

## 2020 WSC ThF Fear of Change PowerPoint Slide Script

Slide 1: Title Slide

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- Change is constant.
- We change in little or big ways every day whether we want to or not.
- How can we as AI-Anon members be more receptive to changes as individuals, groups, Districts, and Areas?
- We were charged with having a thorough discussion on this topic, discussing what can be done to help members and the links of service overcome their fear of change and completing a Knowledge-Based Decision-Making (KBDM) process to determine what is currently known about this topic and what remains unknown.

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- Change has frequently been unwelcomed and accompanied by fear. Many members have found comfort in things remaining the same, sitting in the same seat every week, and having predictable routines.
- With our AI-Anon spiritual principle of rotation of service, we often feel skilled at our job just as it is time to give it up. We can be challenged again by our fears of change: Will we be competent? Will we appear foolish? Will we be with people we don't know? Will we fail or not perform well enough?
- Some members do not welcome change; some relate to change as a negative thing. Some members do not have the experience of having time and space to acclimate to change. Some members feel hopeful with change. These feelings are neither right nor wrong, good nor bad. They are part of our personality and our humanity. These feelings are part of our fellowship.
- When given time to become accustomed to the change, we are often more accepting and can even be willing to participate. Most members are grateful to have the tools of our program. Those of us who practice service in AI-Anon and work with sponsors know that we will not be alone, that help and encouragement are both freely given. Our Legacies provide guidance for all of us to support each other wherever we are.

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- In AI-Anon we discover the tools of our program. There is abundant literature and a World Service Office (WSO) Guideline for most aspects of service and the service structure. The *Service Manual* and the WSO website continue to evolve to offer assistance in understanding the fellowship and the outside world.
- Within our individual groups, Districts and Areas, there is the fellowship. We learn that we are not alone, that we do not have to work a step alone, and that our sponsor will be with us all the way. We do not have to take on a new responsibility alone—we have the benefit of service sponsorship or members who have previously held a service position and are willing to share their experience, strength, and hope (ESH). We have the ability to meet new people and reach out across barriers to find answers and gain understanding.

- Initially it is difficult to trust that others will be there for us and that we deserve assistance. Before Al-Anon many of us had become accustomed to being on our own and were inclined to avoid new opportunities as we were suspicious of the unknown. Some practical Al-Anon tools taught us that we are truly not alone: in our groups we have a call list, we have meetings all across the planet, we have literature in many languages with sharings on fear and change, and we have experienced members volunteer to be sponsors. When we use these tools, we break barriers of isolation—we are not alone.
- It's important to specifically mention the resource of our Twelve Concepts of Service. The Concepts help to ensure that service responsibility is clearly defined, that all members are heard, and decision-making is fair. They also help us to trust that other members in service will be guided by these same principles. Using the Concepts in working together gives many of us the missing piece of guidance that we have lacked all our lives—a blueprint of how to be independent yet connected, to be responsible while also trusting others, and to set aside our fear as we depend on a “power” greater than ourselves in service.

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- We know that our world is changing every minute. Technology changes more rapidly than ever before. Our culture is growing more diverse. Al-Anon long timers have a tendency to say, “That’s not the way we do it” or “We always do it that way.” Our first response to a suggestion or question can be resistance. Because we are all bombarded with so much information so much of the time, we can confuse issues in Al-Anon with the issues in the world and try to work out Al-Anon dynamics by using tools from outside our program, i.e: rules, punishments, etc.
- We have more choices today about our daily lives, and how we spend our time; we can surround ourselves with those in recovery/working their program to the best of their ability in everyday life. Although the global culture is quite diverse, we have a simple program that encourages us to better understand the spiritual part of our program/fellowship. When we "Let It Begin with Me," we can use the tools to get us through a change.
- In Al-Anon we can facilitate conversations about changes without having an outcome agenda. We do not have to approach a discussion thinking that we must have an outcome, a vote or a change. Newer members may question something that we have discussed many times and we need to take another opportunity to examine the question. There is always time for another question. When we take that time for understanding and gathering knowledge, we can more readily find a consensus that we can agree on.
- Our Traditions emphasize unity, civility, being open to others, and considering the beliefs and opinions of others without preconception. There are several tools (including the *Using Al-Anon Principles to Resolve Conflicts Kit* [K-70]) that help us apply our Traditions to the dynamics of change.

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- Fear can paralyze us—most of us share financial fears, fear of asking someone to be our Sponsor, fear of working the Steps, fear that Al-Anon will change or go away. With some Areas having fewer District Representatives than in the recent past, fear can develop that no one will step up, leaving intolerable holes in the service structure. Through recovery we have become more aware of our feelings and we now can feel the fears more intensely. Fear can become a coping mechanism—a coat of armor that is easy to slip back into.
- Fear keeps some of us from speaking up, or from doing anything until someone else encourages us. For others, fear compels us to feel we have to take care of everything. We do nothing or we do everything. Fear of failure can keep us from taking on new roles or opening up to other people. The inability to trust others to be there for us can keep us living in our own isolated world.

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Each one of us can:

- Stop to re-group with the Serenity Prayer if discussions get heated.
- Encourage people to share about their fears. Refer members to Conference Approved Literature readings on fear. Take a Step Four Inventory on fear. Encourage meeting topics on fear.
- Live our slogan “One Day at a Time” and take baby steps.
- Use the "Three Obstacles to Success" to keep track of ourselves. Talk less. Practice unity. Think before sharing. Be more courteous and thinking positively. Keep it moving.
- Reach out to a community for help and encouragement. Iron out the bugs by talking with each other and reasoning things out.
- Trust that a Power greater than ourselves is in charge and will help ‘right’ the ship if we’ve made mistakes.
- Have willingness. Know that fear is a messenger that may appear when we are approaching something that makes us uncomfortable. We each can accept that message with equanimity and look clearly at the fear. (Often when we look things in the face they disappear.) We do not have to do this alone.
- Use the Twelve Steps, Traditions, and Concepts of Service on the fear to help us to get past it. Work with a Sponsor to bounce things off of.
- Recall that change is inevitable. Nothing stays the same. Practice these principles in all our affairs.
- Listen with attention while keeping an open mind. Place principles above personalities and focus on spiritual principles. Presume goodwill on the part of others. Be willing to take the time necessary to allow conversations and discussions to evolve. Be willing to help create a culture of trust within our fellowship—trust ourselves and others, including our trusted servants.
- Practice Step Eleven: focus on strengthening our relationship with our own Higher Power. Remember that this relationship will be the foundation of whatever perspective we bring to a situation that may include change. Be flexible in our meeting structures (District, Area and WSC) to allow for workshops, small group discussions, and skits to address our fears in loving ways. Keep in the forefront Recovery, Unity, Service—our three Legacies.

- Practice humility. Our Higher Power often speaks through others. Practice open communication. Take personal responsibility. Mind our own behavior. Study and use the tools of Awareness, Acceptance and Action. Use “I” statements when sharing and keep the focus on ourselves. “Let Go and Let God.”

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Pros: When we make these changes, we know that:

- Working the Steps keeps us focused on personal growth. we remain united in our purpose and our direction. We have all the tools at hand. Solutions do not involve something to which we do not have access.
- When we address a fear, we can also gain a new skill. Reaching out to others who have had a similar situation lessens fear. it is helpful to be honest and remember the unity of our Traditions. It is okay to be afraid. It is helpful to hear others share. We will want to stay out of judgment and trying to make people agree with us because everyone works the program under different circumstances and in a different way. Sometimes we forget to place principles above our own personality. Sometimes we can come up with solutions based on our own skill set and others are not familiar—it's a challenge to allow each person to participate (and change) as they need to. Time takes time.
- We can let it begin with me: if we lose touch with our program, we can lapse into fear and be overwhelmed.

Cons: We need to remember that:

- It can be tempting to give a very practical and logical explanation for what I fear, and that could sound very reasonable. But it doesn't address the real reason for our resistance: Fear. This often leads us to find solutions outside of spiritual principles. We can get hooked into others concerns or fears instead of prayerfully considering our own viewpoint is a choice. We can be critical of others' pace of adapting to change, and in the interest of time squash the minority voice. We can forget what works.
- We may be unaware we had any fear for a long time because it was covered up with anger. Becoming vulnerable can feel uncomfortable and we may not always be willing to listen. We can feel more comfortable “not” sharing, but we can't grow and change without sharing.
- Getting caught up in fears can give ourselves and others an excuse to stay put. Longtime members can have a hard time with new ways of doing things.

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- Creating time to discuss, share and work things out and avoid double-headed management; sometimes we forget to look at our long-held habits of service and think we always have to do the same thing over and over. We can avoid frustration by staying focused on Spiritual Principles and our Traditions.
- Using our slogans can remind us to be aware of the implications of our choices: Let Go & Let God. Trusting that no matter how it goes, the outcome will be okay. "Easy Does It." We don't have to make all the decisions right this minute. "One Day at a Time." "How Important Is It?"

- When we use the Serenity Prayer, it sets the tone for using spiritual principles. And we can trust each other to be consistent with these as we move forward. Honesty is key. We can avoid providing rational, logical explanations due to our underlying fear.
- We can remember to pause.

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These are just some of the principles we used during this Thought Force, and we believe this is a list we can keep adding to as we approach the conversations about Fear of Change.

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Here are some questions to consider for our discussion on Fear of Change.

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Thank you!