

Testimonials

Feeling like an outsider

I joined Al-Anon when the pandemic started in March 2020. Living in South Carolina, I am in a religious area. I have never been very religious and have some resentments and emotional damage as part of my religious upbringing. This is something being worked on in my personal recovery among other issues I'm working on. When I first looked into Al-Anon and was scared off by the religious aspects for quite some time. It took me finding a Secular zoom meeting by chance out of Boise, to get me started. After being in this meeting and listening to some mostly secular podcasts, I did try some local zoom meetings. That didn't go well at all. I feel like an outsider, an imposter, and have trouble with the "translation" between what people are saying and what they mean in my own language of spirituality. I, at nearly 40, was just about the youngest person I met. I came up with my own name and vision for "God" but it is so mentally taxing trying to juggle that and my feelings of not belonging, I just gave up trying. I was able to find a SMART meeting locally that, with my qualifier, I attend weekly. I still don't have a local Sponsor and only one of the Secular Zoom meetings fits my schedule with work. I would really like to be more involved on a local level, be able to find a sponsor I can meet and feel comfortable with once the Pandemic is over. It would be nice if it was possible to have an in-person meeting to attend that openly attracts people who are OK without the "G word". I'd like to see such a meeting advertised. People around my own age and younger are a little bit more open minded, less religious. I think even here, it would attract the "younger" crowd who, like myself, could desperately use some of the recovery that I have found so far.

- A young newcomer

Ready for change

Until I started going to secular Al-Anon meetings, Al-Anon never felt like home to me, even though it's where I started my journey of recovery, over 3 decades ago. Too often, I have heard myself referred to as "them", categorized, psychoanalyzed and dismissed. Too often I have needed practical ideas and gone away with meaningless generalities.

Fortunately, I have lots of issues and have found answers in newer fellowships. There I discovered that more has been revealed to the 12-step community at large. I heard the steps adapted without sexism or the presumption of monotheism. I have heard the nuts and bolts of how others get results. I have been welcomed with open arms regardless of any differences I might have from others in the group.

When I realized that a lot of younger people won't return to Al-Anon after one meeting because of God-talk, I was appalled and motivated to reach out to them.

Now, the two secular Al-Anon meetings I attend are the high points of my week. I have found my people.

- Tired old lady