

I Asked God To Guide My Words

One of the countless new skills I began to learn when I came to Al-Anon was managing my expectations. My need to improve in this area was especially evident whenever I was anticipating a visit with my alcoholic son, who lives in another part of the country. Beforehand, I would build up the visit in my mind's eye, picturing our family laughing together, doing fun things, talking easily and affectionately about our lives.

But it was never like that. Conversation was constantly strained. It was hard to find any safe topics. Our son didn't seem to want to talk about his work, social life, whether he was working his program or much of anything else. He wasn't particularly interested in doing any of the things I thought would be fun. My rosy expectations bore absolutely no resemblance to what really took place.

As a result, these visits left me feeling hurt, disappointed, frustrated, sad, regretful, hopeless and even a little angry. I definitely had to get my head into a better place.

With my Sponsor's guidance, I began to study Al-Anon literature on the topic of expectations. I soon discovered that there is a close relationship between my expectations and my level of acceptance—or lack thereof—regarding the circumstances of my life. My expectations were unrealistic because I had not truly accepted the realities of my son's life and their impact on mine. I was simply turning a blind eye to how things really were—not denial, but not full acceptance either.

In preparation for the most recent visit, I armed myself with lots of study, prayer, reflection, writing in my journal and a commitment to constantly seek my Higher Power's guidance. I literally asked God to guide every word I said and everything I did. While I hoped the visit would be, at the very least, pleasant and congenial, I no longer harbored glowing images that had no roots in reality.

The visit went better than any of the previous ones, and afterward I felt somewhat at peace. There had been times of real connection and other periods when each of us just went our own way, giving each other plenty of space. I relaxed and didn't try to force things into a mold that would never fit our life. I hope future visits will be even better, but I'm grateful to have learned a new way of dealing with my expectations that I can apply to all areas of my life.

By Anonymous
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