

## **Welcoming Potential Members Skit** (adapted from WSC Thought Force Skit)

**SETTING**      Al-Anon Business Meeting  
(6 Chairs on top of stage, on side in semicircle; 1 extra chair to serve as a small table in front of one of the chairs)

### **CHARACTERS**

**Narrator:**

**Charles the Chairperson** (over the top enthusiastic)

**Greta the Group Representative** (positive & practical)

**Lovely Linda** (very sweet & loving tone)

**Worried Wanda** (a concerned, worried tone)

**Rigid Rita** (no-nonsense, direct, firm)

**Newton Newbie** (quiet, watchful, slightly smiling)

**PROPS:** hats with attached emoticon +names, gavel, 2018 survey, *Service Manual, Groups at Work, How Al-Anon Works, Paths to Recovery*

**Narrator:** The setting of this story is an Al-Anon Business meeting in a tiny church room, somewhere in space & time....

The Characters are: (*stand up when name called; stay standing*)

    "Charles", the Chairperson; "Greta" the Group Representative;

    "Lovely Linda"; "Worried Wanda"; "Rigid Rita"; and "Newton Newcomer".

**Charles (Chairperson):** (*Enthusiastically bangs the gavel*)

Please stay for the business meeting, which begins immediately! (Turns to Newcomer) Everyone is welcome to stay. We would love to hear your thoughts and ideas. (*Banging gavel*) Let's sit down and get started. Greta our GR will conduct the meeting.

**Worried Wanda:** (*worried look*) Maybe our newcomer, Newton doesn't know what a GR is?

**Lovely Linda:** *GR* stands for Group Representative. Greta represents our group at Al-Anon business meetings at the District and at the World Service Area level. I'm happy to explain more about this after our meeting.

**Greta, GR:** Welcome everyone to our business meeting. This group decided to continue the conversation we started a few weeks ago. To bring you up to speed, we've had a number of newcomers who've come in because their loved one is addicted to drugs. Some of our members felt uncomfortable and asked that we talk about how we welcome all newcomers to our meeting while maintaining our primary purpose. Are there any more ideas or thoughts on this topic?

**Rigid Rita:** (*holding up Service Manual*) I looked it up! The Third Tradition tells us that Al-Anon is for friends and family of alcoholics. We can not break that Tradition! I'm extremely worried about Al-Anon's future and the health of this group. I'm not willing to let Al-Anon be diluted in this way!

**Lovely Linda:** (*smiling sweetly*) I understand what you're saying about the Traditions, including Tradition Five, which speaks to our primary purpose. But I hate the idea of turning people away at the door. It just seems so unkind and against our principles of compassion, love, and unity to not welcome newcomers that might have other concerns. Especially since they haven't been coming long enough to know for sure whether they belong and whether they feel that they can benefit.

**Rigid Rita:** (*With lots of attitude.*) Well I certainly don't want to hear a lot of drug talk or talk about addiction!

**Worried Wanda:** (*worried look*) When I first came to Al-Anon, I didn't know anything about our primary purpose. I was in too much pain. I managed to hear how the principles of this program could help me focus on myself, and that it didn't matter whose disease brought me to the doors of Al-Anon. No one told me I had to pass a membership test to be in Al-Anon. I decided on my own that I could benefit from Al-Anon, so I stayed.

**Lovely Linda:** Right. We are definitely here for ourselves. Does anyone have the 2018 Membership Survey results? I heard that the survey has some interesting statistics about our newcomers.

**Greta, GR:** (*Enthusiastically waving the Survey*) I'm glad you asked! I, as your trusted servant, just happen to have that survey right here! Let's see...**"Fifty percent** of members indicated that the family member or friend who had led them to initially attend Al-Anon meetings **had a history of drug use,"** and **"35 percent of the members specifically joined because of this drug use."** Wow! That's higher than I remember. No one asked me if I belonged here and I didn't have to prove I knew an alcoholic. Many times, there is another relative or friend in their background who was, or is, an alcoholic.

**Worried Wanda:** Wasn't there something about children and drug use?

**Greta, GR:** Yes, that's on this same page of the survey: "While more members first joined Al-Anon because of their spouse, members' children have a much higher likelihood of having a history of using drugs, and of leading members to join Al-Anon because of this drug use." It seems our kids are more and more likely to use drugs and make many of us finally desperate enough to find a meeting. I've heard so often that you can divorce your spouse, but not your kids. The survey also says, "while 35 percent of members first came to Al-Anon because of a loved one's drug use, (*emphasize*) **65 percent** of those who came because of drug addiction joined because of a child's addiction."

**Rigid Rita:** So, the alcoholic ex-spouse didn't make them desperate enough, but dealing with the children was another story! Ha! You do know it doesn't hurt to explain Al-Anon's purpose or to refer to Tradition Five!

**Newton Newbie:** Ahhh... Is it okay if I talk? (*All heads nod.*) Before the meeting one of you was very kind and explained to me that this program is for me and it's not necessary to mention who or what brought me here. I was told that I might find my answers if I keep coming back. I think I found something here I need. I was really anxious about coming this time, but now I know I'll come back. I want to thank you all for being so welcoming. I also appreciate being able to attend this business meeting.

**Worried Wanda** (*with a slight smile, looking at the newcomer*): I, for one, am glad you are here. I think whatever that member told you before the meeting could be a regular part of our way of greeting newcomers. (*Looking at everyone*) How about at our next Business meeting we review our format to ensure newcomers feel welcomed, while maintaining our primary purpose. I remember reading the passage in *How Al-Anon Works*, p.110 that said, "Had anyone demanded that we justify our participation in an Al-Anon group, we probably couldn't have done so. Fortunately, it is left to us to decide for ourselves in our own time whether or not we are qualified for membership." Thus, even if they feel uncertain about whether or not they are in the right place, newcomers are always welcome in Al-Anon."

**Charles the Chairperson:** I agree. Let me read this passage in *Paths to Recovery* on Tradition Three, p. 154, It says, "For all who come through the doors and claim by their presence that they have a problem, we extend our hand of fellowship. We offer them unconditional love and acceptance." Wow! Unconditional love! That's what makes me feel safe enough to be honest with myself and others. It doesn't say, "we extend our hand to those who have been affected by alcoholism." We don't know... and newcomers may not know if they've been affected by alcoholism. But at least I can practice tolerance and keep my focus on how Al-Anon has helped me, regardless of why I started attending Al-Anon to begin with.

**Rigid Rita:** You know...I figured that it was my job to screen the newcomers at the door. I can *kinda* see where you are coming from. But I don't want us to forget our Traditions!

**Charles the Chairperson:** What about changing our group format to study one Tradition each month and maybe start a newcomers meeting so we can talk about how Al-Anon works?

**Greta, GR:** It's a balancing act between providing the structure so our meeting is a safe place for everyone to share, as well as keeping our meeting true to the Al-Anon principles.

**Worried Wanda:** When I first started attending Al-Anon all I did was cry. When I finally shared I only talked about my son's drug issue. Eventually I realized that my son was drinking heavily too. I'm so glad the meeting I attended was patient with me while I figured out how to keep the focus on myself.

**Charles the Chairperson:** Thank you all for the great ideas! It looks like we are out of time for tonight. We can discuss them at our next business meeting. Until then, there's a lot to think about as we practice being welcoming to all newcomers.

*(Everyone stands, hold hands and bow)*