

## Suicidal—because my attempts to control failed

I came to Al-Anon as the 48-year-old adopted daughter and only child of a loving but alcoholic mother. She died when I was ten years old. I grew up with a loving but controlling father, whose alcoholism got worse as he got older and suffered dementia.

From the age of five on, with Mum drunk (or in rehab) and Dad at work, I took on the excessive responsibility for my own welfare, for Mum's welfare, and for Dad's serenity since I dared not upset him further.

As I grew up, I progressed from "people pleasing" into "black and white" thinking. I was self-righteous because I thought I knew best. I judged those who deviated from my tried-and-tested right and wrong rules. I tried to control everything and fix everyone's problems, for their own well-being. I was God in my little part of the world—attempting to run the whole show.

I had always believed in God but He had big problems with the starving millions in Ethiopia, etc... He was way too busy for my daily problems. I was also familiar with the Serenity Prayer but I thought it was for weak people. It didn't apply to me since there was nothing that I couldn't change and I had plenty of courage to change everything.

I arrived at Al-Anon exhausted, depressed, and suicidal. My supposedly controlled environment was collapsing around me. I couldn't control my husband's unacceptable behavior; my young-adult children were rejecting my black and white rules; I couldn't fix my aging father's depression; and I failed to protect my eldest daughter from a hurtful marital relationship.

My first Al-Anon meeting introduced me to the word serenity. It was like water to a man dying of thirst in the desert—an urgent need. In just twelve months, Al-Anon allowed me to experience serenity; undertake a reality check of my life and my expectations; personally appreciate and apply the Serenity Prayer; develop a "Live and Let Live" attitude; and recognize that God is my spirit and my friend who is with me 24/7. Thank you, Al-Anon.

By S.T., Australia

The Forum, December 2010

© Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. 2010. All Rights Reserved