

## I Have an Amazing Life.

*By - Anonymous .*

I had recently separated from my husband. He had a drinking problem that I was trying to ignore. A couple of my close friends knew some of what was happening at my house. A few months before my husband and I separated, one of my friends strongly encouraged me to go to Al-Anon. I was in complete denial and didn't want to add another thing to deal with to my crazy life.

A couple of months after we separated, I finally attended my first meeting. I went because I feared for my kids' safety while they were at their dad's, and it was almost too much to bear. My fear for their safety was now greater than my shame and fear of admitting that my husband had a drinking problem. I remember shaking when going to my first meeting, my second meeting, and my third meeting. I could barely read the Twelve Steps. I was still afraid of facing the reality of the situation I had lived with for several years, as well as the new situation of making sure my kids were okay when they were under their dad's care.

Why did I originally come? Initially it was hard to do, but I had tried everything else. I wanted to find the serenity that I sensed in the people at the meetings. I learned that I was there for me, that I did not cause my husband to drink,

and that I was not responsible for him or his actions. The word "love" was mentioned several times. I wanted that and peace.

Why do I continue to come back? I realized that Al-Anon has been one of the best gifts I have been given in my life. Living with the disease of alcoholism had taken away almost everything in my life - my confidence, my security, and my trust in almost everything and everyone. Working the Al-Anon program helped to build myself back up and gave me so much more than I ever thought possible. Even though I still deal with many of the day-to-day effects of alcoholism on myself and my kids, I have an amazing life beyond anything I had ever dreamed. I am now living life, dealing with the tough stuff, and enjoying the wonderful things that life has to offer.

I have been in Al-Anon for three years. I keep coming back for so many reasons, but the most important to me is that I am a better, more fulfilled person than I was yesterday, and I see how the next day will be better than the day before for the rest of my life while I continue to participate in all that Al-Anon has to offer me.

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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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# My Sigh of Relief.

By - Arlene W., Rhode Island.

In the 20 years of living with active alcoholism, my view of people and situations in my life had become severely distorted. I was plagued by guilt because I knew life was a gift to be celebrated, but I often just wanted to die. I could not cope with the pain in my own heart, or in the lives of those I loved. I had no boundaries either, hence, anyone and everyone's pain became mine! How could this "beautiful life" be so hard and how could it ever be "beautiful" if there seemed to be no end to my problems?

I was persistently urged by my counselor to attend Al-Anon; advice I sadly resisted for years. I felt I was already "working hard enough" in our sessions, reading every book she suggested, and "doing the right thing" in all areas of my life. "Why should I have to do more work?" I would sorely ask. I completely misunderstood what gifts Al-Anon would give me if I only let go of my pride and followed her sound advice!

The most ironic thing is that I did not grow up with active alcoholism. My stepfather was the adult child of two alcoholics. Apparently, the damage he suffered was enough to carry aspects of the disease into our home. Apart from drinking, there was still a high level of dysfunction growing up. I moved out at 18; moving never solves anything, and my personal affliction continued to escalate as I dated one addict after another. My sister married an alcoholic and my brother's wife is the adult

child of one. We all arrived in the same spot, even though the active disease had skipped a generation.

I decided to try Al-Anon when a feud between my mom and sister drove me to a near nervous breakdown; their refusal to speak to one another felt intolerable to me! I finally heard the message that Al-Anon was about me, not the other people in my life, and would help me identify the things inside myself that prevented me from coping with life as it unfolded. Al-Anon would help me to see where I was inserting myself into situations that did not involve me, and where my true attention should be directed - towards those things that did.

Since joining this fellowship, I have healed and grown. I not only can cope, but also truly enjoy life, even though serious problems continue to present themselves in my family of origin and my marriage to an active alcoholic. Because of the incredible wisdom and power of the Al-Anon fellowship, I am mostly calm, secure, and dare I say, happy - even amidst the ongoing chaos. Can you hear my sigh of relief from where you are? My body and soul are finally at ease, and a gentle, relaxed smile is on my face where once there was only a deep and angry frown. Thank you, Al-Anon.

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## Literature

Please contact the office Mon - Fri between 9am and 1pm, and they 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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