

I Don't Want To Hide from Life Anymore.

By - Anonymous .

Isolation is a term often associated with prisoners or individuals with infectious diseases. However, when connected with the disease of alcoholism, it took on an entirely new meaning for me. I had recently retired from a position that, over many years, gave me lots of friends and a second family. I was always outgoing and enjoyed contact with others. Despite the rewarding assets of the job, though, I was ready to retire and not be restricted by a set schedule. I never could have imagined the upheaval that would occur in our lives shortly after I retired. My husband and I discovered that our daughter was an alcoholic and well on the path to life-threatening consequences by then.

Once she entered rehab for the first time, I stopped communication with almost everyone except for the people there. I was embarrassed to say anything to my family or friends, and I knew our daughter did not want them to find out about her problems, either. My husband and I quit going anywhere except to rehab to see her. In time, she seemed to be getting better, but I was still afraid to leave home just in case there might be a phone call from her or from someone else telling us she had been in an accident or something worse. All this time, I was truly losing my sanity and driving my husband crazy. I was trying to control everything that our daughter did. I told myself that I could get her to

stop drinking if she would just listen to me, her father and her husband.

When she went into rehab for the second time, I felt sure it was my fault. I thought if I had pushed harder, she would not have needed to return. However, it proved to be the first step on the road to recovery for me, and I have my daughter to thank for that. She suggested that Al-Anon might be a good program for me, and she suggested that a book titled How Al-Anon Works for Family & Friends of Alcoholics (B-22) might explain more about it. I bought a copy and became engrossed in all that it had to say about Al-Anon and the disease of alcoholism. I started going to an Al-Anon Family Group and found loving people who understood what I was going through. They listened to me without judgment when I shared my fears and tears, and I listened and learned from their experiences, as well.

I learned in Al-Anon that I am here for my own recovery and a new understanding of myself. Our daughter is doing well these days with the help of A.A., and our relationship is better than ever. I have learned not to isolate anymore, and I let myself enjoy my life, family and friends.

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<https://www.alanon.org.za/members-newsletters/>

Better communication started with me.

By - Peter B., California .

I didn't think that growing up in a house with constant drinking had any effect on me. It wasn't until my 40s that I found Al-Anon and discovered that I had been affected and realized there were solutions. The effects of alcoholism were apparent to those around me, but I just couldn't see them. It finally took my 15-year old alcoholic stepson to get me to attend Al-Anon.

Up to that point, the only peace I found was by controlling my environment. There were no surprises, few risks, and very little growth. If I could just protect my private little corner of the world, then maybe people wouldn't notice me. I did this very well. Now that I am in recovery, I realize that I wasn't living; I was merely existing.

Being a stepparent can be difficult, but being the stepparent of an alcoholic is a real challenge. Fortunately, my wife and I attended our first Al-Anon meeting together. We still go to several meetings each week - some together, some separately. We have been able to share a life together whether the alcoholic is drinking or not. He has had several slips, but because of the Al-Anon program, we didn't have to follow him down that road.

I used to make decisions regarding the alcoholic without first speaking to my wife. I was committing her to decisions that I had

made, which showed a lack of respect. Today, neither of us makes decisions regarding the alcoholic without first checking with each other and also with our Sponsors. At first, this pause in the "crisis" irritated the alcoholic, but today he knows that my wife and I communicate. He can't play one parent against the other.

I never asked my wife to "take care of this problem," and she never told me to "butt out - he's not your son." Al-Anon has taught us to communicate with each other and even to bring the alcoholic into the conversation. To stay in harmony, we use the First Tradition, "Our common welfare should come first; personal progress for the greatest number depends upon unity."

Having a relationship while in recovery means communicating. Other people, including the alcoholic, just might have a better idea! I don't have to be right; I can "Keep an Open Mind." I can grow by listening more than speaking.

Today, I have a great relationship with my wife and my alcoholic stepson. The key was to let it begin with me. I didn't wait for them to take the first step toward better communication. I'd rather move forward and grow.

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Literature

Please contact Annalise at the office Mon - Fri between 9am and 1pm, and she will be happy to recommend Al-Anon books and pamphlets that meet your needs...

Just for today . . .

- I'll be thankful for all the people I'll never meet who do so much for me . . .
- I'll look for opportunities to give what I can . . .
- I'll slow down and notice what's around me . . .

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