

# I was changing, and I liked it

When I went to my first Al-Anon meeting, I was very surprised to find so many happy people talking before the meeting about things other than alcoholics. After attending the suggested six beginner meetings, I felt I had said all there was to say about our problems as parents of an alcoholic. I was encouraged to join the “regular meeting” the following week.

I learned through members sharing that many had been attending meetings for years, long after the alcoholics recovered, left the house, or passed away. I wondered why these people kept coming to meetings. Surely, they had better things they could be doing.

I saw that members talked about themselves a lot and actually had lives that centered on themselves and not the alcoholics. I wondered why. Didn't they care about the alcoholics and want to help them stay sober?

I saw people volunteering for service at the meeting. Some made coffee, took care of literature, cleaned up, etc. I wondered why. I saw people going after the meetings for fellowship. What was fellowship anyway?

Even though the reading at the beginning of the meeting kept telling me I was here because of the alcoholic, not for the alcoholic, why would I have to continue going to meetings once I got our son to stop drinking?

After attending for several months, I felt part of the group. I was welcomed and comforted by others. I had the feeling that people actually cared about me just the way I was—a somewhat emotional wreck. I too, had a choice on a Friday night, and I chose to keep going back. They all had what I wanted.

I began to feel that the sharings, topics, slogans, and daily readings were changing my thinking about whom the meetings were actually helping. I had some tools to work with. I was changing. I was thinking differently. I was feeling compassion for our son. I was beginning to detach. I was learning about setting boundaries. I started to take “One Day at a Time.” I was learning to “Let Go and Let God.” I was developing a relationship with a Higher Power that I could trust to do what was best for me. I was feeling the support from other members. I asked someone to be my Sponsor.

I looked forward to not only one weekly meeting, but I began attending more meetings in different locations. At one point, I was attending four meetings a week because I felt the more meetings I attended, the more reinforcement I was giving myself. I liked the change that was taking place between my ears.

I realized I wanted to go to meetings. I was never too tired, and if I was tired, I went anyway because the feeling I had after the meeting was always uplifting. Al-Anon members understood what I felt as a child living with an alcoholic father, and what I felt as the mother of an alcoholic son because they felt it too. They understood. They had empathy, not sympathy, for me. I made friends. I wasn't alone in this journey. There are some amazing people in these rooms. One of the most important things I learned early on is that there is always hope.

This is a program through which I have learned to better cope with my problems, celebrate my joys, feel all my feelings, and know that everything that happens will eventually pass. These are the reason I “Keep Coming Back.” I now know that it doesn't matter whether God introduced me to the program or if the program introduced me to my Higher Power. All that is important is that I found Him through Al-Anon.

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