

Al-Anon “Not Even Wild Horses” -By Carol R., New York

In the book, *Courage to Change*, I read on page 72, “When faced with other people’s destructive attitudes and behavior, I can love their best, and never fear their worst.” This observation pretty much sums up lessons I’ve learned from 5 years in Al-Anon.

Full of anger and fear when I came into the program, I felt as though someone had ripped my life apart. My youngest, my beloved 19-year-old son, was abusing alcohol and drugs and destroying our family life. A sober acquaintance told me, “*Save yourself. You can’t save him. Only he can do that. -Consider joining Al-Anon.*”

He went on to explain that when he was using and abusing alcohol nothing--not his parents' love, their pleading, or even wild horses--could stop him from using. “*You can’t stop him,*” my friend said, “*but you can help yourself emotionally.*”

I listened to him and looked for an Al-Anon meeting in my city. What I found was a program where I could immerse myself. This immersion gave me serenity, tranquility, and emotional stability. The tools of detachment, gratitude, the Twelve Steps, Traditions, and Concepts of Service made me into a better person than I was before.

I’m so much calmer and more rational now. I’m a kinder person than I used to be before I came to Al-Anon. I’ve worked on my character flaws and I have experienced some success. I’ve learned how to make decisions, instead of *reacting* to situations. Today I can listen to what other people have to say and mind my own business.

My life is not only serene, but I feel contented. My happiness does not depend on my son's drinking or sobriety. Life is good. I have a program that gives me tools to enrich my everyday living. They also help me in dealing with my son.

The anger I felt toward him and life in general is gone. Instead I have a loving, kind, yet detached relationship with my son. Sometimes I feel I have to start over again every day with Step One, but working the Twelve Steps has given me such strength. Life is never easy.

Bad things still happen, but I know I can and will handle whatever comes my way. Although I would never want my son to be an alcoholic, I am grateful to him because without him and his drinking I would never have found Al-Anon. I have a wonderful life. I love my son and feel confident that I can face the present and the future without so much fear.