

## As an outsider, I couldn't figure out Al-Anon members

The first time I witnessed the joy Al-Anon brought to people's lives I had no idea who these people were. I was waiting tables in a small restaurant. Almost every Saturday a table of about six to ten people would come in shortly after noon. I was usually the one who waited on them.

The rest of the staff and I could never figure out the connection these people had. What brought these people together? How did they form this obviously strong and wonderful bond?

They came from every walk of life. They were a group so eclectic there seemed to be no common thread, except the laughter. They obviously weren't related. It didn't seem like they worked together. We were stumped.

Roughly two years later I was a mess. I no longer felt sane, happy, or even like a human being. I didn't want to kill myself but I didn't want to live either. My life had become so strange.

I loved my alcoholic more than life itself. We had even talked of marriage. There were amazing, wonderful times.

But as great as those times were, there were equally dark and hard times. It was the worst behavior I had ever witnessed—and I contributed to it!

When he went off to rehab, I could take no more. I had nothing left. My entire life was in pieces, even the parts that seemingly had nothing to do with him.

His mother had suggested I attend Al-Anon a few months prior. I had gone to a few A.A. meetings with him during a short stint of sobriety but never Al-Anon. I knew his parents attended Al-Anon, but I was convinced I could do it on my own. The fact that they had been struggling with this family disease for more than 10 years should have been my first clue ....

I was completely desperate when I walked into an Al-Anon meeting. As soon as I stepped into the room, I recognized everyone from my regular Saturday table.

As I went to more meetings I saw the rest of the Saturday regulars and began to understand their bond and the laughter. It all made sense.

Now, just a few months after that first meeting, I go to lunch with this group—which is now my home group. We frequent my old work place often. As I laugh with them, I spot some of my old co-workers looking at us with even more curiosity since I've joined the Saturday regulars.

By Lena  
The Forum, April 2009

© Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. 2008. All Rights Reserved.