

I Was Finally Able to Choose.

By - Beth C., Virginia.

When I walked into my first Al-Anon meeting, I was convinced that I had no choices about anything. I was convinced I was destined to be stuck taking care of everyone else and that love meant putting everyone else's needs above my own. I was there that night because my spouse had finally hit bottom and made the decision to get help for himself. By the grace of God, I, too, somehow realized that I needed help. I had become so numb to my own emotional and spiritual needs that I felt like I merely existed. I wasn't really living, and I sure didn't know how to feel anything at all anymore.

On that first night, I wasn't afraid going to the meeting. I wasn't afraid of sharing my story. What I was most afraid about was the thought that I would never be able to feel anything again. I wanted to be able to laugh, love, grieve, get angry. I had been stuffing my feelings for so long that I was fearful I wouldn't be able to turn them back on. And, when and if I did turn them back on, how painful would it be? How would I survive that process?

Of all the things I have learned so far on this journey, the most powerful for me has been the realization that I have choices and that other people in my life have their own choices. I may be powerless over the disease of alcoholism, but I am not powerless over the choices I can make for myself with the love and guidance of my group, Sponsor, and Higher Power. I am not able to nor should I try to make choices for the other people in my life.

I found the experience, strength and hope I needed in that room that night and every night since then. As I listened to others talk about their experiences and feelings, I realized that part of the program included learning to feel and be present with those feelings. I was shocked to hear that I am both "worthy of love and loving." I was surprised to begin to see that there was a way forward and people there to support and guide me. And, most importantly, I was grateful to see that I have choices.

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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 for Service.

By - Marsha W., Director of Programs.

Before starting out in Al-Anon as a volunteer in service, I occasionally would hear terms that were unfamiliar to me, such as District, Area, or Area World Service Committee (AWSC). I was told that these meetings were part of Al-Anon's links of service. During that time, I had just become comfortable with attending my group meetings, and I had no idea what these other meetings were all about. I was focused only on my recovery.

One day I asked someone to share what the focus was for these other meetings, and I was told that they were a part of our service structure-an opportunity for our links of service to come together. I also came to understand that service is a demonstration of our Twelve Traditions and Concepts of Service in action. My curiosity was ignited, and when I later became involved in service, I felt the excitement and spark for service.

When I started working for the World Service Office, part of my role was working with Al-Anon internationally. Within this diverse community of languages and cultures, I learned that, just like I received that opportunity within my community, it was exciting to see that spark ignite in members from around the world, too. After all, Al-Anon is a worldwide fellowship. I saw that enthusiasm indicated that a spark for service has no boundaries.

As our fellowship expands and grows on many platforms and in many places, it is so important for members to keep that spark of service alive. By inviting someone to a District, Area, or AWSC meeting, we will not only keep the spark for service alive, but we will most likely help ignite that same spark in others, too!

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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 focus on appreciating those who contribute so much to my life . . .
- I'll focus take care of my health . . .
- I'll focus keep my thoughts positive . . .

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