

Stories from the Forum magazine: September 2011

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I looked for love in the wrong places

Growing up in an alcoholic home, I always felt I had to be good enough—that I had to earn my parents love. Every time my alcoholic stepfather would go into a rage, it would be my fault. My mother, severely affected by the disease of alcoholism, would always defend him and tell me to try and do better. I thought they would love me if I were perfect.

As an adult, I searched in all the wrong places to find that perfect love I expected in a mate. I never thought I could be a complete person without the approval and love of a boyfriend. And when I didn't have a boyfriend, I sought that approval from my parents. When that didn't work, I turned to my best friend. When that didn't work, I went back to finding a new boyfriend—and so the cycle continued.

Al-Anon has given me awareness, unconditional love, and acceptance that I never had anywhere else in my world. I listened to my Sponsor's suggestion that I should not date for at least one year. (It took me several years in Al-Anon before I actually listened to that suggestion.)

For this last year, I have been really working the Steps and focusing on myself. This focus has given me the opportunity to see how I transferred my need to be loved onto other sick people in my life, when all along the love I craved so desperately has been right inside of me. It is in the form of my Higher Power and the relationship I am learning to develop with Him. My Higher Power works through other Al-Anon members in meetings, through my Sponsor, and through our literature—showing me that I am loved, and worthy of being loved and loving others.

With this awareness, I am no longer looking for romantic love to fill a void. My void is being filled through working my Al-Anon program.

By Rebekah B., Florida
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