

I Gave Myself Another Look

After decades of being a chameleon, changing and adapting myself to safely belong, I didn't have a solid grasp of who I truly was. The small sense of self I developed growing up in an alcoholic home was further diminished when I dated an abuser, then an alcoholic. There was no room in those relationships for my opinions or growth. I was so lost I couldn't make any decisions for fear they would be wrong and I would be punished. I needed to be told everything, from what restaurant to eat at to what my interests or goals should be.

Now, after just nine months in Al-Anon, I can look back and see myself more clearly. I wasn't sure I had made any progress until after I was told it was visible to others. I gave myself another look. I can see slow and gradual progress. I can make decisions. I speak up, but most importantly, I am less reactive. I feel less responsible for my alcoholic loved one's mood or problems. The woman I want to be can still care for others while holding boundaries. The woman I want to be can pause and think of the response I know can be more effective for my goal—a woman whose own north has a stronger pull than anyone else's.

I can forgive my mistakes and character defects because they weren't born from malice. Living life for myself and not someone else is an easier battle today, and one I don't back down from as readily as I did in the past. My alcoholic loved one and I are separate people, and I am worthy of mattering equally as a partner.

By Levi L.

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