

Worthy of Protecting

By Tom C., Associate Director—Literature

By the time I came to Al-Anon, I had given away so much of myself that I wasn't even sure who I was anymore. I had forfeited my time, interests, needs and self-worth, all in feeble efforts to please the alcoholics and others in my life. I learned in Al-Anon that I have value and worth. I need to protect myself by setting limits and boundaries.

I have grown to understand that just as I now have personal boundaries for my protection, Al-Anon has boundaries to maintain its identity as a fellowship. We safeguard one of Al-Anon's valuable resources, Conference Approved Literature, by following copyright laws.

The Twelfth Step encourages us to "carry this message to others." Copyrights help ensure that Al-Anon owns the documents and that the message is accurate. They help prevent the possibility of distortion or dilution. Requiring permission to reprint verifies the accuracy of Al-Anon literature, as well as the context in which it will be used. Without it, mistakes can happen. Misquotes or quotations taken out of context could give misleading impressions about Al-Anon.

In accordance with our 2014-2017 *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27), the World Service Office can only grant permission for "limited excerpts"—usually a paragraph or less. Members and others can attain permission by submitting the "Request for Permission to Reprint" form found on the Members' website, al-anon.org/members. As the *Manual* states on page 107, "Permission to reprint extensively from our publications is not granted in the United States and Canada to any individuals, within or outside of our membership, or to any outside agency."

The one exception to this policy is that members may copy Conference Approved Literature (and *The Forum*) for use in Al-Anon/Alateen meetings or workshops without written permission, provided it is for a one-time use (such as for a meeting topic), the photocopy is limited to what can be reasonably discussed within one meeting and the material is not for sale or being distributed beyond the group. When doing so, please include the following credit line, "From [title of book or pamphlet], copyright 20__, by Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. One-time reprint

permission granted by Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc."

Copyright law also extends to the Internet. Areas, Districts, Al-Anon Information Services, Literature Distribution Centers and individuals do not have permission to post Conference Approved Literature on their Web sites. However, service arms and registered on-line meetings may obtain written permission to post the Steps, Traditions and Concepts of Service on a yearly basis. Members participating in chat rooms or e-mail meetings that have received this permission may quote up to one paragraph from Conference Approved Literature in their sharing, provided they include a credit line and do not alter the excerpt.

Written permission is not necessary for Al-Anon/Alateen service arms to excerpt items of interest from *Area Highlights*, *Alateen Talk*, the "Inside Al-Anon Family Groups" section of *The Forum*, or other service tools for inclusion in

Al-Anon newsletters or Web sites, provided a credit line is given. In fact, to help spread information, these newsletters may be photocopied or posted in their entirety by anyone. Likewise, three articles from *The Forum* are designated each month for reprinting in newsletters or Web sites, along with the credit line.

"I had forfeited my time, interests, needs and self-worth, all in feeble efforts to please the alcoholics and others in my life."

Let's continue to carry our message of hope to families and friends of alcoholics by preserving and protecting the precious resources found in Al-Anon's copyright-protected Conference Approved Literature.

Statement of Purpose

"Inside Al-Anon Family Groups" presents news, policy and commentary from volunteers, staff, and readers sharing experience through service. Please feel free to reprint these articles on your website or in your newsletter, along with this credit line: Reprinted with permission of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc., Virginia Beach, VA.