

## Stories from the Forum magazine: February 2008

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### At mid-life I found self-knowledge - and recovery

At the age of 18, I got married. Twenty five years later, I got divorced. In those years I moved to a different city, hours from my family, with my new husband; finished college; and had two children. I wanted to start over and have a better life free of the problems associated with the alcoholism and addiction that I grew up with.

I loved my family and I missed them, but I needed to have some distance between the alcoholic and me. I didn't yet understand that the problems and bad feelings I wanted to leave behind were engraved in my heart and soul. I didn't know what to do when these same problems, feelings and fears kept resurfacing over and over again.

My turning point was when I realized that I was recreating the same turmoil for my children that I grew up with as a child. I came to Al-Anon because I wanted to be a better mother, and in the process I became a better person.

Once in the Al-Anon program, I was like a sponge - I wanted more and more. I read every book and subscribed to *The Forum*. I came to understand that alcoholism had permeated my family for generations, that there were valid reasons for my feelings and shortcomings, and that I was responsible for myself and could change and become a happier, more spiritual person. Al-Anon helped with the awareness of my problems and new ways to solve them. I have tools to tackle those problems: attending meetings, listening, and sharing; reading the daily meditations; praying; using the slogans; and talking with my Sponsor and other members.

Today my life is fuller and richer than I ever imagined. I have come full circle. I am more capable of dealing with the everyday problems and the major challenges. Al-Anon has shown how to become a better version of myself. I have returned to my hometown to start a new life on my own - independent and more comfortable with myself, yet connected to my family and friends. I don't regret the past; rather I live in today and look forward to the future.

By Karen H, Kentucky

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