

What if I'm not ready to go to a meeting?

There are a variety of reasons why people are reluctant to attend their first meeting.

Foremost among these reasons: they're so deeply engaged in trying to cope with a stressful situation that it's hard to break away from engrained patterns of behavior.

On the one hand, we know that any possible solution is likely to be found somewhere we haven't looked yet. But on the other hand, it can be worrisome to try something that seems to be entirely new.

Many AI-Anon members struggled for many years with the difficult challenges of coping with the effects of alcoholism. It's often easier to envision continued difficulties than a positive solution. That's why it's easy to think of so many reasons not to attend a meeting.

If you feel anxiety about attending an AI-Anon meeting, you're not alone. Many people have felt that way. But overcoming that reluctance is an opportunity for personal growth, the first of many that the AI-Anon program offers. It's the first step on your road to recovery.

Don't worry about whether or not you want to become a "member." Just visit a variety of different meetings to gather information—to hear how the people there handle their issues with problem drinkers. It may be that some of their experiences will be helpful to you.

[Here's what one first-time visitor experienced.](#)

I went to my first AI-Anon meeting expecting to learn how to get my significant other to stop drinking. At the meeting, I found several "older women" who hadn't lived with active alcoholism for 15 or 20 years. I immediately thought I was in the wrong room because I was living with active drinking and adolescents.

As they went around the group introducing themselves, several said, "I have been a grateful member of AI-Anon for more than 20 years." My first thought was, "Don't they get it yet? Why are they still here?"

I soon realized that though we had different backgrounds, we had all been affected by someone else's drinking. It was the one place I found that I could share my stories and not be judged or told what to do. Someone always said, "Oh yeah, when I did that..."

Now that I am one of the "older women" and have been a grateful member for ten years, I can say that I did "get it"—that's why I'm still here!

There are no dues or membership fees. AI-Anon is supported by members' contributions, which are entirely voluntary. Each group has expenses—rent and literature, for example—and each group is self-supporting.

AI-Anon has no membership list, and does not take attendance. You're welcome to attend as frequently or infrequently as you choose. There is never any obligation. You can choose to share your full name or not.