

I learned that *I* matter to those around me

By Cyndy K., Minnesota

I've been a member of Al-Anon for six years. I serve as our group treasurer, and I try to reach out to group members between meetings. Every once in a while, I am reminded about how keeping the focus on myself, and showing up at meetings matters to those around me.

"It also means that I have to accept that nothing I can do or say will fix her situation."

As the parent of a child who suffers from alcoholism and chemical dependency, the path isn't always clear. But I recently read that our lives touch others, whether we acknowledge it or not. We matter to the people around us. Take a minute to let that sink in! I know it's hard to believe when all my energy is going into fixing a problem that doesn't even have my name on it.

I can decide that my life matters beyond my role of parent/caretaker. But this means, I have to let go of my daughter and trust she will find



her own way. It also means that I have to accept that nothing I can do or say will fix her situation.

Since I began entertaining the idea that I actually matter to the other people in my life, I've been jotting down my thoughts and feelings and noticing how they affect my actions. There is a direct connection. It requires that I pay attention to the stories I tell myself, and how that inner dialog triggers feelings. This work is sacred.

I have an opportunity to "pause" before I say or do anything. I'm actually giving myself permission to forget about "the problem" which has been the center of my life for nearly a decade. I'm not successful every day. But I have hope.

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