

I am learning to live again - within the safety of AI-Anon

by Amelia C., North Carolina

After years of struggling to save my daughter from the ravages of alcoholism, I was broken, exhausted, and defeated. My life had truly become unmanageable.

The one thing I do remember about my first AI-Anon meeting is safety. For the first time since this nightmare began, I felt safe. That feeling has never left me. I am amazed at the absolute miracle of survival my program has given me.

Shortly after I came to AI-Anon my daughter disappeared, leaving behind two young daughters. The agony of abandonment would have been unbearable, but I felt safe.

There were many sleepless nights when the only thing that kept me grounded to this earth was the unfailing belief that I could face anything as long as I stayed in the safety of my AI-Anon circle.

Perhaps most difficult was facing the broken hearts of my grandchildren. Too young to understand the disease of alcoholism, yet their young lives were being torn apart by it. As they gazed deeply into my eyes, as only the very young can, I was able to reassure them with the same encouragement, strength, and hope that was so generously being offered to me.

In February 2008, I got the phone call no parent ever wants to receive. After more than three years of not hearing from her, I now heard that my beloved only child was in a hospital less than 100 miles from me. I was stunned that she could have been so close, yet so far away.

I raced to her bedside only to find that, in truth, she was already gone. In the middle of the night, her damaged heart stopped; though she was revived, the lack of oxygen had left her permanently and severely damaged. I sat and listened in dazed silence as a team of doctors gave me the grim prognosis. In March 2008, she drew her last precious breath.

Through this entire ordeal, my AI-Anon family was with me constantly; holding me, caring for me, catching me as I fell. The day of her funeral, a combination of A.A. and AI-Anon members carried her gently and lovingly to her final resting place.

The grief that followed has been unimaginable. I began to question everything. Even my abiding faith in a Higher Power was scrutinized. The miracle is that, once again, the circle has held strong; and in its safety, I am learning to live again.

My salvation has been the knowledge that I did not cause it, I could not cure it, and no matter how hard I tried, I could not control it. I am learning to accept what I could not change. Most importantly, I am again able to look into the griefstricken eyes of my granddaughters and offer them the encouragement, hope, and strength they so desperately need.

I am told I am an inspiration; however I am quick to give credit where credit is due. I believe today that my Higher Power could see around the corners I could not and led me to the safety and restoration I would need to survive.

Today, my grandchildren can laugh again and amazingly, so can I. When the time is right, I will be able to explain how this devastating disease took their mother away from us. One day they, too, can find the safety of an Al-Anon circle. We are truly blessed and the gratitude I feel as I continue to sit in the circle of my Al-Anon family is immeasurable.

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