

### **An Enjoyable Life of My Own**

*By - Laura B., Hawaii .*

The concept of detachment was baffling to me when I first stepped through the doors of Al-Anon. Were these people asking me to change the way I thought and viewed the world, the way I'd learned as a child? How could I detach from the alcoholics and still love them? How could I allow them to suffer the consequences of their actions - was that really loving?

Each morning before I left my bedroom, I read the readings on "detachment" in One Day at a Time in Al-Anon (B-6). This gave me some peace, even though those readings made no sense to my way of thinking. However, that peace evaporated quickly when I entered the fray of my day, and I reverted to behavior patterns I'd been relying on my whole life - controlling, nagging, manipulating. Nothing changed at first,

but I kept going back to Al-Anon.

Slowly, as I listened to others at meetings and worked with my Sponsor, I started to apply the tools for detaching that had worked for others. At first, I used them in my workplace, minding my own business and job description and allowing others to do their work as they saw fit. Gradually, I was able to apply the principles in my more emotionally fraught family life. And gradually, my relationships changed. I was able to give others the respect to live their lives without my interference. An unexpected benefit was that I found I could have an enjoyable life of my own when I focused on my own recovery .

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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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# I Cannot Save Others from Drinking.

*By - Melinda D., New Hampshire .*

After my fiancé died from progressive drinking, I begged God to let me die too. I had failed to save him, and I had failed his parents, who had said I was their last hope. Someone close to me said they didn't understand why someone so smart with so many opportunities couldn't stop drinking. That question intensified my grief and feelings of devastating loss. I felt abandoned. In my mind, the way his parents had responded to his drinking only increased his guilt and shame and drained him of any remaining motivation to quit. I could not stop blaming and resenting them.

At his memorial service, his best friend, who has years of sobriety through A.A. quietly suggested that Al-Anon might be good for me. I was nervous at my first meeting but discovered that everyone there understood. People hugged me and told me they were glad I had come. I bought a daily reader and read it with my breakfast every morning. I cried at

meetings for several months. No one judged my grief. No one criticized me.

I have learned that alcoholism is not a moral problem and that his parents had no intention of propelling him toward death, nor the power to do so. I realized I, too, had responded in ways that only served to temporarily make me feel less anxious about his precarious state.

Through Al-Anon, I have learned my job is to work on changing myself, not saving others. I had become as sick as my departed alcoholic fiancé, had lived in reaction to someone's drinking since birth, and had spent my life trying to save others to alleviate my own fears. The most important part of my new awareness is accepting that I am powerless over alcohol and all people, places, and things. The serenity I am beginning to experience is an unexpected gift from God.

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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 make an effort to listen to those who speak to me . . .
- I'll be grateful for my life . . .
- I'll accept others for who they are . . .
- I'll remember that I'm a very special person . . .

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