

## Finding the right Al-Anon meeting

My husband had been working in Mississippi (or so I thought) while I was living and working in Florida. I knew that he was an alcoholic and suspected he had also become addicted to prescription pain killers. He called my work one day to say he had quit his job and was checking himself into a rehab program. I was stunned yet happy, and relieved. Little did I know that was just the beginning.

Each time he called home, I learned of another unknown fact of his life. He hadn't worked in months, had been involved with another woman, and there was a new credit card charged to the \$20,000 limit. My world was closing in on me fast.

When I went to the rehab center for family day, my husband's counselor encouraged me to find an Al-Anon group. And she added, "Make sure you find a group that you like."

I procrastinated for the first few weeks that my husband was in treatment. I was feeling very alone, ashamed, and overwhelmed. He was surrounded by counselors and support from other alcoholics. I kept thinking, "What about me?"

I finally took the plunge and found a meeting. I didn't feel very welcomed, and the topic of the meeting was service. As each person shared how they had been volunteers, helpers, officers, it was difficult for me to relate. How can I be in service when my world is crumbling around me?

I felt very discouraged. But, I remembered what the counselor had said about finding a meeting I liked. So, I tried another meeting. As soon as I walked in, I was greeted with such care and love. I felt like they understood. I had found a meeting I liked.

I haven't missed a meeting since that first one. There is a peace that comes over me during that hour of sharing. When I share my struggles—my husband is still drinking—the other members listen and I know they understand.

Last week, as I traveled to my meeting, I realized that the members of my group are virtual strangers to me. I only know their first names and only see them for one hour each week. And yet, I have shared some very intimate details of my life with them. I have grown to care about and love them.

By Maria B., Florida  
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