

ABCs of Wisdom

A - AlAnon

The story of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) is a fascinating miracle that has had an enormous impact in the world. Through a series of synchronicities Bill W. and Dr. Bob S. together founded the organization eighty-four years ago this month, June 10, 1935. See movie "My Name is Bill W" in which James Woods won an Emmy for his portrayal of Wilson.)

AA began as a result of spiritual experiences and remains strong today as a secular organization. AA places a strong emphasis on a belief in a "higher power." However, no dogma, politics, affiliations or religion are represented or allowed in meetings. There are an estimated 2.1 million members of AA worldwide. Most people know of the 12-Steps even if they've never attended an AA or AlAnon Family Group meeting.

So much of my life is influenced by what I've learned from the 12-step program of AlAnon Family Groups. Here is a brief overview of the wisdom I've gained.

- As much as I'd like to solve another's problems, that isn't my responsibility.
- I've learned that the people I love have a spirit of their own. It's not in my job description to be their conscience.
- I've learned how to love without enmeshing. This is a hard one. As a mother and grandmother I can love until it hurts and often do. However I must know when to detach with love.
- I've learned that there is very little in this world that I control and that brings me back to trust. When it comes down to it our control over events is extremely limited. Recognizing and accepting this brings peace and wisdom.

My Version of the 12 Steps

1. I admitted I was powerless over others.
2. I came to believe that a Power greater than myself could give me peace of mind.

3. I made a decision to turn my will and my life over to the care of God *as I understood Him/Her*.
4. I made a searching and fearless moral inventory of myself.
5. I admitted to God, to myself, and to another human being the exact nature of my wrongs.
6. I was entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. I humbly asked God to remove my shortcomings.
8. I made a list of all persons I had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. I made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. I continued to take personal inventory and when I was wrong promptly admitted it.
11. I sought through prayer and meditation to improve my conscious contact with God, *as I understood Him*, praying only for knowledge of His will for me and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, I try to carry this message to others, and to practice these principles in all my affairs.

AlAnon is an anonymous group for family members of alcoholics. We share and learn valuable lessons in how to live life in a positive way and this often has nothing to do with an alcoholic in our lives. When I'm in an AlAnon meeting I have the peace of knowing I can trust everyone there to keep every word that is spoken, confidential. We are all on an equal footing regardless of our socioeconomic status, age, gender or education. Somehow, and I'm not sure how, there is a fellowship among AlAnon members that would do the world good to emulate. It teaches and encourages wise choices.

As King Solomon said, "Wisdom will multiply your days and add years to your life."

Trust, Pray, Love, Release Control and Live One Day at a Time.

So AlAnon is the perfect beginning to my *ABCs of Wisdom for Women*.