

Dealing with my parents' alcoholism – one teen's story

There are many trials in life that one must go through, and everybody deals with these problems differently. Some write. Some fight. Everyone in my family seemed to drown their problems in alcohol.

As a six-year-old, I didn't see the problems that my family faced. The world was big and full of wonder in the eyes of a curious little boy, but having alcoholic parents made my world a lot smaller. I couldn't put into words how scared I was.

I learned quickly to figure out what my parents were thinking and feeling. I needed to know if I was coming home to the warm, loving place that a home should be, or to a war zone where people were afraid to speak their feelings.

At some point, my parents thought it would be a good idea for my mother to leave. During this time, my mom and my dad jumped in and out of sobriety.

One time my dad left on a Friday night, leaving me and my friend at home. When he didn't come home, we went to my friend's house. My dad picked me up hung over. He said he wanted to change.

I saw my mother after that, and she was sober. She brought up Alateen. I told her I would give it a try. I told my dad that I wanted to go, and he decided to go to A.A. We began the journey to recovery together.

I remember my first meeting pretty well, though it feels like it happened ages ago. There were a lot of older kids, and all were complete strangers. I was trying to find a dark corner to hide in when an 18-year-old girl came up to me and knelt down so we were eye level. With a soothing voice and a loving smile she asked me, "Are you nervous?" I hesitantly nodded yes. She grabbed my trembling shoulders, shook them with great excitement, and screamed, "Don't be nervous!" I jumped. Everyone laughed and gave me a hug.

At that moment, all the fear and tension I had in my heart was lifted. For some reason, that was the most loved I had felt in years. I couldn't stop myself from smiling and laughing along with the rest of the group. I was truly happy for the first time in years.

During that first meeting I shared and I cried. It felt so good – like walking on air. I went for years without missing a meeting.

I think about what my life would be like if I had never gone to that first Alateen meeting. I could have hurt myself or someone else. I could have ended up in jail or maybe become an alcoholic. When I picture the alternate world I could possibly have made for myself, I feel blessed that my Higher Power cared about me enough to lead me into the program.

Alateen didn't "fix" me or make me perfect. It showed me where to put things in my life so I could love the finished product. I learned that life is worth living. Being happy is when I look at the cards that God has dealt to me, relax, and smile. I might not have been dealt the best hand, but I don't have the worst.

By Jeremy

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