

Stories from the Forum magazine: September 2008

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Chasing cars - from insanity to recovery

I thought if I could keep my teenage son away from his "bad" friends, he would come to his senses and stop drinking and drugging. I spent years of my life trying to rescue him from his poor choices. It was like he was walking toward a deep, dark chasm, and I was trying to stop him from falling in, but he kept pushing me aside so he could go down. I eavesdropped on his conversations, grounded him from everything, and trailed him night and day. Nothing helped.

I was so very, very tired. I lost weight and was barely hanging on to my job. I didn't enjoy life any more; I stayed away from friends because I didn't want them to ask about my son. I was determined to reason with him. My obsession was full-blown.

Late one night - I rarely slept any more - I saw a car pull up to the driveway with its lights out. Out of the shadows, I saw my son approach. I darted out the door to stop him from leaving. Seeing me, he jumped in the car, and they sped off with me running full-speed, screaming and waving at them to stop, dressed only in my nightgown.

Since I neglected to put on my glasses, I didn't have a license plate number to call the police. I knew who he was with by the color of the car. He would be gone for a few days and would return when the money ran out.

This scene, and many like it, was insanely repeated over and over again.

After my son was in a treatment center, they suggested I go to Al-Anon meetings. I attended several. Each one I liked a little more; there was such warmth and serenity. I finally found a place where I could rest and rejuvenate. I felt the love at each meeting, even with complete strangers, because we have a common bond - living with the effects of alcoholism.

My son did not stay in A.A., but that was his choice to make. He moved to his own place when he turned 18. We keep in touch and have a very healthy relationship. I have attended meetings for more than two years now. I have a Sponsor and read Al-Anon literature daily. I am very proud of the progress I have made. I have discovered the real me through the Twelve Steps. I have also learned to love my son unconditionally.

Last week he called to see if he and his friend could come over and watch a ballgame with the family. He sounded fine, so I said okay. We cooked, played pool, watched TV, and played baseball. When it was finally time to go, my son and his friend said their goodbyes with hugs and kisses. As they pulled out of the driveway, I noticed a cell phone on the couch. I grabbed it and ran full speed out the door and after the car, down the street,

waving and screaming for them to stop. They got out to see what I wanted, and burst into laughter at the "déjà vu" of the situation. At least this time I didn't chase them in my nightgown.

By Caroline G., Kentucky
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