

Does Al-Anon have “Promises”?

(In The Loop: News From Your WSO, 11-13-19)

The WSO often receives questions about whether Al-Anon has “promises” in our Conference Approved Literature, and these questions have been asked for many years. A history of this discussion within the fellowship is included throughout our book, *Many Voices, One Journey* (B-31), but here’s a brief summary.

Al-Anon does not list anything in our literature as “The Promises” or “The Gifts” because the World Service Conference, Al-Anon’s largest representative group conscience, has not designated anything as such.

From as early as 1977, the Literature Committee turned down suggestions to adopt material from A.A. or develop a set of “Promises” for Al-Anon, because in Al-Anon we offer newcomers our experience, strength, and hope. The Committee determined that we don’t make promises because each individual’s needs and situations are different. In discussions through the years, the Conference upheld those recommendations.

Since 1994, when *From Survival to Recovery* (B-21) was introduced, some individual members began to title and number or bullet a passage in this book without permission as “The Al-Anon Promises” or “The Al-Anon Gifts” in handouts that violated our copyright. This action on their part gave some members the mistaken impression that our fellowship as a whole has elevated this excerpt to a higher level of importance than other passages from Conference Approved Literature.

In 1995, after being denied by the Literature Committee, a request was submitted for the Policy Committee to consider the passage in *From Survival to Recovery* as the “Al-Anon Promises.” After much thought and thorough discussion, it was the consensus of the Policy Committee that Al-Anon has no “promises.” They determined that the passage in question was not any more or less valid than any other sources of hope in our literature, and that it should not be promoted as “promises” or “gifts.”

From Survival to Recovery is Conference Approved Literature, and as such can be read in any Al-Anon or Alateen meeting. However, it was approved as CAL as it appears in the book, and therefore any passage needs to be read as it is written. Altering literature to our individual tastes and preferences goes against the whole purpose of CAL, which is to provide a unified view of Al-Anon/Alateen to members, professionals, and others.

More details of the history of this topic can be found in *Many Voices, One Journey* (B-31), by looking under “Promises” in the index.

*By Tom C., Associate Director—Literature
The Forum, April 2014*