

As We Understood... -- What's in It for Me?
The spiritual insight and wisdom of Al-Anon and Alateen members

INTRODUCTION

1. What gives...

"They were able to accept outrageous situations. And I wanted to learn how they did it." page v

2. When I...

"Gradually I began to understand that I was witnessing a spiritual growth that I read about in the literature. And, one day, I realized that I was looking at the world with new eyes." page vi

FELLOWSHIP

3. A member...

"Whatever they had... I wanted. I also wanted their understanding and friendship... People in Al-Anon didn't offer me solutions, but they listened and I could be honest with them... Slowly, it dawned on me that these people were living a spiritual life..." pages 1-2

4. The fellowship...

"...but for us, any suggestion for a recovering person was a ray of hope." page 3

5. They welcomed...

"They taught me that I could not love and help others until I felt loved and secure myself." page 5

6 As I let go...

"What I have found is that when God leads me to make a decision that is right for me, it is also the best thing for everyone around me." pages 17-18

7. I had decided...

"I was looking at my husband as a kind of microbe." pages 10-11

8. I'm beginning...

"It's this exchange—this giving and receiving of love, faith, hope and joy—that raises our consciousness to a higher level, bringing regeneration and peace into our lives." page 24

9. I like to think...

"Each time we feel we're not good enough or wise enough or we just don't care enough to try to help someone else, we put distance between ourselves and our Higher Power." page 24

10. Author from Kentucky, page 21

MOVING TOWARD A SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

11. We have often...

"In addition to offering healing for a hurt spirit, the fellowship offers empathy and choice." page 29

12. I started.....

"...I could no longer be God. The job was much too hard and the hours too long." page 42

13. Giving others

"I now know love, the kind of love that does not possess, but waits and listens. page 43

14. Even though...

"Each time I felt I had reached the limit of my endurance and told my High Power 'That's it! I'm at the end of my tether!', relief came. Either the general situation improved, or I suddenly found myself with a new surge of courage and serenity." page 44

15. Coming...

"Finally, I was forced to take the Fourth Step.... I found that I could no longer live with myself and continue to be complacent and self-righteous about my character defects and mistakes in the past." page 51

16. "While giving away my Fifth Step...." page 55

17. Deep down...

...I became willing to do so.... There I left it, for I believe that if we are willing, the time, the place and the right person will be provided for us, and this is just what happened." page 57

18. Bending over...

'...there's no guarantee that we won't find ourselves growing a new crop of the uglies that have to be weeded out. Using the Tenth Step—and using it often—can uncover a defect before it becomes firmly rooted." page 65

CONCEPTS OF A HIGHER POWER

19. One week...

"I asked him how I could find this God. He answered, 'Say, "Good morning, God," every morning, even if you don't believe it'" page 81

20. For a year...

"I realized that all the things that had happened were not just coincidences; they were gifts from God." page 89

21. One thing...

"One thing that made me nearly miss the Al-Anon program was my spiritual price." page 97

22. Since that...

"...I realized that God loved my child more than I did and would take care of her if I would only get out of the way. So I released her with love... I became willing to stand by and watch her go through whatever it took for her to find her peace with a God of her understanding." pages 100-101

RECOGNIZING SPIRITUAL AWAKENINGS

23. Step Twelve...

"...when it happens, we will know intuitively and a new level of perception will open up to us. We feel there will be no doubt in our minds because a power greater than ourselves can communicate a presence in our lives uniquely, according to our needs." page 111

24. Slowly...

"Miraculously, for the first time in my life, I sensed the presence of a spiritual force outside myself. I felt humbled by my new awareness, and love gradually replaced the bitterness within me." page 129

25. Despite my unwillingness ...

"In a moment of insight, I had reached another crossroads in my relationship to a Higher Power. I could deny Him once again—or I could reach out and reaffirm my faith and trust." page 130

26. "When I came into Al-Anon, God wasn't in the picture. I wasn't for Him or against Him, I just wasn't with Him." page 143

27. This was truly the beginning...

"I do believe that the Higher Power will go to any lengths to let us know He loves and cares for us." page 146

28. "I have held many things in my hands and lost them all, but whatever I placed in God's hands, I still possess." page 152

LETTING GO

29. For years before we found...

"...many of us had a very difficult time letting go of our outdated beliefs. page 154

30. "I don't need to understand the Power greater than myself, only to trust it." page 159

31. I thought that I was working...

"...I am still too powerful for my own good because I'm afraid of losing control and I don't want to trust anyone, even God, to help me." page 159

32. After a time...

"...I began to see that all the things I worried about were taken care of." page 162

33. I believe...

"... all these blessings, and many more, are a result of putting first things first - myself and this program - and leaving room for God to work His miracles." page 162

34. Until I faced...

"...I was agnostic in some areas of my life. I discovered that I believed in God, but did not believe He would help in any way with my current problem." page 168

35. Through study...

"...Al-Anon helped bring back to the surface the spiritual values hidden deep down inside me." page 174

36. But, because...

"...Al-Anon gave me the courage to start mending my life." page 174

37. "Fear is natural and it takes courage, faith, and honesty to look within so that as fears lessen, we can begin to concentrate on ourselves and thus find emotional security and spiritual peace." page 176

38. I had to turn...

"...myself—over to my Higher Power and allow him to take the reins and to guide me in all aspects of my life. I could not do this once and then forget it. I have to do it at least once a day by prayer, meditation, and talking with my Higher Power on a one-to-one basis—in other words by practicing Step Eleven." page 181

39. "Though no one can go back and make a brand new start, anyone can start from now and make a brand new end." page 185

40. A voice spoke...

"...present joy wipes out all past unhappiness. And so I have found it to be." page 188

PRAYER AND MEDITATION

41. Many of us did not learn...

"True knowledge of its power to transform our lives can only be gained through practice; 'knowledge without action is fantasy.'"

42. In Al-Anon,...

"...I learned that God meets me where I am. I don't have to rearrange myself or become 'good' enough before I can approach Him. If I am just willing, He will come to me." page 196

43. "I have found the value of consistency in prayer and meditation." page 201

44. Fear does not go away...

"I finally learned to pray not to have the problem removed, even though that's what I wanted, but instead for the willingness to accept the situation, the strength to work at whatever I needed to do." page 205

45. This is what...

"...the Eleventh Step has come to mean to me: watching the light and asking for the ability to see what is already planned so that I will respond to the power instead of working against it." page 209

46. One day at a time,....

"I go to the source: God as I understand Him. I ask for my portion for this day, and only then can I be the sort of person I wouldn't mind being with for that day." page 211

47. Dear God,...

"I know that I have been fearful for I have sought to take care of my own problems instead of asking for Your help. When I doubt, would you please get my mind off my fears and help me to remember that You are the power that can bring about miracles in my life." page 216

48. Meditation ...

"... is not what you think. page 217

49. My regular meditation today...

"I know I have to separate the time necessary for planning my day from the time necessary to center my life.
page 221

50. I think...

"...I've developed an understanding of God that I don't fully understand." page 226

PRACTICING THE SPIRITUAL LIFE

51. The Twelve Steps...

"...have allowed us to see life with a new vision, to realize that we are able to live happily and sanely today, and that God's will for us is to make a contribution to the peace of other people who are traveling this path with us."
page 231

52. That's how it is...

"Now, I use my future goals to shape the decisions I make today." page 234

53. Al-Anon has given me a spiritual awakening...

"Its power to restore me to healthy well-being and serene contentment is far beyond what I could every have imagined, regardless of how difficult the atmosphere around me, in days where very few, if any, lives are free from the problems of living." page 235

54. To me, the beauty...

"I stopped my childish fantasies and Al-Anon directed me to an orderly, meaningful life and showed me how to attain this and keep it at last." page 236

55. The Twelve Steps...

"... a faith in God today which is based on acceptance of the world as it is. I no longer agonize over how the world should be. God created this world and I am responsible for using my talents and gifts to make a positive contribution to the world today." page 244

56. When Al-Anon came into my life...

"I have discovered that after a cloudy day, the sun shines in all its magnificence so I can see everything God has created for me. I have a big family in Al-Anon. I may live alone, but I am no longer lonely. A new season is fast approaching..." page 251

57 A Tibetan writer,...

"Each advance we make in personal insight and awareness of others is spiritual growth. We can leave the thickets of distrust and discouragement and climb up where we have new worlds at our feet and far horizons before us." page 254