

Script to read by 3 different District members:

Slide #4

CONCEPT 1

Member Sharing:

Hi! My name is Elizabeth. I love doing service in the worldwide fellowship of Al-Anon. Concept One has taught me a lot about responsibility and authority in my group and my life. I grew up in an alcoholic home where I always felt that it was my responsibility to handle everything. I was next to the oldest of five kids, and I always had a deep sense of responsibility for taking care of myself and my younger siblings; because it seemed to me that if I did not take care of things, something awful would happen. There is a quote on Concept One in *How Al-Anon Works* (B-32) that says “we are responsible for taking care of ourselves physically, emotionally and spiritually. We gradually learn to let go of our perception that we are ultimately responsible for other people, places, and things” (p. 128). I learned about this Concept very early in the program after I attended my first Al-Anon meeting. At this meeting I noticed that the meeting did not start on time, there was some disorganization as to who would do the readings, and what readings were supposed to be read. By the end of the meeting, I understood why I needed to be there, I needed to help these people! I needed to make sure these meetings were organized properly. So, the following week I came back with an outline for how to run the meeting in a smooth and organized manner. During the announcements, I presented my plan. After an awkward moment of silence—you know how those are—I was told to “Keep Coming Back.” At the end of the meeting, a seasoned member approached me and said to me that meetings consisted of a group of equal members and that each member of the group has equal responsibility and authority as to how the meetings are to be run. She mentioned to me that I did not need to take on the responsibility of the group, but she suggested that I keep the focus on myself and keep coming back. She also said to me, that eventually if something is important to me, all I needed to do is open it up to the group for discussion. What a concept! I was not alone! Today I know that there must be a unity of purpose. The group as a whole comes together to determine what they need or don’t need. Concept One has taught me that I am an individual person, separate from other human beings, and as such, I have no responsibility or authority over others. With this Concept I have learned to make clear delineations between what does and doesn’t belong to me. Whenever I get the feeling that I need to take responsibility for people, places, and things, I just use the slogan “Live and Let Live.” Thank you

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CONCEPT 2

Member Sharing:

Hi! My name is Steve, and I would like to share with you how I apply Concept Two in my personal life and in the workplace today. Two principles of Concept Two are difficult for me, these are, delegation and trust. Far too often in my work and personal life, I have to complete tasks that are someone else’s responsibility. I believe I do this out of fear that the task won’t get done, or won’t get done to my standard of care, and there would be a negative consequence for myself or somebody I care about. Learning to apply Concept Two in my work and personal life is a work in progress for me. Like many Al-Anon principles I have learned to apply in my life, my initial attempts to apply Concept Two in my home and work life were sporadic and tended toward extremes. In

my home life, I currently live with my wife and our four adult children. We have a rotating daily chore schedule for routine household chores. These days I am practicing letting others in my household complete their chores on their timeline and to their level of thoroughness without criticizing their work or redoing someone else's work that was not done to my satisfaction. I continue to struggle with determining an appropriate level of holding others accountable for their responsibilities that neither enforces my tendencies toward perfectionism on others nor lets them off the hook altogether. In my work life, I am practicing delegating tasks to other staff that is appropriate to their level of experience but will still allow them to grow their skills and confidence. Last year I delegated a number of tasks to staff that was beyond their level of abilities to complete and I did not provide adequate guidance and direction. As could be expected, this resulted in poor outcomes. This year I am working on providing an appropriate amount of guidance and direction so that other staff members are able to understand what they need to do without taking the task back on myself altogether or providing so much direction that other staff cannot exercise initiative and experience growth.

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CONCEPT 3

Member Sharing:

Hello, my name is Betty, and I am a member of Al-Anon. I'm going to share how I use Concept Three in my recovery. Concept Three says, "the right of decision makes effective leadership possible." How does that look in my personal life? I can use that at a meeting, but what does this look like out there where the rubber meets the road? In my work life, I was a manager of a small agency. My job was to make decisions. I wanted to make decisions that worked for everybody, but it is hard to please everybody. Sometimes I had to make hard decisions, but I didn't have to make them alone. If it was a decision that was difficult, I was free to ask others for their input, to see what their ideas were, and then to make the best decision based on that. "Take what I want and leave the rest" just like in Al-Anon. If I didn't make the decision myself, I wouldn't be a leader, would I? How does it look in my home life? My husband is a bit older than me, and he has some health problems. I thought he needed to go to the doctor, and he didn't want to, but I made an appointment anyway, and of course, I shared that with my Sponsor. She didn't take that lightly and said it was not a decision that was mine and was demeaning to him. So, it is important to know if the decision is yours or not. Just recently he started to have back problems. Again, I thought he should go to the doctor, but I asked him if he wanted to, and he refused. A little while later, when I could see he was in pain, I offered again. At this time, he accepted and said he would like me to call the doctor and set up an appointment. We took care of it; he got some medication. But it was not enough, and I asked him again, because it was his decision to make, and I didn't have to make him feel bad about that. Because of this, our household runs a lot smoother. I ask, and I know whose decision it is to make, to begin with. Sometimes it's mine, and sometimes it's not.

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CONCEPT 4

Member Sharing:

Hi, my name is Bob, and I would like to share for a moment how Concept Four, "Participation is the key to harmony," works in my personal recovery.

Prior to, and even sometimes during my early recovery in Al-Anon, there was not much harmony in my home. Decisions were made unilaterally, or sometimes not at all. Anger boiled over, resentments festered, and communication was stifled. I could carry a grudge for weeks. When I found Al-Anon, all that began to change. Members of my home group welcomed me to their community. It was suggested I get a Sponsor, which I did, and we began participating together in service. That meant going to lots of meetings, using the phone list, and most importantly, getting in the car and going to District and Area meetings. It was there that I noticed that the discussions, although sometimes spirited and controversial, were at the same time orderly and respectful. Everyone who wanted to share had their chance, and at the end of the day, we were still friends, regardless of where we stood on an issue. This is where I began to get a real sense of belonging to a worldwide fellowship. There were many voices, and we could all presume goodwill, even those in the minority. I started to learn to keep an open mind, have respect for, and even encourage other points of view. I could learn to be patient while I listened, and sometimes, as a result, I could even change my mind. Could I learn to do that at home? Could I say what I mean and not say what it means? The good news is, yes, I can make changes in the way I relate to others, and I can make progress as I am willing to let a Higher Power show me how to participate in harmony in Al-Anon and in life.

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CONCEPT 5

Member Sharing:

Hi, My name is Miriam, and Concept Five has always been important to me. I grew up in an alcoholic home and in my home, the sounds of alcoholism were either very loud or completely silent. I voiced my opinion loudly—along with anyone else who wanted to participate in the disagreement—without hearing a word that anyone said. Or, I said nothing—sulking and retreating in silence. Neither option was a viable solution for anyone. Then I found Al-Anon, and I learned how to treat people with respect because I was listened to and respected.

To me, Concept Five is all about balance. I have the responsibility to listen with an open mind to all involved, because everyone has a right to be heard and to be treated with respect, including myself. If a disagreement starts to escalate, whether at home or at work, I can remember to use the slogans “Think,” “Listen and Learn,” and “Keep an Open Mind” then calmly give my opinion and say how I feel without criticizing or blaming. When this trust is established, everyone feels counted and no one is left out unless they choose to be. When Concept Five is used everyone is equal and every voice is heard!

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CONCEPT 6

Member Sharing:

Hi, my name is Fred, and I didn't understand how Concepts could be used in my personal recovery until I studied them with my Sponsor and read about them in *The Forum* magazine. My Sponsor and I read Concept Six and stated how it applied to Al-Anon and how we could apply it to our own personal recovery. The Conference knows that legal and other administrative tasks have to be taken care of properly and have delegated that responsibility to the Trustees. Well, there are also aspects of entering into a relationship,

running a home, or raising a family that must be taken care of properly. Some have legal consequences if not done properly, some have consequences that can be costly. And many just have to be done to keep the household running smoothly. It is up to each family to determine and acknowledge who will have the primary responsibility to complete these various tasks. So, Concept Six has and is being used in my personal life—many times without my even knowing it. It has brought a lot of serenity into my recovery and if I keep practicing this principle it will continue to do so. Thank you, Al-Anon, for providing me with this knowledge and teaching me to live a serene life.

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CONCEPT 7

Member Sharing:

Hello, my name is Christine. And I would like to share with you about Concept Seven. There are two types of authority in Concept Seven, practical/legal authority and traditional authority. When we consider practical authority in Al-Anon, we turn to our Board Of Trustees to ensure that the decisions of the Conference are consistent with the law. When we consider traditional authority in Al-Anon, we turn to the spiritual principles of our three Legacies, which are the Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions, and Twelve Concepts of Service. I'd like to share a personal experience with working with Concept Seven in my personal life. One hot summer evening my 17-year-old son had planned to get together with some friends he had graduated with from high school. So, he showered and ate dinner. As he was waiting around to connect with his friends, my husband and I were having a conversation with him. It was getting pretty late in the night, and my son shared that he was headed out now to meet his friends and that they would be going to a party. They would have to drive one hour to get to the party, and they had planned to stay for three hours while there. He would have to drive another hour to get back home. As I processed this new information, I told my son that his dad and I were still legally responsible for him and his arrival time back home would be around 2 AM, which was way past his curfew. Therefore, he would not be allowed to go to the party. Concept Seven: legal rights.

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CONCEPT 8

Member Sharing:

Hi everybody, my name is Katy. Concept Eight guides me in the areas of consistency, responsibility, and delegation. One of the most rewarding roles I have enjoyed has been acting as an Alateen Group Sponsor. The Group Sponsor role is similar to the Board Of Trustees—by operating as a position of support in the Alateen meeting. The Sponsors ensure a safe atmosphere for all, which allows the Alateens to act as the Executive Committee members by taking on meeting duties such as chairing the meeting, reading the Legacies, and choosing the format. I find that attending on a regular basis and consistently providing a positive attitude, fosters mutual trust and respect among the Alateens and AMIAS. I grew up in Alateen. As a young person living in an alcoholic home, knowing the Sponsor would be there on a consistent basis provided me with surety and comfort which helped balance the chaos at home. Feeling safe created an atmosphere where I could relax and begin to focus on the positive message of Alateen. As a personal Sponsor, my role is to encourage the members that I sponsor to move through the Steps and learn how to apply them to their lives. This allows them to become responsible for their own growth and recovery, just like I'm responsible for mine. Like the

quarterly board meetings, seeing the people I sponsor at meetings or touching base regularly over the phone, is key to create an honest and harmonious relationship where both of us can grow. In my home, I act as both a Board member and as an Executive Committee member. Routines are established in order to keep our home running smoothly. This allows each member of my family to perform regular tasks. We may all have to do some jobs we don't like, but we can tackle them together and create an end result that we all enjoy. Like much of my program, home is the hardest place for me to delegate and let go of the results. I do still find myself re-stacking the dishwasher, or re-cleaning a surface now and then, but because of the program, I am able to laugh at myself and make amends if needed, so that everyone's work is valued and respected.

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CONCEPT 9

Member Sharing:

Hi, my name is Patti. The first part of Concept Nine states "Good personal leadership at all service levels is a necessity." My first experience of leadership in Al-Anon was when I signed up to lead a meeting. Understanding that members in the room would feel more comfortable if I kept the readings in order, that if I chose a topic that welcomed wide participation, it would be a good meeting. I thought about that meeting afterward and realized that good leadership can create a safe space. It is rarely my first choice to be a leader, but I do recognize good leadership when I have a chance to work with it. I find myself analyzing the particular qualities that make that person a good leader and try to incorporate them into my own growth. Leadership requires that I fulfill my responsibilities to the best of my ability, even if I am responsible only for myself. But if I have accepted responsibility, others are counting on me to lead, to set an example, to guide—and that is my responsibility. Weak or haphazard leadership leaves others feeling vulnerable and insecure. Bill W. said, "good leadership never passes the buck." The first time I read that, I was thinking it meant accepting blame or responsibility for a mess. As I've grown in this program the idea of blame has just faded away. It's become more like "this is your show, do the best you can, own your mistakes, take care of others, and use this experience to grow." The characteristics I have noticed in good leaders always start with listening. In Al-Anon, I learned to add the presumption of goodwill, and calm—like I just whispered the serenity prayer to myself—kindness, treating others as I would like to be treated, trust myself—my viewpoint is the only view I can have—which takes me back to listening because I need to understand the viewpoint of others. So, in learning to lead, I am also learning to become more of who I want to be and, in the process, creating a safer space for others around me.

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CONCEPT 10

Member Sharing:

Hi, it's Fred. I would like to briefly share with you my experience with Concept Ten. When I first learned of this Concept, I could only picture a big two-headed monster and did not really understand the meaning or intent. Only after serving as our Area Website Coordinator did, I start to grasp the true meaning of Concept Ten. When a new Website Coordinator was elected, after several training sessions, I sat back and watched the new Coordinator go to work. However, if I thought updates were not happening fast enough, or if I thought the items were, in my opinion, inserted in the wrong place, I would change the website myself. When working

through the Concepts with my Sponsor, the light came on regarding what I was doing. It was in direct conflict with everything that Concept Ten is about. I promptly contacted the new Coordinator, apologized and stated that I would be hands-off unless I was asked to help. I turned the management of the website over to the new Coordinator and asked my Higher Power to keep me from violating this Concept. This newfound meaning of Concept Ten carried over into my personal life, at work, and at home. At work when I delegate a task to an employee, I make sure that they were aware of the results needed as well as any boundaries. Then I stayed out of their way as I let them complete the task. This took a lot of stress out of my life, as well as letting the employees grow and let them see that they were contributing to the success of the company. In my home life, the family members discussed who would do the work that needed to be accomplished to meet our obligations and keep things running smoothly. Once assignments were made, it was stated that no one would interfere with how the tasks were completed. This also eliminated a lot of stress—not only in my life but also in the lives of other family members. It eliminated a lot of yelling and finger-pointing and the jobs got done. So, Concept Ten has brought a lot of serenity into my recovery. I can still fall back into some of my old control habits, but I'm definitely getting better and staying in my own lane. Thank you, Al-Anon, for providing me with this important tool.

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CONCEPT 11

Member Sharing:

Hi everyone, my name is Anna, and I am going to talk to you a little bit about Concept Eleven, which is about the World Service Office, its selected committees and Staff members. It's about how they relate to and work with, one another. Concept Eleven tells us that we are not alone, that through partnership and collaboration we can get anything done. Through mutual trust, respect for each other, and dedication to a common goal, we can succeed where others have failed. With delegation, shared responsibility, and flexibility we can get things done together, and no one is left out and no one is above another. We can all work, and live, in harmony—all we have to do is keep the principles of the program topmost in our minds. From *Paths to Recovery*, "honesty, fairness, respect, and willingness to keep spiritual principles uppermost in our minds is our best guarantee of continued friendly efficient service in Al-Anon and in our lives" (p. 318). I try and keep that in mind when I am at work, at play, at my Al-Anon meetings, and at home. I'm working on it constantly every day. I use the principles of the program. I'm not saying I am perfect, but I try to be the best human being I can be, and with that comes the efforts of all the people I am around. It just magnifies and multiplies. I am very grateful to be in this position and to be a member of Al-Anon, and for all of you out there. Thank you.

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CONCEPT 12

Member Sharing:

Hi, my name is Lisa. Before I came into the program, I was the ultimate authority in my home. I worked outside the home, and my husband stayed at home as a stay-at-home dad. Everything about my daily life was about having authority, power, and prestige—at home and at work. What I said ultimately won out. In fact, I was quite punishing if the family members pointed out any weakness in my plan. With my son, I could speak cruelly and shut him down. With my husband, I used a number of different ways including being completely appalled,

or disappointed, or using sarcasm, yelling, screaming, banging doors, and when all else failed, giving the silent treatment. I've also struggled all my life with balance. When I worked, work was my Higher Power, my family was secondary, my health was secondary. Only in Al-Anon I've come to realize the need for balance and how good it feels when I achieve balance—when I'm not practicing the extremes of irresponsible behavior or abject fear. Whether it is in my family relationships or budgeting our expenses. I've learned about ample reserve in this Concept. That ample reserve applies not only to my money but also to energy, serenity. It means not going from one extreme to the other—of being completely consumed in an activity, working out, or something else, or on the other hand ignoring everything about it because I'm scared. Because of Al-Anon, and this Concept, I ask my family for their opinion, I listen respectfully, I discuss openly, consider all of their viewpoints carefully before I make a decision. Because of Al-Anon, I feel that we have democracy in our home and in our family relationships. I'm so grateful!