

## **A Community of Understanding**

Fourteen months ago, I was overwhelmed with anxiety and felt completely broken. My desire to control was off the charts as I watched my beautiful 38-year-old daughter—the mother of a precocious five-year-old and wife of a kind and loyal man—sink deeper into the depths of alcoholism. Her decline had been ongoing for over 12 years, and I was reaching my breaking point.

In my fear, I wrote what I thought was an insightful and necessary email, outlining all my daughter's deficiencies and suggesting clear, measurable goals I felt she should pursue. I called her out as an alcoholic and detailed the negative impact her alcoholism was having on her young son, her husband, and me. I pleaded with her to quit her job and enter treatment immediately. I ended my rant with a sharp jab about her responsibility as a mother and the likelihood of her child continuing the pattern of addiction because of the behaviors she was modeling. That email was brutal, but at the time, I felt nothing else had worked, so this was my "big chance" to change everything with a mere stroke of the keyboard.

That exchange severed our relationship and plunged me deeper into panic and grief. In desperation, I turned to an online search that landed me on the Al-Anon website. I discovered that there were parent-focused meetings taking place on electronic platforms practically every hour of every day across the world. Nervously, I logged into my first meeting and listened as others shared their stories, which sounded like my own. I had

found a community of people who deeply understood my circumstances. I eagerly sought out a Sponsor and began to work the Steps. Gradually, I realized I was not alone and that I could be happy and at peace, whether my daughter continued to drink or not.

Today, my relationship with my daughter has been healed. She often describes the positive changes she sees in me that give her the freedom to fight for her sobriety, knowing that I will always show up with love, empathy, and compassion. I am at peace now and understand that she is on her own path. Additionally, I have an incredible network of Al-Anon angels around me who offer wisdom, kindness, and, above all, hope.

*By Sheryl V., Michigan*

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