

“Keep Coming Back”

After an Al-Anon meeting one night, I stood outside the church in the freezing rain. Cars drove away, and people waved to each other with promises to meet next week. Once again, I felt deep despair because no one in the meeting was able to give me the answers I needed. I wanted a recipe for ensuring the sobriety of the alcoholic. I hoped for a prescription to put my shattered family back together and to enjoy a good night's sleep without worrying about the next bounced check or overdue bill. Instead, a woman grasped my hands before I left, looked into my tear-filled eyes and said, “Just ‘Keep Coming Back.’” *Is she kidding? Why would I come back here?* I thought as I drove home that night. I resolved not to go back.

But I did go back. I went back because of the urging of a friend who had been in these meetings for many years. And I went back because the literature I began reading told me that alcoholism is a disease and that there was nothing I could do to get my loved one sober. As I studied the Steps, worked with a Sponsor and continued to attend meetings, I learned that I could live life with hope and serenity with or without the sobriety of another.

That was over 30 years ago. I have learned a great deal about the disease of alcoholism, how to live with the alcoholics in my family and how to care for myself in order to live a fuller life. One of the things I do for my self-care is to regularly attend meetings. And I try not to miss an opportunity to welcome newcomers. I grab their hands, look into their tear-filled eyes and say, “Just ‘Keep Coming Back.’”

By Laura P., Colorado

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