

Stories from the Forum magazine: September 2010

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I saw a reflection of my life in the domestic violence shelter

I found Al-Anon at a domestic violence shelter. I wasn't a resident there, but I could have been, had I made different choices. There had been violence in my home, both on my part and my ex-boyfriend's.

Many a Saturday, I sat in that meeting looking at women who had black eyes, broken jaws, and bruises. They had fled their homes in fear for their lives and the lives of their children.

These were women who were willing to admit they had defects, but had a program and a Higher Power to turn to when life around alcoholism was leaving them feeling like they had nowhere else to turn.

I clung to their honesty. Before I found them, I was constantly trying to figure out another way to lie—to explain how I got the bruises on my head, around my neck, or on my arms. I was finally free.

I owe my life to these women. They had a program and were making a life for themselves in spite of what was going on at home. The only way I can ever come close to paying them back is to be of service to our fellowship by working the Steps, studying the Traditions and Concepts, and helping to carry the message that they so freely shared with me.

By Kim H., California
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