

### **A Precious Gift**

*By - Sue W., California .*

I recently received a letter from my oldest stepdaughter. I was very surprised by her heart-felt thoughts and feelings about our relationship over the years. She was eight years old when I married her father. She has a younger brother and sister who were five and four years old, respectively. I had no idea their father was an alcoholic when we married, but it soon became evident that his drinking was out of control.

Having grown up in a violent, chaotic, alcoholic home, I had decided that my home was going to be loving, caring, and filled with all the childhood activities I had missed. One of my fondest memories is of baking cookies at Christmas with my stepchildren and having a grand time. My kitchen was filled with laughter, singing, and happiness. I had no idea what a profound effect it would have on my stepchildren all these years later.

My husband and I found our respective programs of A.A. and Al-Anon. We were open about our recovery, and

soon, my oldest stepdaughter joined me in my Al-Anon meetings. We continued to do fun activities as she grew older, and our bond became very strong. I became her confidante, and our hearts have been locked together for eternity. She now has two stepchildren of her own, and we speak frequently about the challenges and rewards of being a stepmother.

Her letter brought me to tears, and we cried together when I called to thank her. We live several hours from each other, so we always cry and hug when we get to spend time together. Our special relationship is just one of the many blessings I have received as a result of working an Al-Anon program and taking it home to my family. I count my special, intimate relationship with my stepdaughter as a precious gift from my Higher Power.

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

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

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# Removing My Rose-Tinted Glasses

By - Allen L., Washington .

When I broke up with my first boyfriend after five years together, my mother arrived to move me back home. On our 12-hour drive, we would go hours at a time not speaking as I silently cried. Once, when she punctured the silence to ask if I'd remembered to pack a towel in my travel bag, I realized I felt more alone and invisible in the car with her than I had at any point in my breakup.

As soon as we got back to my hometown, I looked up my first Al-Anon meeting. I knew my mother had been an alcoholic, but A.A. had "fixed" her, and she'd stopped going to meetings before I was even born, so I worried I wouldn't qualify to attend Al-Anon. However, I was welcomed by everyone as soon as I arrived. After a lifetime with a mother who tried to show her support by "doing" things for me, it was an amazing relief to find a fellowship who didn't do anything for me, but instead sat back calmly as they listened, acknowledged, and accepted my feelings.

At that same meeting, two weeks later, a member began talking about hiding alcohol from a partner. This triggered the memory of how, during my relationship, I could only keep a miniature bottle of cooking wine in the

refrigerator - a quantity too small for my partner to get drunk on. When I bought the tiny bottles of cooking wine, I would hide all but one in my underwear drawer so that my partner would not find and drink them. All of a sudden, a thousand miles away and a month after the breakup, I realized I had spent the past five years of my life with an alcoholic!

This revelation gave immediate credence to the sharings and readings about alcoholic family patterns and inspired me to find a Sponsor right away, work the Steps, and develop an understanding of how my dry-but-still-dysfunctional family had shaped my ideas about relationships and my perception of my own emotional needs.

Several years later, I still struggle to communicate and connect emotionally with my mother, but I'm working my program alongside my fiancé, who has ten years of sobriety under his belt and a commitment to growth that supports and inspires mine. Al-Anon has removed the rose-tinted glasses of denial and helped me to see myself, my life, and my loved ones for who we are instead of who I think we should be.

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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 to say "Thank You" . . .
- I'll share many encouraging words . . .
- I'll be very good to myself . . .

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