

Today, I'm doing more of what makes me happy

"Don't make me stop this car!" The bold quote on the travel mug sitting on the shop shelf caught my eye. I laughed out loud. How many times had I said that to my daughter? I bought the mug.

That was six years ago. Today, I grimace when I think how I blamed my youngest for my crazy behavior. No one can make me act a certain way; only I can control my emotions and conduct.

Today, I don't even like the travel mug that once made me giggle. But I keep it to remind me how far I've come. When I feel my anger surging, I no longer blame others, but look within to find my part in it.

Recently, I bought another mug that makes me smile. It says, "Do more of what makes you happy." It took some reflection and investigation to rediscover what makes me happy. I was so busy working on my career and being a wife and mother that I felt I had no time to make myself happy. I thought back to high school and remembered I enjoyed arts and crafts. I searched for classes and studios I could join. Each day, I try to do something nourishing. Sometimes, it's something small, like picking up a new library book.

My transformation began when I heard at a meeting how the flight attendant always instructs passengers to place the oxygen mask on them first, before turning to help anyone else. I had flown and heard this before, but this was the first time I accepted it as my responsibility for my self-care. It's not selfish. It's logical. How can I help the person or child next to me if I can't breathe?

When I'm happy, it's easier to think calmly. Through Conference Approved Literature, listening at meetings, and sharing honestly with trusted friends, I've learned that I have choices and what my choices are. I can change. I can learn to take care of and control myself. I've altered my attitude and it's transformed my life. "Keep Coming Back."

By Shelley H., Pennsylvania
The Forum, December 2016

*Feel free to reprint this article on your Web site or in your newsletter, along with this credit line:
Reprinted with permission of The Forum, Al-Anon Family Group Hdqts., Inc., Virginia Beach, VA.*