

# Stories from the Forum magazine: December 2011

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## Trusting the process of recovery

My 22-year marriage to a recovering alcoholic has been filled with times of peace and times of great calamity. There have been times when I felt very close to my Higher Power, and times when I wondered if He was there at all.

We recently moved to the spectacular central coast of California, to begin the next chapter of our life. I had to leave friends and family behind. I knew I had to get plugged back into Al-Anon meetings and start connecting to new people. There was a lot of fear and reservation associated with this process. As I learned in Al-Anon, I had to feel the fear and do it anyway. I had to trust the process of recovery.

One sunny Monday morning, I decided I would walk to my meeting by way of the beach. I came across a small river that flowed down from the hills into the ocean. I had my running shoes on and thought if I walked up towards the hill, I could maybe find a place to go around the river without getting wet.

As I walked upstream, the body of water only seemed to get wider, so I decided to walk back towards the ocean to see if there was a spot narrow enough to get over the river. Again, the river never narrowed. Then, it hit me: I was going to have to go through this water to get to the meeting on the other side.

I realized that this was a metaphor for my life. I have always tried to find a way to avoid going through the river of feelings and emotions to get to the freedom on the other side. I was always in search of something or someone to distract me from the feelings. At this realization, I began to cry. I knew that my Higher Power was trying to teach me something.

As I trudged back up the waterline looking for a spot to cross, praying to my Higher Power for guidance, I saw a big log lying in the sand. I thought if I put that log across the river, it would cause some kind of a dam effect that would stop the water flow long enough for me to cross to the other side. Sure enough, it worked and I crossed safely.

This was a huge awareness for me and I was so excited that my Higher Power used this as a tool to teach me—one more time. I made it to the meeting just before it began. It should be no surprise that the topic that day was fear and courage.

Life has its challenges and I am learning to go through the process of recovery to meet those challenges. I also understand today that my Higher Power is with me every step of the way, guiding me along the river and through the river, giving me the courage and strength I need for just that moment. As I reflect back, I know that my Higher Power has always been with me—teaching, prodding, guiding, directing, and loving me with every step and every breath I take. I am grateful to my Higher Power, the fellowship of the program, and the tools that have been so freely given to me.

By Debbie S., California  
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