

WSO MATERIALS FOR USE IN MAY 2025

Inside Al-Anon Family Groups

Finding Unity Across Borders: Connecting with Members in Asia

From time to time, the Board of Trustees for Al-Anon Family Groups Headquarters, Inc. authorizes Trustees and Staff members of the World Service Office to arrange visits to Al-Anon Service Structures around the world. The purpose of these visits is to encourage stability and support the growth of Al-Anon and Alateen worldwide in the countries it supports through ongoing contact and correspondence.

When I learned I would be traveling to Asia with the Director of Programs in November 2024, I was thrilled and honored. I could never have imagined that my recovery journey would bring me to this point.

As the planning began, there were times when I could have found myself distracted by the alcoholics in my life and how I was affected by this family disease. There were moments when my recovery slipped, and I would have sunk back into the depths of despair had I not been able to keep the focus on myself and our mission.

The Asia trip was to include visits to South Korea, Mongolia, China, and India. Preparations included visa applications, fulfilling medical requirements, and, not to be underestimated, a tremendous volume of presentations. Staff at the WSO collectively contributed to the materials needed to educate and expand on the knowledge to support the various countries in growing their structures and Al-Anon worldwide.

As I contemplate how to describe the experience of this trip, I can hardly find the words. How is it possible to find deep unity with so many in multiple countries, where the differences between us could be perceived as a barrier? Yet no barrier existed. Connecting through the eyes into the heart was a deeply intimate and personal experience that words cannot begin to convey.

Experiencing that unity reinforced my understanding of Al-Anon's primary focus: to help families and friends of alcoholics. Barriers created by outside issues need not exist in Al-Anon.

The deep need to belong lives within all of us. Being part of a family affected by the disease of alcoholism is no different for members in the international structures than it is for me. The deep connection made with another Al-Anon member is a significant part of our recovery anytime it occurs. Sharing that depth of connection with members who live in a different country, speak a different language, and are culturally in contrast to my own experiences could only occur because we united as Al-Anon members.

The November 19 reading in *A Little Time for Myself* (B-34), which came, fittingly, during our travels, says, "When I focus on the differences between myself and others, I feel isolated. When I look at what we have in common, I can appreciate the feeling of unity."

A resounding example of this unity was hearing the Serenity Prayer spoken in multiple languages. I have participated in many discussions about what “prayer” to use when opening or closing a meeting. I do not speak Korean, Mongolian, Chinese, or Hindi; however, when I heard the Serenity Prayer spoken in any of those languages, whether in a small room with a board and volunteers or with 200 people in a large venue, there was no mistaking that I was listening to the Serenity Prayer.

It was a profoundly spiritual and emotional experience that will remain with me. With each stop, we better understood that experiencing and participating in local traditions was of paramount importance to the members. This included wearing traditional clothing and enjoying fellowship. While this stretched our comfort zones, the love and pleasure these experiences brought helped forge the bond between us and underscored how important fellowship is to our recovery. One unplanned moment that brought joy and a sense of belonging was when we connected a few members from Mongolia with members in India over a video call. Exclamations of “They are just like us!” resounded from both countries.

The Asia trip included several historic milestones. In South Korea, 100 members attended an all-day event. The visit to Mongolia was the first from the WSO; AI-Anon meetings there only began 12 years ago. The virtual business and recovery meetings with China were the first ever to be held with over 200 members attending. And India held its first all-electronic meeting with members from all over the country.

Our first stop was South Korea, where the board had organized an assortment of activities. Meeting in the office premises was a proud and emotional moment for all as we saw the Conference Approved Literature translated into Korean stacked around the room, heard the phone ringing, and listened to the personal shares and history of the established General Service Office (GSO). Members had worked diligently to translate our presentations into Korean and produced an incredible workbook that all attendees received.

Next stop was Mongolia, a young structure with which the WSO has only been meeting for the last two years. They are still in the process of translating the *Service Manual*, other service tools, and Conference Approved Literature. So little is available to them, yet the program presented to members—including many who were attending an AI-Anon meeting for the first time—was well organized. The willingness of members to serve, and their dedication to recovery, was evident in abundance.

Travel restrictions to China necessitated a pivot to online meetings, which presented unique challenges and certainly supported our slogan “Together We Can Make It”! Many of us take for granted how easily we can join an electronic meeting at any hour of the day, but Chinese members are restricted in the electronic platforms they can access. It “took a village” to bring WSO Staff, Volunteers, members, and interpreters in China together, using multiple electronic platforms, for a presentation sharing personal experience, strength, and hope on the Twelve Steps. For all who participated, it was absolutely wonderful, and although most of us could only express our feelings through emojis, the love and appreciation were evident even through the electronic waves! For many AI-Anon members in China it was memorable to have the opportunity to connect with our worldwide fellowship

The established GSO of India, our final stop, serves a vast area, and Delegates and members traveled many, many hours on trains to attend the meetings held during the visit. Seeing the Serenity Prayer displayed in India's multiple languages was powerful. The emotional impact on my heart reminded me how we can be connected despite differences in language. I was also humbled to hear how members consider their fellows who are not able to support themselves financially and have a desperate need for CAL, as well as many who do not read or write yet desire to hear about the literature from others to support their recovery.

Members from all the countries visited, whether in person or electronically, shared enormous gratitude, expressing how their understanding grew and how they were inspired toward greater service.

Although the physical journey of traveling for three weeks to multiple countries was tiring, the emotional journey of recovery that I was privileged to witness fills me abundantly and reminds me why we "Keep Coming Back," why we do service beyond the group, and why we unite in Al-Anon's "one purpose."

When we speak of Al-Anon as a worldwide fellowship, we can do this knowing that no matter where we are in the world, who we are, or what community we belong to outside of Al-Anon, when we come together in unity, there are no barriers; we connect intimately and our recovery soars.

By Tracey S., International Services Manager

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“Our Common Welfare”—Notes from the WSO

The 10 Conference Approved Literature (CAL) books members purchase most frequently for recovery are:

English

1. *How Al-Anon Works for Families & Friends of Alcoholics* (B-32)
2. *A Little Time for Myself* (B-34)
3. *Healing within Our Alcoholic Relationships* (P-95)
4. *Courage to Change—One Day at a Time in Al-Anon II* (B-16)
5. *One Day at a Time in Al-Anon* (B-6)
6. *Paths to Recovery—Al-Anon’s Steps, Traditions, and Concepts* (B-24)
7. *Reaching for Personal Freedom: Living the Legacies* (P-92)
8. *Hope for Today* (B-27)
9. *Blueprint for Progress: 4th Step Inventory (Revised)* (P-91)
10. *Paths to Recovery Workbook* (P-93)

Spanish

1. *Sanar dentro de nuestras relaciones alcohólicas* (SP-95)
2. *Un poco de tiempo para mí* (SB-34)
3. *Valor para cambiar: Un día a la vez en Al-Anon II* (SB-16)
4. *Cómo ayuda Al-Anon (Tapa blanda)* (SB-32)
5. *Un día a la vez en Al-Anon* (SB-6)
6. *Esperanza para hoy* (SB-27)
7. *Senderos de recuperación* (SB-24)
8. *Abramos el corazón, transformemos nuestras pérdidas* (SB-29)
9. *De la supervivencia a la recuperación* (SB-21)
10. *El dilema del matrimonio con un alcohólico* (SB-4)

French

1. *Le rétablissement dans nos relations...* (FP-95)
2. *Un peu de temps pour moi* (FB-34)
3. *Le Courage de changer* (FB-16)
4. *Comment Al-Anon œuvre...* (FB-32)
5. *Ouvrir notre cœur, transformer nos deuils* (FB-29)
6. *Al-Anon un jour à la fois* (FB-6)
7. *Les voies du rétablissement* (FB-24)
8. *De l'espoir pour aujourd'hui* (FB-27)
9. *Alateen - un jour à la fois* (FB-10)
10. *... Dans tous les domaines de notre vie* (FB-15)

Support your local Literature Distribution Centers or visit our Online Bookstore at al-anon.org/shop to order your copies today.

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Tapping into Serenity

INTERNET

One morning, I was sitting outside enjoying a cup of tea and looking at the trees across an open field. A slight mist drifted through the treetops, and a large maple dropped the occasional spinning seed that floated gracefully to the ground. I felt peaceful and joyous. Later, I wondered why I don't feel this way more often.

I realized how rarely I take the time to sit quietly and appreciate the beauty of the world around me. One of Al-Anon's gifts is learning to be present in the moment, not resentful of the hurts of the past or consumed by fears of the future. But I easily forget that lesson, and I lose my serenity.

Working the Twelve Steps, attending meetings, meeting with my Sponsor, talking to other Al-Anon members, and reading the literature are all ways to find that peace and joy I felt from watching the morning mist in the trees. All I have to do is remember and use the Al-Anon gifts to reclaim my serenity.

By Eric F., California

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Revisiting Trust

INTERNET

Before Al-Anon I trusted everyone and no one. How could that be? I had no boundaries, so I blabbed and complained to anyone who would listen. Yet, I didn't share with those who mattered in my life, because I might be questioned and held accountable. I rarely let anyone see who I really was.

My husband had an affair the summer before I started attending Al-Anon. I allowed myself to be manipulated. I believed the lies I was told and convinced myself that what I saw and heard was wrong. After discovering the truth, I had all kinds of suspicions and trust issues. Coming to Al-Anon changed that.

Honestly, after reading Step One, I recognized that my life was unmanageable. I realized that without boundaries, I couldn't trust anyone, especially myself. So, I kept coming back and started to work on myself.

I continued to go to meetings and got a Sponsor. I began to learn who I was and how fear controlled my life. I learned trust from my Sponsor. She also showed me that my Higher Power has my best interests at heart. She helped me to see how many times I had been taken care of and to believe I would continue to be. I began to trust my Higher Power. I started to feel safe, and I could talk myself down from the ledge of suspicion. Today, when I feel suspicious, I check to see whether I have distorted perceptions and whether fear plays a role. Trust is a decision I can make because I know I am not alone. I rely on my Higher Power.

By Anonymous

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Unfurling As Myself

INTERNET

There came a time in my recovery when I became aware of something missing, some imbalance. I was aware of my shortcomings and had become more willing to make amends and changes. The image of me emerging from the peeling back of the layers of an onion left me with the question, “Now what?”

One more time my Higher Power had brought me to a challenge: to keep growing. I was more than shortcomings, and the Fourth Step had asked me to see my assets, strengths, and gifts. So, during my morning quiet time with “HP,” I accepted the challenge of becoming more like myself—like the me that my Higher Power knows lies within. With trepidation, I admitted that I did have gifts and talents. The next step was to recite them to myself and believe that this was my truth. This did not come easily, and at times I felt like a fraud. And now the scariest awareness of all had appeared—I needed to use them.

This has been my challenge and my joy. It took courage to step into my new world, which meant that I needed to take risks. I take away from our literature that growth, though painful, is worth seeking. I used to think that only famous people were talented, that only musicians, actors, artists, and athletes had gifts. Today, I know that is not true. In *As We Understood...* (B-11), there is a wonderful reading that tells me we all have gifts, and I found this comforting.

Today, my image of growth is a rose. It begins with a tight bud. Gradually, a tinge of color becomes visible, then petals slowly appear. And as the sun shines upon it, the rose unfurls more petals, and its color deepens until it reaches its full magnificence. This is my journey now, to sit in my Higher Power’s warmth and grow my talents.

By Janet H., Ontario

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CMA vs GR: What Is the Difference?

Members who regularly attend Al-Anon meetings often serve in group positions. The member who is serving as the Current Mailing Address (CMA) receives postal and digital communications from the WSO, including the Quarterly Appeal to Members; the electronic newsletter, *In The Loop*; and timely announcements shared on AFG Connects. The information is provided to share with the group. Members report finding it helpful to serve as CMA for at least one year.

The Group Representative (GR) is elected by members of the group and serves for a three-year term. The GR is the voice of the group, representing it at District and Area Assembly meetings to carry the group conscience as well as gather District and Area information to bring back to the group.

Read more about these distinct positions under the “Group Service Positions” in the “Groups at Work” section of the *2022-2025 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27).

“Our Common Welfare”—Notes from the WSO

For Alateens everywhere, the WSO extends thanks to all trusted servants willing to serve. As Recertification is underway, we hope you are looking forward to continuing this important service. If you are:

Have You Recertified as an AMIAS?

Have You Verified Your Alateen Group Information?

Every year, each Area in the World Service Conference Structure needs to take part in the Annual Alateen Recertification process in order to continue to use the Alateen name. This is explained in the Alateen Policy and the 2003 Alateen Motion from the Board of Trustees.

The recertification process is two-fold for your Area:

1. To verify that every registered Alateen group has:
 - Current Area-certified Al-Anon Members Involved in Alateen Service (AMIAS) as Group Sponsor(s).
 - Current Area-certified AMIAS to serve as the Alateen group Current Mailing Address (CMA) and as a Phone Contact for the Public.
2. To certify all new AMIAS and recertify AMIAS already in service to Alateen.

If you plan on supporting Alateen groups at the 2025 International A.A. Convention in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, please consider completing your AMIAS recertification before the deadline!

The Annual Area Alateen Recertification deadline for all Alateen groups and AMIAS is June 15!

We invite you to contact your Area Alateen Coordinator, Area Alateen Process Person, or District Representative to verify the process in your Area, so you don't miss out on this opportunity to share your recovery with teens and younger members!

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Make It a Recovery Vacation

When you go on vacation, *don't leave recovery at home!* Why not add a District or Area event to your itinerary? Whether it's a meeting, workshop, or special gathering, these events are a great way to stay connected while you travel. Go to Al-Anon WSO Facebook Events or [alanon.org/wso-events](https://www.alanon.org/wso-events) to find exciting events happening at your destination.

MEMBER BLOG TOPIC FOR MAY

“What does ‘worldwide fellowship’ mean to you?”

Aside from the WSC Structure which includes members from the US (including Puerto Rico), Bermuda, and Canada, Al-Anon supports over 8,500 international meetings across 47 languages. May's blog topic is, “What does ‘worldwide fellowship’ mean to you?”

As always, you can also write about Al-Anon's three Legacies. This month features Step Five, Tradition Five, and Concept Five.

Please share with us at [al-anon.org/member-blog](https://www.al-anon.org/member-blog) Sharings on the Member Blog may be used in future Al-Anon publications. New topics are being added each month!