

This Is My Story

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I lived with my parents until I was five. When they divorced, I went to live with my grandparents. I was so young, but people told me it was a very stressful time for everyone. My mother, sister and I were supposed to live at my grandparents until my mother could find a suitable place for us to live. She made poor choices and rented an apartment in a bad section of town. My grandparents intervened because they thought it was too dangerous.

Everything became complicated. My dad got an apartment and I visited him regularly, but I rarely saw my mother. Our interactions were short phone calls, if that. Life at my grandparents seemed very peaceful. When I entered kindergarten, I was behind the other students. I worked really hard, though, and now I am an honor roll student in ninth grade.

My sister started going to Alateen when I was ten. She interacted with my mother much more than I did and I assumed she needed more help than I did. About a year and a half later my grandma convinced me that I should try Alateen.

When I'm at an Alateen meeting, they ask us to talk about our first meeting. I always tell people how I walked outside ready to go, then walked right back in and said I would come again next week. Looking back, I realize how Alateen came into my life at the right time. I was just starting to see my mom more and I couldn't understand why she did the things she did. Alateen showed me not everyone's life is perfect and there are people out there who have the same kinds of stories that I do.

I have learned so much from this program. I can look at myself and see how much I have grown and the wisdom I have gained. It has been a long journey, and only recently have I been able to say that honestly and confidently.

I am so grateful to have the program to pull out and use in any situation. When I see my mother, I know how to act appropriately even when she may not. When I go to meetings, I feel like I am a part of something. I have made many friends. Today, I work hard in school, sports and music. The Alateen program has helped me lead a better, happier life.

By Kiana, Connecticut

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