

In Al-Anon, I am not different

By Debbie M., Florida

My persistent feelings of loneliness and dependency brought me to Al-Anon. Depending on others to make me feel adequate was a never-ending job and one that left me feeling short- changed. One day, in the midst of another period of feeling desperately lonely, I got good and angry and called out to myself “enough is enough!” I was tired of living with an aching heart and I wanted to get better. Soon after, I found my way into Al-Anon.

Starting out in Al-Anon, I immediately noticed a conflict. How could I talk about what I needed to share without others knowing I was gay. I thought maybe I’ll change the pronoun, or just listen and never talk. I grappled with wondering how I would begin my recovery if I never started to share authentically. I was so used to pleasing everyone and being someone others wanted me to be. Thanks to Al-Anon, I am much more aware of my need to pretend and my practice of blaming my problems on others, especially my spouse.

Over time in Al-Anon, I was able to share freely about my life and realized that being a gay woman was incidental compared to speaking my truth. My being gay was what I thought about when I was concentrating on the opinions of others. I now know that happiness is my job and comes from keeping the focus on me. When I concentrated on whether I am attractive enough or smart enough, or if my gayness would be accepted, my attention is focused on others. When I attend my Al-Anon meetings regularly,

“... Being a gay woman was incidental compared to speaking my truth.”

meet with my Sponsor routinely, and read my Al-Anon literature daily, my focus is on me. Worrying about what others think about me is not my business. My recovery is about finding companionship and listening to my heart.



Photo by Veronica M., IA

Today, when I share at meetings, my intention is on doing God’s will. If what I have to say helps others with their recovery, then my words are complete. Yes, I am blessed to be lesbian; however, I do not feel different from my fellow Al-Anon family members because of that. I, too,

am challenged by the same issues as other Al-Anon family members. I am not different—as I feel included in a giant circle of love, recovery, and acceptance. Being an active member in Al-Anon is what’s most important to me today.

Feel free to reprint this article on your Web site or in your newsletter, along with this credit line: Reprinted with permission of *The Forum*, Al-Anon Family Group Hdqts., Inc., Virginia Beach, VA