

“Let It Begin with Me”

When I came to Al-Anon—as a friend of mine says, many moons ago—I remember looking at the sayings on the walls. I didn’t understand at first that they were called slogans or how to apply them to my daily life. Some were easier to try than others. At that time, I felt overwhelmed and believed I was already doing everything for everyone.

Every time I looked at “Let It Begin with Me,” I saw red and became angry. I thought, *It always begins with me*. I cook, I clean, I pay the bills, I look after the children, and on and on. I felt it was time for someone else to “Let It Begin with Me.”

My attitude toward this slogan went on for quite a while. Over time, through attending lots of meetings and listening to fellow members, my thinking began to change.

I started to see this slogan differently and thought, *Why not “Let It Begin with Me”?*

Everything has to begin somewhere. I began to feel grateful that I could choose to let it begin with me. In Al-Anon, I learned I could make small changes in how I responded, rather than waiting for others to change.

I’m healthy. I have a program to learn from. If I show compassion and love, then it may rub off on someone else. If I can step up and offer myself before being asked, it may make someone else’s life easier. All this good stuff began in my life because of my change in attitude after coming to Al-Anon meetings.

I’ve also come to believe that if I don’t take care of myself, I can’t truly help others.

In my daily life today, I try to “Let it Begin with Me” in many ways:

- Can I smile and say hello to someone at the checkout first?
- Can I pause instead of reacting to the words my spouse may say without thought?

- Can I reach out to an Al-Anon friend instead of waiting for them to call me?
- Can I take a turn doing the chores while my spouse rests?
- Can I choose to do the things that make me happy instead of thinking it's someone else's job?

Some days are easier than others. There are even moments when I wish things were different, and I remind myself how precious those everyday moments really are.

Has my way of thinking about the slogan "Let It Begin with Me" changed? Yes, completely.

It all began because I came to Al-Anon for myself and truly listened to others share their experience, strength, and hope. Is my life free of problems today? No. But when I remember this slogan when I'm having an off day, most times I can get back on track by reading Al-Anon literature or reaching out to someone in the program. What once felt like a burden is now a choice I can make each day.

My lifeline in the Al-Anon program has many good possibilities when I use the slogan, "Let It Begin with Me."

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