

One Al-Anon Journey: A Spouse's Experience with Addiction

Journal Summary Part 4 – Second Separation and Reunification

J. was drinking and driving with me in the car in October, 1999, about one year and six months after our first separation of three months began. I immediately decided that I would move out again this time, because I did not want to go through making him leave the house and have it drag on and on, like the first separation. J. was very angry when I told him I was looking for a place to live, but I was determined in spite of being very sad. I found an apartment with a six-month lease further away from our house; it was the best I could do with short notice. (This was a mistake – instead, I needed to find a place without a set time to leave.) J begged me to give him another chance, saying he would “try harder.” I said no. J. continued to be very angry, and then at the last minute, he did come through and helped me move. My family was very supportive, and didn't ask a lot of questions or give unwanted advice. J. and I agreed again, as in the first separation, that we would talk every day, get together when we wanted to, and we would not be dating other people.

I did do something different during this separation, however – I started volunteering once a week at the local elementary school close to my job, as well as at the animal shelter on the weekends. This helped me deal with my loneliness and sadness, and was a very positive experience. J. told me he had found an AA meeting that seemed like a better fit, and he was going regularly. However, I saw no signs of a true and complete dedication to recovery, and I told him this. The misunderstandings continued, and we still struggled with how to communicate. I met with my counselor and sponsor. J. and I went on our annual vacation with his dad and daughter, and had a wonderful time together. We spent some of the holidays together, and I once again could see the love was still there and we still enjoyed each other's company. I yearned for us to be reunited, and yet I could see J. was still not dedicated to recovery. My counselor told me her life was headed in a different direction, and gave me some names of other people to work with. After a while, I was able to find another great person.

In late December, something very bizarre happened. J. couldn't find his wallet, and thought maybe he had left it somewhere. The next day he went into our basement and found that the door had been kicked in. He suspected that Luke, his troubled nephew, had done this and come upstairs to take J.'s wallet while he was in the shower. It made sense to me, we talked about it, and I could see that J. was very upset. It was yet another huge, disappointing blow for him.

Life continued. I worked on a letter in mid-January 2000 that outlined my concerns about his approach to recovery and how that related to us reuniting, and read it to him. I also said in the letter that if he were to drink and drive again, I would seek a legal separation. I gave him the letter but we didn't talk about it for a few weeks.

A little while later he said he would try a different medication for depression. We went on a special work-related trip together and everything went well. All the things that brought us together in the first place were still there, and it was a glorious time. Because we had had such a nice time on the trip, I convinced myself that J. was doing better and everything would be OK. I moved back into our house in

the spring of 2000 after the six-month lease was up and briefly, I was thrilled. The love was still there and it was wonderful to be together again. But very quickly, the misunderstandings and J.'s anger came back to the surface. Once again, I was distraught. J.'s anger got worse. Approximately six weeks after I moved back in, J. was drinking and driving with his daughter, Robin, in the car.