

Building My Castle on High Ground

“I can watch the sandcastles go up and the waves come in from a distance.”

The main drinker in my life has many wonderful attributes. One evening when he was drunk, however, he picked a meaningless argument with me that was useless and destructive. I used the tool of detachment that I learned in Al-Anon and quietly got up and walked into another room. As I walked away, he called out to remind me of all the caring and kind things he had done for me the past week.

It was true. He had done many nice things for me and our family that week. He was also capable of becoming irrational and belligerent with the help of alcohol. I could feel all the nice things wash away with his drunkenness that night. It was like I had built a beautiful sandcastle on the beach—each tower and moat constructed from his kind deeds, thoughtful gestures, and responsible actions—only to have it wash away when the inevitable drunken tide came in. How easy it used to be for me to put all my effort into building and believing in sandcastles, only to be devastated when they were predictably destroyed by the alcoholic tide.

After six years in Al-Anon, I am learning to build my castle on high ground. The foundation and structure I build by going to meetings, working the Steps, talking to my Sponsor, sponsoring others, and engaging in service give me stability and resilience. I can watch the sandcastles go up and the waves come in from a distance, knowing that whatever happens with the tides of alcoholism, I am in a structure that can never be washed away, built with the help of my Higher Power and the support of a loving fellowship.

By Kelly M., Utah

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