

Growing Again as an Adult Child of an Alcoholic.

By - Claire R., Associate Director—Public Outreach Professionals .

I had been attending Al-Anon for over a decade when my relationship with my father imploded. I started thinking of my father as an alcoholic, even though I never saw him drunk or passed out. My recognition of his evening and weekend drinking patterns reminded me that it doesn't matter when, what, or how much the alcoholic drinks. As a newcomer or as a member, I only need to identify that someone's drinking bothers me.

So, I added Al-Anon adult children meetings to my usual Al-Anon meetings. I went to a therapist and to a family recovery program at a treatment facility. I read our Conference Approved Literature about adult children of alcoholics. My old approach wasn't working. So, I relearned the lesson that there are no short cuts or fast tracks to recovery. It is a process to walk through the basics of the program again, and it took courage to face the past and additional defects within myself.

I thought I found a healing comfort zone in my family history. Then, I learned my [deceased father's deep secret - I have a half-sister. I try to think of her and her family as a gift from both my father and

my Higher Power. It has led me to a refresher course in the basics of Al-Anon. It isn't easy to do more footwork, so I can rediscover the positive feelings and love I have for my father. I am open about it at meetings. I share my feelings about my new family with my Sponsor and close Al-Anon friends. I find renewed comfort in two of our books—From Survival to Recovery: Growing Up in an Alcoholic Home (B-21) and Hope for Today (B-27). I also find comfort in discussions with someone I sponsor. She, too, is an adult child of an alcoholic. I can share how the program works for me, which helps me to help myself and others to recover from the impact of alcoholism on my life.

This month has a holiday focused on love. There are many teenagers and adult children of alcoholics who feel unloved and alone. I read many painful stories that are posted on social media pages. The very least I can do is refer them to the Al-Anon website meeting locator at al-anon.org and to offer Al-Anon's message of hope and healing to them.

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

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

A Spark of Light.

By - Anonymous .

When I entered the rooms of Al-Anon years ago I felt like a frightened little girl. I gathered the courage to walk into the rooms by first listening to Al-Anon podcasts where people shared their experience, strength, and hope through working the program. It was in listening to others share about their lives and struggles living with the disease of alcoholism that I heard my story told repeatedly. I gained an understanding of how a meeting would feel and thought this program might help me. At the very least, it would give me some-where to voice my hurts, resentments, anger, and deep confusion about where I found myself today. A spark of light, of promise, and hope was lit for me.

I will always remember how I felt sitting and listening to others sharing that first night. My mind was racing with millions of thoughts streaming through it and my heart felt so broken. In being able to share about my struggles, I felt a sense of lightness from my burdens. The members there offered affirming nods, which let me know that they understood—how comforting and en-

couraging that was! One of the constant things I shared in the early days of Al-Anon was how confused I was about how this program was going to help me. People gently suggested that I “Keep Coming Back,” but I had no idea what that meant and initially found it very irritating. But I had not found the answers to my misery on my own, so I kept returning to meetings. I began to open my mind to a new way of thinking and behaving. I realized I had choices; they may not have been easy ones, but I had the freedom to choose.

I have gained many wonderful, supportive, and loving friends through my Al-Anon program. When in doubt and when I’m hurting, I know they are just one call or email away. When the going gets tough, they are the ones who can feed my soul and bring joy and a bright spark of hope into my life .

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Literature

Please contact Gail 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 notice and wonder at the world around me . . .
- I’ll let bygones be bygones . . .
- I’ll try not to control the lives and actions of others . . .

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