

## **Barb's Story 1**(posted June 11, 2006)

Hi, my name is Barb. I am a grateful member of Al-Anon.

Al-Anon is for the friends and family of alcoholics and A.A. is for the alcoholic.

I have found that it is very important to attend meetings on a regular basis and align myself with the winners (that is what I call the people in recovery).

My life started out pretty typical of someone that attends Al-Anon. I grew up in an alcoholic home with an alcoholic father. Alcoholism runs in both sides of my family. I didn't learn healthy life management skills growing up so when I became a teenager and young adult I made many poor choices. I went from one crisis to the next with no skills to get off the crisis roller coaster ride.

My mother started going to Al-Anon and a year later my dad went into treatment. This started the recovery road for our family. My sister and I went to a family session at the treatment center that my dad was in and I heard the words alcoholism, disease and recovery. I was not ready at that time to face all of it so I left there confused and angry. You see all my life everyone told me my dad was not an alcoholic and the things that were going on in our home were not really going on. Then I get to the treatment center and they say my dad is an alcoholic and I need help. This didn't sit well with me.

Thankfully my mother did not give up on me; she hounded me until I went to my first Al-Anon meeting. I figured I would go to one meeting and she would get off my back. What I found at that first meeting was that there were a lot of hurting people that were helping each other get better.

There were two tables. One table was called a "first Step" and that is where they had me sit (I cried through the entire meeting). At the other table people were laughing and having a good time. I was thinking that wow I want to be at their table!!!

That first meeting was the first day of the rest of my life in recovery. I am so thankful that someone cared enough about me to get me to that first meeting. (I consider my mother one of the heroes in my life for getting me there).

A lot of things have changed in my life, some of it good, some of it bad, but I know that with the tools of the program and with the support of my family and Al-Anon friends I can make it through whatever comes my way.

Al-Anon is a spiritual program not a religious program. You will hear the words Higher Power. I choose to call my Higher Power God. I believe that my HP got me to Al-Anon and He is with me everyday.

My father is a success story in our family; he has been sober since the day he went into treatment 20 years ago. I am so very proud of him. He is another one of my heroes!!!!

My husband is also one of my heroes. I had been through a bad divorce and I was not looking for a man in my life but he appeared. I told him I attended Al-Anon and he said can I come and I said sure. We attend meetings together and go to many Al-Anon and A.A. functions. My step son is in Alateen and I consider our home a home of recovery. I consider my husband one of the many gifts that recovery has brought my way.

On Dec. 4, 2005 my 23 year old drug addict, alcoholic son passed away due to his lack of recovery. It has been a very, very painful road since his death but I know that I did not cause his disease, I could not cure it and I could not control it.

I tried everything to get him sober and nothing worked. I have learned a lot in this program and one of the most valuable lessons I have learned is that an alcoholic is the only one that can help another alcoholic. The best thing that I can do for my alcoholic loved ones and for myself is to take extra good care of myself and work my own program. That is why there is A.A. and Al-Anon. Like I said in the beginning Al-Anon is for me and A.A. is for the alcoholic.

Thanks for listening,

Barb