





Alateen Talks Back

— On —

**HIGHER POWER**

Alateen, part of the Al-Anon Family Groups, is a fellowship of young people whose lives have been affected by alcoholism in a family member or close friend. We help each other by sharing our experience, strength and hope.

We believe alcoholism is a family disease because it affects all the members emotionally and sometimes physically. Although we cannot change or control our parents, we can detach from their problems while continuing to love them.

We do not discuss religion or become involved with any outside organizations. Our sole topic is the solution of our problems. We are always careful to protect each other's anonymity as well as that of all Al-Anon and AA members.

By applying the Twelve Steps to ourselves, we begin to grow mentally, emotionally and spiritually. We will always be grateful to Alateen for giving us a wonderful, healthy program to live by and enjoy.

*Suggested Alateen Preamble to the Twelve Steps*

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Al-Anon Family Groups



# INTRODUCTION

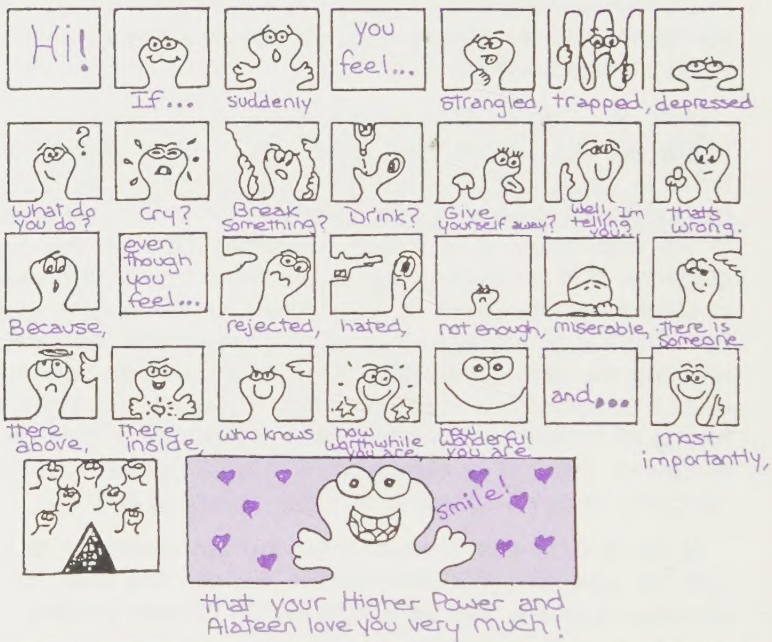
**T**he articles and artwork in this booklet have been written by Alateen members and taken from past issues of *ALATEEN TALK*. By expressing their views, Alateen members show there are many ways to improve our conscious contact with the God of our understanding.

Most of us come into Alateen feeling lonely, confused, and frightened. We wonder why we have been given such a rotten break in life. A few of us still have a strong belief but many of us question if there is a God, or blame God for our problems, or we stop believing in a God altogether. Through the gentle guidance of the Alateen program, we begin to trust and believe in *something*. For some of us, it might be the Alateen group. For others it is a belief in something bigger than ourselves—knowing we have the freedom to develop our own concept of what that something might be. Once we reach this point, the feeling of loneliness can lessen and our problems don't seem so severe. Many of us experience a "spiritual awakening" when we come to believe there is a Higher Power to help us.

At the end of this booklet, there are ten questions to help with the idea of a HIGHER POWER. We can use them for our personal recovery, and as a topic for an Alateen meeting.

*ALATEEN TALK* is published quarterly and has been serving the membership since 1961. For information about a subscription to *ALATEEN TALK*, please write to Al-Anon Family Groups, Inc.; the address is listed in this booklet.





**Alateen Members**  
**Quintana Roo, Mexico**

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**B**efore I came to Alateen, I was a crying, nervous, fearful and miserable girl. I felt lonely and frustrated because of the problems in my home; always the outcries for nothing, each day with the same confusion. Thanks to this program, I have changed. I'm not the girl I was; I don't feel alone anymore because now I have a Higher Power who listens to me and understands.

The Alateen program has helped me to understand those close to me and others. Now I can attend parties with my parents and feel O.K. Whether my father drinks or not, it doesn't affect me. I can let go of him and let God take care of him because now I know he is a sick person.

My faith has grown, one day at a time toward a Higher Power that I call God. My mind is clear and the problems don't arise as before. With the practice of the Alateen program and my mother in Al-Anon, my home is a real "home sweet home." Understanding and happiness are present most of the time.

**Marichuy**  
*Puebla, Mexico*

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**W**hen Dad came home I could tell by his breath that he had again picked up a drink. I tried to hold back my tears, but it scared me to see his eyes so red. I wished I was dead.

The next day the old promises were made. I ran outside and cried again. Then my sister came and sat down beside me. I wiped away my tears and told her I hated him and wanted to die. Although she is younger than I, her attitude was different; she didn't know why but she never felt the same way. Today I feel differently, too.

In the past, I drank to get back at Dad, this never helped me, it just made him angry. Now I am in Alateen and AA. I am so grateful I have a place to go to. My mother keeps going to Al-Anon, my father lives one day at a time in AA and my sisters go to Alateen too. Now if Dad slips, I'll handle it somehow. I shared in Alateen how I'm trying so hard to understand why my Higher Power is putting me through this. Many of the Alateen members keep encouraging me to work the Steps, and that the answers will come to me eventually.

**Connie**  
**California, U.S.A.**

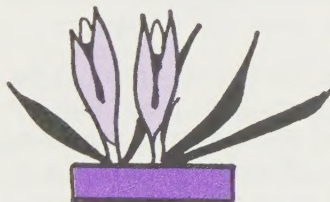


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**I** know now that Alateen is a beautiful program and it has helped me grow. I came in hating everyone including God, but now I understand and I'm loving. I learned that alcoholism is a disease and I didn't know that before. This was the first big step towards recovery.

I am now a regular participant of my Alateen group and when I feel bad, I can share about it. Now I know I can grow more and I will always be able to grow. It's like our Sponsor says, "We're the gifted ones." My Higher Power whom I choose to call God, has helped me to understand that.

**Mike**  
*Minnesota, U.S.A.*



**A**lateen means wholeness. I need God, Alateen, and a will to do what is right, and to be the best I can be. Alateen has helped me see what I need to do to be as God wants me to be. I'm finding out about myself and learning who I am. Alateen has helped me shape my life. Thanks Alateen!

**Dave**  
*Missouri, U.S.A.*

**B**efore Alateen, I never liked myself; I was a "loner." When I came into the program the first thing I gained were friends, true friends! Something I thought I would never have. The program then showed me that I could be who I wanted to be and feel the way I wanted to feel. It was my choice! I chose to try to be happy and grateful each day. My Alateen friends said to me, "Anything that you want to work out, will! You just have to believe it will." I say this to myself often and it helps.



Alateen and the friends I have in the program mean a lot to me. There is so much that I'm grateful for. Because of all the love and understanding I receive, I now have the strength and courage to be me, and not be afraid to let people know who I am. I am even willing to reach out to a God of my understanding. I can now sit in a room all by myself, all alone, yet not feel lonely because I know my Higher Power is there with me. I could never have done this before.

After six years in Alateen, I can honestly say that I like the real me. It's a great feeling, and I wouldn't trade it for anything.

**Penny**  
**New York, U.S.A.**

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**B**efore Alateen I resented my lot in life and thought I was the only one asking, "Why me?"

Through Alateen I learned to be honest with myself, to give myself a chance to see the good side of life, and develop a positive approach.

I found that I could either harbor my self-pity or turn it over to a Higher Power. Self-pity is destructive.

Turning it over, is being good to myself.

**Debbie**  
**Scotland**



**S**ince I am an older member of Alateen, some of the younger members would come to me and ask, "How do I turn my will and life over to the care of my Higher Power?" I turned to my Higher Power and asked for the words to help these Alateen members understand. He helped me to say, "I'm going to turn over as much as I want my Higher Power to have. If I want Him to have 50 percent, 50 percent is all He is going to get. But if I want Him to have 100 percent, and turn it all over to His care, He will guide my life 100 percent of the time!" I have to remember to keep doing this in my mind because I really believe it will eventually become a part of me.

**Billy**  
**Texas, U.S.A.**

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**G**od as *I understand Him* is not of the earth; He is floating somewhere, someway. I believe that God, God being the accepted name, gives me life, and that is all He does. He does not punish me or give me guidelines—just life. Someone once asked me to describe God in earthly terms. I said, “Then God must be a plant.” He is living, He is real, He does give life (oxygen) and that’s all He needs to do for me to believe in Him.

**Kathy**

***New Jersey, U.S.A.***



**I** definitely have a Higher Power! When I first came to Alateen, I heard everyone talking about this “Power greater than themselves” and I wanted one too. It didn’t come overnight. I knew there was a God as such, but a Higher Power seemed to be much more to me.

My Higher Power is a close friend who lives in my heart, who I can confide in when I feel that the world is coming in on me, someone to laugh with me when I do something crazy.

My Higher Power also keeps me on the right track and helps me to choose between right and wrong and keep my head on straight.

My Higher Power reminds me that I have a wonderful program to lean on if I need help. Thanks Alateen! I love you!

**Torie**

***South Carolina, U.S.A.***



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I have been in Alateen for five years. I joined because my father is an alcoholic and my mother thought Alateen might help. Well, the problem was that my dad wasn't violent and so I didn't believe he was an alcoholic. It may also be that I was too young to remember the really bad times or what my dad had been like before he started drinking. To be honest, I stayed in Alateen at first because it was a heck of a way to skip class. But as time wore on and I hit my sophomore year, I found that it truly helped with everyday problems. Until then I didn't really know what alcohol did to a person.

I, myself began "partying" pretty heavy; no dope, but lots of alcohol. My personality changed so much that I didn't recognize myself. Usually I'm a happy-go-lucky kind of person, but, I became the opposite.

The last few months have taught me something I'll never forget and through Alateen I may have spared myself and my family a lot of pain. But miraculously the program got through. For a long time I used my stuffed lion as my Higher Power, but now I've got something else that's really powerful. I have a program of love, acceptance and understanding and it keeps getting stronger every day. I found God again!

**Denise**  
**Montana, U.S.A.**



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I have been going to Alateen for a year now and it's been one of the greatest learning experiences of my life.

Before Alateen I was a very lonely, confused and introverted girl. I took Mom's drinking personally and always felt responsible for her actions. All of these responsibilities brought up fear, anger and lots of resentment. I kept it all bottled up inside of me. I felt so alone and couldn't believe in anything.

The loving members of my Alateen group very slowly helped me to "come out of my shell." My feelings and problems surfaced because I started to talk and share.

I have been to two different Alateen conferences in my area, and have never met so many friends who I can share and grow with. At both conferences, there was a "God as I understand Him" workshop. It was just a beautiful experience for me, because, as I listened to each person share on their Higher Power, I began to believe in something again.

I still have a long way to go but I know that with the help and support of the program and the love of my Higher Power, I will learn little by little to have faith, smile and be happy again.

**Ann Marie**  
**New Jersey, U.S.A.**

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I used to have a lower power because I did not know how to deal with my problems until I came into Alateen. I learned how to believe in a Higher Power because of the Alateen Sponsors who help me and thousands of other children.

My Higher Power helps me to deal with my problems with the alcoholic in my house. He also helps me cope with my other problems and to work them out. I can also have the courage to find someone I know and trust to talk to. I know they won't betray me and, even when I share my feelings with them, they will not break my anonymity.

My Higher Power means a lot to me, and I can't let someone drunk and abusive tell me how to live my life, because of the way they live theirs.

**Kelli**

***North Carolina, U.S.A.***

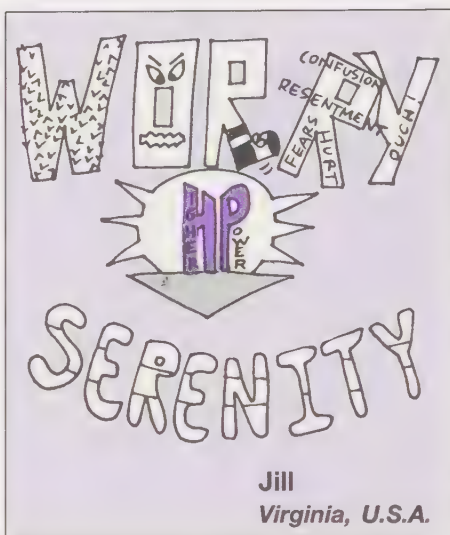


**W**hen I hear AA members talk about a slip, I know what they mean. But what about me when I, as an Alateen member, have slips? For an AA member, slips mean drinking. For me, a slip is a change back to my old attitudes and turning away from my Higher Power.

When my family, friends or school get too much for me, do I use my program? Or, do I do what I used to do, which was to run away from the problem or blame it on someone or something else?

I have choices today and it helps me to remember that the slogans are there to help me over the rough spots. I want to turn it over and, Let Go and Let God.

My prayer for today is: Dear God, Please help me grow some more today. Help me also to face my life and problems honestly.



**Dani**  
*California, U.S.A.*



**A**lateen is such a wonderful learning program that I don't know what I would do or where I'd be without it. It has given me gifts that I could never have found on my own—like a God of my understanding, peace of mind, serenity, real true friends, happiness. And, the list goes on.

Happiness is very important to me and when I think and feel happy, I remember reading something from the Just For Today card that Abraham Lincoln said, "A man is as happy as he makes up his mind to be." This is true. Since I have learned "to know the difference," I can surely be as happy or as unhappy as I want to be. It was not easy for me to accept the fact that I have a choice in the matter. I can face things negatively and be miserable, or with the help of Alateen and my Higher Power, face them positively and be happy.

Being happy does not mean living life without a care or always being cheerful. I can be very concerned about things without letting them upset me. I know now that when problems happen in my life, whether I realize it at the time or not, everything will turn out for the best for me because God is taking care of my life and His will is being carried out.

**Louise**  
**Ontario, Canada**

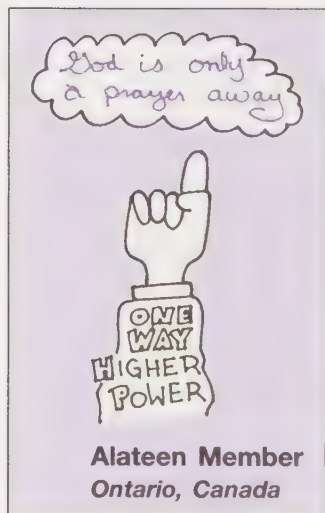


I came into Alateen a year ago, and I would never have believed there was any solution to my problems. There are times when I still feel that way, but it's only because of my laziness. I do know there is a solution and it is up to me to do something about it.

I try to tackle my problems "one day at a time," with the help of my Higher Power, my *Alateen*—a day at a time book, the slogans, my meetings, my sponsor and my experience. Experiences are important; they help to create maturity.

When I came into Alateen I was like a child learning to walk for the first time. Each time I fell, I had to pick myself up and then the next fall wouldn't hurt so much. I had to find the courage through my Higher

Power to pick myself up. I needed the wisdom I got through prayer and meditation to show me this was the right thing to do. I want to remember that things do get better. I have learned that things improve according to how much effort I put into working the program. By practicing the Alateen program I have gained a small amount of serenity.



**Angela**  
*Oxfordshire, England*

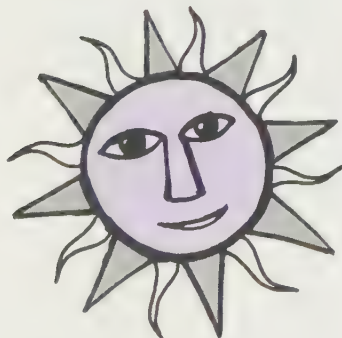
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**W**hen I look back at the time I first started going to Alateen, I remember feeling an inner peace when people would talk about their Higher Power and what He had done for them.

I immediately started looking for mine, and found Him too. I had known about Him for some time. I always had what my Alateen friends called a "Higher Power" without knowing it.

Most of the time I feel that God has always been my shepherd watching over me day and night. But it wasn't until I came to Alateen that I found my Higher Power. I believe that my Higher Power has a place in His heart that was made for me. I can talk to God all the time or when I'm feeling exceptionally lonely, confused, or scared. I have the privilege to dig deeper and reach my Higher Power. My H.P. is that certain someone who knows more about me than anyone else could.

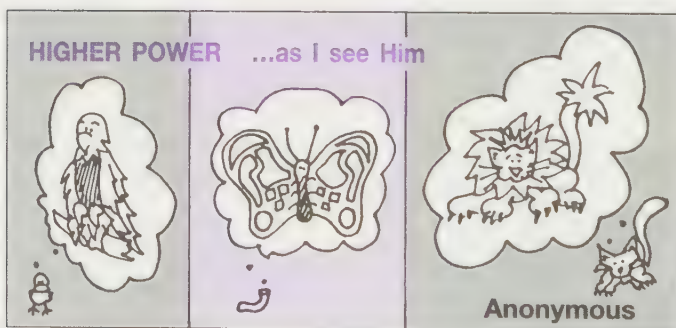
**Torie**  
***South Carolina, U.S.A.***



**W**hen I first came to Alateen, I kept hearing the word God and it scared me because I was so confused about the one that I knew. I felt that God was punishing me all the time because I had a parent that was abusive and drank all the time. My dad was always so concerned about my mom's drinking that he hardly had any time for me. I kept feeling as if I had done something wrong to deserve this life.

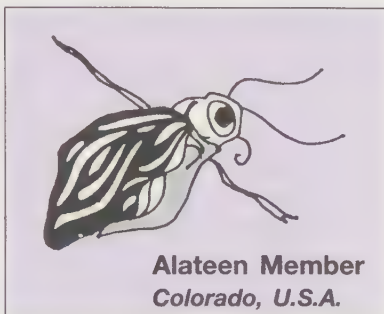
I was scared that Alateen would force me into believing something that I didn't want to. Well, that didn't happen. Instead I heard many people share different ideas as to what their Higher Power was. They helped me to find something to believe in. It was great because that meant that I could just believe in the group, and that would be okay. I feel I have a long way to go before I understand my Higher Power, but just for today I keep it very simple.

**Betty**  
*California, U.S.A.*





**F**or me, through Alateen, my Higher Power is God. I choose Him because I believe there is only one God. I don't understand how people can think of their Higher Power as forks, roaches, or their cat. For me God is always there, even if it may not seem like it; He is watching over me. If there wasn't a God, where would I be? God has helped me out of many situations, even when I lose faith and don't believe in Him, or when I don't think He's really taking care of me as I go through tough times.



He even pulled my father out of trouble without any complications which was really a miracle. When my mom went through surgery, she came out okay, too. The doctors thought she had cancer again and she had to go through surgery once more and everything worked out fine.

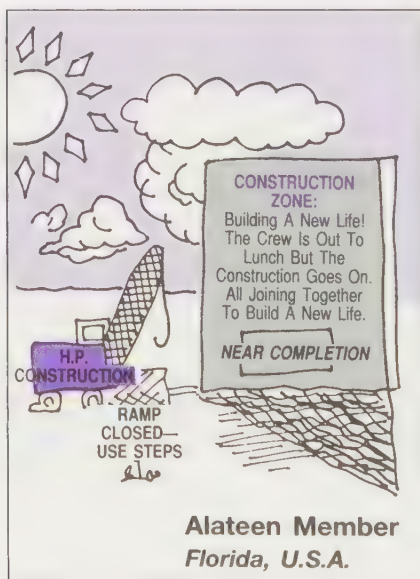
So, I know that if there wasn't a God, then how could all these miracles happen? God plays a really big part in my life.

**Juanita**  
**California, U.S.A.**

I have a Higher Power and I use God as mine. He is there for me when I need Him. I can turn problems over to him when I am feeling angry, sad, and depressed. Then I can start doing something to make myself happy such as look at my own inventory, get to a meeting, call a friend or detach.

I came to believe in a Higher Power after I started working the Alateen program. I started to believe in one after I learned how to detach. It's nice to have someone there for me. It's like having a friend to count on, which He is!

**Debbie**  
*Indiana, U.S.A.*



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**A** power greater than myself is good to have when I need help or when I have good things happening to me. A Higher Power helps me to detach, accept and adapt to situations that I never have been able to adjust to before, such as problems with friends, family or even when I am feeling sad.

My Higher Power is God. Some people use their radios, televisions, stereos or other particular objects as their Higher Power. This program offers all kinds of Higher Powers for everyone. It also offers a lot of spiritual healing even if we don't practice any religion; but it only works if you work it. My Higher Power is there for me when I am in trouble. I can turn any situation over to Him or Her. It is such a good feeling to know that someone else is there for me.

**Diane**  
***Kentucky, U.S.A.***



**G**od of my understanding is a very hard concept for me. Ever since I can remember, my mother and grandmother have been pushing their religion on



me. I would go to church and listen to how I had to do this, and that, and how I couldn't do this, or that, and then heard that God will always love me. I never understood what I was supposed to do or say. I was always scared and felt guilty. Then I came to question my faith in God, the God I was exposed to. But to me, God is a being that lives in all of us. I have a hard time trusting or believing in things I can't see or touch. So God and having faith is still difficult to accept, but with the help of Alateen I can break through all that and begin to trust in my Higher Power.

**Dawn**

**Iowa, U.S.A.**

I had come to believe in a Higher Power through my church. I describe my Higher Power as my best friend. He helped me to find Alateen.

My best friend is someone I can talk to at anytime about anything and everything. My best friend also loves me and cares about me. He is always there for me. He helps me cope with my problems and understands them. My Higher Power is loving and His name is God.

**Robin**  
*South Carolina, U.S.A.*

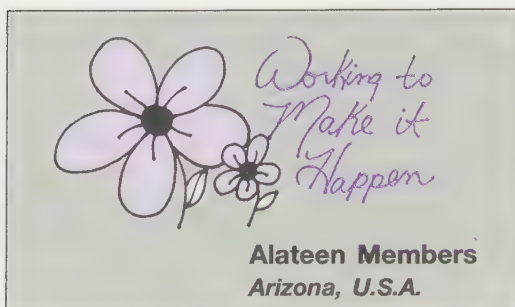


I do believe there is a Higher Power because of being in Alateen. I'm not sure about what to believe in, in terms of denomination. I do believe however, that my "God" can solve all problems in due time if I only believe in Him and have faith that sometimes there are reasons for unanswered prayers.

I believe one day God will forgive my father for his violence towards me and others and will give me the peace that I have long prayed for. My father will be at peace with himself, his family, and with God.

**Kemberly**  
*South Carolina, U.S.A.*





**O**ne way Alateen can help me is to remind me of things that I tend to forget. For example, we hear again and again at our meetings that alcoholism is a disease, our alcoholic parent is a sick human being, we do not try to punish people who are sick.

I may hear this and say it, but why do I often think that my alcoholic parent is my enemy and that she is out to get me? I need Alateen to remind me that such feelings only hold me back and prevent me from growing spiritually. This attitude will not help the situation in my family. Resentment is a poison that stops me from reaching out to my Higher Power and to the wonderful members of Alateen.

I can cope with my problems by changing my thinking, correcting my mistakes and improving my attitude in order to allow both my parents to take care of their own problems. I can remember they have their own Higher Power, too.

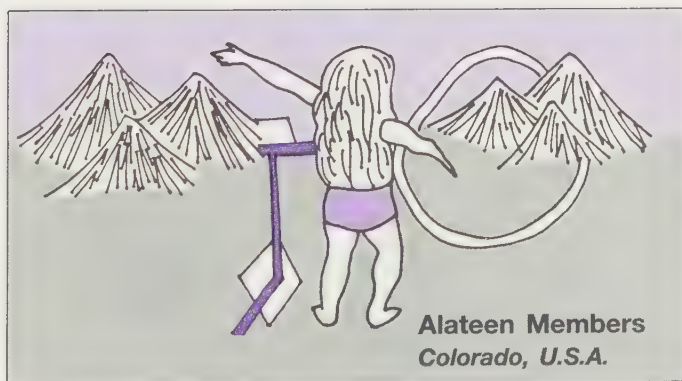
**Kathy**  
**Nebraska, U.S.A.**

I am 17 years old and have been a faithful Alateen member for nearly three years now. As a new member I was forced to attend Alateen meetings for three weeks by my recovering alcoholic mother. After the third meeting it was then my choice whether I wanted to go back. I had found such serene love in the group that even the rebellion toward my mother couldn't keep me away.

Today, I have the best support any teenager could ever have because of what the program has taught me. Not only do I have very supportive and trusting Alateen friends, but I have a Higher Power whom I choose to call God, to keep me on the right track of living one day at a time. The best part, however, is that I've found the most precious support of all, Me!

I've a new friend and she is growing and learning with a new faith and a lasting hope. By the grace of God, I can live today and be me.

**Paula**  
**Missouri, U.S.A.**



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**T**here is a Higher Power,  
I do believe it's true,  
But sometimes He doesn't help me,  
the way I'd like Him to.

So then I turn to Alateen,  
I feel it's where I belong,  
It helps me live a better life,  
and helps me carry on.

I found I'm not the only one  
who experiences the hurt and pain,  
So don't be scared, just speak your mind,  
there's everything to gain.

Everyone there listens  
to what I have to say,  
I have support and their help,  
they won't turn and walk away.

This is only my opinion  
on how you've helped me live,  
So in return, I thank you all  
for the help and support you give.

**Roberta**  
*Massachusetts, U.S.A.*



I haven't been in Alateen for long and I'm still confused about some things. But I think I am catching on about a Higher Power. I used to think that if I prayed to God, He would do what I wanted Him to—like make my cricket team win! But since I've been coming to Alateen I've learned a different way to pray and I hope I am asking my Higher Power to help me in the right way now.



**Tim**  
*South Victoria, Australia*

Before Alateen I felt lonely and scared, yet I am not sure why. It seemed my whole world would soon end; but it didn't. Somehow I lived on in my own little world, even though I knew something was wrong and something was missing.

Then by some Higher Power, I went to my first Alateen meeting. I thought the kids there were strange and crazy, but I kept going back and something hit home deep inside of me. I felt like a miracle happened! That's when I knew I was in the right place and felt someone really cared.

I've learned to love and respect myself. Most of all, I know that I'm important and that people will be there when I need them.

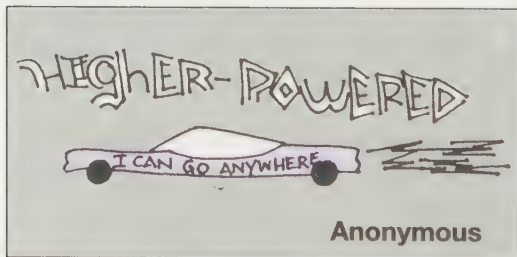
**Terry**  
*Michigan, U.S.A.*

There were so many times in the past when I wondered why God didn't like me and why he put me in this miserable family of mine. Everyone was always screaming at each other and there never was any peace. All I wanted to do was to run away and I tried to many times. The only problem was that I couldn't run away from what was going on inside my head.

I heard about the Alateen meeting at school and started to go. What a relief it was to hear the other Alateen members saying the same thing and feeling the same way. Someone shared that God didn't make junk, and it just clicked inside me that he really cared for me. It's true that I still think my family is crazy but maybe I can just get better by working on myself. I can use the resources that my Higher Power has given me and just move forward. I can find a quiet place to be calm and really think what my Higher Power wants for me. At least it's a start.

**Marie**

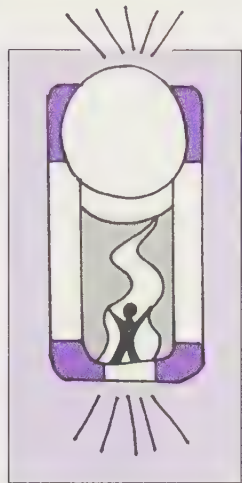
***Florida, U.S.A.***



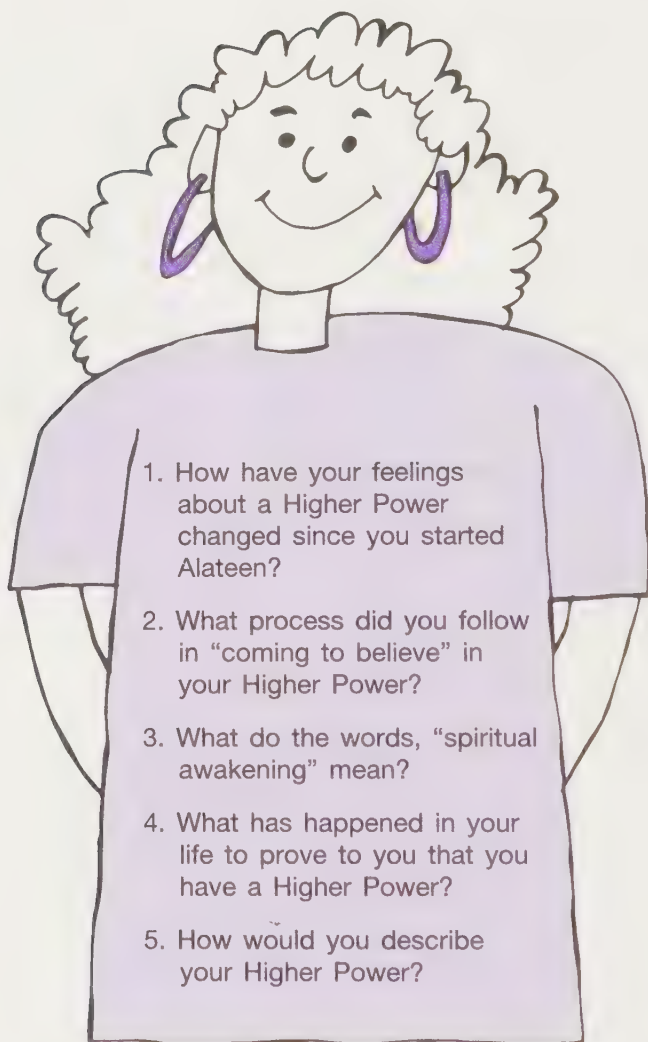


**T**rust is a five letter word but from it springs many others. If I trust someone, I'm usually honest, open, caring, friendly, respectful and united with that person. A kind of "blind faith" runs my emotions, giving me faith in these people.

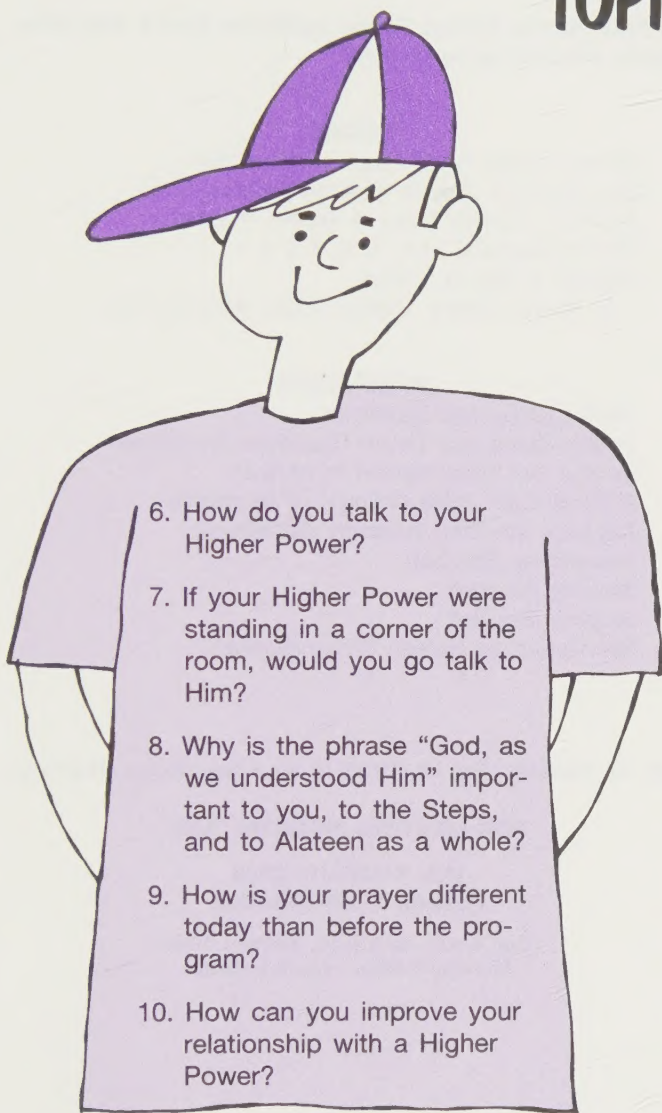
In order for our program to work, there must be trust. An untrusting group isn't a group at all. Even though many of us have this "blind faith," we are aware of the light at the end of the tunnel. The light shines brightly on us in Alateen. It's the hope for children, relatives or friends of alcoholics. It's our Higher Power who helps us through the tunnel to the bright light. It's the understanding that there are others like us out there. My "blind faith" keeps my program going.



**Michele**  
**Wyoming, U.S.A.**



# ALATEEN MEETING TOPICS



6. How do you talk to your Higher Power?
7. If your Higher Power were standing in a corner of the room, would you go talk to Him?
8. Why is the phrase "God, as we understood Him" important to you, to the Steps, and to Alateen as a whole?
9. How is your prayer different today than before the program?
10. How can you improve your relationship with a Higher Power?

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**The Al-Anon World Service Office publishes books and other pamphlets which may be of help:**

**BOOKS**

- B-3     *Alateen: Hope for Children of Alcoholics*
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