

Please Share in Writing on INTIMACY IN ALCOHOLIC RELATIONSHIPS

(working title)

The 2011 World Service Conference gave conceptual approval for "a new piece of literature on intimacy in general, including sexual intimacy, in alcoholic relationships." The Literature Committee is seeking sharings from Al-Anon/Alateen members for possible use in this piece.

Alcoholism is an illness that warps and seriously damages our ability to form and maintain intimate relationships. In recovery, we find many ways to connect to others, and learn to replace fear of intimacy with a healthy set of boundaries. We hope this piece can reflect the wide variety of experiences our members have faced regarding intimacy, in many different types of relationships. Intimacy takes many forms, including emotional, physical, and spiritual. Sharings do not need to be limited to sexual intimacy. However, we do want this piece to cover issues around sexual intimacy more thoroughly than any other previous Al-Anon literature, without being either too vague or too explicit and offensive. Please share your struggles as well as your successes.

Intimate relationships, or the lack of them, can be connected to feelings of shame, insecurity, fear, and guilt. Other topics that could be covered in this piece include sexual compulsion, abuse, infidelity, and promiscuity, as well as hope, trust, safety, joy, emotional and physical closeness, and a sense of feeling cared for as well as supported.

Some questions to consider:

- + How have the dynamics of the family illness of alcoholism affected my perceptions of all types of intimacy, including sexual?
- + To what extent, if any, do I accept responsibility for the loss of intimacy in my relationships?
- + In what ways have issues of intimacy within an alcoholic relationship affected my other relationships?
- + When, if ever, have I used sex as a substitute for real intimacy? What was the result?
- + How did I feel when someone I cared about tried to use sex to control or manipulate me? How did I feel when I did the same to others?
- + Describe the impact that issues of self-worth or other character defects have had on my intimate relationships with my Higher Power, the alcoholic, family members, friends, or myself.
- + How has building a relationship with my Sponsor and learning to trust helped me expand my capacity for intimacy?
- + What other Al-Anon tools have I used to rebuild trust and intimate relationships?

Please keep the following guidelines in mind:

- ❖ Share personal experience from the heart, focusing on yourself, not the alcoholic or others.
- ❖ Write in the first person singular—"I." Please avoid the use of the pronoun "you."
- ❖ Avoid generalities, outside issues, treatment center language, and religious philosophy or doctrine.
- ❖ Kindly observe Al-Anon's Twelve Traditions when sharing.
- ❖ Share feelings and behaviors rather than discussions of mechanics and specific sexual practices or activities.

Please mail, fax, or e-mail your completed sharing to:

Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc.
1600 Corporate Landing Parkway, Virginia Beach VA 23454-5617
Attn: Intimacy

Fax: 757-563-1655 + e-mail: wso@al-anon.org (Please put "Intimacy" in the subject line)

In order for us to acknowledge receipt of your sharing, please include your name or pseudonym and postal or e-mail address. If you wish anonymity among WSO staff, consider creating a new e-mail address that is not in the WSO database and does not include your name.

If printed, your sharing will remain anonymous. If your sharing is not used for the piece, it will be forwarded to the Forum Editorial Advisory Committee for their review and possible publication in *The Forum*. You will be notified by letter and a complimentary issue of *The Forum* if it is printed.

You may wish to use the flip side of this sheet for your sharing.