

Husband's relapse posed spiritual challenge

By Denise P., New Jersey

Even in the midst of storms in our lives, I have come to realize that my Higher Power gives me refuge and provides serenity. All I need to do is ask for help, be aware, and listen for a reply.

Recently, my husband relapsed while we were visiting our daughter out-of-state. We missed our flight home because this disease was in full tornado mode. After changing our flight and eating the fee, we were waiting at the gate to board our plane.

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The storm was at a steady downpour at this moment, with sharp words and comments from both sides. My mind went into a tailspin, not knowing what else to do to stop the storm from escalating. It was then I remembered, I had choices and I could do something.

I removed myself to a quieter area of the terminal and reached out to my Sponsor by telephone. Her calming words were like an umbrella sheltering me from the storm. And her laughter, even in the midst of my turmoil, wrapped my shaking, cold body in a hug. I started to calm down

and actually felt my heart beating in a more normal state. When I hung up with her, I followed her guidance and began to seek refuge from the subsiding storm by praying to my Higher Power.

My primary thought was Step One and how so very powerless I was. After 16 years in Al-Anon, I had never felt the depths of powerlessness quite like this before. Could it be because my husband had just finished an amazing 30-day inpatient rehab just prior to us vacationing with our daughter, and he already relapsed again? Could it be that I was questioning our 34 years of marriage? Could it be that I was so very, very tired and didn't know how I could go on doing the same thing over and over?

My life certainly was unmanageable! For goodness sake, I was sitting in an airport terminal with tears streaming down my face, feeling the storm starting to escalate again, not even knowing what to do next.

But I did know what to do next. I closed my eyes, bowed my head, and once again talked to my Higher Power—this time truly admitting how very powerless I was over this disease and how my life had become unmanageable. I said that I was truly surrendering and asked my Higher Power to let me know He was there for me.

I kept saying over and over, "I am powerless, I am powerless, I am so very powerless," all the while praying for my Higher Power to show me that He was with me. Then the most amazing thing happened. As I felt my breathing calm down, I opened my eyes, and the first thing I saw was a huge advertisement on the wall of the airport with an inscription that said, in capital letters, "I AM POWERFUL!"

I smiled and felt the storm subside as the inner calm of my Higher Power's words were there before my very eyes, letting me know that I may be powerless, but there is One that is powerful and will help me find serenity, even in the midst of the storm! I snapped a photograph of that advertisement, and keep it in my journal to this day, letting me know that my Higher Power is, oh, so very powerful!

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