Newcomers’ Welcome

Supplied by WSO in group binders until 2004, when they removed it, declaring it “directive (telling newcomers how they felt and what they needed to do).”


[italics are in the original] [underlined are points to consider; please see footnotes]

As a newcomer you may feel that you are here tonight for the alcoholic...that your presence here may teach you how to stop his or her drinking. The truth is you are here because of the alcoholic and not for the alcoholic. You will soon learn that you did not cause the alcoholic to drink, you cannot control the drinking, nor can you cure the alcoholic. You are here for yourself. You and you alone are responsible for dealing with your own pain.1 This is your program, it is your recovery from the effects of the disease of alcoholism.

You will find love, understanding, and a lot of hope from the Al-Anon Family Group.2 The people around you tonight are experiencing in varying degrees the hurt, the anger, the anxiety that you are experiencing.* We in Al-Anon share our experiences because it helps us to focus on ourselves and our recovery. We do this with the use of the Al-Anon tools of the program (Steps, slogans, literature) which will be provided to you.

Al-Anon will work for you if you allow it to. It’s as effective as you make it. It’s the safe place, the right place to be.3 Feel free to ask any questions4 or you may feel more comfortable just listening. That’s fine too. There are no “musts” in Al-Anon.

Finally, what you say or hear here and who you see here tonight stays in this room. Your anonymity is protected at all times.

Reprinted from the April/May 1990 issue of *Inside Al-Anon*
(submitted by the First Step Group, Glens Falls, NY)

---

1 Alone? This seems contrary to the Fifth Tradition, which urges all of us to “welcome and give comfort to families of alcoholics.”

2 Is this promotion, warned against in the Eleventh Tradition? From our *Service Manual* p.123: “In error, we would be promoting Al-Anon if we offered promises, guarantees…”

3 “…or gave the impression that we are the experts who know what is best for all families and friends of alcoholics.”

4 Since we don’t engage in crosstalk or dialogue, questions asked during the meeting are likely to be met with an awkward silence or apology.

* Should we assume we know what a newcomer is feeling? And doesn’t recovery move us away from hurt, anger, and anxiety -- toward detachment, compassion, and serenity?