



Making Meetings about Money Easier...

Spiritual Principles in Group Money Discussions

Fear of Financial Insecurity

Those of us who have lived with alcoholism have often lived with financial insecurity. Bills went unpaid, savings lost, cars repossessed, houses foreclosed upon and sometimes we wondered where the money would come from to buy groceries. Living this way has left us scarred with a fear of financial insecurity even if our finances recover and times are good. As a result, we are reluctant to discuss money and may hang onto our money for fear of not having any.

As we grow in Al-Anon we become more responsible for our actions; part of which is becoming financially responsible not only for ourselves and our family but for our group and our fellowship.

Al-Anon principles can help by guiding us to have sufficient operating expenses and an ample reserve. By studying and applying the spiritual principles of the program, groups find guidance in money matters.

Suggested Readings

- *...In All Our Affairs: Making Crises Work for You* (B-15), pp. 62; 100-101
- *How Al-Anon Works for Families & Friends of Alcoholics* (B-22), p. 238
- *Blueprint for Progress* (P-91), p. 41

Questions for Discussion

1. What were (or are) my fears concerning finances before Al-Anon or now?
2. Have my fears changed since coming into Al-Anon? If so, how?
3. How have spiritual principles played a part in those changes?
4. How can I continue to use those changes in other areas of my life?

Living Spiritual Principles

We found it helpful to keep in mind spiritual principles when discussing financial challenges. These include: faith, trust, love, honesty, patience, understanding, equality, compassion, gratitude, acceptance, generosity, fairness, prudence and abundance. These and more can be found in the Steps, Tradition and Concepts. The more we hear of financial challenges being made manageable by applying these principles, the better we will be able to apply them in our personal and group money discussions.

Suggested Readings

- *Al-Anon's Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* (B-8), p. 116
- Concept Four "Participation is the key to harmony"
- *Reaching for Personal Freedom—Living the Legacies* (P-92), p. 95
- *Courage to Be Me— Living with Alcoholism* (B-23), p. 187
- *Paths to Recovery—Al-Anon's Steps, Traditions, and Concepts* (B-24), p. 193

Questions for Discussion

1. What spiritual principles am I practicing when my group discusses money contributions and expenses?
2. How do following spiritual principles in money matters affect my self-esteem and the esteem of all members in my group?

Using Tradition Seven for Money Discussions

Tradition Seven says that we are self-supporting. We're not asking members to give beyond their means, but allowing members to contribute what they can. Gifts reflecting our financial abundance need not be huge amounts; just what we can truly afford—gifts from our hearts.

As with our personal relationships, the same can be applied to discussions in money matters about our groups. If we use the principles of kindness, tolerance, respect, love, understanding and trust, we are saying we have faith in you. You can do it! We also take responsibility, listen to and

participate when our group's Treasurer has issues for discussion.

Oftentimes, fears about money from our personal relationships can affect our thinking with regard to the group's finances. We are all accountable for our group's money and as trusted servants we can support without controlling. We can also "Let Go" and trust in our fellow members, the process and our Higher Power.

When it comes to money, we are also in denial when we say: "Al-Anon costs nothing," and to "...give what you want" without considering expenses. To have a group budget, contributions and expenses can be estimated and established on a monthly or weekly basis.

The budget can relieve the sense of financial insecurity and create pride because we support ourselves and our service arms. We aren't threatened by money discussions because we know what we want to do with the money belonging to the group. Rent, service arm contributions, Conference Approved Literature (CAL), Post Office box, etc. are expenses for which the groups are responsible since we do not accept funds from any outside sources.

The Treasurer needs the direction of the group conscience on where the money is going and how much to send for each link of service.

Suggested Readings

- *Courage to Be Me— Living with Alcoholism* (B-23), pp. 231-234
- *Many Voices, One Journey* (B-31), pp. 56, 117, 156

Questions for Discussion

1. What does fully self-supporting mean?
2. Has my group established an ample reserve or are we stockpiling money for no specific reason?
3. Do I consider costs and what my group needs when I decide how much to contribute, or do I just keep tossing the same amount in the basket every week?
4. How do we support our AIS? District? Area? World Service Office (WSO)?

Abundance and Gratitude

We give gifts to commemorate the people, places, and things that are most important to us. We give to family and friends to mark certain holidays or to note certain events. We give to people like letter carriers, delivery people, co-workers and even employees in gratitude for jobs well done. The gifts we give not only make the recipient feel appreciated; they make us feel good to know that we have acknowledged that person's contribution to our lives.

Why not, when we are able, give a gift to the fellowship where we found unconditional love, peace, joy, understanding, hope and serenity; where we learned what abundance and gratitude really mean; where we found out who our true family and friends are; and what special events really are? Why not Al-Anon Family Groups?

Personal Sharings

At many meetings, I have heard gratitude expressed for Al-Anon, 'Because it saved my life.' It certainly saved mine, both figuratively and literally. I think about this every time the basket is passed. One way of expressing my gratitude is by being as generous as reasonably possible with my contribution. I don't have an unlimited budget. Keeping it "One Day at a Time," I figure that my Higher Power will see to it that everything will work out. So far it always has. I am glad to be a grateful member of Al-Anon."

"Contributing to the financial support of Al-Anon affects the way I think about money in all areas of my life. When I give, I trust that I have enough and that I value what has been freely given to me. When I give what I can, I am thinking abundantly and expressing gratitude. I am saying 'I can.' I am saying 'Thank you' with an action that means more than words ever will."

Suggested Readings

- *Al-Anon and Alateen Groups at Work* (P-24), p. 21
- *Discovering Choices* (B-30), pp. 277-278
- *Many Voices, One Journey* (B-31), pp. 56, 156

Questions for Discussion

1. What benefits do we/I get from being part of a worldwide fellowship?
2. Do we/I contribute to the quarterly Appeal?