

Beauty Inside and Out.

By - Laura D., Nevada

Recently, I was preparing to move to a new state and had to decide what to keep and what to donate to charity. I had some old beds in storage that had not been used since I was a teenager in my alcoholic home. I decided I would use these beds in my new home, and I began to fix them up for use in a new place.

As I was cleaning and shining the parts of the bed frames, a certain joy came to me. Recovering the beauty of those beds reminded me of how Al-Anon has recovered the beauty that was hidden inside of me. As a child of an alcoholic mother, I grew up in a traumatic environment full of yelling, financial difficulties, criticism, and judgement that left me full of shame. My response while growing up was to try to be perfect and to never ask for anything. With friends and neighbors, I tried to hide my shame and never show my hurt or confusion. It was a dishonest life where it was safer not to share my real self.

I have been a member of the Al-Anon program for many years and have uncovered many of my unhealthy responses to living with an alcoholic. I have

also learned that alcoholism is a disease that cannot be cured by my wishing or hoping, or by my hating the person with the disease. I found that sharing my truth in Al-Anon meetings was safe and healing. Working with a Sponsor taught me many important lessons. I learned that an alcoholic's behavior was not my fault. I also learned that a Higher Power exists for me, and forgives me for the misguided behaviors of my past that harmed myself or others. Today I feel free of shame. It has been replaced with compassion and even love for a mother who was just doing the best she could with a terrible disease. I have learned to live and create my own life.

Now those lovely beds have a second life in a home with recovery. They look beautiful. I am older now, but inside I feel beautiful too. Making the choice to attend Al-Anon was the most rewarding thing I have done in my life. I plan to be a member forever.

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

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

The Courage to Grow. *By - Wendee S., Washington .*

When I entered the Al-Anon rooms for the first time, I was in deep despair. My adult daughter's drinking was out of control. She was living with us, so her drinking affected my husband and I daily. I thought Al-Anon would show me the path to cure her! I soon learned that is not the way Al-Anon works. The program is designed to help me focus on my own recovery. I also learned that I didn't cause the disease, I couldn't control the disease, and I couldn't cure my daughter's disease. This knowledge was such a relief to me once I heard it, and then I accepted the truth and wisdom of these words in my mind and heart.

As I recovered, I also learned that there were other people in my past that had the disease of alcoholism, such as my ex-husband and my father. Both of these men affected my life profoundly, and both are no longer on earth. I learned that what I experienced living with them - walking on eggshells, people-pleasing, and keeping my head down to shield me from their verbal assaults - reverberated throughout all my present relationships. I had become invisible, and I had lost my voice and my path to living life fully.

By applying Al-Anon's Twelve Steps, working with a loving Sponsor, attending meetings, and reading Al-Anon literature, I learned to live "One Day at a Time," and to even find peace and joy. I was able to get reacquainted with myself and discover the many assets and faults I possess. Finding out these things about myself gave me the courage to grow and change, laugh at myself, and reach out to other people who were hurting because of their loved one's alcoholism.

I'm grateful to my loved ones, for their disease has led me to the path of Al-Anon. I'm also thankful for that fateful, sleepless night that led me to find an online Al-Anon meeting in my community! When I began attending meetings, someone always encouraged me to "Keep Coming Back" and to attend at least six times before I made a decision to stay or leave. Although I don't know where my daughter is with her recovery, I have learned to detach with love knowing that I am on the right path for myself .

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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 focus on appreciating those who contribute so much to my life . . .
- I'll remember that patience is important in life . . .
- I'll focus on appreciating those who contribute so much to my life . . .

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