

# The Concepts

Al-Anon's  
Best-Kept  
Secret?

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AL-ANON FAMILY GROUPS

*hope for families & friends of alcoholics*



## Introduction

For many Al-Anon and Alateen Family Group members, Al-Anon's Twelve Concepts of Service are the answer to an often-asked question, "Where do I go from here?"

After having had a spiritual awakening and becoming ready to practice the principles of the program in all their affairs, most members of the fellowship begin searching for new avenues for growth. Service within the fellowship often provides the enrichment we are seeking.

Our first meeting gave many of us a feeling of hope and the realization we were not alone. Hearing such slogans as "Easy Does It" and "One Day at a Time," helped us see there had been others before us who understood what we had lived through. It was a struggle in the beginning to focus on anything except the alcohol, but gradually, as we attended more meetings and began to listen, we found it easier to break through our barrier of denial to concentrate on what other members were saying. We heard about the Twelve Steps to personal recovery and wanted to try to work them. Then we found we had already begun to work them without even knowing it.

As more time passed, we were able to widen our focus and look at our group. We wanted to ensure that our group continued to flourish in a healthy manner. When we heard about the Twelve Traditions and what they meant to group unity, we came to realize that most of the time our group was practicing the Traditions. Like the Twelve Steps, the Traditions began to seem familiar—their wisdom was applicable to our group and to our own personal lives.

Some of us were in Al-Anon or Alateen for years before we ever heard about the Twelve Concepts of Service. At this point in our recovery, many of us could think clearly most of the time, keep an open mind some of the time, and allow others to give their opinions occasionally. Some of us were already involved in service and felt an obligation to read the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* section "Al-Anon's Twelve Concepts of Service." As soon as we opened to the small print on the first page we may have been dismayed, thought it too big a project, and left it for someone else to do. Others may have attacked it as they would a school assignment—something to memorize, to learn, to quote—forgetting that the Concepts may

require a different approach than the personal ones used for the Steps or the Traditions.

In truth there are no text books in Al-Anon and no teachers other than past experience. We have always been free to take what we like and “let go” of the rest.

While we were listening to members share their service experiences, and we were sharing our personal experiences, we were also, perhaps unknowingly, practicing the Concepts of Service. When we became ready to learn more about them, we came to see them as written experience—a legacy that would help us go about the business of Al-Anon. Thus, without duplicating efforts or unnecessarily spending monies, we carried our recovery message to the outside world. Simply put, the Concepts are the Twelve Steps and Traditions expanded to the business level. They give us the shared experience of those who came before us, who had learned how to practice Al-Anon principles in business affairs—conducted mainly by the World Service Office (WSO), the Board of Trustees, and at the World Service Conference (WSC).

The Concepts provide a method to address issues, hear opinions, and balance the scales between service entities. They offer guidance on how to avoid certain business and program pitfalls while leaving enough room for growth and interpretation, always reminding us that our business is different. Our business is based on a spiritual program. We aim for spiritual growth for the greatest number rather than financial gain, power, or prestige for a few.

After considering these ideas, it is but a small step further for us to wonder if the Concepts play a useful part in our groups’ lives. The answer is YES! Whether a group is flourishing well or beset by problems, the Concepts provide a vital link to the service experiences of others. Once again we realize that we are not alone; others have experienced similar problems and met them with understanding and compassion.

In this spirit, you will find in the following pages a brief look at each Concept of Service as first presented in Al-Anon’s monthly magazine, *The Forum*. This makes no attempt to abbreviate, nor shortcut your walk through the material in the *Service Manual*—rather we trust this will widen the view for groups and individuals to “practice these principles in all our affairs.”

## CONCEPT ONE



**The ultimate responsibility and authority for Al-Anon world services belongs to the Al-Anon groups.**

Our groups are the building blocks of the fellowship. They carry the final responsibility and authority for Al-Anon. When each group acts responsibly in supporting world service, philosophically and financially, Al-Anon's message will be spread across the world.

Since each group is the collective strength of its members, each one of us has the responsibility for world service. Before Al-Anon most of us were so obsessed with somebody's drinking that we had a warped sense of responsibility. Out of our anger and despair we did everything or nothing. Here we learn that the first responsibility is to ourselves. We are healed through living the Twelve Steps and we begin to reach out to others. Our first service work is being responsible for bringing the coffee, chairing a meeting, or reaching out to a newcomer.

Many of us, feeling our new strength and vigor, may start to take on too much. Instead of trying to control the drinker, we may try to control the group, seize the baton and rush ahead with it, rather than giving everyone the opportunity to participate.

Further study of the Steps and Traditions will help us get our sense of responsibility into perspective. It's not up to us to save the world. Carrying our share and allowing others—even, and especially, the alcoholic—to carry theirs, is the constructive way.

We must develop trust to let go of control and grant authority to others. Trusting group conscience and responsible group leaders, sharing only our needs and experience—no rules, no controlling, no mandates—is the essence of Al-Anon. Its strength is in the individual members who share responsibility and authority. There are no teachers, nobody governs.

This sharing of responsibility and authority expands in ever-widening circles. The group interacts with other groups; therefore, our basic obligation of service is to understand the meaning and purpose of our Traditions and then to elect a Group Representative from among us. The group places its trust and gives the necessary authority to its leaders, who recognize and are responsible to the group.

As long as there is balance of responsibility and authority in our groups and the groups' representatives in service, worldwide Al-Anon will continue to give hope and help to all whose lives have been affected by someone else's drinking.

## CONCEPT TWO



**The Al-Anon Family Groups have delegated complete administrative and operational authority to their Conference and its service arms.**

This Concept sets the democratic and spiritual framework for the fellowship.

Al-Anon is democratic in structure and spirit in that it demonstrates confidence in the individual member and in each Al-Anon Family Group. Its Traditions and Concepts safeguard individual rights, establish equality and justice, and set forth the lines of accountability.

In a truly democratic manner, at first the groups were polled on important questions, but as the groups grew more numerous, polling became unwieldy. The fellowship is now guided and directed by the Delegates to the World Service Conference. These representatives are chosen by the members. They represent the groups, as they meet annually with the Trustees, committee members, and administrative staff of the WSO.

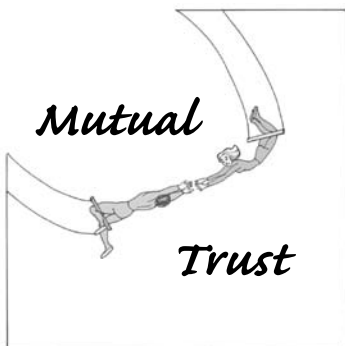
The groups have entrusted to the Conference and its service arms the authority to make decisions for fellowship world services. To maintain a system of checks and balances, the World Service Office and its committees are accountable to the Conference,

which is the active and effective group conscience of Al-Anon in world affairs. Al-Anon's spiritual basis is also clarified in this Concept: faith in the groups and in the harmony to be achieved through determining the group conscience of all the members. There is a spiritual element in the accountability understood in this Concept which requires putting into practice qualities of trust, judgment, and responsibility. In our personal recovery in Al-Anon, we learn we have a responsibility to ourselves. In local service we are answerable to all other members. Everyone in worldwide service is accountable to the Conference which speaks for the groups.

Such accountability reinforces the First Concept which says that final responsibility and authority belong to the groups. The groups can freely give them over to the Conference because they hold them in the first place.

This Concept reaffirms the democratic basis of world service and the trust essential for delegating authority. It interprets the spirit of the Traditions by setting forth the principle of accountability and maintaining reliance on the largest group conscience as an expression of the ultimate authority—a loving God.

## CONCEPT THREE



**The right of decision makes effective leadership possible.**

Being allowed to make appropriate decisions, to act freely without being hassled or second-guessed, gives dignity to the person who is doing a job. Giving that freedom, bestowing that confidence, is a measure of maturity on the part of the other people involved. This freedom to exercise judgment, and the trust which permits it, are the core of Concept Three.

Each member is in a position of leadership or of delegating responsibility—helping to decide who opens up and leads next week's meeting, who will handle group funds or serve as group representative. Therefore, this Concept has a personal application to everyone.

Before Al-Anon we did not trust anyone else. When the group trusted us with the responsibility for bringing cake or ordering literature, we became able to make the necessary decisions. We grew from making relatively small ones, both in our personal lives and in service work, to being able to make more wide-reaching decisions. We became trustworthy and then we learned to trust.

Trust is essential to overcome the harsh imposition of ultimate authority and the headstrong carrying out of responsibility. Trust is the mainstay. We trust our group leaders to decide when to handle group affairs and when to ask for guidance. We trust the Conference to decide which matters to dispose of and which to refer back to the areas. We trust the Board of Trustees to decide when to act on its own responsibility and when to ask the Conference for direction. We trust members of the WSO staff in positions of responsibility to decide when to act wholly on their own and when to refer a problem to the next higher authority. It is our duty to carefully choose for every position those who will serve us and then trust them to do the job without interference or undue criticism.

This trust must always be recognized as a privilege. No members can demand it. If they abuse the trust placed in them—knowingly breaking Traditions, misusing the groups' money, imposing their personal prejudices—they can be removed from office as a result of action taken through group conscience. Our leaders are always accountable to those they serve. In our spiritual program of Al-Anon, however, with wise choice of our leaders and mutual trust between us, we will be worthy of each other's confidence.

## CONCEPT FOUR



### **Participation is the key to harmony.**

This Concept, basic to world service, is essential to other situations of life. In the harmonious playing of musical groups, each instrument takes its proper part. The horns can't drown out the violins, the drums can't overpower the flute. In the structure of Al-Anon service, each member and group of members contribute an essential note to the whole.

All members are engaged in a working partnership; none is regarded as second class. There are no superiors or inferiors. No class is set in absolute authority over another.

To make such a participatory method of doing business work, there must be a great deal of respect for one another—not a childlike, abject respect for an authority figure, but respect for the rights of other individuals. The groups, group and area leaders, Delegates, committee chairmen, WSO staff, and

Trustees, in exercising their authority, must respect each individual member and encourage participation so that others are never turned into mere rubber stamps.

Before Al-Anon we were often cut off from normal interaction with our family, our neighbors, our community. Then in the fellowship we found a place where we could belong. We began to respect ourselves and learned to respect the rights of others. Understanding and acceptance overcame the fears and self-doubts of our isolation. We felt we belonged and became able to participate constructively.

Recognizing this spiritual need to belong, the principle of participating has been built into our whole service structure. Respectful, self-disciplined consideration of every other member and group of members will give everyone the right to participate in the service of Al-Anon and so assure harmony.

## CONCEPT FIVE



*Members listen to minority views.*

**The rights of appeal and petition protect minorities and insure that they be heard.**

Consideration of others and courteous regard for the views of all builds strength, unity, and cooperation. These precepts, which apply to our personal and family relationships, have been incorporated into Concept Five to apply to world service work.

This Concept assures protection both of minorities and of the entire fellowship. It declares that the thoughts and feelings of members who are in the minority, count.

Through the right of appeal, they can be heard. Conference members with minority views actually have a duty to present a minority report to the Conference when they believe that a wrong decision could seriously affect Al-Anon. When minorities speak out, whether they are right or wrong, they help preserve the fellowship. By compelling a thorough debate, they are our chief defense against uninformed, misinformed, hasty, or angry action.

The right of petition protects each of us in our service structure for the redress of personal grievances,

without fear of reprisal. Any paid or unpaid worker can carry a complaint directly to the Board of Trustees, which is in the position to impartially hear all grievances without bias. These rights of appeal and petition underscore the accountability established in Concept Two and the mutual trust of Concept Three.

The safeguards spelled out for individuals and minorities in this Concept extend to the groups as well. By speaking up and being listened to, trusted servants can inform and stabilize group conscience. The group in turn is strengthened by working through to a group conscience.

Al-Anon's concern is the freedom and protection of individual members as well as the unity of the whole. This Concept insures that no tyranny, either of the majority or the minority, will ever happen. It calls for considerate voicing of all views, with no lobbying or pressuring, and for time willingly given to reach a broad consensus on all important issues. In caring for the smaller and seemingly weaker members of the fellowship, this Concept provides security and continuity for all.

## CONCEPT SIX



**The Conference acknowledges the primary administrative responsibility of the Trustees.**

Before the steam engine could be built, there had to be the discovery of the power of steam and the invention of the engine to use steam for power. The principles behind the engine had to be understood and applied, and rails had to be laid across the country. To make it run there has to be an engineer at the throttle, fully knowledgeable and proficient to do his job properly, but he can take the train only where the tracks are laid down.

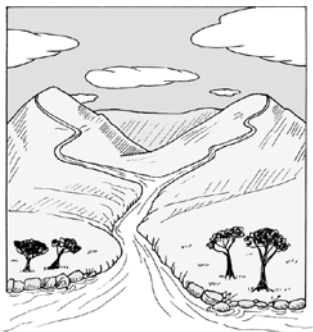
So too with our fellowship. The principles on which it is founded are voiced and practiced in the groups, set up throughout the world. The groups entrust their authority and responsibility for world service affairs to the Conference, the “working engine.” The Conference in turn entrusts the administrative authority to the corporate body of

the Trustees, “the engineers.” They are expected to spearhead the formulation of Al-Anon policy in accordance with Al-Anon principles and are accountable for its proper execution—in other words, to make sure the fellowship doesn’t get derailed.

To fulfill this position of piloting the fellowship, providing efficient and balanced leadership, the Trustees must be chosen, from among the members, for their Al-Anon experience and sound judgment. Their great responsibility requires a large grant of authority with which to discharge it.

The Trustees are the active guardians of our Twelve Traditions and are charged with upholding and applying these principles. As administrators in managing the business prudently, there is no need to choose between good business and good Al-Anon practice since there is never a conflict between them. Through effective business operation we can best achieve our spiritual objectives.

## CONCEPT SEVEN



*“Then the two become one and  
service flows out for all.”*

**The Trustees have legal rights while the rights of the Conference are traditional.**

If all issues could be resolved through harmonious cooperation, life would be ideal. We can reach for this ideal in our private lives through keeping our conscience and our actions in balance. While we become aware of our intuitive needs, we can't let our emotions rule us. Our actions must come from a sensible viewing of what is right to do. When we acknowledge our heart, and temper it with judgment, the two become one and life flows more smoothly.

The Concepts point the way to this ideal of harmony in the service structure. Concept Seven defines the balance of powers between the Conference (the conscience of Al-Anon with traditional rights) and the Trustees (who are responsible for Al-Anon's actions because of their legal responsibility for Al-Anon's funds and services). The two work well together when each recognizes its role and neither is “tempted to make a ‘rubber stamp’ of the other.”

The Conference is expected to bear in mind the rights and responsibilities of the Board of Trustees. The Trustees have a legal right to veto Conference action if it would seriously injure Al-Anon's public relations, or Al-Anon as a whole, or be fiscally irresponsible.

Yet "the actual power of the Conference will nearly always be superior to the legal power of the Trustees" since it springs from the traditional influence of the Conference Charter and our chosen Delegates. "The Trustees should constantly realize that the Conference is the real seat of ultimate service authority."

There need never be a clash or testing of these seemingly opposing rights, the traditional and legal, as long as the Conference and the Trustees work together in good faith with mutual trust and a common goal. Then the two become one and service flows out for all.

## CONCEPT EIGHT



**The Board of Trustees delegates full authority for routine management of Al-Anon Headquarters to its executive committees.**

How many times have we found ourselves lost in a thicket—overwhelmed with endless details and all the petty routines of daily living! We feel totally lost among the trees and never have the overview of the forest.

What we learn in Al-Anon helps us rise above the restricting minutiae and view ourselves and our lives with a new perspective. By keeping it simple and taking “First Things First,” we get past the trees and can appreciate the forest. This doesn’t mean that we dump all those nagging chores. We just learn to keep them in their place so they don’t smother us.

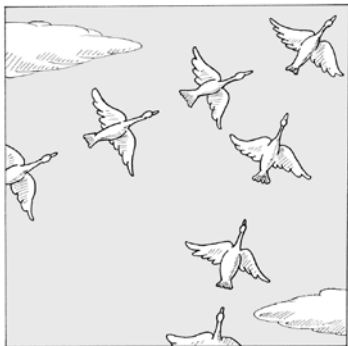
In the service structure of Al-Anon, it is essential that an overview is maintained. Vision is needed to address policy questions, supply leadership, meet financial obligations, strengthen the interrelationship of groups, and carry the message of Al-Anon around the world.

With this responsibility in mind, as Al-Anon grew and the work of the World Service Office increased, the Board of Trustees, which administers it, appointed a large committee to advise them. This advisory board was replaced in 1964 by the Conference of Delegates. The Conference then became the permanent guardian of Al-Anon's Traditions and services. The overall view was established.

However, since the Board of Trustees is expected to spearhead the formulation of Al-Anon policy and its proper execution, it also needs to have space to exercise vision. The endless, day-to-day details of the ever-growing World Service Office work were, therefore, delegated to an Executive Committee. This administrative committee has full legal powers and meets monthly to oversee the routine conduct of the WSO. The Board continues to be the custodian and guarantor of good management of the WSO.

Thus Concept Eight insures the continuity of the forest, while providing for the conservation of the trees.

## CONCEPT NINE



*“...an example that inspires others to follow.”*

**Good personal leadership at all service levels is a necessity. In the field of world service the Board of Trustees assumes the primary leadership.**

In Al-Anon we learn we can take charge of our lives. We are the leaders of ourselves. Even if we have never been elected to a committee or office, the qualities of leadership are important for us.

Concept Nine defines those qualities as responsibility, tolerance, stability, flexibility, judgment, and vision. They are inherent in all of us and are brought to full strength as we practice the Al-Anon program. When they are part of our thoughts and actions, they produce a resolute, satisfying life. When applied in our service structure, they generate a caring and selfless spirit.

If we act responsibly, we inspire confidence. Our family, friends, and co-workers respect us. Being responsible includes being motivated by principles, never passing the buck, and setting an example that inspires others to follow.

Stability, another leadership quality, gives us the strength to originate plans, to listen carefully to criticism, and gauge it wisely. Having good reasons for our actions, and being willing to give them when

asked, rules out arbitrary and willful behavior. Yet there must be flexibility and willingness to consult and compromise to improve a situation.

Vision is the crucial ability to distinguish between wishful fantasy and thoughtful estimates for the future. It enables us to make decisions, keeping in view the longtime effects of our plans.

Using these qualities in our personal lives enriches us. In service, Group and District Representatives and Delegates exhibit these characteristics in fulfilling their roles as the primary representatives of Al-Anon's group conscience.

When selecting them, and all service workers, members have a responsibility to evaluate these leadership traits in the candidates. Since each member in service is a world servant, not a popularity contest winner, there is no room for personal ambition or self-glorification.

Step Ten asks us to continually take a personal inventory. In that spirit, Concept Nine declares we must constantly review the special skills and characteristics that make good service leaders, "especially for our Board of Trustees," in order to fulfill the goal of our fellowship—to bring Al-Anon's message of hope to all who can benefit from it.

## CONCEPT TEN



**Service responsibility is balanced by carefully defined service authority and double-headed management is avoided.**

Responsibility! Do we take on more than our share or shirk it completely? Authority! Do we dictate and dominate or passively cave in? Al-Anon shows us how to find the right balance between responsibility and authority in our personal lives so we do our own job and no one else's, so we know when to yield and when to stand up for our rights. Concept Ten describes how such balance is achieved in service for fellowship.

Relationships are harmonious when persons know exactly what their area of operation is and how much leeway is allowable for individual initiative. Authority can never be divided into equal halves—"double-headed management." When there is confusion in definition, if two people are trying to do the same job, when there is no communication, or if the person in charge is unwilling to delegate

suitable authority, then personal clashes result and nothing gets done.

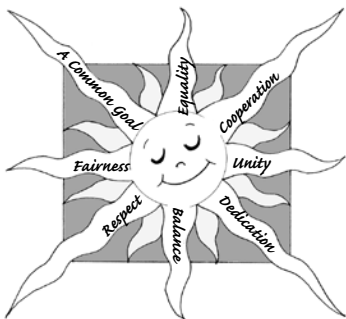
The service structure of Al-Anon is built on the premise that each individual counts. To avoid “overbossing,” each member in service is considered a trusted servant with a clearly defined job to do and the authority to do it.

Responsibility and authority must be equal. If an imbalance should occur, there are the safeguards of Right of Decision, Right of Appeal, and Right of Petition (Concepts Three and Five) to correct this.

There must be a final authority and in the fellowship that is the Al-Anon groups themselves. When there is mutual trust and respect, authority can be delegated from the groups to the Conference Delegates, by them to the Trustees, and by them to the committees and staff of the World Service Office.

This Concept is an application of Tradition Two which defines the ultimate authority of Al-Anon as the group conscience and recognizes the trusted servant as the delegated authority. No one governs in Al-Anon.

## CONCEPT ELEVEN



**The World Service Office is composed of selected committees, executives and staff members.**

By correlating good spiritual practice with good business, Concept Eleven demonstrates how Al-Anon principles should operate in all our affairs. It is Step Twelve in action. It defines the structure of the World Service Office (WSO) and sets forth the principles that should operate in service.

The committees and staff members at the WSO share with the Trustees responsibility for helping to preserve the unity of Al-Anon and spread its message to all those in need of its help. All committees are composed of trusted servants, both paid and unpaid.

These committees are vital to Al-Anon Family Groups. They deal with such matters as policies, finances, and nominations. Committees provide input and feedback regarding service necessary to support and expand groups and to aid in the growth of individual recovery.

To coordinate these functions and assure cooperation, key principles are spelled out in the descriptive text of the “Al-Anon’s Twelve Concepts of Service” section of the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*.

First, the qualities needed for a good executive are explained. These qualities embody the prin-

ciples contained in all the Steps and are a checklist for anybody in a position of responsibility. A good executive acts without favor or bias, consults with those who are affected by new plans, and finds the center point between overdriving or being weak and indecisive. Most of all, the good executive is open to hear and always respects constructive criticism.

The second principle also deals with fairness. It declares that though there is a spirit in the fellowship of helping others and thereby helping ourselves, fair recompense in salary and appreciation is essential for efficient service.

The third principle discusses the importance of full participation of paid workers. They should in all ways be considered respected members of the team. The dependence of workers on their salaries should not be used to limit their freedom to voice their views.

This Concept illustrates Al-Anon's spiritual principles: respect for each individual; dedication of all to a common goal; cooperation; and unity in achieving this purpose. When they are applied in Al-Anon business as well as personal affairs, our work and our lives are harmonious.

## CONCEPT TWELVE



**The spiritual foundation for Al-Anon’s world services is contained in the General Warranties of the Conference, Article 12 of the Charter.**

Our personal spiritual awakening is the result of the Twelve Steps. Applying spiritual principles is also the goal of Al-Anon service. Through spiritual practice we find the freedom to live courageously and joyously.

Since wealth, prestige and power are often obstacles to spiritual practice, the founders of our fellowship wrote Concept Twelve to counteract them. It sets forth five warranties for spiritual progress that counsel prudence—in personal relations, in money matters, and in all our contacts. Through establishing the prudent middle ground between fear and recklessness, we can achieve effective harmony.

Warranty One gives specific direction on prudent financial management.

Warranty Two protects each member from absolute authority and reinforces the Right of Participation. It shows how spiritual power flows from the activities and attitudes of truly humble, unselfish, and dedicated Al-Anon servants, because real power lies in leading by example. There is always the awareness of Tradition Two, that “for our group purpose there is

but one authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience.” There is no absolute authority in any human form; no member is placed in unqualified authority over another.

Warranties Three and Four also express deep respect for the spirit of freedom in our fellowship. There is regard for the views of all and the directive that all decisions be reached by discussion and vote and, whenever possible, with unanimity.

They state it is against the fellowship’s spiritual character ever to inflict personal punishment upon members, or for Al-Anon to enter into public controversy. When we allow anger and resentment to betray us, we jeopardize our personal security and Al-Anon’s effectiveness. When problems arise, the best answers are found in our Traditions.

Warranty Five reaffirms the high value we set on our liberties and restates the democratic nature of our fellowship.

In a democratic organization, power is held and exercised by the people. In Al-Anon the individual members and groups hold this extraordinary power. It is through their prudent, responsible, and loving exercise of these liberties that the fellowship of Al-Anon can continue to grow, bringing comfort and hope to millions more in need of its help.

In Al-Anon we always come back to the individual. How do the Concepts affect us on a personal level? While ours is a program for individuals, we still need others to nurture our growth. Our whole program is based on group sharing. Without the group, where would we be? Only through the love and support of others struggling for the same answers do we find strength to go on. We recognize the importance of the basic principles such as: the need for participation, the spirit of mutual respect, the role of our trusted servants, and the inspired nature of group conscience.

We know from our meeting experiences the value of each member of the group and acknowledge how deeply we rely on all who are present. We hear the individual voice when it is carried on through our service structure. No matter where, each member's voice is heard; it is valued through the wisdom available in the three Legacies: Recovery, Unity, Service.

When we become involved in service work, we are not performing some good deed; we are taking a positive action that has an immediate effect upon us—on our growth, our well-being, and our recovery. The Concepts guide us and provide insight into this special work that yields such great personal rewards. The Concepts and their study can open a whole new range of service opportunities for any member who is ready and willing to put gratitude into action.

## Twelve Concepts of Service

1. The ultimate responsibility and authority for Al-Anon world services belongs to the Al-Anon groups.
2. The Al-Anon Family Groups have delegated complete administrative and operational authority to their Conference and its service arms.
3. The right of decision makes effective leadership possible.
4. Participation is the key to harmony.
5. The rights of appeal and petition protect minorities and insure that they be heard.
6. The Conference acknowledges the primary administrative responsibility of the Trustees.
7. The Trustees have legal rights while the rights of the Conference are traditional.
8. The Board of Trustees delegates full authority for routine management of Al-Anon Headquarters to its executive committees.
9. Good personal leadership at all service levels is a necessity. In the field of world service the Board of Trustees assumes the primary leadership.
10. Service responsibility is balanced by carefully defined service authority and double-headed management is avoided.
11. The World Service Office is composed of selected committees, executives and staff members.
12. The spiritual foundation for Al-Anon's world services is contained in the General Warranties of the Conference, Article 12 of the Charter.

## General Warranties of the Conference

In all proceedings the World Service Conference of Al-Anon shall observe the spirit of the Traditions:

1. that only sufficient operating funds, including an ample reserve, be its prudent financial principle;
2. that no Conference member shall be placed in unqualified authority over other members;
3. that all decisions be reached by discussion vote and whenever possible by unanimity;
4. that no Conference action ever be personally punitive or an incitement to public controversy;
5. that though the Conference serves Al-Anon it shall never perform any act of government; and that like the fellowship of Al-Anon Family Groups which it serves, it shall always remain democratic in thought and action.

### The Serenity Prayer

God grant me the serenity  
to accept the things I cannot change,  
courage to change the things I can,  
and wisdom to know the difference.

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The Al-Anon Family Groups are a fellowship of relatives and friends of alcoholics who share their experience, strength, and hope in order to solve their common problems. We believe alcoholism is a family illness and that changed attitudes can aid recovery.

Al-Anon is not allied with any sect, denomination, political entity, organization, or institution; does not engage in any controversy; neither endorses nor opposes any cause. There are no dues for membership. Al-Anon is self-supporting through its own voluntary contributions.

Al-Anon has but one purpose: to help families of alcoholics. We do this by practicing the Twelve Steps, by welcoming and giving comfort to families of alcoholics, and by giving understanding and encouragement to the alcoholic.

Suggested Preamble to the Twelve Steps

For information and catalog of literature write to  
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