



Facing Our Biases

BIAS is partiality or prejudice, unfair preference for or dislike of something or someone. Are my own personal biases keeping me from embracing those different from myself and being open and welcoming to all?

The family disease of alcoholism thrives on keeping us isolated from each other. By using our spiritual principles, we can concentrate on our similarities, not our perceived differences. When we apply these principles, we broaden our thinking and widen our fellowship circle to welcome all who suffer from the family disease of alcoholism.

Taking a Personal Inventory

- How do I feel if I walk into a meeting and everyone looks different from me?
- How do I feel when a member shares their experience with a Higher Power different than mine?
- Where do I usually sit in my home group? How do I feel if someone is in “my spot?”
- How often do I get out of my comfort zone and talk to someone new before or after a meeting?
- Do I believe I can learn and grow by listening to someone much older or younger share?
- How do I ensure members with visible or non-visible disabilities are welcome in my meeting?
- What is my reaction when someone new appears disheveled? When someone new appears well-dressed?
- Is attending a diverse meeting important to me or am I more comfortable in a meeting where we are all the same? What is my reaction when someone new identifies themselves as a member of another twelve-step program? Am I willing to help them understand the concept of anonymity?
- Would I be comfortable if a member brought a small child to my meeting? How about a teenager?
- Am I comfortable having a meeting in a mosque, synagogue or church?
- Do I pay attention to someone’s grammar and reading skills and compare them to my own?
- How do I react when someone new comes to my meeting and shares that a family member or friend is a drug addict?
- Am I willing to be a Sponsor/Sponsee to a member in a heterosexual relationship? Same-sex relationship? Single? Divorced?
- Am I welcoming to a newcomer who speaks a language different than the primary language of the meeting?
- Is the closing in my home meeting inclusive to people from diverse backgrounds and experiences?

Using Al-Anon’s Spiritual Principles

- Unity and Participation—How can I remind myself that our common welfare should come first, as stated in Tradition One?
- Respect and Open-Mindedness—How can I put “principles above personalities” and show loving respect to every member?
- Compassion and Understanding—How can I support someone with characteristics different from mine so that they feel welcome?
- Acceptance and Tolerance—Looking beyond what makes us different, how can I find the common humanity in all who suffer?
- Honesty and Humility—By answering these questions honestly and with humility, how will I grow and change?
- Spirituality and Trust—How can I trust my Higher Power to guide me in overcoming my biases?