

Others' Alcoholism Affected Me Too.

By - Rosemary B., Arizona

As a newcomer to Al-Anon, it took several months before I could share the most painful parts of my past - the things that had happened to me and the mistakes I had made.

Growing up in an alcoholic home, I learned to stuff my feelings, to isolate, and to shut down emotionally. Those were the ways I learned to survive. I didn't want to feel those feelings. Guilt, shame, and self-doubt played equal parts in thrashing my happiness, triggering my unease, and sabotaging my capacity to love myself.

Working and practicing the Steps allowed me to see some harsh realities that I needed to accept in order to move on. I learned that I had just as cunning, baffling, and powerful a disease as the problem drinkers in my life. I hid. I pretended. I lied to myself over and over again.

In meetings, others suggested I keep coming back. I heard phrases like

“Don't leave before you get your miracle,” and “It works if you work it.” I found these suggestions inspiring, and so I kept coming back. By choosing to be honest, open-minded, and willing, I discovered that Al-Anon's spiritual principles continually help me to accept, to forgive, and to love myself and others - to be the best version of myself that I can be.

Because of practicing this beautiful way of life, I now know there is strength in being vulnerable and that tears are brave, beautiful, and healing. Sharing my story has put me on a path to inner peace and contentment, as well as continued spiritual growth. Today, I choose to live emotionally healthy, happy, and free.

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

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

The Sound of Silence.

By - Jennifer S., Michigan .

There have been times in my life when silence has been healing for me. Moments spent in meditation, reading a book, or observing nature help turn off the noise of my rapid thoughts and provide me with peace. Growing up in an alcoholic home, I prayed for silence from the angry yelling, swearing, and loud music that often echoed throughout the house. When all became quiet, I knew it was time to lay my worries to rest on my pillow.

There were also times, though, when the silence in my life could be destructive. Silence was my punishment whenever I tried to verbally share my feelings. This silence was louder than any yelling, swearing, or loud music. A turned back or a dirty look was a common response to my pleas for the drinking to stop. All the anxiety, frustration, and loneliness that was building on the inside had nowhere to go. I learned to stop expressing my emotions and instead began to hold them in until they all came bursting out in waves of anger. I learned

to try and drink my pain away with alcohol, and by the age of 15, I, too, had a drinking problem. Yet still, in my home, my problem was not acknowledged. Again, silence.

By the time I reached the legal drinking age of 21, I had quit drinking and found new, healthy ways to cope. I knew nobody at home was going to help me with my problem, and therefore, I had to "Let It Begin with Me." Decades later, with one parent deceased and the other still drinking, I found that teenage girl who was full of anxiety, frustration, and loneliness resurfacing. I reached out to a local Al-Anon family group and, for the first time, found support among people who understood what I was going through. With a simple response of "Thank you," my feelings were safe and validated. I can trust that whenever I walk into an Al-Anon meeting, the emotions I express will be heard and will never be silenced.

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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 the value of prayer . . .
- I'll be thankful for my ability to see and to read words . . .
- I'll be thankful for the energy the sun sends our way . . .
- I'll remember that there's nothing wrong with singing aloud . . .

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