

# Why do I still go to those meetings?

By Jacki B., Connecticut

Sometimes, I am asked why I still go to “those meetings.” Yes, I have been in Al-Anon for a very long time, but my reply is simple. I came to Al-Anon because of alcoholism, but I stayed because of my life. I was overwhelmed with the effects of living with an alcoholic and all the problems associated with trying to raise five children. Al-Anon became my lifeline.

I think the greatest motivation for me then was that my children deserved one sane parent and it looked like it was going to be me—if our family were to have any chance. I worked hard to become a better parent, and we all began to recover. It helped that three of my children went to Alateen.

When I became stronger, and it looked like things were not going to improve in our household, my husband and I separated and later were divorced. Tough as things were trying to cope with raising five angry kids on my own, we not only survived, but we thrived.

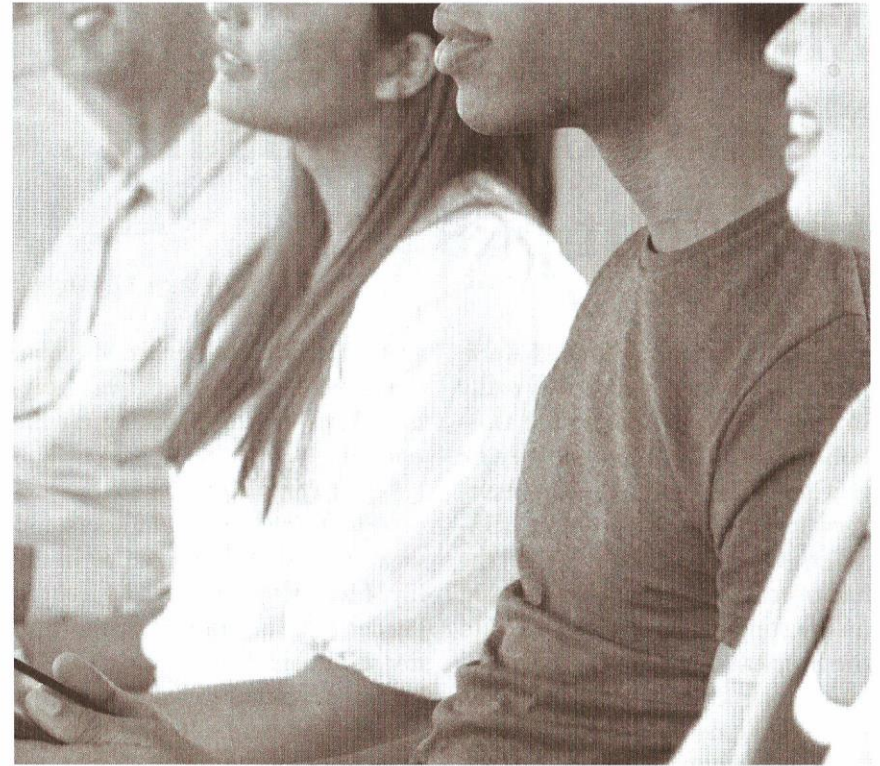
Sometime later, I married a wonderful man who also happened to be a member of Al-Anon. We were

all very happy. The children loved him; they grew up and became fine young adults, and all went relatively well for quite a few years. However, my husband became ill and was eventually wheelchair bound. It was such a great gift that we both had a program to live by and we kept that in mind. So often, when things were really difficult, we would use the slogans to guide us and encourage us. The little bookmark *Just for Today* (M-10) was also so helpful; we often quoted, “I can do something for 12 hours that would appall me if I felt I had to keep it up for a lifetime.”

*“Someone was there for me.  
Can I do less?”*

My husband required care around the clock, and I had not been able to attend meetings. Friends in the program would occasionally come to our home and hold a meeting for us, and these meetings were a God-send.

Eventually my husband died, and I was faced with yet another challenge: how to go on with my life.



It was a brand new experience to have no one to care for except myself—and it was scary! One of the first things I did was to go back to my Al-Anon meetings. It was as if they were waiting for me!

This brings me to the question I mentioned at the beginning: Why do I still go to those meetings? The biggest reason is that I’m still alive and I never want to forget all the lessons I’ve learned in the program. It is truly a program for living. Also, once in a while I hear a real

gem that is shared that stays with me, and I don’t want to miss those little pearls of wisdom.

Last but not least, what would happen if there were no one to greet the newcomer who is hurting, needs encouragement, and someone to say, “You’re in the right place”? I’ll never forget the feeling when I was a newcomer and a member sat me down, put her arm around my shoulder, and brought me a cup of coffee. Someone was there for me. Can I do less?

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