in the confusion & I can be calm within.

My recovery from alcoholism is a journey that I treasure. I know to which direction I am going, but I do not have a destination. Today, what I have is my "primary spiritual aim". This is to help others, period. If they want help, that is. Having a purposeful life is all I ever wanted; this returns me to my youth; I could never find this resolve. Thanks to alcoholism & my need to recover, I uncovered usefulness.

Today I received an acceptance letter to Keene State College and I am interested in my major, Nutrition. I may use the learning to be of service to people, us. I find it truly spectacular to desire to learn & then, to want to share what I

learned. I recall this feeling way, way back in my initial self; the self that existed before I was affected. So I keep coming, continue changing and I return to innocent, the original, and me.

My serenity stems from acceptance of my own character. I am powerless over a lot of things, but this one, the shaping of myself, is one that with guidance, such as sponsorship, 12 steps in my life (journey), and presence at meetings – I am not powerless to change.

Thanks God, for the “courage to change what I can”. Wish me luck, guys ‘cause following school policies was never my forte; I know it’ll be a challenge. My pursuit for progress is strong, so maybe this time around, I can be me & let others be themselves – you know: “Live & Let Live”.

Conceivably, I can provide a platform where those who want assistance may receive my support. This is service. What a gift. Everything meaningful in my life is service. How’s that for an “ah-ha” moment!

In gratitude,
Arlene H.



Dumping Despair

When I walked into my first Al-Anon meeting, I was filled with despair and anger. I was tired. I felt abused. I hated my marriage, but was afraid that it was ending. I saw nothing but a painful road ahead.

GMS Editor: Jo S



At that meeting I saw a pamphlet, “Freedom from Despair.” That was what I was seeking. I read that pamphlet over and over, and at first I couldn’t see any way out. I blamed my wife, I blamed my father, I blamed my sisters. But I kept coming to meetings.

After about six months of complaining, I began to listen. When I listened, I realized that if I was really going to experience freedom from despair, I had to start working the program. I realized that I alone was responsible for my despair, and I alone could remedy it.

When I really listened in meetings, I came to realize that I had a community of people, some of whom had relationships just as turbulent as my own, but they had bravely worked the steps and seemed to find joy and gratitude, even in the face of major challenges. And I realized that I could have that too!

Now, almost five years after my first meeting, I can say honestly that I am a grateful member of Al-anon. I too, can find joy and gratitude whenever I look. Because I read my literature daily, meditate, work with my sponsor, regularly attend meetings, and practice the Al-anon principles in most of my affairs, I am glimpsing the face of serenity. And sometimes that face is my own.

Anonymous

The Topic is Forgiveness

As a member shares
Deaths in her recovery
Then a Mother speaks of old wounds,
So deep, so deep that tears well.
And we listen.

I listen and notice
The shape of the mouth
The movement of muscle
Cracks in the voice holding in a sob
And we listen
Another shares
This time about active alcoholism
Tears form in watery eyes
Are pushed away by naked fingers.

And we listen
A long-time member
Plans to visit her Mother, a recovering
alcoholic
More emotion in her than
I have seen in twenty years
And we listen.
Next to me a voice quivers
I zoom in on trembling lips
As fears roll from a newcomer
And we listen, we all listen
Are we learning to forgive?

Dianne r.



Our Next Green Mountain Sharings will come out in the fall. The Topic will be on

Working Steps 10, 11, 12.

*Send submissions to:
Please send submissions to
the Al-Anon website,*

www.vermontalanonlateen.org

or give them to your GR or DR.



Save the Date! July 25-27, 2014

2014 VERMONT AL-ANON CONVENTION

at the
Historic Middlebury Inn
Middlebury, VT

Book hotel rooms separately.

\$139.40 per night for first 25 rooms. **Reserve by June 25** for this rate.

Call 802.388.4961. Ask for special rate for VT Al-Anon Convention.

Other accommodations available at surrounding Inns and B&Bs (within walking distance)

Registration Form ~ requires check or money order (no cash)

Separate registration forms are required for each attendee.

Make checks or money orders out to "Vermont AFG Convention" and send to:

David Park / 2014 Convention / 7 Whipperwill Lane, Grand Isle, VT 05458 / ph. 802.372.8593

(or register online at www.vermontalanonlateen.org using PayPal)

Convention Registration

Al-Anon \$20 (postmarked by June 15)

Al-Anon \$25 (after June 15)

Alateen \$10 (anytime)

Dining Option

Luncheon Buffet \$25

Dinner Buffet \$35

NAME _____

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CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

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Accessibility Needs (if any) _____

Indicate any help you would like to provide:

Registration check in Workshop Chair Greeter Hospitality Decorations

Other _____