

A changed perspective led me to serenity

By Kimberley M., Michigan

Last fall, I decided to visit my family for Thanksgiving. My decision thrilled my mother since I had declined the invitation numerous times in years past. This time, it felt like the right thing to do. I was ready.

I went home with an open, grateful heart - with no expectations and no lingering resentments. My visit was wonderful. I truly had a great time.

To welcome the New Year, I called both my adult Siblings. I wanted to express how nice it was to see them and spend time with them and their families. After our conversation, it was hard to believe that we were all under the same roof during that visit. Why was their reaction so different than mine? Then I thought about perspective - my perspective.

I'd set out on that trip intending to enjoy myself, free from the past, determined to keep things in the present. The only thing I can conclude is that something has changed. I've changed. I'm not better than they are. I'm just different. I am no longer seeking out the negative, holding onto past hurts and resentments.

Today, I navigate in a new way. Just for today, I am willing to work from where I am. I feel more comfortable in my own skin; more accepting of people, places, things, events, and family dynamics for who and what we are. I try to keep the focus on myself and my perceptions. I work at asserting reasonable, healthy boundaries, taking with me a deliberate attitude of gratitude during visits home or when making those phone calls. I take what I like and leave the rest.

I'm so grateful to Al-Anon for having shown me a lighter, better way. The best part - I no longer seek to argue my perspective with others. I am better able to accept and appreciate others exactly where they are. I respect their individual points of view. After all, "How Important Is It?"

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