

From abusive relationships to personal serenity

After yet another failed relationship with a man who turned out to be abusive, I reached my bottom. I was so screwed up: crying, trying to hold it all together, and struggling financially - since he left me with a pile of bills.

I was truly ashamed, since I'm an educated professional. I was angry for letting myself be duped again. Was I ever going to find a decent guy to have a relationship with?

Fortunately, my Higher Power steered me to counseling sessions. I looked in the phone book, picked a name of a woman counselor, and showed up. After our first meeting, she gave me some "homework." She told me to go to an Al-Anon meeting, and that they could help me. I replied, "Isn't Al-Anon for alcoholics? I'm not an alcoholic ... my father is." Then she told me that Al-Anon is for family members and friends of alcoholics.

I was still skeptical. I replied half-heartedly - never intending to follow her advice - that I'd have to call and find out when they met. Right then and there, she handed me the Area meeting schedule. I agreed to pick one meeting, get to it, and then get back to her after I had done my homework.

I walked into my first Al-Anon meeting here in New York. There was a lady named Martha speaking about celebrating her tenth anniversary in Al-Anon. She had such serenity about her! I said to myself, "I want what she has." I went to every meeting I could get to, and I kept going back. Later on, I would ask Martha to become my first Sponsor.

The people in the rooms of Al-Anon were, at one time, just like me. We all had in common the disease of alcoholism in someone we loved, and would learn together how it had distorted our thinking, actions and feelings.

Alcoholism had colored all our relationships, in every area of our lives, to varying degrees. By sharing their experience, strength, and hope, the folks in the rooms of Al-Anon gave me the tools to face the future, to learn from my mistakes, and to have the courage to change myself, instead of trying to change others around me

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