

# GALLERY WALK

TRADITION 7/CONCEPT 4

**NYN Spring Assembly 2012**

Shared thoughts on participation and  
being self-supporting within the fellowship.

## #1. Am I an active participant in Al-Anon? Why or why not?

**YES-** I love service; it helps me grow. Participation is my recovery. It keeps me healthy. It's a life saving program, so I am active. I got so much from the program, I want to give it to others. One day at a time, it gets me through challenges and joy. When I got busy I got better. Yes, because it keeps me from being insane.

One of the primary keys to recovery is service work—I meet new people and build confidence. It helps me to keep the focus on myself—I am important. Yes—either participate or be in the house with the curtains closed. It helps me to learn the concept of keeping the focus on ourselves and not the alcoholic.

Participation is healing. Yes—through meetings and sponsorship. We are all here! I try to participate muchly. I need reminding there is always something to learn. Our participation is healing. I am here in the Assembly with no position...because it is such a part of my recovery.

I am an active participant (in spite of fears) because I always want to change and grow, grow, grow. I could be more active, but I'm finding myself, learning to find some balance, have never said no yet and have always grown. I don't have to like it! Don't say no to service. Has my recovery plateaued? To keep it I have to give it away. Be patient.

Yes I am. Someone was there when I came and I want our group to always be there for others. I will be forever and ever – amen! Wouldn't want to be anywhere else.

## #2. Do I encourage business meetings for my group? What is their importance?

**YES-** Learning how others solve problems helps me. It's important to keep things on track; do inventories; money; how is meeting going; any cliques, etc. It helps to take and maintain a pulse/structure for how we are functioning. We need to know why we have to help others. Monthly meetings help us to keep all informed about Al-Anon. Keeps business up front, keeping everyone informed. It keeps us honest and connected.

We have one, ½ hour before the regular meeting, (announcing it the week previous) once a month. It keeps the line of communication open. It helps determine the condition of the group and allows minorities to be heard. We have one every three months. We have one every month. No, we don't but we should. Yes, at least quarterly—it gives a system of checks and balances. It's an added meeting.

As a new GR, I brought it up and heard “Just mention it at announcements..No one wants to hear business.” Do others know the Al-Anon structure? Group Conscience= Group Health. We are all equal and everyone has a voice. It allows the openness to express issues. Bring it up every meeting-short questions like “Has any business come up?” It makes us accountable. It's hard to get more than the same 5-6 people to attend.

What is a business meeting? A group conscience. Keep it simple. Do a group inventory re: business. I prefer to call it a group conscience – It prevents resentments and gossip and keeps the group balanced. We have a group conscience meeting every two months. We list it on our calendar. We are a small group and have them short and as needed. It helps provide unity. Yes- we do a 5 minute meeting weekly. No- It is part of every meeting. I talk business when I can. We don't, but are learning the importance of group conscience.

Sometimes, uncomfortable as Al-Anon principles are, not always as much in evidence as in meetings. Does not matter if group members are not happy, some things are done for the good of all. Yes, yes, yes- Knowledge Based Decision Making and Conflict Resolution in groups and in my family.

### **#3. In what ways, other than financial, do I support my group, district, area?**

I'm here. I volunteer, show up, share and greet newcomers. I'm a group rep. I spread the work about the meetings. I open the door (it's kept locked), give rides, and greet newcomers. I speak to newcomers after the meeting. I bring in the Forum and share. I sponsor others. I attend AIS and GR meeting. Volunteer services for the group and mind my own business.

I show up, speak, and chair a meeting. I make coffee, clean up. I encourage others to open the meeting and be a greeter. I edit the newsletter. I help the District Rep by being the group records coordinator. I attend functions, participate in events, and pick up literature.

I give rides, open the meeting, encourage service by example and by asking one on one and welcome newcomers. Yes, I take a position and have an opinion. I use the phone list. I share, chair, fill in for GR, listen to person giving information, practice principles over personalities and ask questions about business side. I give literature to depts. of employers and write Forum articles. I do sponsorship. I show up at group, am treasurer for district, attend days of sharing, chair AIS. I attend other groups and days of sharing, promote service sponsorship, give phone number to newcomers personally, and support struggling groups. I get literature for my group. A member of our group spoke at a school. I am taking info and readings into prison.

I keep a service position and encourage others to do the same. I do personal and service sponsorship- working smarter not harder. I take time for newcomers, am available for phone calls and for sponsorship. Also, I attend other meetings and days of sharing. I became a GR and then a DR. I do service work as often as possible.

I founded our group, have served every office in 22 years, co-chaired a convention and am always present if possible. I support through service, service, service. It's about attendance, support and participation.

### **#4. What can I do to participate more fully?**

I can jump into the water of service and volunteer my district to host an Assembly...Yikes! I can volunteer to chair meetings, sponsor a newcomer, be a service sponsor, talk to others about getting involved, ask questions to learn more about service positions, and thank those who do service. I can say yes to speaking and volunteering at days of sharing, conventions and assemblies. I can remember my books. I can remember the names of newcomers. I can arrive on time, encourage and share literature at meetings, volunteer at AIS, help organize special events (Tureen Supper, Anniversary), contribute to the Forum and throw more money in the basket. I can bring another person to a meeting or convention.

I can stay after a meeting to talk to someone. I can give more hugs. I can go to more meetings. I can look at other AFG sites. I can update the phone list and make sure literature is available. I can become more familiar with my service manual, the Traditions and the Concepts. I can pick up the phone. I can read my service manual. I feel good about my service level and did each service position at least once. I can support newcomer meetings. I can support special events, especially around holidays. I can give more of myself, allow others to speak, go deeper into myself and talk with enthusiasm about service. I can announce members willing to sponsor. I can share more consciously and honestly. I can read the Northern HiLights. I can confront dominance. I can listen more fully. I can take on new service and end other commitments.

## **#5. What benefits have I received when I volunteered in Al-Anon?**

I found new perspective and new friends. I met new people who didn't judge me. I was able to focus on something other than problems. Members loved me until I could love myself. I never have to do anything alone. I didn't have to isolate anymore. It gave me a voice. It gave me a purpose and that felt good. I got to travel. I got to meet and know people, gained a feeling of belonging, has kept me coming back, gained a voice, growth, self-esteem, support, got me out of the house, and helped me to mind my own business. I got better!! Helped me think...rather than get in the ring with the problem. I got a life. I got a sense of connection with the whole world of Al-Anon. I found love. I learned to keep the focus on myself and not feel guilty. I gained confidence, met new people and don't ever have to be alone.

I am learning new behavior, ie. listening. I grew as a person. I learned flexibility, acceptance and cooperation. I gained personal growth, serenity, hope, sanity, my voice, friendship, and a chance to travel. (Presently overwhelmed) I learned bonding with others and car pooling with longtimers. I am getting to know people much better outside of the meetings. I am learning service pushes me to move past my fears. I'm a flower blooming! I got to pick a topic ...it helps me with an issue. When I got busy ...I got better. I am growing in my recovery. I am finding myself...getting to know (finally) who I am. I have gone from no self-esteem to accepting and loving myself. I got rid of my fear of people. I don't feel like I am the only one anymore. I grew in self-awareness.

I learned to share the responsibility and delegate. I know the importance of financial responsibility. I met new people, gained self-esteem and confidence, and have close friendships. I found I could things I didn't know I could do and am finding out things about myself. I have learned to stretch myself. I can travel and grow. I have a daily spiritual connection. My list is too numerous to mention! I gained satisfaction, transformation, learned to trust, and to let go. I feel appreciated and

inspired.

## **#6. How often do we rotate service positions? Do we expect a few people to hold up the rest of us?**

At the end of my term, I always encourage others to review *"The Joy of Service"*. Need to educate home group on rotation and show them how to do service positions. Every three years...no!...yes! Small group rotates most positions well. Pickings can be slim. When someone steps down... someone steps up. Invite or ask specific person to try a position. Offer to service sponsor someone in a new position. Even if a spot goes empty, let it go after two terms, otherwise people don't engage. Empty spaces do fill up in good time.

We have a small district, so a few people have to do the work. Chair meetings in a small group weekly or monthly. I was mentored into my first service position. Most positions are three years. Hopefully new people will begin. Small group, not enough members, rotate yearly, some groups go one week- one month in meetings. More difficult today than it used to be. Don't just ask a large group- ask someone privately, one on one.

Step down at the end of your term to let others share the growth. Everyone has a place, a voice, and talent. We need new and longtime members. Our home group has a monthly chair and a treasurer for one year. Group Rep and District Rep are three years. We have trouble getting members to serve. Service needs to be encouraged more. Rotation keeps Al-Anon healthy. Encourage others and stand aside to let others grow. My group is small, so everyone pitches in. A small group with lots of newcomers- we try when we can.

My philosophy is: first year- learn; second year- do; third year- recruit! A new point of view; a new approach, breathes new life into it. Members come and go, so it is hard to get volunteers. Drop the ball- someone will pick it up. Not enough! People aren't willing to do stuff. People who don't, want to quit. Just say no (politely), someone will step up. Review after a year to see if someone else wants the position.

## **#7. What can I do to encourage others to participate?**

Keep it simple. Tell my service story. It's about attraction rather than promotion. Teach by example. Realize we are not in charge, HP is. Offer help and support, explain expectations, shut our mouths and have rotation of service. Be a happy learner and show it. Ask someone to take the key and set up the meeting. "You know how to make coffee?" Let them know the benefits of service. Thank people for sharing, service, etc. Be specific --give a job! Are there other words than "service"? Share with newcomers the benefits of service. Include in the beginner packet. You are never alone. We share experience, strength and hope.

Make it sound exciting. I bring new members to join me in service. Don't wear more than one hat. Mentoring someone is helpful. I can participate myself! A personal invitation—"Will you keep me company in the car?" Make it fun. Set an example. Ask for help in doing something, be

enthusiastic,, say thank you, be fun and friendly to others, not grumpy or bossy. Volunteer them and tell them never to say “no” when asked to do service. Let them know support is included. Call them. “First share, then chair.” Take them to a service event and offer to walk them through a service position.

Ask fairly newcomers to read Steps and Traditions, chair a meeting, etc. Show them the outline and be there to support them. Be a service sponsor, rotate positions, let others share recovery. Pick up the phone. It’s OK to ask for help. Give a *Forum* subscription. Let members do their jobs. Don’t micro-manage (no double-headed management). “I’d like everyone to have a chance to talk and go around the room. We have a “hot topic buzzer to avoid dominance. It’s a spiritual timekeeper! Lead by example, excited about service, validate participant, explain the duties thoroughly, and provide support. Be positive. Be gentle. Take someone under your Al-Anon wings. Let it begin with me.

## **#8. What could I do to encourage less active members to become involved? Am I as active as I could be?**

Share personal experience. Share jobs with an alternate. Have a service calendar. Am I still growing? Mentor and have enthusiasm. Encourage another person from the group to join the Group Rep at the Convention/Assembly. Ask someone to do a “fun” job at Day of Sharing, ie. 50/50 Raffle. Encourage longtime members to volunteer and encourage newcomers. Sponsors encourage sponsees. Keep it simple, start small, invite newcomers, explain benefits. Let members know what is being done and what needs to be done. I tell my service story in terms of my personal recovery vs. “helping” Al-Anon. Tell them to “get in the car.” Offer a scholarship to attend events. Don’t do everything. Let someone else step up. Thank members for their service.

If I want to know if I am as active as I could be, I ask someone else. Share how importance service is and explain how it changed you. Start small, one on one. Encourage participation, model by example, and car pool. Help others to overcome hurdles which may keep them from meetings. Give them a copy of *When I Got Busy, I Got Better*. Give them guidelines and format. Give them a fun, simple title. Chair a meeting on how service helped me. Keep picking up the phone. Describe service / what we do. Have a calendar filled out at meetings with topic. Don’t keep jumping in at meetings—let others speak. The topic of service should be included when sharing with newcomers. Use a Group Inventory for awareness of responsibility.

## **#9. Do we contribute to the large group conscience by sending our GR as our voice and vote at district and area meetings?**

**YES:** When we have a district meeting and when we are educated about where to find information. We make funds available for them to go. If GR cannot go, we ask for someone else to stand in and bring back info to the group. We provide funds and support. We send someone when finances permit. We go to group conscience meetings ourselves. The DR needs to go to meetings to encourage participation. The AIS needs to do the same. We are here in full force at every assembly.

My groups are small and poor. We don't always have financial support. We are a small group and made the commitment.

The Group Rep is the communication link from the group to the world of Al-Anon and from WSO to NYN to the group. What is the large group conscience? Are we informed? Are we receiving info? Do we know the Al-Anon structure? Not sure that I can go back to my group and recommend that they spend the money again.

If there is someone willing, the support is there. I belong to a service oriented group and district. The alternate Group Rep is important. We attend and support although some members aren't interested in reports. They are the ones to get involved. Read the Service Manual about the GR so the group knows responsibilities. Some of us contribute and some don't. Perhaps NYN could fund one or two whose groups are financially struggling—scholarship?

### **#10. Is there a situation in my life today where group, district or area members do not participate equally in all decisions? What can I do?**

If there is, it's good to have a group conscience. Most groups in my district don't have a Group Rep. I can visit those groups and share my experience. Could have active groups visit inactive groups. Have the District Rep address lack of GRs and invite members to a district meeting. The DR came to the groups and told them that they would be inactive if they did not have a GR. Have frequent business meetings, inviting everyone in the group. Encourage sponsorship and go to your sponsor. The trick is not to try to do it all myself. In small groups, people leave early. Groups are not well represented in meetings. Some groups are just not interested. Keep sharing the benefits of service and what they are missing. There is a lack of GR participation in district meetings. Do outreach to groups with no GR.

Collect facts, take a break and don't take it personal. Ask DR to solicit speakers for unrepresented groups. Let go and let God. Invite area officers and coordinators to speak at your meeting. Without a GR you don't have a voice or vote. Have monthly district meetings. Have DR communicate frequently. Go around the room so everyone participates. Right now, I'm trying out just letting people be, yet keeping in touch and communicating more to them so they participate by listening to me. Get a sponsor. Be willing to try new things. Be open-minded. Read Al-Anon literature for guidance, especially the *Service Manual* and *How Al-Anon Works*. Look to the DR for help. Talk about it during a regular meeting.

### **#11. What benefit do we get from being part of the worldwide fellowship?**

I can go to a meeting wherever I am. It is comforting. I get acceptance. I meet new, interesting, fun people. There are a lot of people to learn experience, strength and hope from and I am never alone. I go to Conventions, etc.! If all meetings follow Al-Anon guidelines, I know what to expect when visiting a new group. I continue to be amazed by this disease—it does not discriminate. It can affect anyone anywhere. I know where ever I am there is comfort and support to be found in meetings.

The structure helps me keep an open mind. There are smiling faces when needed. There is global support. I find the power of human beings, warmth and love, and being informed of new ideas. In

the literature, the Al-Anon story is told worldwide, learning we are all unique but the same. There is always a source for finding local groups and literature. I get new ideas from the website, the *Forum* and podcasts.

It's good to know that I matter. I am no longer alone. I have an extended family. People know me when I go somewhere. I am seeing things from a different perspective. CAL promotes unity. I get love and understanding. I am learning tolerance. I am expanding my horizons and spiritual growth. I can make a difference. When I go out of town, I feel right at home. I feel a sense of belonging and being part of something bigger. I feel connected. I am learning humility. I love the travel. I'm not isolated like I was before Al-Anon. I meet new people. I'm new and just learning.

I get a diverse point of view from attending different meetings. I meet people. There are more resources available with a worldwide fellowship. I can recognize similarities. My voice counts! It gives me hope. There are phone meetings. Never alone - Never alone - Never alone! There is always someone I can call. I feel a sense of belonging and I am never alone.

## **#12. Does my group understand the idea of prudent reserve? Do we stockpile money in our treasury for no specific reason?**

We have a small group with a small budget and have no reserves. Our excess is given to all service arms. My group understands the concept and uses our money wisely. Treasurers should not make all the decisions—should be by group vote. We understand. Actually, we did a group conscience on what our reserve would be. We don't have a reserve. There is never enough money to build one. We don't stockpile. We distribute to other service arms, ie. WSO, NYN, etc.. My group knows that it is important to send our GR to assemblies. They do understand prudent reserve. They also understand the importance of purchasing literature to have for newcomers.

I believe that happens with our group. It is hard to reason with our treasurer. We need more business meetings to dispense funds. Have a group meeting including a treasurer's report.

We hand out a "guideline sheet" that helps our group know where they should donate funds. We provide the names and addresses on where to send donations. We have a prudent reserve. I understand, but some groups do not have enough money. We have a prudent reserve and donate to WSO, NYN, AIS, and district.

We follow the guidelines in the service manual and set up regular donations. We also need to budget for upcoming expenses. Small groups, small resources, limited budget—makes it hard to create a reserve. Increase donation from \$1 to \$2. We understand. We have just enough—send money when we can. We have no reserve. We use what we have to pay rent, buy literature and contribute to AIS, NYN, WSO and district.

We have no reserve. We keep a supply of one copy of each book. My group is too small to have a reserve. We have no reserve for frivolities. We are self sufficient. We understand. We do a group inventory. We are a small group- sending a GR to assembly is a sacrifice. We have no reserve. We give it to AFG levels.

I don't know if we have a reserve. When we get to a certain amount, we buy literature or increase



donations. No reserve. As a small group, we donate on a consistent basis, based on what we have.

Do we know where the money goes? Do we contribute \$1? What else could the money be doing? We understand at the business meeting level. We understand but do not have a reserve. We are a prosperous group and we share the riches. We save for expenses—group list, literature and day of sharing. We have a very large group and use contributions to help other groups.

### **#13. Am I willing to hear all that others share?**

Yes, as long as they stay on Al-Anon topics. Listening to others is the best part. Yes, I'm very willing. They help me, but I sometimes feel some members share for a long time and don't give others a chance. Absolutely, I learn when I listen. I am willing to listen because others listen when I need to share. Yes, I believe in respect for others.

Some groups will extend time so that all can share. Announce at the beginning, time may run over. You can leave, if needed. I don't always know what I need. By listening, I learn. Listening is a skill I needed to develop to get out of my own pain. I decided not to share more than one time at a meeting. One of the greatest of Al-Anon is learning to listen...but do I always hear?...and take in? We never know how our Higher Power is going to speak to us.

Listen & Learn...LISTEN & SILENT are spelled with the same letters!

I have a hard time when people go off topic or dominate. Need to learn balance. Principles above personalities and take what you like and leave the rest. Yes, Al-Anon is the place to share experience, strength and hope. Al-Anon is where I learned to listen. Even if I don't like what I hear, I learn. I am sure everyone wants to hear me, but I'm not judged. I welcome listening to others. There is more than one way... my Higher Power speaks through others. Hopefully I am hearing. I have sharings from meetings that come to mind when needed.

I can always hear, but I try harder to listen. That's why I come here. I love to hear new members. I always hear something to remember. The more I listen the better. I hear when I am open minded, tolerant depending on my mood, when I am quiet and centered, and when members stay on topic. I learn patience when listening.

Yes, best hearing "before" and "after" they do service. I always hear what I need when I stop and listen. Solutions come from others. Listen and learn. I love to hear heartfelt experience, strength and hope. To me it is the basis of the program. It's absolutely vital. Members need to be encouraged to share and others need to allow them the opportunity.

### **#14. Do I understand the spiritual reason for contributing?**

Yes, because our Higher Power works through all of us, as we give or receive. It gets others involved, more blessed to give than receive. Giving money keeps us self-supporting. Yes, my sharing often comes through me not from me. Yes, I feel I belong. We become a part of, not a taker. Participation is the key to harmony. I get through giving. Giving is a part of gratitude. It

gets me outside of myself. I am worthy of giving. I am important. I am learning to trust HP that I will always have enough.

When you give, you get way more in return. Our Steps are written in the “we” form. HP speaks through others. When everyone show up and shares, it gives everyone a sense of community. The more you give, the more you get back. I hear others share my story. It makes me feel that I belong. Our HP speaks through us. I need to hear myself speak. It heals my heart. I hear God speaking through others. To keep it, you have to give it away. I can't out give my Higher Power. What I give comes back, tenfold. We agree...share the blessings of the program. There is something wrong with taking all the time and not giving.

With experience, strength and hope, my Higher Power got me through a lot. Yes, it's a spiritual program. The one who is aware, is responsible. It keeps program there for others. I don't really get until I give. After I learn the first three steps, yes, I understand the spiritual part. Maintaining self-reliance is important. It is important to not do for others what they can do for themselves.

## **#15. Is my self-worth based on how much I'm needed by others? Is this healthy? Why?**

Not now, it used to be. That wasn't healthy. It kept me from looking at my own issues. Self-esteem, self-love and self-worth are reasons to get up in the morning. No, not when my HP is really in my life. Letting this go allows me to look at myself and my own self-care. It is not good to have self-worth based on the needs of others. It keeps others in a needy place relying on someone else to enable. Tending to the needs of others is exhausting.

I am trying to get over it, but I feel I was programmed as a child and only received recognition and love because of the amount of work I did. I still have those feelings but am not reacting on them. I try to remember that I am a human being not a human doing. It used to be true...not any more. No, my self-worth is based on how I feel about myself. It is who I am, not who I can serve. I'm working on it.

I sometimes use it as an excuse not to look at my own issues. My need to be needed—I need to find a balance. God determines my worth—not me or any others. It's nice to be needed, but it can't be necessary for my existence. I don't want to put my well-being into something that can change minute to minute or day by day. Higher Power is stable and gives me stability. Recovery is an inside job. Sometimes, my self-worth is dependent on others. Is it healthy – no. It's a character defect.

I learned not to take it personally, let go and let God, and it gives me more confidence. Sponsors help. GOD (good orderly direction) is present. If I feel needy, then someone else has control over me. Self-love is very important. Encouragement of service and participation helps to develop self-worth. Enjoy being wanted not needed. I'm trying to keep the focus on myself, not on others' responses to me or what I do.

## **#16. Am I willing to risk discovering that I have more to offer than I thought?**

Believing this is true, gives me the courage to move beyond my comfort zone. When asked, say yes. Never say never. I am a good person. That's what Al-Anon is all about. I did not realize what I was capable of doing. It's about a leap of faith. Sure, I might just like myself and realize I am a child of God. I'm tired of being sick and tired. Discovering who I am is exciting, but sometimes scary. Yes, I am willing to risk and I'm worth it. The more service I do, the more self-discovering I do. Yes, it makes my soul grow.

I'm willing to risk. I feel guilty if I don't take a job. I need to grow. I am discovering who I am. Scary, but this is the safe place to do it. There is support, encouragement, experience and caring. With other members, we can learn and discover ourselves. Let it begin with me and share anyway... Faith is my prayer in action. Feel the fear and do it anyway. Enjoy the thrill ride.

When I got busy, I got better...not a title to me, but a slogan. I'm not taking a risk when I am lazy and afraid. No risk, no reward. I've learned this in Al-Anon...self-awareness...I've learned to take risks without fear of failure. Yes, I'm afraid. No problem with this one. I'm beyond it. You can always try something new. We are willing because we are here. Service is a challenge. We discover it without making a conscious decision.

It is scary living from a place of abundance rather than scarcity...will I lose it? Take a risk! My Higher Power will catch me. There's no failure unless I don't try.

## **#17. Am I afraid of letting go?**

No, when I let go, it all works out. When I move beyond my comfort zone, I experience growth. It is about trust and humility for me. Absolutely, I work on my relationship with my Higher Power to learn to let go. I'm only afraid if I don't work the Steps with my sponsor and my Higher Power. Let go or be dragged! Fear and faith cannot co-exist. It is freeing. It gives room for God to do his work. I give up the illusion of control. I'm less afraid if I come to meetings and work my program. It's a big relief to let go.

Let go and let God. Believe. Trust. Turn it over. It's OK. When I am fearful of the outcome, I want to control it. I'm not afraid...my HP has always been there. I can be afraid, especially when it is something new, but with faith, I can let go. When I am spiritually sound, I can let go. Sometimes I feel I can do it myself. It allows me to work on myself and letting go can let God's plan unfold.

I'm afraid of letting go because I am afraid of the consequences. When anger is involved, I am afraid of hurting others. Sometimes I am and sometimes I am not. Let go and Let God, I feel better. It's hard to let go and harder to let go for good. It's not fear, but my own will that gets in the way of letting go.

Yes, until I exhaust myself from hanging on, I may not be ready to let go. Everything I have let go of, has "claw marks" on it. I'm working on it. I'm not afraid because I use my God jar. I'm not

afraid to let go, but sometimes I have to hold on until it hurts. Faith is fear that has said it's prayers. Encouragement gives me courage. Letting go is not the problem...it is always taking it back that is the struggle.

Yes—I have fear of the unknown and fear of loss of control. Sometimes, I wonder what is left to hold on to? Then I find that I can try new things. I am often afraid, but it is worth it. It is a process for me and I learn trust. What if I let go and there is only a void? I feel the fear and do it anyway. My feelings aren't always the truth.

## **#18. Can I accept and express my own feelings without feeling wrong or justifying them to others?**

I'm not perfect but have more acceptance in Al-Anon meetings. I couldn't when I came in. I couldn't without starting World War III. I could start World War III if that was the right thing to do for me. I did it last week. Working on feelings not seen as good.—sadness and anger. A photo of myself as a child helps me express myself even when I am afraid. Acceptance can be hard if I allow it to be. I have acceptance when I keep coming back...it works. I still carry a lot of fear, but I am better at standing up for myself. I still feel that I have to explain when I say no. My feelings are my feelings...not right or wrong. In meetings, yes. Outside of meetings, it's a process to learn.

It is still hard to do with my alcoholic. No is a complete sentence. No explanation needed. It is practice not perfection. I can agree to disagree. It takes practice. Most times I can. It depends on how I feel that day. It is progress not perfection. Yes. There are times when there is a need to justify. It is hard, but I still try. Not yet. It is difficult to do. I am used to justification. It depends on who the others are. I have acceptance depending on how I feel at that particular time. I can and I do! I can in a safe environment (meetings). I try. I'm getting better. I'm honest. (You might get mad at me—I'm learning I am OK.) There is honesty in meetings and with my sponsor. Now I know I can express my feelings, then I let go and let God. Not always, I'm a work in progress.

I need to identify my feelings, so I can identify why I feel the way I do. I am learning to say what I feel in appropriate ways rather than keeping quiet. Finally after many years, I have acceptance. Thank you, Al-Anon. I'm a work in progress. No is a complete sentence. Now I can say I don't want to do this. Think first before speaking. Being heard...I'm worth it. I'm a person, too. I'm learning to say what I mean, mean what I say and not saying it mean.

## **#19. Can I trust that there is more than one good or right way to do something? How?**

Yes, because I believe in team playing. Yes, because my higher power will be with me no matter what I choose. Yes, because I listen to other opinions...none are quite the same. Yes as I do prayer and meditation which leads to the best choice for me. Humility helps...forget my ego. EGO=easing God out. It's hard to stand and watch. It's good to bite your tongue. I never thought of that. Do you want to be right or do you want to be happy? Today...yes. Sometimes I just have to listen.

Yes, I am open to listening. I need to remember—responding not reacting...wait a few minutes.

Yes, by trusting our Higher Power and letting go. It's good to let go and let God. Al-Anon is moving me out of my black and white thinking. I'm getting better at considering there are other possibilities. Humility! HP gave me the gift of being open minded. Yes, I learned keep an open mind and believe in others. Now I--we can--by trial and error (experience) and trust in HP. Yes, because I want others to give my way a chance. There are more ideas and more learning. Of course, there is more than one way to a destination. Compromise doesn't mean someone has to lose. Yes, it has been proven to us over and over.

A mistake is another way of doing things. I'll try to think "both / and" rather than "either / or". If it seems there is no serenity—my ego. If it goes peacefully and smoothly—it's God's will. Yes, when we have the same goal. Life is not black or white, it's a rainbow. There is more than one way to skin a cat! Practice makes it better.

## **#20. Do I take responsibility for my feelings or blame them on the actions of others?**

Been there—did that—no more! Feelings are neither right nor wrong. They just are and they change. Not always. I am not always aware of my feelings. I believe it takes two in any situation so, my feelings are mine and theirs are theirs. On a good day, I can confront people. I'm really working on this. What part did I play in it? Do I have resentments? I have awareness that I'm human and I need to take time to think. Yes, I've looked hard at this. I'm learning that my feelings are valid, whatever they are. I take responsibility for me. I can see others do the blame game and I can detach. Still blame them, can't help it. I've earned to own my feelings. The program is helping me to do this and not feel sorry for myself or like a victim. In service position, I'm struggling with taking responsibility.

Yes I do. In Al-Anon I found out we are only human and I can admit my mistakes. The three A's and the three C's---Their opinion doesn't make it right. Everyone has their own HP. When I blame others, I am giving my power away. Keep the focus on myself and my feelings. I have learned to not blame myself for other problems. It begins with me. We need to remember we all have choices. I used to have lots of excuses. I'm better. Now I realize my role. Nobody makes me feel...and feelings are not facts. They are like the weather...they can change in five minutes. My feelings are me, but I do take responsibility.

I accept responsibility for who I am, but think I became who I am in response to others behaviors. I take responsibility. Is my name on it? No one can make me feel anything unless I let them. Al-Anon has taught me that I am responsible for my actions and reactions. Feelings just are...not good or bad. If we keep the focus on "I", we can keep the responsibility. Use "I" messages. Yes, the "if only" has been left behind. Yes, until I wake up and turn it around. I also stop blaming myself.

## **#21. Does my happiness depend on outside influences or can I look to myself**

## for fulfillment? Why?

Al-Anon has changed that (internal) on self-fulfillment. I have a spiritual connection. I do meditation. When I'm not happy (outside things) I come out of my funk quicker. If I am happy, at least one person is happy. I'm responsible for my own happiness. Service—I'm proactive doing things. I know it makes me feel good. I've learned to be comfortable in my own skin. I've learned to love myself. Might think others and things make us happy. I must decide to be happy. Disappointment is not always unhappiness.

Yes, money. No, easy to look at things. Must slow down and find my self-center. I try not to go to the hardware store for bread! I love "my time" and my fulfillment and it's a struggle. If I am, I know my connection with my HP needs to be looked at. I look to my own self-worth for fulfillment and to my HP. I'm finding more ways to do this within myself. I look at what my perceptions of happiness are. It's hard when my unhappiness is caused by someone or something else.

Depending on outside influences for fulfillment has been my lifelong quest, and it did not work. I was in constant pain before Al-Anon. I own my own joy. I am responsible for taking care of it. I need to learn to be with myself. I love my quietness and love my serenity and time spent with HP. Getting better, I need to remember "powerless". I look for my own happiness – why—because I'm the only I who cares for me the most. My happiness derives from relationships with my HP—conscious contact.

Happiness is a temporary thing. Contentment is a goal. I try to remember how uncomfortable it is to be "everything" to someone. It is an inside job...Attitude is everything. It's a program of discovery. Is my attitude worth catching? The Serenity Prayer helps me. I am learning to love myself. Learning how to take care of myself is my responsibility. I look to my HP It helps to have outside good too. I am as happy as I make up my mind to be. Get over it. Progress not perfection, on this one.

