

I learned to detach from my son—with love

I had two immediate thoughts when I first heard the phrase “detaching with love” and parenting in the same sentence. One, it’s a good theory. Two, whoever coined this phrase did not have children. How could a loving parent ever detach from their child knowing he or she was struggling and in pain?

Today, I have a better understanding of this concept. “Detaching with love” doesn’t mean I don’t care about my child or that I’m abandoning him. It doesn’t mean I don’t love him or think of him often. It doesn’t mean I don’t feel sad or disappointed about his lifestyle. I am only detaching from the horrible disease that he has been fighting for the last five years.

I still find myself worrying about him. When that happens, I ask myself if I can do something constructive. I have learned to trust my instincts. When my son was still active in his disease, I told him he could not move back home, but he could call me day or night and I would take him to get the help he needed. When he didn’t have access to a phone anymore, I loaned him my cell phone. If I’ve done all I can without enabling him, I “Let Go and Let God.” I pray that God watches over him and keeps him safe for me.

As of today, my son is sober. At the end of each day, if I haven’t heard differently, then I consider it a good day for him. This wasn’t how I pictured my life when my son became an adult, but I have accepted the fact that this is my new reality. I thank God for my Al-Anon friends, and I continue to take “One Day at a Time.”

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