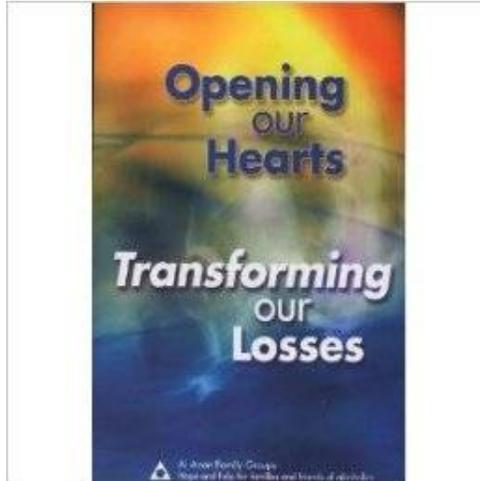


FROM YOUR AREA LITERATURE COORDINATOR

Are you struggling to come up with a meeting topic? Have you thought about using a chapter in one of our Al-Anon books?

Is your meeting suffering from low attendance? Have you thought about a short term format change? Have you thought about using one of our Al-Anon books for a book study?



Using the book Opening our Hearts Transforming our Losses for a book study in your meeting or choosing one chapter for a meeting topic:

About:

Opening our Hearts Transforming our Losses has 9 chapters. Each Chapter has three parts: 1) A chapter with multiple titled sections 2) Member sharing's and 3) Questions for reflection and mediation

One Suggested Format:

Have members read and comment on each titled chapter section, have members read and comment the members sharing's section, and then if time permits open the meeting for discussion of the questions. Do to the nature of the topic, the length of the chapters, and the size of the group it might be beneficial to extend each chapter over two separate meetings. The first meeting could be the titled sections and the second meeting could be the members sharing's and the questions.

From the Preface:

This book is an exploration of issues that concern everyone who has struggles with someone else's alcoholism. We experience loss from not having had the happy childhood we wanted, from a marriage that fell short of our hopes and dreams, or from the disappointments of other personal relationships that did not meet our expectations.

In coping with these problems, we wondered why unfortunate things were happening to us. We learned to ignore our feelings, create fantasy solutions, and minimize our problems. We assumed that somehow we were at fault—and that no one else could understand our despair. With each loss, we felt more alone and isolated.

This book helps us to acknowledge the painful reality of loss and grief. It encourages us to acknowledge sometimes hidden thoughts and fears, to recognize the truth of our feelings, and to seek solutions that ease our pain and lead us to inner peace. (Opening our Hearts Transforming our Losses, pg 1)

CHAPTER TITLES AND SECTIONS

Introduction

- Loss as a part of the family disease of alcoholism
- It's not just about death
- Physical, emotional, and spiritual symptoms of grief
- Grief and loss in the journey toward recovery
- How to use this book

Chapter One: Grief as a Process

- Admitting our grief
- The recurring nature of grief
- When an old loss revisits us
- Questioning our recovery
- Giving ourselves time to grieve
- Question 3: Am I giving myself time to grieve without worrying about how long it "should" take?

Chapter Two: Living with the Family Disease of Alcoholism

- A disease of losses
- Changing the dynamics of our relationships
- Coping with uncertainty and crisis
- Moving out of chaos
- Living with chronic illness due to alcoholism
- Anticipatory grief
- The gift of detachment
- Question 5: If there is a particular loss I fear will happen in the future, why does this potential loss attract my attention so strongly?

Chapter Three: Loss of the Dream

- Mourning what was lost, grieving what never was
- Grieving for our children
- Coming to terms with our unmet expectations
- Facing financial loss
- Loss of self-awareness
- Question 3: Am I ready to forgive myself for the mistakes I made as a parent?

Chapter Four: Grieving for Out Childhood

- Growing up with active alcoholism
- Freedom to feel
- Dealing with abuse and violence from our past
- Accepting the families we had
- Forgiving our families
- Al-Anon as family
- Question 2: What painful parts of my past do I prefer to avoid thinking about?

Chapter Five: Loss in Relationships

- Should I leave or should I stay?
- When the decision to leave is ours
- When the decision to leave is not ours
- Separation and divorce due to alcoholism
- Healing our relationships with our adult children
- Question 1: What relationship am I grieving today?

Chapter Six: Death of a Loved One

- Understanding our feelings
- Relief
- Facing a suicide or sudden death
- Unresolved issues and unfinished business
- Coping with the death of a Sponsor
- Fear of never getting over it
- Permission to move forward

Chapter Seven: Dealing with Our Feelings

- Permission to feel
- Coping with a multitude of feelings
- Numbness and denial
- Guilt and regret
- Anger
- Depression and isolation
- Why me?
- The other side of grief
- Question 3: Which feelings are most difficult for me to express?

Chapter Eight: Taking Care of Ourselves

- Defining care for ourselves
- Asking for help
- Tending to our physical, Emotional, and spiritual well-being
- Turning to our Higher Power
- How the steps can help
- Making use of the slogans
- Attending meetings
- Keep coming back
- How sponsorship can help
- Growth through service
- Reading our literature

Chapter Nine: Spiritual Growth from Grieving

- Increased self-awareness and self-esteem
- Letting go and moving on
- Reflecting on our progress
- Gratitude
- Hope for today