

Inside Al-Anon Family Groups

Changed Attitudes Can Aid Leadership

I had only been in the program for seven years when one of my employees took me aside to let me know that my boss had declared he wanted to fire me. Wait, what?! I was shocked. In our weekly meetings, my boss and I disagreed about product design, but he had never said that I was not performing. My team and I had good working relationships, and I knew the president of the company respected me. Clearly, my boss had to be wrong! *He* was the problem, not me!

My brain circled around and around in my disease, focusing on my boss, what he had done wrong, and how I was the harmed victim. Thankfully, once the shock wore off and I had talked with my Sponsor and other trusted friends, I realized this was *my* disease, and I needed to practice my program. I started by rereading [Concept Nine](#) on good personal leadership. Then I leaned into the faith and commitment to my Higher Power found through [Steps Two](#) and [Three](#), and I took [Step Four](#). By taking a fearless moral inventory and sharing it with God and my Sponsor ([Step Five](#)), I reluctantly came to recognize my part.

I realized I was demonstrating a disrespectful attitude toward my boss, both privately and through my tone during our conversations. I recognized I was taking *his* inventory (assessing his motives), and I was violating [Concepts One](#), [Two](#), [Three](#), and [Five](#)! After all, the president had the ultimate authority and responsibility in our workplace; he had delegated certain responsibilities to my boss (not me, who knew?), and that gave my boss the right of decision. Although I had the right of appeal, that didn't mean my boss's decision had to change, and regardless, I had a responsibility to honor that delegated group authority.

With my changed attitude, I was able to maintain serenity regardless of my boss's decisions or actions. I behaved respectfully, which ultimately contributed to the organization realizing there was indeed a problem, and my boss left the company. At the World Service Office (WSO), I have witnessed similar scenarios play out. When communication is lacking, whether from the WSO or trusted servants, the family disease assigns motives and blame to the other. Thankfully, I have also observed WSO Staff, Volunteers, and the organization practicing the program by listening, inventorying, and changing what we can.

The lack of qualified applicants for Trustee is one example of these principles in action. Initially, when few members were applying to serve, the natural inclination was to look outward to understand how to change "them." In applying the program, however, the Board recognized the need to examine *its* process and discovered that its uncommunicated expectations were causing significant frustration and mistrust among applicants. The Board consulted widely with the Conference and professionals for ideas and suggestions before updating the process to include role descriptions as well as clear explanations for those applicants who were not selected so that each could learn and grow. The Board's actions led to an increase in applicants and overall satisfaction with the process. What a gift for Al-Anon and each of those involved.

By Vali F., Executive Director

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