

My son's future is his— not mine

By Ruth H., Pennsylvania

“He is not living his life for me,” I thought as I shuffled into the cold kitchen. It was three o'clock in the morning. I was in search of an Al-Anon daily reader. My son, my only child and someone I loved more than anyone, had been arrested, spent the night in jail, and was in more trouble than I ever imagined possible.

I had never thought that my child, whom I put through college and spent many waking hours imagining his promising future, would be in that situation. However, all of that changed when his addiction became known to the family. From that time on, I faithfully attended Al-Anon meetings, sometimes four times a week. I got a Sponsor, chaired and spoke at meetings, and volunteered to speak at an Al-Anon meeting at the women's prison.

My son's future was my future, and I told myself that my efforts made in recovery were for the both of us. Deep down however, I was betting that my recovery would ultimately guarantee his recovery. In my heart, I believed that the love we shared along with the Al-Anon and A.A. program would be the life raft he needed to recover. I was his mother. I could make it happen.

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Vigorously, I embraced the Al-Anon program. At the same time, my son was making progress in A.A. Then, eleven months into his recovery, as we looked forward to acknowledging his year of recovery, he relapsed.



The nightmarish scenario of his getting arrested, with a mandated community service sentence, created an intense fear and anxiety that brought back the feeling of terror I had experienced when I first came into Al-Anon.

Now, weeks after the arrest, awake at three a.m., I reached for the book, *Courage to Change* (B-17), and randomly opened to a page that said, “You can't live someone's life for them.” It was what I needed to hear. As challenging as it was, I had to stop living his life and focus

on myself. I had to let go of the life he was creating and embrace my own life.

The next day I attended an Al-Anon meeting. The topic was, “Let It Begin with Me”—further confirmation. In the meeting, I shared my experience of randomly opening to a page in *Courage to Change* and reading, “You can't live someone's life for them.” Finally, I was beginning to understand that for my serenity, I had to live each day focused on myself and my recovery, and “Let It Begin with Me.”

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