

GAUTENG & DISTRICT OFFICE
24-Hour helpline 0861 25 26 66

Dear Loners

November 2018

What a lovely surprise to find this letter in my inbox. Thank you

I thought I was insane, crazy, and defective for staying with my husband. I believed there was something wrong with me, surely no one else would take abuse like this and still stay, still love the man responsible?

I began to doubt myself as a person, what am I doing to deserve this, why would my God punish me like this?
Why can't I just leave him and be done with him?
All these questions and so much more battled for space in my head.

I was irritable, I didn't want to be alone but I didn't want to be around people either. It was like my mind and my heart was involved in an ongoing battle. I didn't know which way to turn.

Then my husband went to Rehab and I slowly started finding myself again. After he came out he started going to AA meetings and I felt excluded, shoved aside, back into that confusion and turmoil.

My husband was seeking recovery and I was staying behind, once again he had a life where I didn't fit. Then came the shock, even though he was attending meetings he was using them as an excuse to find time to drink again. So instead of letting him go on his own, I started taking him to his meetings.

At the second meeting of the week I took him to, I was invited inside by the GR, at first I refused because this is an AA meeting, as far as I knew, I was only allowed at Open meetings. They didn't take "No" for an answer. And so my journey with AA began.

There was no Al-Anon group in our area, the last one died out years before. We started attending meetings 4 nights a week, driving to neighboring towns to attend theirs as well.

I started feeling better, about my husband, myself and my marriage. A faint light started to shine in the darkness. Where before resentment and rage filled me, compassion and understanding started to grow.

I learned more from the AAs about my husband's illness than the doctors, psychologists, psychiatrists and the Rehabs taught me.

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I began to see the struggle through the eyes of those suffering from it. Whereas before I told my husband he was making excuses, that he was full of nonsense, I began to see that the struggles was real. Not imagined. I began to see that he was not doing this to spite me, to punish me or because he didn't care about me. His drinking was not about me. His disease was real. The rift in our marriage started getting smaller as understanding and knowledge took the place of anger and resentment. Our family started to feel like a family of love again. Our healing had begun.....

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“..Sobriety brings change, but it doesn't take away all the problems. Al-Anon helps me learn that I don't have to accept the unacceptable, nor do I have to argue or convince another person that I'm innocent or right. I can begin to recognise when I am dealing with alcoholism's insanity, and I can detach. I certainly don't have to respond by doubting myself.”

Thank you for taking the time to share your first months in the fellowship.

We would love to share your experience strength and hope with other loners in the programme. New groups have opened in our area. Please visit our website, www.alanongauteng.co.za it is updated regularly with new shares, blogs and book reviews. Remember help is a phone call away.

The national website www.alanon.org.za has a new members sections with lots of interesting material. Well worth looking at both these sites.

Our banking details are: ABSA Bank, Oakdene, branch code 632 005). Current account no 1118881482.....in the name of **Al-Anon Information Service**. Please put your **name or group as a reference**.

With love in Al-Anon, Juliet

P.S. If you do not want to receive these letters send email to alanontvl@absamail.co.za with the word **unsubscribe** in the subject and we will remove your name from the distribution lists. If you know of new members who would like to receive our newsletter please let the office have the details