



# Sharings

Next Sharings submission  
deadline is Sunday,  
Nov 13, at 9:00 pm

NewsletterEditor@jaxafg.org

District 3, Greater Jacksonville, Florida Website: [www.jaxafg.org](http://www.jaxafg.org)

### Spiritual Journey through

### *"Opening Our Hearts, Transforming Our Losses"*

Contributed By Nancy H.

A little over a year ago, the Friday meeting of the SOS Al-Anon Family Group was experiencing a loss of participants. One member suggested that we try an Al-Anon book study format. *"Opening Our Hearts, Transforming Our Losses"*, was selected as the topic. We had no idea at the beginning that 14 months later we'd still be studying this book. Attendance increased and many have been a part of the book study since July 9, 2010.

Even having been a member for some time, I had no idea that the content of each chapter would awaken forgotten thoughts and feelings and allow me to grieve parts of my life that were deeply hidden. It appears that others had the same experience because at several meetings we covered no more than two pages. There was so much sharing of experiences and pain, but it became safe to share our stories, fears, and grief.

Others had taught me early on that the first word of the first step is "We". We shared our experiences of grief including death of loved ones. We also shared the grief of loss of our childhood to the family disease of alcoholism that many of us experienced in our early years. We began to understand the hidden pain from loss of our dreams, for our lives, and that of our family. We discovered that loss of some of our relationships may have, in part, come from our lack of experience in being a good partner. Having brought children into a relationship, we found that our lives became more complicated as the circle of the family disease of alcoholism continued.

While reading and sharing from *"Opening Our Hearts..."* we learned the importance of feeling the pain and becoming willing to let it go. We read the chapters on "Dealing with Our Feelings" and "Taking Care of Ourselves" and discovered that acceptance and forgiveness were important. As we moved forward, we were able to "Transform Our Losses" and our lives. We began to change our feelings to realize that we were able to leave the past behind and move forward with self-awareness, self-caring and self-love.

### Personal Sharing

*"Opening our Hearts, Transforming our Losses"*, changed my life in a profound way. I'm grateful to have experienced the group study using the book as our guide, it is a treasure." —Joanie R. Fernandina Beach

### Heard at Sept 2011 North Florida Area Convention:

"A sponsor knows the way, goes the way,  
and shows the way." — Bo T., Alabama

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"Intimacy: Into me you see."

### WHAT AL-ANON MEANS TO ME

Al-Anon is very special to me because it has meant the difference between insanity and sanity. Even when I slip back into the insanity of the past, which I knew for so long, at Al-Anon meetings I am not judged or criticized. I was truly a mess coming into Al-Anon, and it has virtually saved my life. I had been trying for so many years to control the alcoholism in my life (unsuccessfully I might add) that I was at my wit's end.

Al-Anon offered a safe and secure place to share. Others who shared similar experiences, offered their friendship, and gave me hope that someday, my life would be better. Al-Anon also introduced me to the idea of sponsorship. I have been fortunate enough over the years to have three wonderful sponsors from whom I have learned a lot. I can remember my first sponsor saying "If you don't have a sponsor, you don't have a program." I agree wholeheartedly with that. Sponsors and sponsees have taught me so much, listened to my woes, and guided me with a gentle yet firm hand.

Al-Anon has also meant giving back in the way of service. Although, a perfectionist at heart, I have learned to "just do my best" and that it's "progress not perfection". Service has given me something to do when my heart was heavy and what I really wanted to do was crawl back in bed. As the Al-Anon booklet states, "When I Got Busy, I Got Better", and I have found that to be very true.

I have no idea where I would be without Al-Anon, and I do not plan on discontinuing Al-Anon meetings to find out! I only wish everyone was as fortunate as I to have this great 12-step program.

Anonymous

### Sharing on Service

What has service done for me? The last three years as your District 3 Representative has given me a lot of self-esteem. Today, I have hope and have started learning not to control, but to lead. Service has helped me to live, One Day at a Time, and to have patience with other relationships in and out of service. When I first became DR, I took everything someone mentioned to me to heart and had a lot of issues to handle. Finally, I made a choice to not listen to everyone and become my own person in service whether you liked me or not.

Guess what? I didn't make a wrong decision. Today, I pray a lot for acceptance. I have learned to have an open mind and not to try and force a situation my way. I am only a trusted servant. Practicing by using all these Al-Anon tools has helped me in my personal life, to follow my Higher Power, I choose to call God.

Hugs to all from your trusted servant, Arlene W. District 3

### 2011 District Calendar



**Nov 12-13**—N. FL Area Turnover Meeting in Sarasota, FL  
**Nov 19**—District Business Meeting 9:30 am to noon-  
**(Incoming and Outgoing Panels & GR's should be present)**  
**Dec 10**—District Meet & Greet Fun Day

All District Business Meetings and Workshops will be held at **Arlington United Methodist Church, 1400 University Blvd. N.** Doors open at 9:00 a.m., and **meetings begin at 9:30 am.** All interested Al-Anon members are welcome. District Business Meetings are held in The Parlor and Workshops and Fun Days will be in Wesley Hall.

### Meeting News

**Serenity Seekers, Wed.. 12 noon, New Covenant Ministries, 2360 St. John's Bluff Rd,** meeting format has changed to a Step & Tradition meeting.

**Monday, Nov 7, 6:30 pm,** Language of the Heart, 400 Penman Rd, Jax Beach, is having a **Speaker Meeting** as they always do, on the first Monday of every month.

**Northside Easy Does It AFG,** at the Highlands Library is **no longer meeting.**

The **Spanish meeting** has moved to **St. Luke's Episcopal Church, 2961 Univ. Blvd. N., 32211,** on **Wednesdays,** from **6:30 - 8 PM.** The church is across the street from Jacksonville University.

**Anything new happening in your group?** Speaker meeting, a special Anniversary, moving, expanding hours, need support? Why don't you share it with the district and have it printed in The Sharings? If you know of any meetings that are no longer meeting please contact Susan H., so this information can be shared with the TAS volunteers who respond to phone calls from new members." Thanks for all you do to help families find recovery. Susan H. [jaxafg@gmail.com](mailto:jaxafg@gmail.com)

### One Time 12th Step Opportunity

Please consider sharing your experience, strength and hope with the families at Breakthroughs Recovery Center. We meet the last Thursday of every month from 6-7:30 pm, at 3810 Williamsburg Park Blvd, off of San Jose Blvd in Mandarin. Come prepared to share your story. This is a **great opportunity for parents.** If you are interested in this **one time commitment** please contact Lea Ann at 403-2809.

### LDC Corner



The LDC is fully stocked for your holiday shopping and gift giving.



Volunteers needed for **"one"** scheduled Wednesday 2:30-3:30 a month in the LDC (Literature Distribution Center).

Contact Ann at [LDC@jaxafg.org](mailto:LDC@jaxafg.org)

*How Al-Anon Works* paperback edition is available for \$5 for a limited time. Purchase your copy on Wed. 2:30-3:30 & Thur. 7:00-8:00 at the LDC, 1423 San Marco Blvd.

### Panel 49 District 3 Trusted Servants

Information is for Al-Anon/Alateen use only. Please respect the Anonymity of our fellow members.—NOT for solicitation purposes.

District email address: [jaxafg@gmail.com](mailto:jaxafg@gmail.com)

### District 3 JaxAFG Email Addresses

Arlene W.	District Representative	<a href="mailto:DR@jaxafg.org">DR@jaxafg.org</a>
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Kim C.	District Treasurer	<a href="mailto:treasurer@jaxafg.org">treasurer@jaxafg.org</a>
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### World Service Office Information

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 Virginia Beach, VA 23454-5617

[www.al-anon.org/members](http://www.al-anon.org/members)

**Group meeting information only:**

1-888-4Al-Anon

**Group Record Inquiries only:**

(757)563-1600

**Forum Subscriptions info:**

(757)563-1600

**FAX:** (757) 563-1655

**Hours: Mon-Fri 8 a.m.-6 p.m. EST**

**Email: [wso@al-anon.org](mailto:wso@al-anon.org)**

### One member's suggestions:

Al-Anon is a simple program and uses simple terms. Some members, affected by alcoholism do not know that certain terms are used by counselors in rehab centers. Instead of qualifier, Al-Anon suggests using spouse or family member. Instead of saying ACOA, use adult child. Instead of saying double dip, one can raise their hand as often as they wish to share in a meeting.—Submitted by **Anonymous**