

I learned how to take care of myself

I cannot express how much Alateen has helped me. Growing up, I was all alone. My parents were always fighting. Whether it was about what to have for dinner or getting a divorce, they were always at each other's throat. I would try to solve the issue and make things better, but I quickly learned that it made things worse. As a seven- or eight-year-old, I didn't know how not to be in the middle. Until Alateen, I didn't learn how not to get upset when they were fighting and to focus on myself.

Alateen has not only taught me how to detach with love from my parents' fighting, but it has also brought so many friendships and opportunities in my life.

When I was younger, not only did I have to deal with emotional, physical, and sexual abuse from my alcoholic father, I also had to watch my life fall apart day by day. Although my life was extremely hard and sometimes unbearable, I put on a smiling face and showed everyone that I was the happy kid in school, and that I loved life. This was hard to do, but I certainly did not want people asking questions and finding out that I really was a sad and lonely girl who had messed up parents.

I kept everything quiet until about sixth grade, when my parents got divorced. The divorce was so hard on me. I needed someone to talk to, so I told a few of my friends what was wrong. Being in sixth grade, drama and secrets spread fast. By the end of the day, my whole school knew that I was going through a hard time and that my perfect family had fallen apart. This was very hard to deal with, but looking back on it, I realized that this is what brought me to talk to people. I wanted to be popular and have friends so badly that I just poured most of my life out to them.

With everything being so bad both at school and at home, my mom suggested Alateen. I wanted to give it a try, however my sister didn't want to go. I found the courage to go alone. My first meeting was horrible. There was only one other kid and one of the Group Sponsors. Although I had hated that meeting, I decided to give it another shot, and I am so glad I did.

Slowly, everything started to make sense. I realized that I can't control my father, and that it really is not my fault he is drinking. I learned how to find a Higher Power, and most importantly, I learned how to take care of myself.

Alateen has brought so many people into my life, and I don't know what I would do without them. I am so thankful that I was able to bring four other people into the rooms of Alateen. Not only does Alateen help me deal with the alcoholic in my life, I use my program every single day. Words cannot describe how much Alateen has helped me. Although having an alcoholic in my life is extremely hard, I wouldn't change it for anything because it brought me to Alateen.

By Julie, Connecticut
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