

### A Glimmer of Hope.

*By - Sherri S., Oregon .*

As I drove toward the church on that warm, dusky night, I desperately hoped the meeting would be canceled or that no one else would show up. I felt the knot in my stomach tighten as I pulled into the parking lot filled with cars, dread filling my body like helium in a balloon. With ten minutes until the meeting started, I sat in my car scanning the people walking into the basement of the church and prayed I wouldn't see anyone I knew. What would they think if they saw me here? They would know. They would gossip. Then I thought of the desperate promise I had made to myself while lying on the bathroom floor the night before in tears-to give this a shot.

I got out of my car and walked into my first Al-Anon meeting feeling like a kindergartner on the first day of school. I held my head down to avoid eye contact with anyone in the room. People of all ages talked animatedly with each other while holding cups filled with coffee or hot chocolate. I quietly took a chair, hoping to make myself invisible to those around me, but the group members welcomed me. As people began to read aloud, words like peace, serenity, and hope were tossed about as if they were part of everyday

life. If these people are peaceful and hopeful, I thought, then their stories cannot be as bad as mine. My life was spiraling out of control. I sat in that chair an anxious, short tempered, sleep-deprived wife and mother, exhausted from pretending my life was as perfect as I made it appear on social media. No way was I going to share my experience with this group. I spent my days looking for hidden bottles and my sleepless nights waiting for my husband to come home, arguing, and making empty threats that the drinking would stop - or else.

As the group members shared their stories, I felt my jaw drop in disbelief. My heart began pounding, and I felt a sheen of perspiration come over me. One after another, I heard stories so similar to mine being told with compassion and even serenity. Soon the tension started to drain from my body, as I felt the years of bottled up anger and resentment being pushed aside like the dirt from a budding flower. In its place sprouted a glimmer of hope.

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**The Loners letters from all areas can be found on our website**

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

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# I Was Finally Able To Take off My Armour.

*By - Sue P., Virginia.*

Growing up in an alcoholic home, I had to figure so much out for myself. As a result, I developed an arrogant, smug belief that I had all the answers. I felt that I was the one who had to keep things together. Once I left home, I was sure that I was prepared to take on the world and vowed to myself to live differently. I put on my coat of armor, and it was going to take a miracle for me to reveal my true self to anyone - including myself.

I heard about Al-Anon during an internship I was completing for school and attended some Al-Anon and A.A. meetings as part of my assignment. My immediate thought was that my mom really needed to do this Al-Anon thing because it was clear that she was unhappy with my father's drinking. She went a few times, but did not see how Al-Anon could help her. After all, she didn't drink. She purchased one of the daily readers and felt that was enough for her.

Even though my alcoholic loved one became sober and started going to A.A., I

was more miserable than ever. My deep-seated insecurities were running amuck, and by the time I got back to Al-Anon, I didn't think I belonged because I didn't want to belong. I didn't want to see my part. Fortunately, I heard that Al-Anon was about my disease. My behavior and attitudes were making me sick and I didn't even realize it. I put everyone else first, thought I knew the answers to everyone else's problems, and justified my actions to the point that I didn't think I could change.

By listening to others share their experiences, I felt hope for myself - hope that I could risk taking off the armour, or maybe just a piece of it, to reveal the real me. Amazingly, I started to change as this loving program began to unfold in front of me. Al-Anon has helped me love and accept myself as I am, despite the family disease of alcoholism. I will "Keep Coming Back" to remind myself that I am worthy.

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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 avoid negative thoughts. . . .
- I'll stop any negative thoughts as soon as they start . . .
- I'll for today, I'll be very good to myself . . .

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