

A Disease of Communication and Relationships

I believe that alcoholism is a disease of communication and a disease of relationships. When my husband offered to help me around the house, I didn't expect him to volunteer to wash my daughter's expensive sports gear. I cringed. Would he do it "correctly" (aka my way)? I always hand wash the items in question. I wanted to tell him how to do it when, all of a sudden, I heard my Sponsor's voice in my head. She would have said, "He is a *grown man*. If he wants to wash his daughter's gear and messes it up, you let him." I didn't say anything to him.

But, seconds later, when he pulled out her white uniform and red uniform from the gym bag, I cringed again. Would he separate the colors? Again, I didn't say anything. At that moment, I decided that if we ended up with a pink jacket instead of a white one, the worst-case scenario was that he would have learned something, and we would have to replace the jacket. It is better to replace the jacket than risk damaging my marriage with petty arguments. No one likes being nagged. No one likes someone hovering over them, making sure they "perform" correctly. I certainly don't.

When he finished washing and pulled it all together out of the machine, I was shocked. "Oh! Did you wash all of that at the same time? And it didn't turn the white jacket pink?" I asked.

"Oh, they don't make red dye that bleeds anymore," he said. I couldn't believe it. I would have made that laundry load much harder on myself than it needed to be. Ultimately, I was the one who learned something. Finally, I have learned in Al-Anon to stop nagging people and to stop needing everything done my way. I want people to love me for who I am, and thanks to Al-Anon, I can offer to others what I want for myself. I'm able to "Live and Let Live."

By Kimberly M-P., Alabama

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