Forgiving myself for my shortcomings

As a child, I felt I could do nothing right. My father was impatient and critical. I thought, "When I'm grown up, I'll get it right." My father's parenting style was to point out everything that I did wrong, and nothing that I did right. I believe he thought he was helping me become a better person. Of course, I never got everything right, but it didn't stop me from trying. I demanded too much of myself in striving for my father's approval. This determination carried over into my roles as a wife, a mother, and an employee.

When I came to Al-Anon, I heard many slogans and sayings: "Easy Does It," "Let Go and Let God," "Progress Not Perfection," "expectations are resentments waiting to happen," and "put your oxygen mask on yourself first." They were perplexing. But I knew there had to be a better way to live, so I kept an open mind, listened at meetings, read Conference Approved Literature, and eventually found a Sponsor.

Once I realized I was expecting too much of myself, I eased up, threw away my lists, and became less pushy. I renounced my endeavors to be perfect. My change in attitude allowed me to forgive myself for my shortcomings. Then it became easier to let go of my expectations of others, and I was also able to forgive them for being human. It was a relief to begin making different choices in my life.

This domino effect led me to find serenity, and my peace of mind and happiness continued to escalate. My faith in Al-Anon also increased, and I began to understand that my old slogans, such as "where there's a will, there's a way," no longer served me. I recognized that I and others each have our own Higher Power, and I'm not it. My Higher Power started as Al-Anon, and now it's something more. "Keep Coming Back."

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