

Subject: Al-Anon Traditions and the Saturday Night Meeting

Date: June 17, 2014

Dear Dual Member,

I am writing you this e-mail in the spirit of fellowship in order that the **Saturday night group might find a stronger foundation in Al-Anon** as I feel it has in some ways gone astray from the vital and necessary following of the **Al-Anon Traditions**. I consider myself a member of the **Saturday Night group**. As a member of this group and as a member of Al-Anon I am obliged to help ensure the integrity and healthiness of every group I participate in. I come to you in order to ask that you focus some attention to and re-direct your energy's to following the guidelines presented to us in the 12 Traditions of Al-Anon and be particularly aware of the "Three Obstacles of Success" from the Al-Anon Service Manual. It is because I know your heart for service I do believe that you are committed to idea that "Al-Anon discussions should be constructive, helpful, loving, and understanding" [1] but I am obligated through Tradition Two "to remind them (you) of the Traditions in a caring, loving way." [2]

While attending this meeting I have specific behaviors that are, in their essence, violations of our Traditions. These are my observations and how I feel they violated the Traditions:

1. **Discussions of Religion – On multiple instances specific Bible verses have been quoted. "Al-Anon is not allied with any sect or denomination. It is a spiritual program, based on no particular form of religion. Everyone is welcome, no matter what affiliation or none. Let us not defeat our purpose by entering into discussions concerning specific religious beliefs." [3] This is discussed in depth in the "Three Obstacles to Success." [4]**
2. **Non-Conference Approved Literature discussed – On multiple instances the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous was referenced. "In meetings we share our experiences and share from Conference Approved Literature (CAL)." [5] "We keep it simple and use the literature that we know reflects our Al-Anon approach to alcoholism." [6]**
3. **Multiple references were made to the fact that certain members were from "next door" implying there membership in Alcoholics Anonymous. "Having a grounding in the Twelve Steps makes crossover likely and even comfortable, but if we are to benefit fully from the experience Al-Anon has to offer, it is important that we leave our other hats outside the door and concentrate on Al-Anon solutions in Al-Anon meetings." [7]**
4. **Dominance – Although the format of a Beginner's Meeting does typically allow for a chairperson to lead a meeting more than a typical discussion meeting you made a point of responding following everyone's share and replying directly to that person, often times giving advice rather than sharing your personal Al-Anon experiences. In the Al-Anon Alateen Service Manual it**

states that "No member of Al-Anon should direct, assume authority, or give advice. Our program is based on suggestion, interchange of experience, and rotation of leadership. We progress in our own way and pace. Any attempt to manage or direct is likely to have disastrous consequences for group Success."^[8] "An attitude of humility and gratitude for the gift of Al-Anon will help us avoid the pitfalls of controlling and running the show. Remaining sensitive to the needs of others, examining the area of our responsibility, and not exceeding its limits will remind us we are not an elite corps but trusted servants."^[9]

5. The "Came to Believe" retreat was announced at the meeting. This retreat has no affiliation with Al-Anon. Reading it is a direct violation of Tradition Six. "What about retreats or announcements and literature from other Twelve Step programs? These are "outside enterprises." Al-Anon does not sponsor such gatherings or affiliate itself with any therapy or religious organization, even if they use many of our principles and some of our members attend them."^[10]

These are just my observations and my analysis versus my understandings of the Traditions. I am not trying to solely "call you out" as I know there are other members of this group that have done each of these items. I trust that in your leadership and with your servant's heart you will address these issues. I hope in no way that I have personally offended you as my only concern is for the well-being of our group and the health of Al-Anon as a whole. Please feel free to contact me so we can discuss these matters if you wish.

Sincerely, An Al-Anon Member

^[1] Al-Anon Service Manual, P-24/27, p. 24

^[2] Paths to Recovery, B-24, p. 136, under Tradition One

^[3] Al-Anon Service Manual, P-24/27, p. 24

^[4] Al-Anon Service Manual, P-24/27, p. 24

^[5] Paths to Recovery, B-24, p. 137, under Tradition One

^[6] Paths to Recovery, B-24, p. 137, under Tradition One

^[7] Paths to Recovery, B-24, p. 187, under Tradition Six

^[8] Al-Anon Service Manual, P-24/27, p. 24

^[9] Al-Anon's Twelve Traditions Illustrated, P-60, p. 21, under Tradition 9

^[10] Paths to Recovery, B-24, p. 186, under Tradition Six