

This Must Be Serenity!

By - Amy T., North Carolina .

From as far back as I can remember, I lived with constant anxiety. As a person affected by the family disease of alcoholism, I worried about everything and lived in a constant state of fear. I chewed my fingernails. I had eczema. I had a bleeding stomach ulcer by the time I was in second grade. When I was 15 years old, I finally had a complete breakdown and ended up in a mental hospital for two months.

My life went out of control and eventually crashed. Through my therapist, I was led to Al-Anon. When I walked into my first meeting, I knew that I was “home” with other people who understood and accepted me. I remember many times when members told me, “We will love you until you learn to love yourself.” I felt cradled in their love.

As I worked the Steps with a Sponsor, little by little I found my life beginning to turn around. I vividly remember the day I first felt serenity. I was standing in my living room all by myself, and a feeling of peace washed over me.

Surprised, I said to myself, “This must be serenity!” I had never felt it before in my life. My very next thought was, “Now how do I keep this?!”

The feeling of serenity was all kinds of delicious! Like a beautiful sunset, the best dessert, a symphony, and the beach all rolled into one. Since that day, I have continued my journey in Al-Anon and discovered that, in fact, I can continue to live every single day in serenity. It feels as if I have awakened from a long, dark confinement in a prison of fear and anxiety and emerged into a bright day of joy and light. Some days I am so happy and joyful, I feel like I could just pop!

I am so grateful for Al-Anon’s Steps, Traditions, and Concepts of Service, and for being part of the loving, compassionate, and wise family of Al-Anon members. Through this journey, I have come to build my life on a whole new foundation of peace and serenity.

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

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

Overcoming My Fear of Sharing

By - Allen L., Washington .

When I first came to Al-Anon, I had the same fears about sharing in meetings that I've since heard other newcomers express: fear of the story getting back to the alcoholic, with disastrous repercussions; fear of sounding overly dramatic or being misunderstood; fear of speaking to a group. But after coming to Al-Anon meetings for a while, I recognized the truth of the Al-Anon closing: "Whatever your problems, there are those among us who have had them, too."

When I share now, I know that other members don't see me as a bizarre or foolish person. They see in me the struggle to find my way out of the chaos in my life. I learned from another member that if something is a big deal inside my head, it's a big enough deal to share about in a meeting.

Overcoming my own fear of sharing did a number of wonderful things for me.

Telling those parts of my story that I had kept secret took away their power to control my actions. I no longer had to spend time and energy avoiding and hiding that part of my past. You might say that sharing my story released those secrets so they can't keep me sick.

By far the biggest lesson I learned from sharing my story was the difference between what is secret (something I believed I could not share) and what is private (something I only share with trusted friends). For example, my personal finances are not secret but private, something the world at large is not privileged to know. By mentally moving certain issues from the "secret never to be shared" category to "private information only shared with trusted friends," I took away their power to control my thoughts and actions.

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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 keep my eyes open for the small beautiful things that I normally don't see . . .
- I'll make sure that I sincerely compliment at least three people . . .
- I'll remember to encourage a child . . .

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