

Still Learning and Growing.

By - Elizabeth N., North Carolina

I attended my first Al-Anon meeting in Harare, Zimbabwe, in 1979. Since then, the program has sustained me through many crises, including the suicide of my son at age 18 in 1994 and the death of my husband two months later in a car accident, caused by his intoxication.

When I entered that Al-Anon room for the first time, my life was centered around my alcoholic husband and two young children. My misery, fear, and despair were profound. I hoped the woman sitting in the room would tell me how to stop my husband's drinking and create a happy life for my children. She couldn't do that, but that meeting did set me on a path that restored me to sanity. Our family's move to the United States in 1990 brought me into contact with the woman who became my Sponsor. Working the Steps with her, I began to grow and recover.

Journaling was (and still is) a tool that helped me gain awareness of my emotions and myself. Looking through some old writing recently, I remembered how, in 1992, my husband Andy had told me of his attraction to another woman. I felt a lot of hurt, rejection, and sadness about this, but thanks to Al-Anon, I recognized it as a manifestation of his disease. I was particularly struck by this journal entry, from July 24, 1992:

"I cannot make Andy love me. All I can do is accept him as he is. His lack of love for me, which hurts, is not something he is deliberately

doing. I need to become more fully myself, to enhance and develop my own talents. I am strong. I can inspire and generate new ideas. I can be accepting, loving, giving, and empathetic. I can be fully me, with or without Andy's love and approval."

With the love, encouragement, and example of people in the program, I went back to school and got a degree that enabled me to be fully self-supporting after my husband died.

I have heard that we attract people with the same level of recovery and maturity that we ourselves have. In 1999, I met a man with whom I found great happiness. We had 16 wonderful years together before he passed away in 2016.

Al-Anon encouraged me to "Live and Let Live." I found activities that energized me and gave me joy. I continue to attend meetings and share my experience, strength, and hope. The only way I can repay in some small measure the incredible gifts that this program has given me is by showing up at meetings and passing on the wisdom that was shared with me. I find tremendous joy in seeing others move beyond their pain and begin to grow and heal as I did. I am still learning and growing in the program because Al-Anon works when I live it.

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

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

In a Safe Place.

By - Dana S., Illinois .

I have not missed the irony that the same place where I dropped my daughter off for preschool 14 years ago is now the place where I attend Al-Anon meetings because of her drinking. I remember the first day I dropped her off at preschool. She was sobbing uncontrollably, and it pained me to leave her that way. I called my mom, crying. "I'm not sure why I am crying too," I said. She told me it was because I was entrusting my child to someone else's care.

My daughter cried every day at preschool drop-off for the first month. Leaving her that way was such a difficult thing to do, but I knew it was essential to her learning and growth. I also knew she was in a safe place. Eventually the tears stopped - both hers and mine -

and instead of feeling the anguish of leaving her, I witnessed the excitement she had when I came to pick her up and she understood that I would always be waiting for her with open arms.

We are in a similar process now. It pains me to see her in her current condition, but I am entrusting her to my Higher Power's care. I know that it is essential, not only to her learning and growth, but also to mine. When she is ready and wants my help, I will be waiting for her with open arms. In the meantime, I will continue to attend Al-Anon meetings in the same building where my daughter went to preschool, because I know I am in a safe place.

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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 remember those who came before us who helped to better the world for us . . .
- I remember to turn off my cell phone and enjoy a bit of solitude . . .
- I'll practice giving the benefit of the doubt . . .
- I'll keep in mind that what I do this day can affect me and others for many days to come . . .

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