

An Open Heart and Mind

When I first came to Al-Anon many, many years ago, I did not understand what the program was about. I felt a small sense of peace, but I ran away, which was typical of me, and I did not return for several years. When I returned about two years ago, my heart felt ready to receive the program, and I was desperate.

I have learned so much about myself, it's unbelievable. Much of it I did not appreciate while I was learning it, but now I can see how each experience has shaped me.

- I have learned to listen and wait before speaking, and now I understand why I've heard that everyone in an alcoholic/addict situation deserves and needs extra loving care. I never realized this until Al-Anon.
- I get to focus my attention on what I can do, rather than what others should do. I can put my energy into my own recovery. This has been a wonderful advantage for me.
- Allowing my Higher Power into my life and being willing to open my mind and my heart to what He has in store for me has proven to be extremely gratifying and such a positive force in my life.
- Many of the tools, including the Serenity Prayer, have gotten me through some tough times. Slogans like "Easy Does It" remind me to take some time before I respond to tense situations. When I use slogans like this one, I usually respond in a manner that I am much happier with. I do not hurt people with my rash, rude comments as often as I used to.

I've learned in Al-Anon that by working the Steps with my Sponsor and staying honest with myself, I can lead a happy, healthy life regardless of what others choose to do with theirs. This does not mean I do not feel pain and sadness about my loved one's choices. I now understand that those choices are theirs, not mine, and I love them anyway. I can demonstrate my love by staying out of the way and allowing their Higher Power to take care of them.

By Lisa P., California

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