


Al-Anon CAL

and

Writing Workshop

or

Writing for CAL = Service



“Anything done to help a relative
or friend of an alcoholic is service:
...sharing your story...”

Whether you're a newcomer or a long
timer, everyone has something to share.

Forum Writing Guideline (F-1)

The Forum

Writing Guideline (F-1)

Everyone has something to share about the Al-Anon program, whether you are a newcomer or a longtime member. *The Forum* publishes sharings that detail how Al-Anon has helped members recover from the effects of someone else's drinking—to improve and live happier lives. Our stories share our tears, fears, joys, and laughter and describe the ways we address and respond to the sorrows, miracles, setbacks, and steps forward that are part of our recovery journey.

You don't have to have all the answers, and your story doesn't have to be perfect. Just share from your heart. The World Service Office Staff will edit for grammar, punctuation, spelling, clarity, and length. It takes courage to write with complete honesty, but finding that courage is another step toward recovery for you and for those who read your sharing.



Word count for *Forum* features:

- Standard topical sharing—300 to 400 words
- "Our Three Legacies" (sharing on a Step, Tradition, or Concept of Service)—200 to 400 words
- "CAL Corner" (sharing on a particular piece of Al-Anon literature)—200 to 400 words
- My Al-Anon Story—up to 1,200 words
- Short sharing—100 to 250 words
- "One Quote at a Time" (an original sentence or two that captures some truth about your recovery)—15 to 50 words

Topic ideas are as limitless as your imagination:

- The Legacies: How does one Step, Tradition, or Concept of Service specifically help you?
- Slogans: "Easy Does It," "Keep It Simple," "Listen and Learn," "One Day at a Time," etc. (See the indexes of Al-Anon and Alateen books for additional slogans.) How have you applied a slogan in a difficult situation?

- Recovery concepts such as detachment with love, serenity, or keeping the focus on myself.
- Having or being a Sponsor, asking a member to be your Sponsor, changing Sponsors.
- A favorite piece of literature and how it helped you.
- Living in sobriety.
- Resolving conflicts.

When writing for *The Forum*, please keep the following tips in mind:

- Write from your own experience using first person singular pronouns (I, me, or my). Focus on yourself, not someone else.
- Keep your topic related to Al-Anon. Avoid generalities, outside issues, treatment center or therapeutic language, religious philosophies, and other Twelve Step programs.
- Avoid "teaching" or giving advice.
- Observe Al-Anon's Twelve Traditions when sharing.

Please complete this form (or its online equivalent), including your name and address so we can acknowledge your submission. If your sharing is published, we will send you a complimentary copy of the issue in which it appears.

Note: All sharings become the property of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc., and may be used in whole or in part to develop Al-Anon/Alateen printed or electronic material.

Check one: Please use my first name, last initial and state for credit Please sign me "Anonymous" Please use my pseudonym

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____ E-mail: _____

State/Province: _____

Country: _____

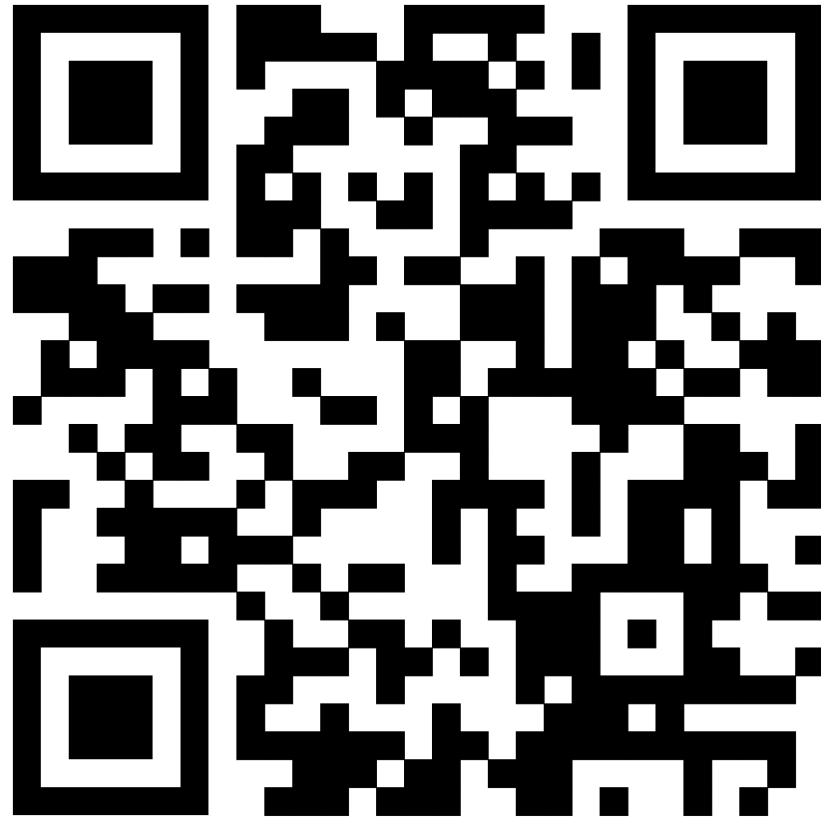
Zip/Postal code: _____

(Members may photocopy and share this form with other members.)

Please submit your sharing and this form to:

AFG, Inc., Attn: *The Forum*
1600 Corporate Landing Parkway, Virginia Beach, VA 23454-5617 • Fax: 757-563-1656
email: wso@al-anon.org • To submit a sharing online, please go to al-anon.org/forumshare

Forum Writing Guideline (F-1)



Just Share from the Heart

- You don't have to have all the answers.
- Recovering from the effects of someone else's drinking is a journey that is often confusing and painful.
- You don't have to be a professional writer.
- The Editors will help with grammar, punctuation, and spelling.

Spiritual

- There is something you can share that someone else needs to hear...
- When you share from the heart, you may never know how many lives you touch!
- It might bring a smile, a tear, or make someone work on an aspect of their own recovery.

Safe Place

- Writing for *The Forum* gives you the privacy and safety to take a close look at the really difficult issues we face in dealing with the effects of alcohol.
- Intimacy problems, abuse, anxiety, and crisis of faith are among the personal challenges that we face day-to-day as Al-Anon members.

Courage to Recover

- As we share, we learn about ourselves and realize that we are not alone.
- Others learn from our stories and gain courage too.
- It takes courage to write with complete honesty—but finding that courage is a step forward toward recovery, for you as well as for those who read your sharing.

Al-Anon Guidelines

- Write about your own experience, not something you heard about from someone else.
- Keep the focus on your own path to recovery, not the alcoholic's.
- Explain how one of the Legacies or tools of the program helped you deal with a specific challenge in your life.
- Write in the first person (I and me, not we and us).

Al-Anon Guidelines (cont.)

- True personal sharings do not give direction; they express your own experience, strength, and hope.
- Avoid generalities, outside issues, treatment-center language, and religious philosophy or doctrine.
- Al-Anon members are asked to write only of their own experience in using the Al-Anon program.
- Kindly observe Al-Anon's Twelve Traditions when sharing.

Less is More for *The Forum*

- A short sharing for the Zip 23454 Department (member letters) is 50 -75 words
- Most feature and Legacy sharings are 300-400 words.
- “My Story” is the longest feature, which could be up to 1,200 words.

The Forum

Many people refer to *the Forum*
magazine as:

“The Voice of the fellowship”.

So let your voice be heard!

Techniques

- Not the “forum” for your autobiography.
- The best short articles-writings hone in on one to three specific incidents.
- The best writing backs up a single idea, such as an attitude change, with an incident or two. Keep it simple!
- Think about the best sharings at your Al-Anon meetings. They often include personal antidotes rather than generalities.

Techniques

- Try not to “self edit” as you write.
- Let the words flow.
- Keep the pen moving...
- You can make improvements later.
- The Editors will help.

Practice... Practice... Practice...

- Ok.... Let's try it....
- We'll take 20 minutes to complete this exercise.
- Remember what we said....
 - Share from the heart
 - Tell Your story
 - Keep it short and simple
 - Mention an antidote
 - Keep the pen flowing
- Take a pen and paper and start writing!

Practice Exercise

- Write down your favorite slogan
 - Write a phrase why you like it
 - Use it in a sentence
 - Write a short paragraph telling about a situation where you have used the slogan in your recovery program
- Easy does it
 - First things first
 - How important is it
 - Just for today
 - Keep an open mind
 - Keep it simple
 - Let go and let God
 - Let it begin with me
 - Listen and learn
 - Live and let live
 - One day at a time
 - Think



Read what you wrote!

Take a chance, be courageous!

There will “no gossip or criticism” here!

Share your experience, strength and hope,

in two minutes!

How to Submit to *The Forum*

- Put your first/last name, mailing address, e-mail, and phone number at the bottom of the page for acknowledgement.
- Only first/last initial/state is used in publication (anonymous).
- If published, you will receive a complimentary copy of the issue.

- Address to:

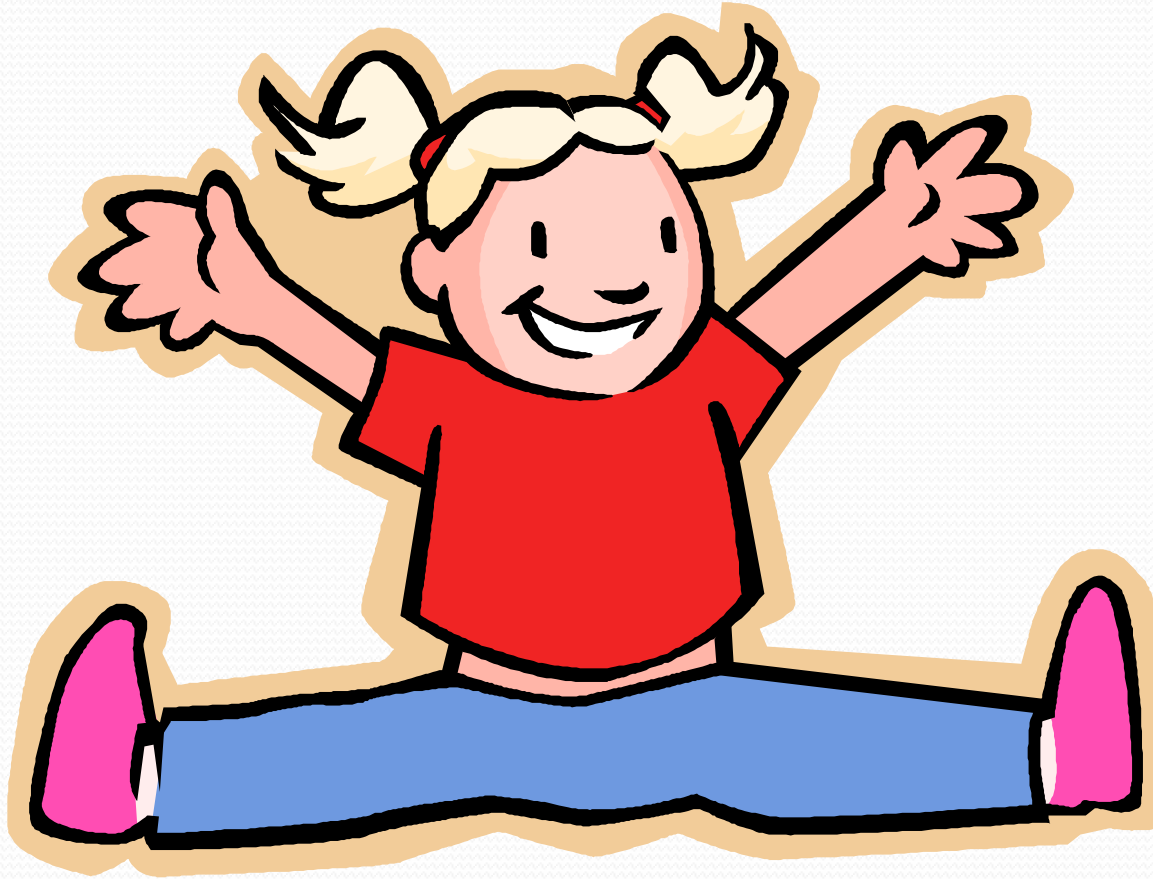
AFG Inc., attn: *The Forum*

1600 Corporate Landing Parkway

Virginia beach, VA 23454-5617

- All submissions become the property of WSO

Whew! We did it! Do it again!



Read and Subscribe
to the Forum online!

