

Financial Matters

Spiritual Principles of Al-Anon's Self Support

Tradition Seven is Gratitude in Action. Al-Anon is supported by members' financial and service contributions together with the sale of our literature.

Our spiritual principles inspire members to support the fellowship as it serves both members and prospective members. As we receive the hope and help we each sought, we use these spiritual principles to ensure that those following in our footsteps have the same opportunities:

Abundance—We learn to change our thinking from what we don't have to an awareness of gratitude for what we do have. As that idea expands, we continue to give of our time and money, realizing we can never give back all we have been given. Thinking abundantly allows us to accomplish our primary purpose of reaching out to families and friends of alcoholics.

Anonymity—Within our practice of anonymity we are reminded that our personal donations are made without recognition or public acknowledgement.

Gratitude—We express our gratitude by giving generously of our time and resources. We want to ensure that Al-Anon will continue to be available to others.

Responsibility—Step Twelve suggests that reaching out is essential as we strive to carry out our responsibility to be there for the newcomer. To fund this very important work, we consider what combination of service and money each of us is willing to provide.

Trust—We believe our trusted servants practice these spiritual principles when making informed decisions about the use of our resources. We realize that we all want what is best for Al-Anon as a whole. As we trust others, we come to understand that we too are worthy of trust.

Unity—Our contributions provide the means to create, maintain and expand the services that are necessary to enhance the sense of belonging so all members are connected in fulfilling our primary spiritual aim.

Contributions to WSO

As Individual Members, we give through:

Direct Contributions

In any calendar year, an Al-Anon member may contribute in gratitude to the WSO any amount up to one percent of the total revenue of the WSO General Fund as identified in the previous year's audit.

When giving locally to our groups, Districts, Al-Anon Information Services /Literature Distribution Centers (AIS/LDCs), Areas or General Service Offices, we make our gifts in a similar proportion to the revenue and expenses of these service arms, keeping in mind that all members want to have responsibility for supporting our structures. Our contributions express our individual abundance so no one donation, regardless of amount, is more important than another. (Also see "Incorporation/Taxes, Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc." regarding charitable deductions.)

In addition to checks, money orders and online contributions, members may authorize deductions from their bank accounts. (Contact the WSO for details.)

Birthdays Plan. In honor of their Al-Anon/Alateen birthdays, members may express their gratitude by contributing an amount for each year's membership.

Memorial Contributions. Any Al-Anon or Alateen member may make contributions to the WSO in memory of any relationship in accordance with the direct contribution limit. (Contact the WSO for details.)

The World Service Office accepts contributions in memory of deceased Al-Anon members from "family" who are not Al-Anon members. The Fellowship recognizes that accepting such contributions can give comfort to families as described in Tradition Five.

The World Service Conference defines family as anyone who has a close relationship of loving care and concern for another. The individual donor defines his or her relationship to the deceased Al-Anon member.

This one-time gift of gratitude is limited to an amount no greater than \$500. Memorial contributions by non-members are not solicited.

Quarterly Appeal to Members. The quarterly appeal gives each member an opportunity to participate in Twelfth Step work beyond the group level. Since

the WSO does not maintain a list of all members of Al-Anon/Alateen, quarterly appeal letters are mailed to the groups in February, May, August and November. It is requested that the letters be read at two meetings to allow individual members to contribute directly to the WSO in addition to their regular group donations. Members give in accordance with spiritual principles and the opportunity to contribute is offered to all.

The 1966 World Service Conference voted that three letters of appeal for individual contributions be sent annually from the WSO to Al-Anon/Alateen members in the United States and Canada. In 1998, the World Service Conference voted to increase the appeal frequency to quarterly. In November, the appeal is extended to members of groups worldwide.

Workplace Combined Giving Campaigns. Members may contribute to the WSO via a combined giving campaign through their employers. In keeping with members' individual responsibility to be self-supporting, such contributions come directly from their income and matching funds from employers (non-members) cannot be accepted. Members notify the WSO of their intent to make such contributions so it is clear the money is coming from a member. (Contact the WSO for details.)

Bequests

The WSO may accept a *one-time* bequest from an Al-Anon member's estate or trust in any amount. Bequest amounts, up to ten percent of the total revenue of the WSO General Fund as identified in the previous year's audit will be placed in the General Fund. Members may designate, in a spirit of gratitude, more than the ten percent; however, the portion of the bequest above the ten percent will be reported separately on the financial statements. The World Service Conference will authorize the use of these excess amounts and the authorized expenditures will be administered by the Board of Trustees. These excess amounts are not available for general purposes, unless further authorized by the Conference. (Contact the WSO for details.)

In maintaining the principle of anonymity, no individual's gift is acknowledged publicly nor can the gift be earmarked for any specific purpose or program. Al-Anon members give knowing that the money will be spent continuing to support and expand the program that brought us peace and serenity during our lives.

As Groups and Other Service Entities, Members Give Through:

Al-Anon/Alateen Groups

As an expression of gratitude, groups may make donations to the WSO on a regular basis without limit after meeting the group's expenses and contributions to local and Area service entities.

Al-Anon/Alateen Service Arms

Districts, Al-Anon Information Services (Intergroups), Literature Distribution Centers, Areas, General Service Offices and other Al-Anon/Alateen service entities may also contribute in a spirit of unity directly to the WSO without limit.

Al-Anon and Alateen Conventions

A portion of the funds derived from Al-Anon and Alateen conventions may be contributed to the WSO. (See "Conventions," "Distribution of Proceeds.")

A.A. Conferences/Conventions

Contributions received from A.A. conferences/conventions that are offered as an acknowledgment of Al-Anon's participation in these functions may be accepted by the WSO or its service arms.

Reserve Fund

Warranty One recommends that an ample reserve be the prudent financial principle of the World Service Conference. This ample reserve, created from the generosity and abundance of the members, ensures the continuation of the important Twelfth Step work of Al-Anon Family Groups and the funding of special projects. (See *Reserve Fund Guideline* [G-41].)

Contributions of Money, Goods and Services

Members' personal contributions of money, time and experience are appropriate expressions of our spiritual principles.

Fund-Raising

As part of our responsibility to be self-supporting, many groups, Districts, Areas, Information Services, conventions, conferences and assemblies often raise funds to provide services.

Fundraisers such as potlucks, dances or other social events are usually conducted in agreement with the Al-Anon/Alateen groups directly involved. If such events are open to the general public, use of the name Al-Anon or Alateen violates our Traditions of anonymity and self-support. (Also see "Announcing Events.")

Discounts of Goods and Services

WSO and other Al-Anon service entities may accept discounts of goods and services that are routinely available to other not-for-profit organizations (e.g. nonprofit postal rates, free placement for public service announcements, etc. In addition, service entities may accept discounts of goods and services that are routinely available to other not-for-profit organizations and for-profit entities—e.g., freeware and other digital media—provided that members’ anonymity is protected and there are no appearances of affiliation or requirements that would violate our Traditions.

Outside Contributions of Money

Al-Anon and Alateen groups do not solicit or accept* direct contributions of money from outside the Al-Anon membership in order to adhere to the Seventh Tradition of self-support and avoid the appearance of affiliation or influence by others. Seeking or accepting any outside funding through awards, endowments, gifts, grants, scholarships, etc., would not be in keeping with our spiritual principles. (See also “Use of Group Funds,” and “Discounts of Goods and Services.”)

Program-Related Jewelry and Other Items

The WSO does not stock or offer program-related jewelry or other items for sale because these actions could divert our service office from our primary purpose of helping families of alcoholics.

In keeping with Tradition Six, the WSO does not provide lists of suppliers for articles associated with the fellowship, e.g., plaques, jewelry.

Selling Products/Chances

Selling Products at Meetings/Conventions/Conferences

Tradition Five states that the one purpose of each Al-Anon group is to help families of alcoholics. Therefore, it is inappropriate for an individual or outside entity to use Al-Anon meetings or other Al-Anon events as a marketplace before, during, or after these gatherings for the sale of services or products.

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**The only exceptions would be subject to the Memorial Contributions Policy for family members.*

programs. Our experience suggests that confusion arises when such events are announced in Area newsletters and Al-Anon/Alateen local bulletins, on Al-Anon websites and at group meetings.

The Al-Anon/Alateen name, therefore, cannot properly be used to identify or publicize any retreats, events, or activities sponsored by others. This applies when most or even all of the participants are members of Al-Anon/Alateen. Otherwise there could be a misunderstanding of Al-Anon's purpose and function. In order to avoid any appearance of Al-Anon/Alateen affiliation, it is important to keep promotion of such events outside of Al-Anon/Alateen meetings and meeting locations.

Autonomy of Service Arms When Announcing Events

Whether to announce a particular event is a matter of autonomy, keeping in mind other groups, the District or the Area may have different criteria. For example, an Area may choose to only make announcements at Assemblies of events sponsored by Al-Anon service arms.

Just as we have no opinion on outside literature, we have no opinion on events outside of Al-Anon. Members may read or attend whatever helps them in their recovery; but we keep our events focused on Al-Anon principles and topics.

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Avoiding Commercialism

Raffling various articles at meetings or other gatherings is a matter of autonomy but to avoid commercialism in the fellowship, it is suggested that these items relate in some way to our spiritual principles. Items such as Al-Anon or Alateen books, subscriptions to *The Forum*, or the donated products of the creative efforts of individual members are suggested. In keeping with our principle of self-support we do not solicit or accept items from outside the fellowship. (Also see "Raffles/Lottery Tickets.")

Selling Products at A.A. Meetings

In keeping with Tradition Seven and our principle of self-support, Al-Anon and Alateen members should refrain from soliciting or selling any products at A.A. meetings.

Raffles/Lottery Tickets

Raffles/lotteries are subject to national, state/provincial and local laws.

U.S. federal law and Canadian federal law make it illegal to send lottery tickets through the mail.

Governmental regulations may prohibit solicitation of ticket money by letter or by the sales of chances on a prize. Similar restrictions may apply outside the United States and Canada.

There may also be other state or provincial laws which regulate the use of fund raising involving the sale of chances or tickets by charitable organizations. Since groups, Districts and many Areas are not registered as charities with state/provincial or federal authorities, these laws could prohibit such sales.

Local statutes must also be investigated and complied with in order to prevent individual members and Al-Anon as a whole from becoming involved in public controversy.

After determining that the proposed raffle and/or lottery is legally permitted within the Area where it is to be held, additional precautions need to be taken so that we are not diverted from our primary purpose and do not imply endorsement. Distribution and sale of raffle/lottery tickets should be limited to Al-Anon/Alateen meetings and events. (Also see “Fund Raising” and “Selling Products and Chances.”)

Public Meetings

During open meetings when the public has been invited, it is appropriate to read the Al-Anon Preamble to the Twelve Steps and the Seventh Tradition before passing the basket to clarify our spiritual principle of self-support.

Use of Group Funds

Group Expenses

Our Tradition of self-support suggests that the expenses for the group’s operation such as rent, literature, insurance, public outreach, supplies, post office box rental, Group Representative and Information Service Representative expenses be met first. Funds in excess of an ample reserve are used to help support local and Area structures and the World Service Office.

Rent

In facilities where rent is not accepted, a group may provide a supply of Al-Anon/Alateen Conference Approved Literature and local meeting schedules as an appropriate alternative.

Gifts to Members

In the spirit of unity, group funds are used for group purposes only, not for personal gifts to members.

Child Care

Some meetings are attended by members who must bring children. Using group funds or taking a special collection to pay for child care at the meetings is within a group's autonomy. Paying for this type of service does not violate Traditions, since avoiding disruption of a meeting benefits the unity of the group as a whole.

Outside Agencies/Groups/Organizations

Fees for Speaking

Sharing our experience, strength and hope as Al-Anon/Alateen speakers is an example of the important Twelfth-Step work of carrying the message. In keeping with the Eighth Tradition, Al-Anon speakers are reimbursed for expenses only. Fees are not charged or accepted for speaking. When a member is speaking to an outside organization and a fee is offered, the speaker may suggest funds in excess of expenses be used by the organization for the purchase of Conference Approved Literature (CAL) for distribution by the organization as an educational service.

Donations to Outside Agencies

In keeping with our Sixth Tradition, group funds are to be used for Al-Anon/Alateen purposes only. As part of their Twelfth-Step responsibility groups may use their funds to purchase Al-Anon/Alateen literature to donate to outside agencies, activities and programs for public outreach.