

## Stories from the Forum magazine: September 2007

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### Overwhelmed by life at age 23, with no solution in sight

I'd been miserable for a very long time - and I was only 23 years old! I'd made some progress with the therapist I was working with, but I still felt so useless and overwhelmingly sad. I had no idea that this feeling of hopelessness and willingness to give in, despite my best efforts at holding things together, was my journey towards recovery.

I'd been seeing my therapist weekly for about two years. While at my usual Monday night session, I told her I didn't think I would ever get to feel better. She assured me that I had come a long way in the two years we'd been working together. Then she told me why everything felt all wrong. "You're an adult child of alcoholic parents," she said. "I wasn't raised in an alcoholic home, so I don't completely understand what you're going through. But the good news is there are people who do, and Al-Anon is where you'll find them."

She gave me a book about adult children of alcoholics and I read it in two days. I was amazed and angry that someone else had written and published my story.

I was desperate to feel better. If what she said was true, I had to find Al-Anon. I attended my first meeting the Saturday after she told me where I should go and I've been coming back ever since.

Not only did the people in the meetings tell my story, they listened to me relate my confusion and sadness - and they understood. All my life I'd felt like I just couldn't figure out how to maneuver the channels of talking to people, making friends, and dealing with life in general.

In Al-Anon I found there were people willing to love me when I couldn't love myself. They were willing to listen to me as I learned how to express myself and wander through my confusion. They showed me a different way to live. My Sponsor and other Al-Anon members have helped me throughout my continuing journey of learning to live and not simply to exist.

I'm so grateful to my Higher Power for putting a therapist into my path who was able to admit she didn't have what I needed. Moreover, she was willing to send me to a place where I could get help and begin the process of recovering from the effects of alcohol in my life.

By Sharon G.E., Colorado

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