

No Longer in Anger.

By - Dylan M., New York .

Truth was hard to come by in my family. Growing up with a disabled and moody dad with chronic pain and lots of health problems was not the easiest experience for a young kid. What made it worse was that we never talked about it or admitted that it was frustrating and upsetting to live with those challenges. As a family, we pretended he was okay and did our best to seem as normal as possible to the outside world. I thought as long as no one came inside to see the wheelchair, wooden leg, crutches, and medical supplies or notice the ambulances coming late at night, no one would know that my family wasn't quite normal.

After my dad died and I was a teenager living with an alcoholic stepfather, I didn't think much had changed. By then, I was so numb to my feelings about my family that it didn't occur to me to be embarrassed about him passing out every night. As usual, the family's priority was to act as if everything was okay, so we swept his drinking under the same rug we had swept my dad's problems. I was left feeling that no one cared what I felt or thought

anyway.

When I came to Al-Anon in my mid-30s, I had a serious need to hear some truth, and I found plenty of it. People in meetings talked straight about being neglected and mistreated. They revealed their deepest secrets and talked openly about how poorly they had handled the problems caused by the alcoholics in their lives. People cried, and they laughed. Part of me felt like I had landed in heaven, and another part was terrified at the prospect of getting honest myself. One of the greatest gifts I have received from Al-Anon is learning to speak my truth - not in anger, like I did as a teen, but clearly, without apology, and without shame or guilt. In the loving presence of other members committed to honesty, I can do what my family could not - acknowledge the real story of who I am, what I am coping with, and how I am doing it. It may not be perfect, but it's real. Today, thanks to Al-Anon, I can handle that.

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

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

I Desperately Needed a Life Preserver.

By - Linda S.

A number of years ago, I finally took the step to walk into a drug and alcohol counselor's office. By the time I reached that office, it felt like I was gasping for air, drowning in a rowboat that reeled in 40-foot swells. I desperately needed a life preserver. I was exhausted and wanted to fix someone else's drinking problem. I also wanted to get the knots out of my stomach and the fear out of my life. I had tried everything I could think of. I was pretty sure even then that it was a disease, not a poor moral choice. I didn't like how this bear of a disease was affecting me. It was ripping apart everything good and hopeful in the script I had written for my life.

A few minutes into the session, the counselor asked me why I was there. I didn't want to sound like I was completely uninformed about the disease of alcoholism. So, I answered by saying, "I want to figure out how to

navigate better in the midst of active alcoholism." I didn't come right out and say I wanted to fix someone else, although it was true. Instead, I said that I wanted to fix me.

I remember the smile and compassion of that professional. I felt safe. I'm sure now as I look back that the person had probably heard others like me frame their reason for coming in a similar way. And then I heard what I had hoped to hear: "I am glad to see you, glad to help you, and to help you learn new thinking and actions so that you can begin to recover. I will also ask you to attend Al-Anon." So, I did that - I trusted and joined Al-Anon - shaking and full of fear. I will be forever grateful.

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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 pay attention to my health and eating. . . .
- I'll appreciate the children in my life. . .
- I'll focus on compassion instead of judgment. . . .

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