

BACKGROUND FOR BIG QUESTION

Big Question: How do we envision responsible service leadership in Al-Anon, a vision that inspires today's members to be tomorrow's leaders who are motivated by spiritual principles?

Background:

The 2014 World Service Conference members discussed a Big Question related to the theme of the Conference. This “big thinking” approach is continuing at the 2015 WSC, building on last year's idea of looking at Al-Anon's place in the future.

The 2014 Big Question was, “How can we as service leaders anticipate the future and Al-Anon's place in it, ensuring that the necessary resources are available with our spiritual principles as our guide?” During discussions, members tried to anticipate Al-Anon's place in the world 15 to 25 years from now. Contemplating the year 2051, Al-Anon's one-hundredth anniversary, was challenging. Among the topics discussed were societal changes affecting members and groups; technology influencing communication among members and groups; meeting formats; links within the service structure; self-support; and the role of our clearinghouse—the World Service Office (WSO).

This year's Big Question focuses on our vision of service leadership in the next three to five years, a time span that perhaps we all can better “see.” Concept Nine reminds us a “good idea can come from anywhere,” and “anywhere” is well represented at the 2015 World Service Conference with attendees from Bermuda, Canada, Puerto Rico, the United States, Germany, Mexico, and the UK & Eire. We Conference members represent the largest group conscience for Al-Anon and are a valuable resource for Al-Anon Family Groups. As today's leaders, we have the opportunity to share our vision of Al-Anon's future service leadership.

Relevance:

Concept Nine states that good personal leadership at all service levels is a necessity. Leaders, in order to be effective, must possess specific personal qualities, among them the all-important attribute of vision, “the ability to make good estimates, both for the immediate and for the more distant future” (“Concept Nine,” *Service Manual*, p. 202). Living “One Day at a Time” refers only to our mental and emotional lives and not to considering our future.

As human beings and leaders in service, we have the capacity for foresight, or vision. As leaders, we can think not only about tomorrow, but months and years ahead. In fact, “Responsible world leadership must be proficient in this vital activity (p. 202). If we as leaders of a fellowship do not look to the future, we ‘shall surely suffer.’ Even miscalculating the future is better than to refuse to think about it at all.”

We also have the capability to examine past and present experience and evaluate what we think it means. We have the capability to think about our service needs as they relate to general economic conditions, group capability, and willingness of members to contribute. Concept Nine emphasizes that as leaders we must estimate constantly, especially at World Service levels, where stakes are high. An operating structure can be no better than the personal performance of those who serve and make it work.

Therefore, the future of Al-Anon Family Groups depends upon our dedication and vision. New ideas will help carry us into the future, reaffirming the guarantee that world services will not only continue under all conditions, but thrive.

BIG QUESTION AND BREAK-OUT SESSION TOPICS

Big Question: How do we envision responsible service leadership in Al-Anon, a vision that inspires today's members to be tomorrow's leaders who are motivated by spiritual principles?

Service Leadership Topics

1. Relying on the ideas in Concept Nine, especially the "Essay on Leadership" as a guide, what can Areas do to inspire members to grow and develop as future leaders?
2. What is our vision of a World Service Conference embodying spiritual principles that meets the needs of all Conference members?
3. What skills, talents, and abilities will the World Service Office need of its administrative staff leaders in the future?
4. How can service leaders use technology to link members together at all levels of service, strengthening communication and inspiring spiritual connections within the service structure?
5. What is our vision of an attractive and dynamic Alateen program that would meet the needs of today's young people affected by someone's drinking?
6. How can we as leaders encourage individual Al-Anon members to personally expand public outreach efforts?

Memorial Contributions Information Requested by 2013 World Service Conference

At the 2013 World Service Conference (WSC), members shared their opinions on the presentation from the Memorial Contributions Thought Force. During the discussion, members requested clarification on the definition of “family,” “member,” and whether there would be a limit on the memorial contribution.

WSC members requested safeguards to ensure no undue influence or “ear-marking.” WSC members expressed concern that Al-Anon/Alateen members maintain financial accountability to preserve the fellowship and that a change in Policy could affect Alcoholics Anonymous (A.A.) and much of our Conference-Approved Literature.

Alcoholics Anonymous verified that accepting non-member memorial contributions would not impact A.A. in any way.

In response to the request made at the 2013 World Service Conference, the Policy Committee has provided suggested definitions for member and family, pros and cons on limiting the dollar amount of the memorial contribution, safeguards to ensure no outside influence should the Policy be changed, and suggestions on calculation of a maximum contribution should a limit be recommended.

In creating the definitions, the rationale followed by the Thought Force was to research Conference-Approved Literature, the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*, and to review legal and popular definitions. At each quarterly meeting, the Policy Committee reviewed and thoroughly discussed the work of the Thought Force.

Memorial Contributions Definitions Requested at 2013 World Service Conference

1. Definition of a “member of Al-Anon?” Who is a member?

In accordance with Tradition Three, anyone claiming to be a member is accepted as such. “Anyone who feels his personal life is or has been deeply affected by close contact with a problem drinker is eligible for membership in Al-Anon/Alateen.” (Page 81, *2014-17 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*)

2. Definition of Family

“Family,” for purposes of Al-Anon, is considered in the broadest sense. “Family” means any person who plays a significant role in an individual’s life. This may include a person who is or is not legally related to the deceased member. In the context of memorial contributions, the individual donor defines his/her relationship with the deceased Al-Anon member.

3. Safeguards to ensure no outside influence

1. Do not solicit the contribution
2. Allow contributions from self-defined Family members only
3. Place monies into the General Fund. No earmarking of funds by the donor.
4. Allow non-members to make a one-time only contribution per deceased member.

4-A. Discussion - Limiting the dollar amount of a Family Memorial Contribution

1. Protects against perilous wealth or diverting Al-Anon from its primary spiritual aim.
2. Ensures that members are always primarily responsible for the financial health of Al-Anon as a whole.
3. Allows family members to express gratitude and grief without violating Al-Anon’s principle of self-support.
4. Protects Al-Anon from outside influences through the built-in safeguards created by our fellowship.

4-B. Discussion - Not Limiting the dollar amount of a Family Memorial Contribution

1. Allows contributors to give freely, with no strings attached, in loving memory and gratitude for Al-Anon.
2. Recognizes the dollar amount behind giving is not the issue. Great or small, the donation represents love and respect for the deceased member and is appreciated equally. People give according to their ability.
3. Recognizes that generally, members are unaware that, under current policy, contributions can only be accepted from the member, from member’s monies.
4. Takes into consideration Lois’ question, at the 1963 WSC, “Why the families, who have benefited emotionally and in all sorts of other ways from Al-Anon, should have to give that money to some other organization...”
5. Alleviates the need to engage a grieving family member in a discussion of Al-Anon Policy.

5. Maximum amount of contribution

There are two approaches we could take on this.

1. Limit the amount to a fixed dollar amount.
2. Use a percent limitation like we do with other contributions.

Review of the Traditions regarding Memorial Contributions by Family Members and Friends of a Deceased Al-Anon Member

Tradition One: Our common welfare should come first; personal progress for the greatest number depends upon unity.

Considerations:

- This Tradition would be violated if allowing family member memorial contributions would affect the unity of the fellowship and prevent recovery of our members.
- Many members have long-held beliefs that AFG is not allowed to accept family member memorial contributions. A decision to do so could bring disunity to the fellowship.
- A unifying connection between surviving members of the family and AFG could be beneficial to them and to Al-Anon.
- Accepting such contributions could be seen as creating a “loop-hole” thus leading to an internal controversy that could keep the fellowship from advancement.

Tradition Two: For our group purpose there is but one authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants—they do not govern.

Considerations:

- We do not need to fear discussing this issue, our Higher Power is present in the group conscience.
- The early group conscience decisions on this topic allowed memorial contributions from family members to be accepted. Years later, a World Service Conference (WSC) decision on this topic decided that family memorial contributions were against Traditions. A new Group Conscience could either affirm or reverse that decision.
- We can be assured that asking our Higher Power to express Himself in an informed discussion on this issue will continue to lead us to the best decision at the time it is made.

Tradition Three: The relatives of alcoholics, when gathered together for mutual aid, may call themselves an Al-Anon Family Group, provided that, as a group, they have no other affiliation. The only requirement for membership is that there be a problem of alcoholism in a relative or friend.

Considerations:

- Surviving family members may meet the qualifications for membership but it is not for us to assume.
- Al-Anon membership is self-defined.
- Attempting to specify who is a member could cause distress to the family and conflict within the fellowship.

Traditions Four: Each group should be autonomous, except in matters affecting another group or Al-Anon or AA as a whole.

Considerations:

- Could accepting family member contributions affect Al-Anon as a whole in any way, including any possible effects on groups, districts and Areas who follow the lead of the WSO in such matters?
- This Tradition requires us to consider the impact of any new decision on other Al-Anon service structures around the world.
- Alcoholics Anonymous (A.A.) doesn't accept such contributions. If Al-Anon were to do so, would it affect the A.A. fellowship?

Tradition Five: Each Al-Anon Family Group has but one purpose: to help families of alcoholics. We do this by practicing the Twelve Steps of AA *ourselves*, by encouraging and understanding our alcoholic relatives, and by welcoming and giving comfort to families of alcoholics.

Considerations:

- Acceptance of such contributions allows family members to express their gratitude for the help that their loved one has received.
- Al-Anon members don't want the fellowship to be thought of as ungrateful or uncaring.
- If accepting family member contributions helps us bring comfort to the grieving, we may be fulfilling our primary purpose.
- Accepting contributions might build a connection with a family member and could open the door to a prospective member.
- Tradition Five does not say we bring comfort only to those who have come to an Al-Anon meeting or claim to be a member.
- Tradition Five was written at a time when contributions were accepted from family members of deceased members.
- Some members believe that accepting memorial contributions from family members has nothing to do with the group's purpose to provide help to families of alcoholics.
- Members tend to define "group" as a group, district, AIS, LDC, Area, WSO, or GSO. They do not make the distinction that in this Tradition "group" refers to a single Al-Anon Family Group. Allowing non-member memorial contributions at the WSO may cause confusion with what is allowable at an individual group or service arm.

Tradition Six: Our Family Groups ought never endorse, finance or lend our name to any outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property and prestige divert us from our primary spiritual aim. Although a separate entity, we should always co-operate with Alcoholics Anonymous.

Considerations:

- Providing services requires money to carry out our spiritual aim. Such contributions provide an additional means to provide those services.

- Any monies received are used for our sole purpose—to carry the message to families and friends of alcoholics.
- When we accept a contribution in any amount, we protect ourselves from influence by both limiting the amount and by not allowing earmarking of funds. We guard against allowing anyone to control our decision-making.
- The acceptance of money on behalf of anyone, including a member, must pass a test of safeguards to ensure that this Tradition is not violated.
- WSO does not accumulate monies beyond an ample reserve so that we are not diverted by excessive amounts of money or property.
- Al-Anon groups are encouraged to maintain only a reserve that is prudent for the purpose of supporting the Al-Anon fellowship. Would allowing contributions from family members tip that balance?
- Would accepting such contributions divert Al-Anon in any way from its primary spiritual aim?

Tradition Seven: Every group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.

Considerations:

- If we accept family member contributions we could be perceived as not being self-supporting.
- Members tend to define “group” as a group, district, AIS, LDC, Area, WSO, or GSO. They do not make the distinction that in this Tradition “group” refers to a single Al-Anon Family Group. Allowing non-member memorial contributions at the WSO may cause confusion with what is allowable at an individual group or service arm.
- The long version of Alcoholics Anonymous Tradition Seven addresses the groups’ responsibility to be self-supporting. The importance of this practice was to ensure that groups were not influenced by large amounts of money or being obligated to any outside enterprise.
- Could accepting memorial contributions in small amounts undermine the groups’ support of WSO?
- Prior to 1986, memorial contributions that were accepted had amount restrictions placed on them.
- From the beginning, Al-Anon has never solicited contributions from outside the Al-Anon fellowship.
- WSO occasionally receives unsolicited memorial contributions from family members.

Tradition Eight: Al-Anon Twelfth Step work should remain forever non-professional, but our service centers may employ special workers.

No connection

Tradition Nine: Our groups, as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.

No connection

Tradition 10: The Al-Anon Family Groups have no opinion on outside issues; hence our name ought never be drawn into public controversy.

Considerations:

- Currently, when a non-member makes a contribution to AFG, Inc., it is returned or a call is made to verify whether the contributor is a member. This practice has the potential to elicit a public controversy if such a contact makes the contributor upset enough to express the concern in a public way.
- It might lead to public controversy if an obituary or other public notice appeared to solicit contributions.
- This Tradition refers to public controversy rather than internal controversy.

Tradition Eleven: Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, films, and TV. We need guard with special care the anonymity of all AA members.

Considerations:

- Al-Anon might be seen as attractive to family members if they are allowed to contribute to Al-Anon in memory of their loved one.
- Any reference to contributions to Al-Anon in the media (such as in an obituary) would violate this Tradition.

Tradition Twelve: Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles above personalities.

Considerations:

- The source of all contributions to the WSO are anonymous to the Al-Anon membership.
- The current WSO practice requires verification by the WSO staff that any contribution is from an Al-Anon member. This practice may be in conflict with our principle of anonymity.
- Would acceptance of memorial contributions from family members compromise our spiritual foundation?

Memorial Contributions Frame 2015 World Service Conference

At the 2013 World Service Conference (WSC), a Policy conversation began on accepting memorial contributions from a non-member on behalf of his or her deceased family member who belonged to Al-Anon. This conversation came at the request of the 2011 WSC in response to a discussion on identifying information for a guideline on memorial contributions.

The Policy Committee began the discussion in July 2011 in light of Tradition Five and “giving comfort to families of alcoholics.” Once this Tradition was fully explored, the Policy discussion expanded to include a review of all Legacies and extensive archival research.

At the 2013 World Service Conference (WSC), members shared their opinions on the Memorial Contributions presentation, which included the archival timeline Delegates were provided on e-Communities in preparation for this discussion. During the discussion, members requested clarification on the definition of “family,” “member,” and whether there would be a limit on the memorial contribution. WSC members also requested safeguards to ensure no undue influence or “ear-marking” and questioned whether a change to Al-Anon’s policy would affect AA as a whole. At the end of the 2013 discussion, the Conference members requested the conversation continue.

At the 2014 World Service Conference, in response to the work of the Thought Force, Conference members discussed the definition of “family” and “member”. Due to time restrictions, the discussion was unable to reach conclusion. Conference members requested to continue the discussion at the 2015 World Service Conference.

Before we begin our discussion, members of the Policy Committee will present the information requested from the 2013 WSC. We look forward to this on-going conversation and your thoughts on this topic.



Welcoming New Practices

Thought Force Presentation

World Service Conference 2015

“With the help of Al-Anon, my sponsor, and my Higher Power, change need not be so scary. If I don’t at least make an effort, I may never know how much I can accomplish.”

—Hope for Today, p. 278

Our Charge

Identify the difficulties that keep the membership from considering, and perhaps embracing, new ideas within the fellowship and create strategies that could help the membership welcome new practices into the fellowship that are consistent with our spiritual principles.

Try This

Write down a new practice in Al-Anon that you initially resisted

- Why did you have difficulty?
- How did you overcome the resistance?
- What spiritual principle(s) supported this new practice?

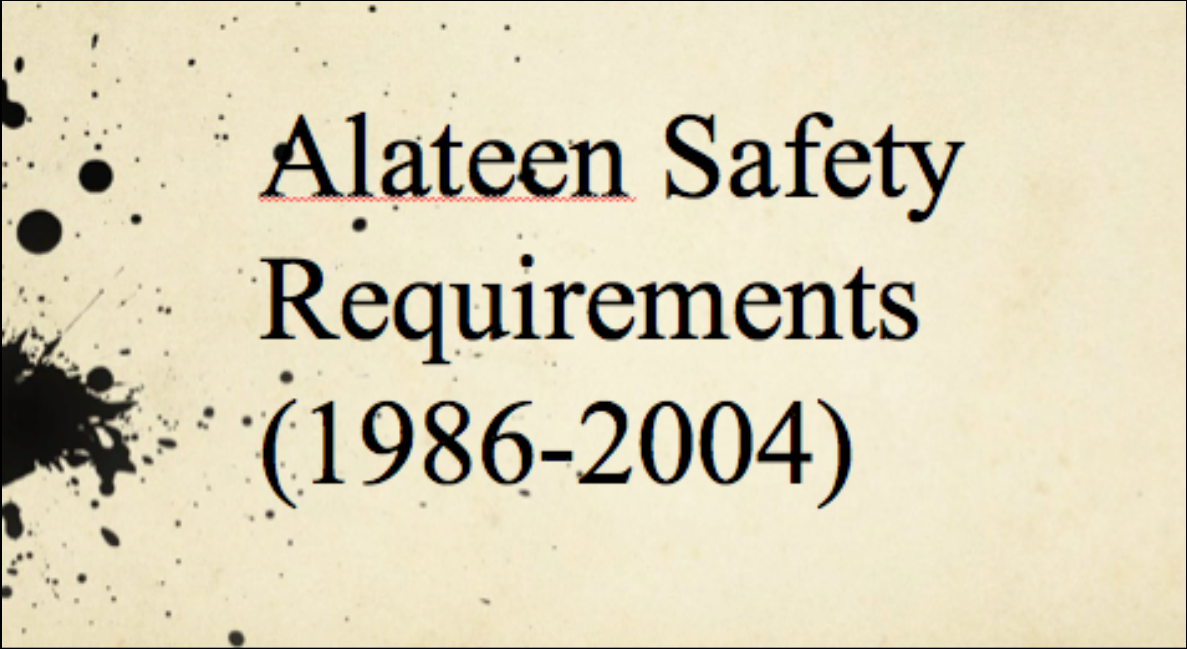
Why We Resist Change

- Desire to control
- General fear of change
 - Fear of risk
 - Fear of dilution of the program
 - Fear of not being able to adapt to changes

Why We Resist Change (cont'd)

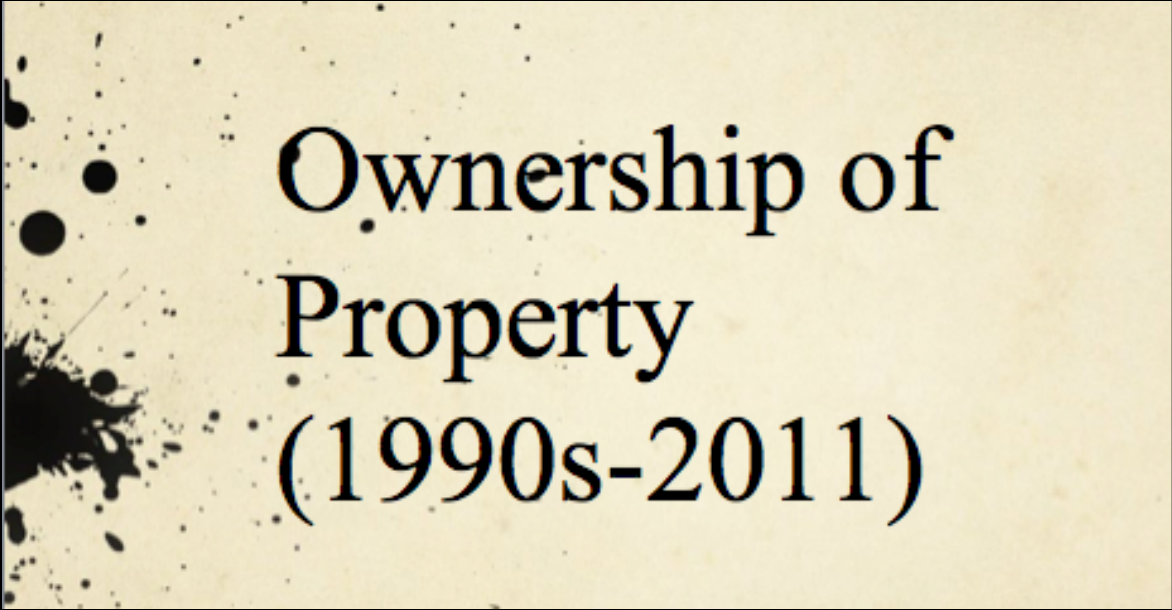
- Concern about the Traditions
- Apathy or inertia
- Focus on personal recovery, not the health of Al-Anon overall
- Difficulty trusting the process of change

Examples of New Practices from the Past



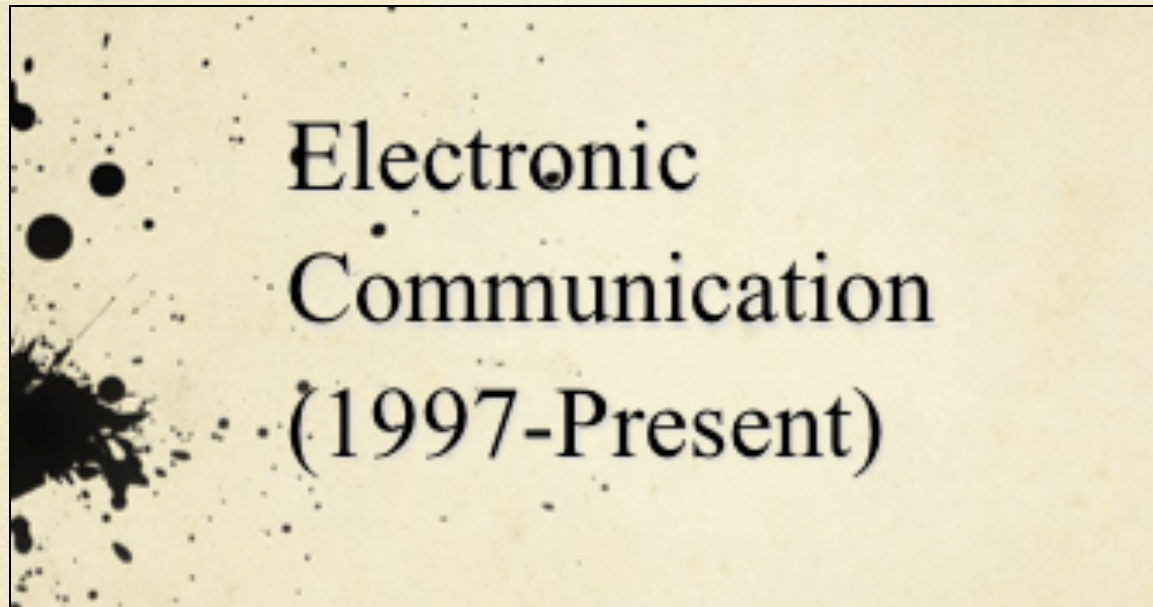
Alateen Safety
Requirements
(1986-2004)

Examples of New Practices from the Past



Ownership of
Property
(1990s-2011)

Examples of New Practices from the Past



Examples of New Practices in the Present

- New practices still challenging us
 - The Al-Anon Declaration
 - Social media – Facebook and Twitter
 - Telephone meetings

Strategies

Four categories:

1. Create communications/workshops
2. Encourage discussions about change
3. Explore technology as a means of encouraging change
4. Encourage innovative thinking

Strategy One: Workshops

- Workshop focused on literature that addresses change
- Brainstorm/writing session for ideas relating to change/new practices

Strategy One: Workshops (cont'd)

- Workshop on history of Al-Anon and changing practices over time, create a timeline
- Presentation on technologies and how they can be used for member, group, or business meeting communication

Strategy Two: Discussing Change

- Encourage workshops/meetings on change
- Consider ways to find meeting places that don't imply affiliation
- Highlight new practices embraced by the membership that have strengthened program

Strategy Two: Discussing Change (cont'd)

- Create sharing sheet for meeting topics on changing attitudes, technologies, face of Al-Anon
- Encourage use of service tools that address overcoming resistance to change

Strategy Three: Technology

- Use new technologies to keep members up to-date
- Encourage members to be proactive and open to new ideas
- Help members gain access to technology

Strategy Four:

Innovative Thinking

- Encourage innovative thinking and expansive brainstorming at all levels
- Offer methods for withholding judgment during discussion
- Create environment and atmosphere of dreaming big, envisioning Al-Anon's future without limiting thinking

Discussion

1. Which of these strategies do you think would help Al-Anon members overcome fear of change and embrace new practices?

Discussion

2. Can you apply one or more of these strategies to a current difficulty in your group, district, or Area?

Discussion

3. Would you like to share the personal experience you wrote about at the beginning?

**Thought Force: Create Strategies to Help the Membership
Welcome New Practices into the Fellowship
2015 World Service Conference
Al-Anon Declaration Monologue**

Hi everyone. I am known as the Al-Anon Declaration. I am often the last words Al-Anon group members say together at the end of the Al-Anon meeting.

Some of you might remember me, when I was in short pants and pigtails, as a slogan. I grew beyond my slogan years to the present fuller declaration: "Let It Begin with Me. When anyone, anywhere reaches out for help, let the hand of Al-Anon and Alateen always be there, and—Let It Begin with Me."

You can read about my history in *Many Voices, One Journey* (B-31). On pages 172-173, it states that "At its meeting in January, the Policy Committee declared: The slogan "Let It Begin with Me" is to be worked into a declaration similar to A.A.'s "I Am Responsible" and it is to be printed in a small leaflet to be introduced at the 1974 World Service Conference...Then, at its meeting in March 1984, the Policy Committee approved the new Al-Anon Declaration."

You may recognize my literary picture from such Conference Approved Literature as the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27) and the pamphlet *This is Al-Anon* (P-32). I am often included with the Al-Anon/Alateen Closing. It is suggested that groups close in a manner that is agreeable to the group conscience. Many groups say the Al-Anon Declaration in their closing.

In closing their meetings, I have been adopted by a number of groups.

At the 2001 Conference, one member reminded the Conference that Lois W. said, "It doesn't matter what prayer we close with, but that we close with a spiritual moment." (*Many Voices, One Journey*, p.335)

As members understand me and put me into practice by reaching out, we demonstrate consistency with our spiritual principles so we can better live our primary purpose by extending our hand to families and friends of alcoholics.

**Thought Force: Create Strategies to Help the Membership
Welcome New Practices into the Fellowship
2015 World Service Conference**

Thought Force Members

Linda Wolf, MA-53 (Chair); Helene Dupont, QC(W)-52; Liz Perry, MI-52; Jennifer Banga, SK-54; Janice Bosson, NV-54; Connie Hurst, Trustee; Marsha Ware, Staff

Revised Charge

Identify the difficulties that keep the membership from considering, and perhaps embracing, new ideas within the fellowship and create strategies that could help the membership welcome new practices into the fellowship that are consistent with our spiritual principles.

[Original charge: Identify the difficulties that keep the membership from considering, and perhaps embracing, new ideas and create strategies that could help the membership welcome new trends into the fellowship.]

Strategies

1. Create communications/workshops

- Structure a workshop/meeting on literature that focuses on/addresses change and being open to new practices (e.g., the epilogue of *Many Voices*, *One Journey* (B-31); the daily readers using the index to find “change,” etc.)
- A district workshop to “brainstorm” on a specific topic relating to change/new practices – the purpose to include more voices and to gather fresh ideas from the membership. As part of the workshop, each GR be given in writing background information and/or talking points to share with their group. All having the same information in writing would help the GRs to pass on what was actually discussed. Sometimes an individual’s interpretation of a topic or idea can cause resistance from those that were not present during the conversation.
- Create tools/messages/presentations/workshops on the history of Al-Anon to help members visualize change, understand the difference between “tradition” and the Twelve Traditions, and put change into context through a timeline/historical representation or visual (like an infographic) of some sort. The graphic would demonstrate the evolution of the program in relation to new approaches/practices.
- Presentation using different technologies, demonstrating how they can be used for intergroup/member communication, or business meetings – demonstrate how texting can be used, or Skype, or apps – but without endorsing any of the companies or technologies

2. Encourage discussions about change

- Encourage discussions/workshops/meetings on change – changing attitudes, changing technologies, changing face of Al-Anon – to explore what makes change easy and what makes it harder, and how we can work on our own attitudes about change in order to be as welcoming as possible to people and to new practices that can benefit the program.
- Consider ways to encourage groups to think about and discuss other options for meeting locations to avoid the perception of affiliation and make it more clear that Al-Anon is for people of every ethnicity, culture, religion, sexual orientation, etc., and not limited to a perceived type of person (which a religious meeting place can imply even if it’s not true)

- Highlight changes and new practices that AI-Anon has embraced in the past that have strengthened the fellowship (e.g., use of electronic literature).
- Suggest a sharing sheet/workshop to have a group use the topic of “change” as a meeting discussion.
- Encourage use of service tools that help members address resistance to change and embrace new practices (e.g., conflict resolution tool kit, sponsorship).

3. *Explore technology as a means of introducing/encouraging change*

- Encourage use of technology (e.g., at Area or world service level) to keep members up-to-date on emerging issues and new practices. Have workshops at district or Area level. Do an on-line presentation on where and how to find this information. Encourage weekly viewing of Members’ Web site once a week and sharing it with other members.
- Take advantage of emerging practices, be proactively open to new ideas (e.g., developing our own app or using social networks)
- Encourage members who don’t have access to consider gaining access to technology (e.g., expand the e-buddy idea, take a friend to an Internet café and introduce them to e-mail, social media, etc.)

4. *Encourage innovative thinking*

- Encourage expansive brainstorming at all levels
- Offer methods for withholding judgment during discussion
- Create environment and atmosphere of dreaming big, envisioning AI-Anon’s future without limiting thinking

WSC THOUGHT FORCE

**Create Strategies to show Spiritual
Connection of being a Registered Group**



2015 World Service Conference

Spiritual principles/core values of being a registered group

- Unity
- Participation
- Accountability
- Responsibility





Types of Unregistered Groups

- Groups that don't know about being registered
- Groups that don't want to be registered
- Groups that don't understand the benefits of being registered

Strategies to show Spiritual Connection of being a Registered Group

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[Alateen](#)

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Groups New Registration/Update



<http://al-anon.org/members/groups/new-group-registration-update>

Strategy #1 – Create a group outreach tool



Emphasize:

- Traditions One, Four, and Ten
- Concepts One and Four

Strategy #2 – Develop a presentation to share with non-registered groups

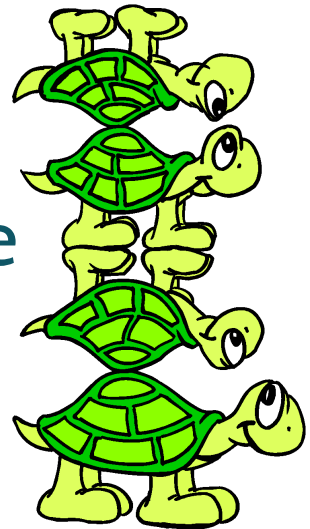


Emphasize:

- The group conscience
- The spiritual tools of the program
- The service tools

Strategy #3 – Offer a workshop or presentation on Unity

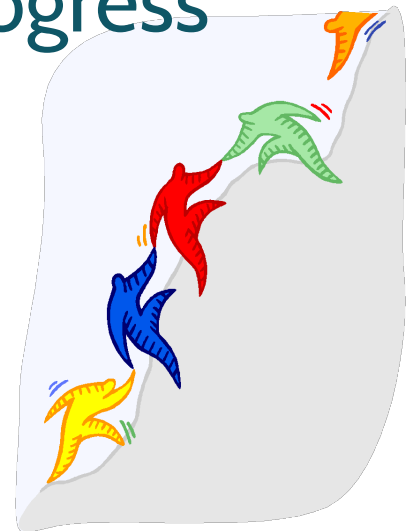
- **Autonomy** without affecting **Unity**
- **Participation** leading to more harmonious decisions
- **Responsibility** through consideration of our common welfare
- **Democracy** ensuring **Accountability**



Strategy #4 – Propose ways for groups to support one another

Demonstrate

- Concept One – Ultimate responsibility belongs to the groups
- Tradition One – Personal progress for the greatest number depends on unity



Strategy #5 – Modify the *Starting an Al-Anon Group* Guideline (G-12)

Al-Anon **guidelines** The Shared Experience of Al-Anon and Alateen Members.

Starting an Al-Anon Group

G-12

[Faint, illegible text from the original document, likely the content of the guideline.]

This Guideline may be photocopied.

This piece may be adapted by a General Service structure and distributed within that structure.

Strategy #6 – Introduce spiritual concepts wherever possible in the instructions for completing the GR-1 form



Instructions to fill out the Al-Anon Registration/Group Records Change Form (GR-1)

1. Group Record

WSO ID is a number assigned by the WSO at the time of registration. Groups registered after January 2007 have an 8 digit number, groups registered before 2007 have an ID number with 6 or less digits.

District Number and Area Name (abbreviated) are used to sort information for group reports.

2. Status

Indicate the current status of the group. If the group is being registered for the first time, it is a "New" registration.

3. Changes

Check the appropriate boxes when a...

4. Group Registration Overview

The Group Name is inviting to all and with any other Twelve Step group, self-rehabilitation facility, or other outside e.g., the Church AFG or the ICAI (ICMA) is often a member's home, to a program registered with the letters AFG for Al-Anon Fellowship.

A name that includes the town or section of the town, the meeting day, a slogan, or another phrase from our program is inviting to all and conforms to Al-Anon's principles. The group name may provide information about the subject of the meeting, or it may include a special designation, i.e. adult children, teen, women, parents, LGBT. See Al-Anon and Alateen Groups at Work booklet (P-24) and the Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies section of the 2010-2013 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual (P-27) for additional information – "Naming the Group" and "Choosing a Group's Name" sections.

Meeting Language is the language in which the group receives mail. The meeting language can be different from the meeting language (e.g. language spoken at the meeting is Spanish, but the group would like to receive mail from WSO in English). WSO mail can be sent in English, Spanish, or French.

Location is where the meeting is held. The name of the building, followed by a full address including the zip code.

Contacts receive calls from newcomers seeking Al-Anon's help or others seeking directions or additional information about the Al-Anon meeting. Contact phone numbers are occasionally given out to callers on the WSO toll-free meeting line.

Introduce
Spiritual
Concepts

Strategy #7 – Create a skit

Compare How ...

- An individual's actions: attending meetings, choosing a Sponsor, and offering to be of service helps achieve greater spiritual connection

Compares With ...

- A group's actions: forming a group, and registering with the WSO helps achieve greater spiritual connection

Discussion

- Which of these strategies would help your Area's members convey the spiritual connection of being a registered group?
- Are there other strategies you would add?

**Thought Force: Create Strategies to show
Spiritual Connection of being a Registered Group
2015 World Service Conference
Report**

Chair: Vali Fayen, Panel 53, Arizona
Recorder: Liesel Brooks, Panel 54, Alaska
Jennifer Davis, Panel 52, Florida South
Kerry LaRocque, Panel 52, Manitoba/Northwest Ontario
Lisa Baker, Panel 53, Oklahoma
Cathy Trojan, Panel 53, Wisconsin and the Upper Peninsula of Michigan
Sandy Fairweather, Panel 54, Maine
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Framing

In many Areas, there are groups that do not feel there is a benefit to being registered with the World Service Office; other groups have multiple meetings but only elect one set of officers; and some even feel that if they were to register, it somehow implies control by the WSO. Just as many of us before and even early in program remain convinced we can manage on our own – potentially hesitating before reaching out to an experienced member to be our Sponsor—some groups are unaware of how the spiritual connections of the program are strengthened and enhanced by being registered to the worldwide Al-Anon fellowship and structure. Those who have had the opportunity to be part of a strong, registered home group understand the value of being connected to the whole. Perhaps they learned of opportunities to attend conflict-resolution workshops which help individuals and groups grow in unity, or to understand how groups internationally blossomed despite having only one book available in their language because they took accountability together for their Area or country connection. For those who have never experienced such a group, fear of the unknown and the ever-present draw of isolation can be strong motivators to remaining unregistered.

Spiritual principles/core values of being a registered group

The Thought Force started our journey by identifying a list of the spiritual principles or core values we felt were enhanced by being a registered group:

- | | |
|-----------------|------------------|
| • Unity | • Accountability |
| • Participation | • Responsibility |

We included this list in all our notes to remind ourselves of our goal: to create strategies that demonstrate these spiritual connections. As we review our strategies, we hope you will be able to identify the principles underlying each.

Approach

To create the strategies below, the Thought Force considered what might be appropriate to reach different categories of groups:

- Groups that don't know about being registered.
- Groups that don't want to be registered.
- Groups that don't understand the benefits of being registered.

We also brainstormed strategies from the perspective of districts, Areas and the World Service Office which might implement the strategies.

Strategies that show Spiritual Connection of being a Registered Group

1. Create a group outreach tool which could be a pamphlet, a bookmark, a publication, or a *Forum* article that focuses on demonstrating the spiritual connection a registered group has to Al-Anon Legacies. For instance:
 - Both Traditions One and Ten emphasize **Unity**:
 - *Paths to Recovery* (B-24) (p. 135) states of Tradition One: "Within a loving, spiritual community, each of us has the best chance for personal progress and Tradition One sets the foundation for creating and maintaining that community."
 - A recent *Forum* article suggested of Tradition Ten that "having no opinion on outside issues is a source of unity."
 - Tradition Four outlines the need for **Accountability** while enjoying Autonomy:
 - *Paths to Recovery* (p. 165) suggests, "Sometimes groups don't live by the principles ... because members are unaware of the history and experience behind them. A member familiar with the Traditions then has the responsibility to speak up and inform the group of its options."
 - Concept One reminds us:
 - The ultimate **Responsibility** and authority for Al-Anon world services belongs to the Al-Anon groups:
 - *How Al-Anon Works* (B-22) (p. 129), describes responsibility and authority this way: "Each group has equal responsibility and authority. If a group accepts responsibility by choosing and supporting a Group Representative, then it is in position to exercise its authority."
 - Concept Four defines a democratic way of making decisions through **Participation**:
 - From the *Service Manual* (p. 189), "Thus in the participatory method of doing business, there are no superiors and no inferiors."
2. Create a workshop or presentation that demonstrates the spiritual connection of being a registered group. Emphasize:
 - That **Unity** is enhanced through being part of the group conscience.
 - How the spiritual tools of the program help to increase **Participation**, for instance:
 - How district and Area meetings run according to the Principles of the Program can create a safe environment for sharing concerns and gaining experience, strength, and hope;
 - That having access to service tools such as *Conflict Resolution using our Twelve Traditions* (S-72), *Taking a Group Inventory* Guideline (G-8a/b), *Members Interested in Speaking* Guideline (G-1), and *The Forum* support groups demonstrating **Responsibility** and **Accountability** to their members and Al-Anon as a whole.

3. Offer a workshop or presentation on **Unity**. Being connected and joining the AI-Anon fellowship by registering draws a group more closely into the triangle of AI-Anon's three Legacies, enhancing the group's spiritual connection while enabling each group to maintain its own personal flavor.
 - Group Unity is shown in the Concepts, especially in Concept Twelve, Warranties Three, Four, and Five:
 - Warranty 3 - that all decisions be reached by discussion, vote, and whenever possible, by unanimity;
 - Warranty 4 - that no Conference action ever be personally punitive or an incitement to public controversy;
 - Warranty 5 - that though the Conference serves AI-Anon it shall never perform any act of government; and that like the fellowship of AI-Anon Family Groups which it serves, it shall always remain democratic in thought and action.
4. Propose ways for groups to support one another. Show the spiritual connection of being a registered group by demonstrating the principles of **Accountability, Responsibility, and Participation** through action.
 - For instance, groups within districts or Areas could consider:
 - Initiating a buddy system to support new or struggling groups, to guide groups through the registration process, etc.
 - Creating a task force to meet with non-registered groups to invite them to participate in a workshop or to share the presentations developed through Strategy #2 or #3.
5. Modify the *Starting an AI-Anon Group* Guideline (G-12) to include either a statement describing spiritual connections of being a registered group or an example showing how being a registered group can be spiritual for all group members.
 - For instance, the Guideline currently highlights some of the material things each group will receive from registering but it does not show how doing so will improve the spiritual connection for the member or the group:
 - Opportunities to participate in one's own recovery;
 - Personal growth of group members by being informed;
 - Information needed to make informed group consciences; and
 - Connection to worldwide AI-Anon.
 - And it might include the statement "Congratulations you are on your way to spiritual growth!"
6. Introduce spiritual concepts wherever possible in the instructions for completing the GR-1 form.
 - Spiritual principles could be included in the instructions for completing the AI-Anon Registration/Group Records Change Form (GR-1) to help groups understand the link between completing the paperwork and how their group could:
 - Improve group **Unity** through access to the greater group conscience;
 - Increase newcomer and new member **Participation** with the publishing of group meeting details at the World Service, Area and district levels; and
 - Grow in personal recovery by demonstrating **Responsibility** and **Accountability** for keeping group contact and meeting information current so the newcomer and long-timer alike can find a meeting whenever and wherever they might need one.
7. Create a skit (or other such option) comparing a) how an individual's actions such as attending meetings, choosing a Sponsor, and offering to be of service help achieve greater spiritual connection to b) how a group's actions such as forming a group and going from being unregistered to registered help achieve greater spiritual connection.

- This skit could include these spiritual principles:
 - **Unity**
 - Individual - Tradition One – “Our common welfare should come first;” and does when we learn to let go of control and allow others their own decisions.
 - Group – Concept One – “The ultimate responsibility and authority for Al-Anon world service belongs to the Al-Anon groups.” By registering, groups ensure our unity of purpose is preserved.
 - **Participation**
 - Individual – Tradition Seven – “Every group ought to be fully self-supporting...” and is when its members are of service to the group.
 - Group - Concept Four – “Participation is the key to harmony” and registered groups contribute at every level of Al-Anon service.
 - **Accountability**
 - Individual - Tradition Three – “The only requirement for membership is that there be a problem of alcoholism in a relative or friend,” but members have to attend meetings to recover.
 - Group - Tradition Four - Each group should be autonomous but groups learn they cannot impact other groups.
 - **Responsibility**
 - Individual - Step One - We are not alone if we reach out.
 - Group - Step Twelve – “We tried to carry this message to others,” groups are armed with guidance and support in this effort when they register.

Memorial Contributions Timeline / Key Dates

1962 – August 14 – Advisory Board minutes

DISCUSSION: An A.A. wants to leave some money to Al-Anon in memory of his wife who belonged to Al-Anon... Discussion arose as to whether the limit on gifts and bequests should be \$100 or \$200.

MOTION: Any gifts from members be limited to \$100 during a year, or any bequests from members, or on behalf of a member, be limited to \$100.

VOTE: seven to seven, and the Chairman, Lois, cast the deciding vote in favor.

1962 – September 11 – Board of Directors minutes

DISCUSSION: Since the motion passed by the Advisory Board limiting gifts to \$100 was carried by a vote of 8 to 7, it should have been stated as a resolution, which must be passed on by the Board of Directors.

MOTION: This resolution be accepted as follows: Any gifts from members be limited to \$100, during a year, or any bequests from members, or on behalf of a member, be limited to \$100, subject to ratification by the World Service Conference in 1963.

VOTE: Carried

1963 – World Service Conference (WSC) Summary, p. 11-12

DISCUSSION: Recent offers of money to be left Al-Anon in two wills, one of a member and one of an alcoholic, resulted in the important decision that – all personal gifts from members to HQ be limited to \$100 per year and that all bequests from members or their immediate families be limited to \$100.

Before this was passed 30 to 17, many ideas were expressed. Some Delegates wanted to make the limit higher because: members of their families should not be deprived of showing appreciation of what they have received from Al-Anon; a grateful relative of a deceased member should not have to divert most of a bequest to another agency; but especially because HQ services an increasing number of groups and many groups are non-contributing.

MOTION: All personal donations and gifts from members of Al-Anon to HQ are to be limited to \$100 per year and all bequests from members of Al-Anon or their immediate families are to be limited to \$100.

VOTE: Carried with 30 for and 17 against

1968 – WSC Summary, p. 8

DISCUSSION: was not recorded in the *Conference Summary*

MOTION: Increase the limit on all personal donations and gifts from members of Al-Anon to the World Service Office (HQ) to \$200 per year and all *bequests from Al-Anon member or their immediate families* to \$200.

VOTE: unanimous

1968 – April 27 – Annual Board of Trustees Meeting p. 3

MOTION: that all personal donations and gifts from members of Al-Anon to the World Service Office (HQ) be limited to \$200 per year and all bequests from members of Al-Anon or their immediate families be limited to \$200.

VOTE: unanimous

1974 – WSC Summary, p. 6, p. 20

DISCUSSION: At present, the WSO may accept no more than \$200 per year from an individual member, or a bequest in the same amount from a member, or his immediate family.

Two years ago, A.A. raised to \$300 the amount a member may contribute to GSO. Since inflation has already cut the dollar value greatly, the Policy Committee reviewed this matter and weighed the possibility of raising the amount per year a member may contribute and increasing the limit of the legacy or bequest since it can be accepted on a one-time basis only.

MOTION: *Hence the Policy Committee recommends to the conference that:* The yearly limit on contributions from individual Al-Anon or Alateen members, or a one-time contribution from the immediate family in memory of a member, be placed at \$400.

The WSO be permitted to accept a legacy from an Al-Anon member limited to \$1,000.

VOTE: passed

1974 – April 27 – Board of Trustees

MOTION: that the limit on all contributions from individual members of Al-Anon and Alateen to WSO be set at \$400 per year and a one-time contribution from the immediate family in memory of a member be set at \$400.

VOTE: passed

1984 – WSC Summary, p. 37

One workshop confronted this puzzle: “The WSO will accept a one-time contribution from the immediate family in memory of a member. If the family members are not Al-Anon members, is this not an outside contribution?” Six workshop members held that it *would* be an outside contribution, four that it would *not*, and three abstained!

1984 – July – Policy Committee Meeting

DISCUSSION: ...at the WSC the question of accepting contributions from the immediate family was a greenlight question which was discussed in a workshop. Also there was a letter from a member... who questioned an article in *INSIDE AL-ANON* informing her that an in memoriam gift could be received from the immediate family in memory of a member. She felt that this violated our Seventh Tradition of declining outside contributions. ...the majority in the WSC workshop felt that such a contribution violated Traditions. Also expressed was the thought that the feelings of the family should be honored at their time of grief. After discussion and the knowledge that AA would not accept such a contribution, the committee concurred that accepting such a contribution would violate our Seventh Tradition.

MOTION: To amend the Policy Digest to read as follows: ‘The limit on all contributions from individual member of Al-Anon and Alateen to the WSO is \$500 per year.’ (Deleting the words—“...and a one-time contribution from the immediate family in memory of a member is \$500.)

VOTE: carried with 1 abstention

1984 – July – Board of Trustees Quarterly Report

The long-standing policy of accepting in-memoriam contributions from the immediate family of an Al-Anon member had been rescinded; such contributions will now only be accepted from Al-Anon members.

1985 – WSC Summary, pp. 38-39

The motion to delete the words “and a one-time contribution from the immediate family in memory of a member is \$500” was presented to the Conference. Despite several attempts at rewording, however, the recommendation could not accurately express the major points. An ad hoc committee was therefore formed to meet during lunch to reword the motion. A considerable amount of confusion arose regarding the wording (rather than the sense) of the motion, and although the vote carried by a simple majority, it was sent back to Policy for further work. (yes 50; no 39; 4 abstaining)

1986 – WSC Summary, p. 36, p. 46

DISCUSSION: Following the 1985 WSC, the (Policy) Committee reviewed the motion to page 19, I. WSO CONTRIBUTIONS - Regular c., since this motion did not carry with substantial unanimity at the 1985 WSC (50, yes; 39, no; 4 abstaining), a decision was reached to present the revision in two motions: 1) to limit WSO contributions to Al-Anon members only (not their families) and 2) to add a section on "In Memoriam" contributions. These motions and any others developed in January will be presented at the 1986 WSC. The motions and background information will be available in the addenda section of the Conference brochure.

The (Policy) Committee opened the session by proposing text and policy changes to page 19 of the Digest in two separate motions (which had evolved from a rather densely-worded recommendation defeated at the 1985 WSC). Both motions carried with substantial unanimity and will appear in the Digest as follows:

(under I. WSO CONTRIBUTIONS-Regular)

c. Individual Contributions

The limit on all contributions from individual members of Al-Anon and Alateen to the WSO is \$500 per year.

(Deleted is: "... and a one-time contribution from the immediate family in memory of a member is \$500.")

Added in place of *Bequests* will be:

e. Memoriam Contributions

Any Al-Anon or Alateen member may make contributions to the WSO in memory of anyone who is deceased (see Item c. above)

What this means is that contributions will not be accepted from persons outside the fellowship (regardless of whom they commemorate) and that Al-Anon members' contributions will be accepted in anyone's memory.

MOTION: That the limit on all contributions from individual members of Al-Anon and Alateen to the WSO is \$500 per year; (deleting the words from the Policy Digest and wherever else needed 'and a one-time contribution from the immediate family in memory of a member is \$500.')

VOTE: yes 81; no 13; void 1

MOTION: to amend the Policy Digest that any Al-Anon or Alateen member may make contributions to the WSO in memory of anyone who is deceased.

VOTE: yes 90; no 3; abstaining 1

2011 – WSC Summary, pp. 47–49

Thought Force to Identify a Guideline on Memorial Contributions

DISCUSSION: In recent years, surviving family members, whose deceased relatives were members of the fellowship, have attempted to make memorial contributions. Current policy does not allow the WSO to accept contributions from anyone who is not a member.

The WSO receives approximately three-to-five inquiries about family member contributions a year. It is WSO policy to give potential donors the option of purchasing Conference Approved Literature and donating it to an appropriate facility or to make a contribution to the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence or the Stepping Stones Foundation.

Conference members were asked, “In the spirit of our Traditions and our principle of unlimited, abundant resources, in what ways can Al-Anon Family Groups support a non-member’s request to honor a deceased member of Al-Anon?”

At the close of the session, it was asked whether the Board or Policy Committee could appoint a Task Force to study this idea further in terms of family non-member gifts.”

2013 – WSC Summary, pp. 48–51

Thought Force to Identify a Guideline on Memorial Contributions

DISCUSSION: At the 2013 World Service Conference (WSC), members shared their opinions on the presentation from the Memorial Contributions Thought Force. During the discussion, members requested clarification on the definition of “family,” “member,” and whether there would be a limit on the memorial contribution. WSC members also requested safeguards to ensure no undue influence or “ear-marking.” WSC members expressed concern that Al-Anon/Alateen members maintain financial accountability to preserve the fellowship and that a change in Policy could affect Alcoholics Anonymous and much of our Conference Approved Literature.

2014 – WSC Summary, pp. 58–60

Thought Force to Identify a Guideline on Memorial Contributions

DISCUSSION: At the 2014 World Service Conference (WSC), members shared their opinions on the definitions of “member of Al-Anon” and “family,” which were requested by the 2013 WSC. Conference members were in agreement to continue the conversation at the next WSC.

2015 World Service Conference Universal Understanding of Recovery Work Group

Two proposed definitions of Family Recovery:

1. Definition A:

Family recovery is a process of healing and growth from the effects of living in a family affected by someone's problem drinking. This process helps individuals to make healthier life choices, and to develop relationships that are more positive and supportive.

2. Definition B:

Family recovery is a process of healing and growth for family members affected by someone's drinking. This process helps these individuals make healthier life choices and develop relationships that are more positive and supportive.

Timeline of Universal Understanding of Recovery- **What Is Family Recovery?**

In 2008, a Theme Work Group created steps necessary to develop and achieve a Universal Understanding of Recovery (UUR). As the Work Group began its discussions, the group realized that a universal definition of “family recovery” didn’t exist, making a universal understanding of family recovery difficult.

In February 2009, the UUR Theme Work Group posted a survey entitled “Help Us Define Family Recovery” on the Al-Anon Family Groups Members’ Web site. The goal of the survey was to collect data from members regarding their experience with family recovery that could potentially aid in developing a definition of “family recovery”—718 responses were received.

In September 2010, a second survey was posted to test five definitions of “family recovery” that the UUR Theme Work Group developed based on the data collected in February 2009. It was offered via e-mail to the 543 members who participated in the initial data collection, and provided their e-mail address to be included in future surveys on this topic—284 responses were received.

In November 2010, a third survey was posted, using the same methods as before, for further refinement. This survey tested four definitions, modified from feedback received in the previous survey. It was offered via e-mail to the 232 members who participated in round two of the data collection, and provided their e-mail address to be included in future surveys on this topic—199 responses were received.

In April 2011, the UUR Theme Work Group looked at the results of the previous survey and opted to combine the resulting two emerging ideas into one definition, which included an explanation of what is -the “family recovery.” This fourth survey was also open to all members and 1,735 responses were received.

In October 2011, after four surveys conducted with the membership, a survey was conducted with all the professionals who received the WSO newsletter, *e-News for Professionals*. This survey tested a modified definition from the previous survey with members, based on feedback received—404 responses were received.

In April 2013, a second survey was conducted with all the professionals who received *e-News for Professionals*, and those who follow AFG, Inc. on LinkedIn. The survey tested the original definition from the survey in October 2011, along with two modifications created from feedback received—143 responses were received.

In July 2013, a final survey was conducted with the 1,145 members who provided their e-mail addresses to be included in future surveys on this topic, in April 2011. This survey tested the two definition modifications using the input from professionals. A resulting, finally modified definition was presented to the UUR Theme Work Group based on the final feedback received.