

Taking a Beauty Break

“I stop whatever I’m doing at sunset to sit with my husband and talk.”

I’ve learned so much about how to apply Al-Anon’s tools and spiritual principles by listening to members share their experience, strength, and hope at meetings. I’ve also encountered lessons in unexpected places.

While hiking through the Grand Canyon a few years ago, I stopped at a ranger station to refill my water and read some flyers with hiking tips. One of them recommended that hikers rest for ten minutes every hour and elevate their feet to clear the lactic acid buildup in their legs. The flyer said most hikers don’t do that because they’re afraid it will slow them down. But, in fact, those who do make better time because they hike with renewed strength and energy.

When I read this, I thought of the slogan “Easy Does It.” I had been in Al-Anon for some time at that point, but I hadn’t paid much attention to that slogan. Being gentle with myself was a foreign concept. I always pushed myself to finish everything that needed to be done before sitting down at the end of the day.

But a few days after my Grand Canyon hike, I looked out the window while washing dishes and saw my husband watching the sunset. Instead of feeling envious or resentful, I decided to follow his example and practice “Easy Does It.” I took a break from the dishes and joined him. The sunset that evening was magnificent, but our conversation was even better.

Previously, by the time I finished all the household chores and finally sat down, my husband would have been watching TV and not feeling very talkative. I realized I'd been missing more than sunsets. I had been missing a daily opportunity to connect. Since then, I've made it a point to practice "Easy Does It." I stop whatever I'm doing at sunset to sit with my husband and talk. I've also learned to take breaks at other times rather than running myself ragged. It's made my life more enjoyable.

Likewise, practicing "First Things First," I found that everything that needs to get done usually does. The things that don't are generally not that important. They certainly aren't as important as the awe I feel when I stop to marvel at the beauty of my Higher Power's creation or the increased intimacy that has come from spending more quality time with the man I love.

By Kathy M., Arizona

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