

From abusive relationships to personal serenity

By - Cheryl D., New York .

After yet another failed relationship with a man who turned out to be abusive, I reached my bottom. I was so screwed up: crying, trying to hold it all together, and struggling financially - since he left me with a pile of bills,

I was truly ashamed, since I'm an educated professional. I was angry for letting myself be duped again. Was I ever going to find a decent guy to have a relationship with?

Fortunately, my Higher Power steered me to counseling sessions. I looked in the phone book, picked a name of a woman counselor, and showed up. After our first meeting, she gave me some "homework." She told me to go to an Al-Anon meeting, and that they could help me. I replied, "Isn't Al-Anon for alcoholics? I'm not an alcoholic... my father is." Then she told me that Al-Anon is for family members and friends of alcoholics.

I was still sceptical. I replied half-heartedly - never intending to follow her advice - that I'd have to call and find out when they met. Right then and there, she handed me the Area meeting schedule. I agreed to pick one meeting, get to it, and then get back to her after I had done my homework.

I walked into my first Al-Anon meeting here in New York. There was a lady named Martha speaking about celebrating her tenth anniversary in Al-Anon. She had such serenity about her! I said to myself, "I want what she has." I went to every meeting I could get to, and I kept going back. Later on, I would ask Martha to become my first Sponsor.

The people in the rooms of Al-Anon were, at one time, just like me. We all had in common the disease of alcoholism in someone we loved, and would learn together how it had distorted our thinking, actions, and feelings.

Alcoholism had coloured all our relationships, in every area of our lives, to varying degrees. By sharing their experience, strength, and hope, the folks in the rooms of Al-Anon gave me the tools to face the future, to learn from my mistakes, and to have the courage to change myself, instead of trying to change others around me.

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

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

Overwhelmed by life at age 23, with no solution in sight

By - By Sharon G.E., Colorado .

I'd been miserable for a very long time - and I was only 23 - years old! I'd made some progress with the therapist I was working with, but I still felt so useless and overwhelmingly sad. I had no idea that this feeling of hopelessness and willingness to give in, despite my best efforts at holding things together, was the beginning of my journey toward recovery.

I'd been seeing my therapist weekly for about two years. While at my usual Monday night session, I told her I didn't think I would ever get to feeling better. She assured me that I had come a long way in the two years we'd been working together. Then she told me why everything felt all wrong, "You're an adult child of alcoholic parents," she said. "I wasn't raised in an alcoholic home, so I don't completely understand what you're going through. But the good news is there are people who do, and Al-Anon is where you'll find them."

She gave me a book about adult children of alcoholics and I read it in two days. I was amazed and angry that someone else had written and published my story. I was desperate to feel better. If what she said was true, I had to find Al-Anon. I attended my

first meeting the Saturday after she told me where I should go and I've been coming back ever since.

Not only did the people in the meetings tell my story, they listened to me relate my confusion and sadness - and they understood. All my life I'd felt like I just couldn't figure out how to maneuver the channels of talking to people, making friends, and dealing with life in general.

In Al-Anon I found there were people willing to love me when I couldn't love myself. They were willing to listen to me as I learned how to express myself and wander through my confusion. They showed me a different way to live. My Sponsor and other Al-Anon members have helped me throughout my continuing journey of learning to live and not simply to exist.

I'm so grateful to my Higher Power for putting a therapist into my path who was able to admit she didn't have what I needed. Moreover, she was willing to send me to a place where I could get help and begin the process of recovering from the effects of alcohol in my life.

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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 . . .