

Living With Sobriety (posted June 13, 2006)

I am a grateful member of Al-Anon. I have been coming to Al-Anon since June 2003. When I first came I wasn't sure if I belonged here, since I never had lived with an alcoholic who was drinking. My husband, who I married in September 2003, has been sober since September 1998. He had been sober for three years when we first met. He attended meetings usually two to three times a week, and I sometimes attended open A.A. meetings with him. It was an important part of his life, and I wanted to share it with him and understand why it was important to him. When he suggested I try attending Al-Anon and see what it might have to offer, I felt hurt at first. Did he think there was something wrong with me that I needed to go to these meetings? Or did he feel I wasn't supporting him as I should? Had I failed in some way? He assured me none of the above was true.

I attended my first Al-Anon meeting with trepidation. I wondered what people would think, and what I should say, and whether I would "belong" or not. I attended a large meeting at first, and was welcomed warmly. I listened to others and did not have to say anything at all unless I chose to speak. It was explained to me that Al-Anon welcomed anyone who felt they had a reason to come, whatever the reason may be. I learned Al-Anon was not about my alcoholic husband-to-be, it was about how I would live my life. I learned about the disease of alcoholism, which helped me understand and support my husband. I heard stories from people who were living with active alcoholics, from people who had lived with active alcoholism in the past, and from people who were living with alcoholics in sobriety. I saw people living with grace and serenity and humor, whatever their life circumstances were, and I wanted to live that way as well.

Eventually I embraced the program of Al-Anon. I learned about the Twelve Steps as a way of life. I have a sponsor who helps me to work through and live the Steps. I sponsor two other women. I feel that this program has made me a better person, a better wife and a better mother than I would have been if I did not have the tools of this program. It has also brought a depth to my relationship with my husband that I do not think we would have been able to achieve if we did not each have our own program. Through working the Steps myself, I have learned to recognize patterns that I do not want to carry on to my son or to children we may have in the future, and I am working to change these patterns. Sometimes this process is joyful, and sometimes it is painful, but it is always fruitful. I now attend my home group meeting once a week, and other meetings on occasion. I do this for me first, and for the benefits it brings to my family by helping me to be the person I want to be.

If you are new to Al-Anon, and wondering if this program is right for you, I hope you'll come try it out. You don't have to be certain you belong here. You will be welcome, whatever your reasons for coming.

(Anonymous)