

Loving My Alcoholic Sister - and Myself.

By - Tracy .

My sister Kris is 18 months older than I am and was truly my best friend throughout childhood. We grew up in the country and built forts, played kicked the can, went sledding until our cheeks were rosy, set up our Barbie neighborhood on the ping-pong table, caught tadpoles and fireflies, and played for hours and hours on the big swing. Oh, how we loved the big swing. When we had a neighborhood parade, Kris insisted I be the queen who got to ride on a chair in the red wagon. I felt so special. For Junior Prom, Kris carefully applied my makeup and did my hair. What fond memories. After her high school graduation, Kris moved away. My heart sank as she pulled out of the driveway in her loaded car.

Over the last decade or so, Kris's drinking has escalated. In 2015, she got her first DWI. Her husband called and said she was in jail. Shocked and crying, I met Kris's husband and my younger sister at her house to try and figure out next steps. Kris went to her first rehab and proudly told me about accepting her coins at Alcoholics Anonymous meetings. Sadly, her sobriety was short-lived. She has been in five rehabs since, wrecked a few cars, skirted jail time, and has challenging relationships with her children. Meanwhile, I prayed for Kris. I cried a lot and had no idea what to do. I went to a few Al-Anon meetings at first, but I guess I wasn't ready.

Finally, in April 2020, I contacted my church to ask for guidance and prayers for my sister. The woman I talked to suggested I try Al-Anon and emailed me

a list of meetings. This time, Al-Anon changed my life. When I heard, "I didn't cause it, I can't control it, and I can't cure it," I thought the Liberty Bell had clobbered me over the head! The comfort I now feel, the knowledge I've gained, and the love I've experienced is inconceivable. Al-Anon has become my place of solace.

I share at most meetings and listen intently to the stories and lessons others share from their experience. I have a Sponsor and recently finished Step Five. Yesterday, I skipped a networking event for my new business to attend my weekly meeting because I needed to be grounded and work my program. Who knew working the Steps would be so rewarding?

Today I am at peace and taking care of myself. I work the program by taking time for daily readings, talking with others, listening to recovery podcasts, and attending meetings. I even chaired a meeting for the first time on my one-year Al-Anon anniversary. The program works when I work at it.

I love my sister unconditionally. Today, I pray she will have a sober day. Although our relationship has changed, my sister will always be my best friend.

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

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

Letting Go of My Children and Grandchild.

By - P. H.

I have been deeply affected by my children's drinking and the effect it has had on my grandchild. I have felt an emotional death in my soul which has brought me to a new dependency on a Power greater than myself.

Step One was a long and difficult step for me. Giving up my sense of power and control was a long, slow, painful death. The overwhelming heartache still continues today as I surrender my children and grandchild to the God of my understanding. Daily, I surrender the jumble of feelings of embarrassment, shame, anger, sadness, the gripping fear of loss, needless responsibility for others, secrecy, and denial. I surrender feeling like a failure and my jealousy of others who appear to have achieved the success I felt I deserved. I surrender my need to make myself feel better and more in control by putting others down.

Working the Twelve Steps of Al-Anon has helped me realize that my happiness, success, safety, and self-esteem do not depend on what another person does or does not do. This old way of thinking kept me from my real source of power, and it led me to Step Two, in which God is restoring me to sanity. I was insane and living in a

false belief system. In Al-Anon, I learned that I am not alone in these feelings. Other people also lived in fear, but found, through the program, hope and strength to live a new life. The pain I have felt is being transformed into awareness and acceptance.

I am certainly not perfect at living in peace. I realize it took years for me to develop this false sense of power and security, and I have to work daily at letting it go and accepting that my Higher Power is doing for me what I cannot do for myself. I rely on the strength of my friends in Al-Anon, who have struggled like I have and yet made choices for themselves that led to new ways of living.

I repeat the slogans, pray the Serenity Prayer, read my literature, call my Sponsor, and value myself enough to know I am worthy of love, respect, and joy in my life. My children and grandchild also deserve this, and with the help of their Higher Power, I trust they will discover their true selves and find contentment. I believe my greatest gift to my children and grandchild is to "Let Go and Let God."

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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 not get caught up in negative thoughts . . .
- I'll be responsible with my finances . . .
- I'll remember that patience is important in life . . .

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