



Preface

Hope for Today is a collection of daily thoughts and meditations based on the sharings of Al-Anon members who grew up with the family disease of alcoholism. While the Al-Anon Family Groups are a fellowship of equals, ours is an incredibly diverse membership. Alcoholism does not discriminate. Its devastation affects everyone close to the drinker. However, for those who grew up in an alcoholic home, one of the primary differences is that as children we lived with alcoholism through no choice of our own. With parents and siblings also trapped in this family disease, we had no frame of reference for healthy behavior.

To meet the expressed need of our fellowship, the 1997 World Service Conference, Al-Anon's largest group conscience, passed a motion "to give conceptual approval to develop a daily reader for Al-Anon adult children." A call for sharings was issued throughout the fellowship and the Conference Approval process began.

As this book developed, however, something amazing happened. Though it definitely meets the Conference charge that it is "for Al-Anon adult children," it is much more than that. The powerful examples of recovery, use of Al-Anon tools, and love of our fellowship included in these pages are universal. They transcend boundaries and limitations. The topics cover a range of issues for all Al-Anon members, as well as anyone seeking insight into, or recovery from, the family disease of alcoholism.

Al-Anon's first daily reader, *One Day at a Time in Al-Anon*, states "The more varied the experience, the greater the strength and hope." *Courage to Change: One Day at a Time in Al-Anon II* continues this thought with, "Although we have our unique qualities, all hearts beat the same under the skin." Please join us, one day at a time, as we continue this tradition and open our hearts to share with you the hope, the help, and the friendship we have been privileged to enjoy.

January 1

In the past I developed many uncomfortable emotional connections with the word "home." I never knew what to expect at home and I was too ashamed to let friends visit. I wanted to escape *from* instead of *to* home. While I agreed on the outside with the adage "There's no place like home," there was a smirk on my face and pain in my heart whenever it was spoken.

With the help of Al-Anon, I have begun to create a new life with new attitudes and new definitions. The word "family" takes on the meaning of "Al-Anon Family Groups," where I have a new family of choice that helps me in a way my family of origin could not. My new family suggested I find a "home" group. This is where I feel I truly belong. Barring severe illness, I always attend my home group meetings and participate in business meetings, group conscience decisions and service. No one forces me to do these things. I do them because I have chosen to commit myself to that group, that family.

In turn I receive from my home group elements not abundant during my childhood: consistency, intimacy, emotional depth, and acceptance. Because I share with my home group members week after week, they know my innermost secrets and flaws. They see themselves in me, I see myself in them, and we learn to love and accept each other and ourselves. Without reservation in my mind or heart, I can truly say there is no place like my home-sweet-home group.

Thought for the Day

The world is much larger than my family of origin. "When a loved one's alcoholism brought me to Al-Anon, I found a new, second family, a family that helped me discover the me that had been hidden for so long, a family that will always be there for me." *Courage to Change*, p. 11