

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

### **Journal Entries, Part 5 – Third Separation and Reunification**

May 31, 2000

I feel sick, sick, sick – and angry, and full of despair. When I got home from work, J. had left to give Robin a ride home from work. When J. got back, I could tell right away he had been drinking. I told him right then I knew he was drinking and driving, and that this time it means a legal separation. He looked at me and said, “Well, why didn’t you stop me?” My jaw dropped. Didn’t he remember that he left before I came home? And is it my job to control what he does? Choices have consequences, and I was very clear about what would happen if he were to drink and drive again. I can’t believe it. It’s only been six weeks since I moved back in from our second separation. What am I going to do? My mind is reeling.

June 1, 2000

I could hardly sleep, and woke up with my heart pounding. I decided to exercise to try to work out some of my dreadful feelings. I called my sponsor, several of my friends, and my counselor to talk about what had happened. I have decided J. should move out of the house this time, and I will tell him tomorrow.

June 8, 2000

It has been a very unhappy time with poor communication between us, and a lot of anger coming from J. Yet, we’ve had some moments of almost normal living, too. Yesterday when J. woke up, he was very angry at me for not giving him another chance, and also for asking him to move out of the house. I did not try to talk him out of being angry. Later in the day I met with my attorney to discuss the legal separation. I am going to pay for it myself because I know J. will get angry if I ask him to help. When I told J., he was absolutely stunned, as if he couldn’t believe I was actually going to follow through with my promise to pursue a legal separation. Last night when he got home things were a little better. Tonight, we talked about his plans for the future. He says he wants to have a workshop of some kind where he lives. I’m not sure this is practical, but didn’t say anything. J.’s dad is coming to visit us this weekend. We haven’t told him the latest news.

June 12, 2000

What a mess. When I got home Friday night, J.’s dad had arrived for the weekend, and I could tell J. had been drinking. I felt terrible. I’m sure his dad could sense the tension and sadness between us. Thank goodness he has been supportive of what I’ve been doing in the past. I haven’t given J. a deadline to move out because affordable rentals are hard to find. I have relatives who question this approach, but I believe I’m doing the right thing.

June 13, 2000

When I got home from work today, there was a note from J. saying he wouldn't be home tonight. I'm very, very sad. Please, God, help us.

June 14, 2000

When I got home from work today, there was another note from J., saying he was looking for a place to live over an hour away. I felt sick and started to panic. This will be so difficult. We look after Robin together – how is this going to work? Who will help with errands and medical appointments? Will this now be my entire responsibility? I called my sponsor and friends to share this news. No one has answers, of course – none of us do. Please, God, help me find my way.

I decided I need to prepare for another difficult conversation with J. This is what I'm thinking of saying to him:

"This is what I observe:

- I was hoping this move towards separation would encourage you to seek recovery, but I don't believe it has.
- I believe you were drinking on Friday and Saturday evenings while your dad was here.
- I don't have control over your life. I know it is truly out of my hands, but I do have some control over Robin's, who is not in a position to know when it is not safe to be in the car with you.
- I remember what you asked me when I said I was pursuing a legal separation because you had been drinking and driving. You asked why I didn't stop you from picking up Robin if I knew you had been drinking. I reminded you that I wasn't home yet when you left the house to go get Robin. So, it sounds like on some level you are blaming me for "allowing" the separation to happen.
- What do I do about you drinking and driving with Robin in the car? How are you going to deal with this? I am beside myself with anxiety because it involves someone whom we both love, and the safety of everyone else who is on the road when you are drinking and driving.
- Of course, I am worried about your safety as well, but I can't do anything about your actions – I have no control over you.
- I am trying to speak to the part of your mind that is not addicted."

June 15, 2000

I exercised this morning extra hard this morning because I couldn't sleep and woke up early. J. and I talked during the day, and then we met at church after work. He was less angry so we were able to have a conversation. I prepared these notes for when we meet with our couples' counselor tomorrow, with the help of my sponsor.

- Do you understand why I want a legal separation?
- How badly do you want to save this marriage?

- I have told you more than once that I will not live with drinking and driving, and would pursue a legal separation the next time it happened. What did I do that led you to believe I wasn't serious about this? Why are you surprised at my actions now?
- What are you willing to do to save our marriage?
- What is next for us?
- When I moved back after being separated for six months, I wanted our marriage to continue and believed it could. I hoped you had turned a corner. I had dreams for our future, but they have been shattered by your actions.
- This time, the separation needs to be at least a year, so I can see real progress.

June 16, 2000

We met with our counselor today, and we got through it. I was able to share many of my concerns. I'm feeling a bit more hopeful because J. was less angry and I felt like I could reach him. It turns out he has found a place to live and it's very close to our house, so we can still mutually look out for Robin. This was a huge relief. Thank you, God.

June 17, 2000

I had a big day at work, and when I got home, J. was cooking a wonderful dinner and we ate on our porch. It should have been a happy evening, but we both were sad, knowing what's coming – our longest separation ever. However, we will still see each other whenever we want, talk to each other every day, not date other people, and spend time together. This weekend he will work on cleaning his new place – it sounds like it's very dirty. I will see it soon. I feel sad.

June 21, 2000

J. is getting furniture he needs, and will start sleeping at his new place tomorrow night. He says he "wants to come back home" when he's better. I told him that's what I want too, but I know this time I want no doubts in my mind at all. I do not want to go through this again. My attorney called – the separation papers are ready. We will sign them next week when I get back from a work meeting. We continue to check in with each other every day. I tell him that I think of him all the time, and he continues to be in my heart. I feel so very sad and sorry for myself.

June 27, 2000

We signed the separation papers today. I am very sad, and also determined. We are continuing to work out arrangements for the car titles – I want them to be separate now, in case he gets into an accident. What a mess. Also, for the time being, I am picking up Robin so there is no risk of J. drinking and driving with Robin in the car.

July 4, 2000

J. and I met at church, and had lunch afterwards. We still enjoy each other's company, in spite of everything that is happening. We both loved the special music at church, and I felt close to him. We got together tonight to watch the fireworks, and he promised me that next year, we would be reunited in our

marriage, watching fireworks and living together. It was good to hear him say this, and I know he means it, but can he live it out?

July 5, 2000

J. came over and cooked a special meal. We ate on our porch and enjoyed a summer evening with Robin. We could have this joy every day of our lives, of being with our soul mate, and yet the disease of alcoholism robs J. of himself. I don't understand why God has cursed human beings with this disease.

July 6, 2000

I am having an extremely difficult time adjusting to this separation. J. stopped sleeping at our house about two weeks ago and so far, I have been frittering my time away. I think I'm stuffing myself with food because I don't get to hold J. or feel him hold me. Is it possible to think of this new, available time as a gift and not punishment, so instead of feeling sad and lonely I am energized to be doing things that are life-affirming and bring joy?

When I come home at night, I throw some food together, throw it down my throat, turn on the TV, watch shows to escape, stay up too late, eat more food, and wake up full of regret for wasting time, eating too much, and staying up late so I'm tired the next day. This is stupid!!! I would really like to do better than that with my time. Please God, guide me each day to do your work in the world and do your will. Please help dissolve this knot of fear and anxiety. Help me to do better.

July 7, 2000

Things to ask J. when we meet with our couples counselor tomorrow:

- Is recovery important to you?
- Will you make an effort because you know it's what I want, or do you want it for yourself?
- What do you want for your own life? I need to know so I can make decisions for my own life.
- During our previous two separations, it seems they were not significant for you. So how do I do things differently this time so you see how important it is to me that you truly embrace recovery?
- I'm enabling you if I protect you from this consequence from your action of drinking and driving.
- It is up to you if or when this separation ends.
- It seems like you are choosing alcohol over me – that your love for alcohol is more important than your love for me.

July 8, 2000

We met with our couples counselor today. I told J. the thoughts I had worked on. I also said I feel I'm being cheated out of the marriage I want, and I'm angry. When I said that I felt like he was choosing alcohol over me, our counselor said something that hit me hard – he said J. was choosing alcohol over himself. We talked about the difference between enabling and encouraging – I want to be encouraging. I said that our marriage and his recovery go hand in hand. Our counselor said it was OK for me to comment on things that are bothering me, but I shouldn't criticize J., because it will stop all communication and energy between us. This makes sense.

July 15, 2000

J. called me to say he was feeling very sad about something that happened with Robin, who has made a poor choice. I was sad, too, when I heard what happened. Why is life so challenging for some people, and others seem to skate through life without major trauma? Life is so unfair. Please, God, help us help Robin.

J. told me he has decided to go ahead and retire. He's tired of his job, wants more freedom in his life, and wants to spend more time with his dad.

July 16, 2000

I woke up feeling very sad. J. came over for a visit, and we had another great meal that he cooked. It was so good to be with him. We talked about how much it meant to both of us to be involved in a volunteer project at church, and the fact that everyone appreciated what we had done. It was a lot of work, but it meant a lot. I know J. likes helping others, which is one of the things that attracted me to him. He is very kind and compassionate when he's not consumed with his addiction.

July 18, 2000

I was very sad today. I wonder what the future holds for us. How long will I be living like this, separated from the man I love, waiting for him to make changes in his life? I continue to cope by eating too much. I'm gaining weight but I figure this is better than other things I could be doing. I'm still exercising most days, but eating, especially sugary things, is a very easy way to deal with my sadness.

July 21, 2000

One of my relatives arrived to visit me for a few days. It's wonderful to be together and just talk. J. came over and cooked a delicious meal for us. He also apologized for what had happened to cause the separation, and said he wished the circumstances were different. I'm very proud of my relative for treating J. with respect, and not being angry at him, at least to his face.

August 1, 2000

I went to my usual Al-Anon meeting, and talked about how sad I feel. But going to the meetings always gives me a lift. I see my friends in recovery, and hear about things that other people are going through. It not only helps to know I'm not alone, but that other people are facing far more serious challenges. It puts my issues in perspective. I also heard something helpful – look up at the sky, and notice the clouds. It can lift us out of being stuck in our heads.

After the meeting, I met with my counselor, and we talked about the things J. and I had discussed with our couples counselor last month. I'd like to believe J. is taking his recovery seriously, but I'm not sure that he is. I can't control what happens – I can only focus on myself. Please, God, help me live one day at a time.

August 7, 2000

J. and I spent some lovely times together over the weekend. He mowed the lawn, cooked two great meals, and we enjoyed being together. I still love him, and want our marriage to continue. Can he make the changes he needs to for that to happen?

I heard the funniest thing at the coffeeshop this week – someone said, “I’m the healthiest corpse in the graveyard.” I laughed out loud. It’s so good to laugh. I’m still staying up too late and eating too much. I’m tired all the time, and it’s my own fault.

August 9, 2000

J. and I met for a picnic after work, and then went to a great movie. We still connect. How I long for these happy times to continue.

August 25, 2000

J. and I had a conversation today about his next steps in recovery. I’ve heard it before, and now we’ll see if he follows through. I’m still eating too much and staying up too late. Why can’t I do better? I wake up tired the next morning, filled with regret, but it doesn’t change my behavior. I’m so sad, but right now this is how I cope.

August 30, 2000

At the Al-Anon meeting, I told the group that I’m in training for widowhood.

September 5, 2000

This day began really well. I started going through things in closets, and J. came over for a visit and to go through some of his things. He hurt his back, though, and is in a lot of pain. This isn’t good. He’s hurt his back before and when he’s in pain he has a terrible time coping with it in a positive way. I can see recovery taking a back seat to the pain. I’m very worried.

September 7, 2000

J. and I are supposed to drive this weekend to visit his father. I’ve asked J. to tell his dad that we will be sleeping apart during the visit. J. isn’t happy about this, and I’m feeling very sad but I know I’m doing the right thing.

September 8, 2000

I met with my counselor today, and we talked a long time about the trip to see J.’s dad, and if I’m being an enabler. It was very difficult and I’m so sad.

September 10, 2000

It’s been a difficult day. When I woke up this morning, I realized I should not go on the trip to visit J.’s dad, that I would be an enabler if I pretended that things are OK when they are not. I called him

to tell him. It was a very sad conversation. When does all this sadness end? I feel like I'm treading water while I'm waiting for J. to truly take hold of recovery. But I made a vow when we married, and I believe in my heart that God is asking me to honor "in sickness and in health," even if other people wonder what I'm doing and why I'm doing it.

September 16, 2000

I found out today that a while ago, J. did not invite me to the official event celebrating his retirement. I feel awful, as if I've done something wrong, when I know it's not true. I also found out that he is considering a consulting opportunity. He said it was very gratifying to know that people have admired his work and are seeking him out and the extra income would help a lot. He says it would only be part-time, but I seriously doubt that is possible for him. I can see it unfolding now – recovery taking a back seat to work. Oh, I am so very sad. This is incredibly difficult!

September 21, 2000

Last night I had a very disturbing dream about J. It made me very sad and worried about our future. This afternoon I talked to J. and he volunteered to come over to the house and make dinner for me, and it was really delicious, as always. We ate on our porch and talked about options for our future. To me, it seems like he's drifting, as he has in the past – he goes to meetings some days, and still hasn't found a sponsor – in other words, he's not truly engaged in recovery, so nothing has changed from our previous separations. He talks more about the possibility of his new consulting opportunity than he does about recovery. It was also a huge blow to hear that he's stopped going to counseling because he doesn't feel that it's helping. I love being with him, yet I know in my heart this isn't real recovery. I stuffed myself on ice cream while I was doing dishes, trying to fill the void inside. Of course, this will affect my sleep. But at least I'm enjoying volunteering at the elementary school. The kids are a lot of fun, and I'm totally engaged in thinking about something completely different than J.'s recovery, or the fact that it isn't happening. I am still doing the language learning, and that helps me feel like I'm making progress in one area that is completely under my control.

September 26, 2000

What a day. I finished a big surprise project for one of my family members, and put it in the mail. I think they will be very pleased when they open it. It felt good to be doing something positive for someone else. And then I found out that someone I know and used to work with, who is about my age, died suddenly and unexpectedly of a brain aneurism. It was a huge shock. We never know what's going to happen in the future.

October 2, 2000

I spent another Friday evening by myself, again, and I remember the wonderful Friday evenings J. and I used to have when we were not separated, and I got extremely sad. Later I called J. and left a message, saying I was going to church and hoped I would see him there. He didn't call back so I went by myself and felt the sadness and despair wash over me. I talked to relatives this afternoon and they were

very concerned about me. I'm so lucky to have their constant moral support and love. They want me to come for a visit in the next month. I think I'll go.

October 6, 2000

I met with my counselor today, and we came up with a list of things I need to share with J. when the time is right.

- Do you have a plan for recovery?
- Is our marriage important enough to you to do something about the tremendous emotional pain and trauma you have from the past?
- Or do I need to accept that our marriage is over? This is NOT what I want.
- Are you willing to confront the pain that triggers drinking and address the issues that lie underneath, or do you want to just continue hoping you can somehow avoid the pain?
- There are other ways to deal with the pain besides drinking.
- I want to see you free of that pain. I know how much support you will need to confront your past. This pain is keeping us from being closer.
- I'm aware that you and your counselor were meeting, but that you have stopped. Did you encounter something you couldn't handle?
- You need a safe container to deal with your pain, without everyday distractions like the amount of time you are spending on your consulting.
- We have so much to live for, and so much to look forward to. You are cheating yourself out of this joy we could have, together.

October 8, 2000

I talked to J. over the phone after work today. He sounded sad, which makes me feel sad. As far as I know, he still doesn't have friends from AA to talk to – basically, I'm his only friend. I feel so fortunate – my relatives are a huge support, and we enjoy each other's company. I have Al-Anon friends I can talk to if I'm sad, or friends I've made throughout my life. I would wither up and probably die if I didn't have friends. But I can't make friends for him, and I have to let go. I know he would rather spend time working than deal with his past or spend time on recovery. I was hoping he would be really dedicating himself to recovery with the extra time in his retirement. But that extra time will vanish once he starts consulting. I'm sure he will decide to do it. This is another thing I have to let go. I tried looking at the clouds, and it helps for a minute.

October 14, 2000

We met with our couples counselor, and I talked about the issues I'm concerned about. J. says he's working on it, like always, but I see no progress. He's not so defensive about his recovery when we're with our counselor, as if J. is on his "best behavior" with him, but boy is he defensive when I bring it up outside of our sessions. We had lunch together afterwards but it was very quiet.



October 18, 2000

J. called me to tell me he's decided to go ahead with the job opportunity that has opened up for him. My heart sank. I know what will happen – he will throw himself into work, it will take over his life, and he will forget about recovery. I am very sad, but there's nothing I can do.

October 26, 2000

Luke called to talk to J. Evidently there's a new crisis – the only time he calls is when he wants money or needs J. to do something for him. I called J. to give him the message. Please, God, do we have to have something else to deal with???

November 8, 2000

I have just returned from a wonderful visit with my family. It was great to be together and be somewhat distracted from my worry and sadness. I cried a lot while I was there. J. said he missed me.

November 18, 2000

When I woke up this morning, I had the distinct sensation that I had been holding both of J.'s hands in mine – even after I woke up, I felt that. And before I fully woke up it felt like a half-dream and I was talking to him and I said something about consequences. He said yes, he knows about the importance of consequences, and I wasn't hinting about recovery but he seemed genuinely interested in his recovery – he brought it up himself. He said (still in this half-dream) he had been talking to his counselor about recovery and as he was telling me, J. seemed truly changed – he was not defensive, and was eager to do whatever it takes to be well. I was so happy – it felt like a message from God.

November 20, 2000

J. and I went to church together today, and afterwards he told me that he went to visit a residential rehab place earlier in the week, but it doesn't seem like a good fit for him so he's not going to pursue anything there. I was crushed to hear this because it has an excellent reputation, and I had been so hopeful that he had turned a corner since my dream two days ago. I wanted to ask a lot more questions but decided against it because his recovery is his recovery. Where are we headed??? If only he were truly eager for recovery, like he seemed in my dream.

November 28, 2000

J. told me today he's going to try an out-patient program that meets once a week. I'm sad because this doesn't seem like enough.

December 12, 2000

I found out that my counselor died suddenly a few days ago from a massive stroke. We really connected – this is a terrible blow. She knew a lot about addictions and helped me understand my dreams. It will be a struggle to try to find another person to talk to.

December 14, 2000

I had a dream that made me sad – it's easy to figure out, too.

I'm driving in my car and get off at the wrong exit. I try to get back on, and come to a street intersection. I don't see a traffic light, or a stop or yield sign; I start to go through the intersection and then all of a sudden, cars come from different angles and almost hit me. It keeps happening. I look for a sign to tell me where I'm supposed to be and when is it safe for me to go through the intersection, but I don't see any. It's very scary. I look for a sign that will tell me I'm going the right way to get back on. I think I'm at the right place to keep going, but I'm not sure.

Boy, that's sure how I feel right now – I can't find the right way to get back on the right road, I feel like I'm going to get hit, I'm scared, and there are no signs telling me the right way to go. This is the story of my life right now.

December 23, 2000

J. and I decorated our house for the holidays, a family tradition, and I wonder if we'll be together next year and what we'll be doing. I looked at the special ornaments we've received as a couple from my parents, one saying "Just Married," and I got very sad. A couple of days ago all I could was eat and eat and eat – cake, and candy, more cake and more candy – and it didn't help my sadness at all. But today J. and I volunteered at church again to help with another big project, and it was wonderful to feel like we can be a team, doing things we believe in. It was very sad to say goodbye to him and go our separate ways at the end of the evening. We will celebrate Christmas as a family, though, and that will be nice.

January 28, 2001

J. and I went to a work-related meeting out of town, but did not stay together overnight. As always, it was great to be with him, hear his ideas, and explore a new place. He is spending a whole lot of his time on his new job, as I figured he would. He never talks about recovery. There is nothing I can do.

February 5, 2001

I notice I'm writing in my journal a lot less often than I used to. I'm still going to Al-Anon meetings on a regular basis, and volunteering at the school, two things that mean a lot to me. I talk to my sponsor and my Al-Anon friends. I am continuing with learning a language, and it feels very fulfilling. Church is important. But it's very painful to write the same thing over and over again about what's happening with J. – my worry over his commitment to recovery, my sadness about the future and whether we'll ever be reunited in our marriage, going into panic mode when he doesn't answer his phone, the good times we have (most of the time anyway) when we are together, eating too much and staying up too late as a way of numbing my pain...it's all the same.

I write my dreams down every time I remember them, but most are so odd they aren't giving me any insights. I haven't had the heart to find a new counselor. I'm sad all the time, I'm afraid of the future, and I worry constantly. I used to tell people at the Al-Anon meeting that my epitaph is going to read, "She worried a lot, and then she died." This week I amended it to read, "She worried a lot, and she

was afraid a lot, and then she died.” Is this my life – that I worry and I’m afraid all the time??? At least my job gives me a reason to get out of bed every day, even if it’s stressful a lot of the time, because sometimes it’s very rewarding. I’m lucky to have it. I do my best to be grateful for what I have – as they say in the program, “the attitude of gratitude.” I’m more and more convinced that if you can be grateful, you can be happy. And I’m very blessed my family continues to be supportive. I hear horror stories at the meetings of people not getting along with their families and it makes me so sad.

So what triggered this entry today? J. was very sad when he came over to our house before we went to church together. He didn’t want to talk about it. Instead, he talked about another job opportunity, as if that is going to help him deal with his depression. My hands are tied – I can’t fix this and it hurts so much. I would do ANYTHING to make his pain go away, and it is not possible for me to do it. At least now I know this in my heart as well as my head – well, mostly anyway. I can pray for him and love him, and that’s it.

February 20, 2001

We celebrated Valentine’s Day together with a lovely meal, and we exchanged presents. But the present I want most is my husband to be embracing recovery fully, and that is not happening. He talks about the job instead, and I want to scream. His dad came for a visit, Robin joined us, and J. cooked fabulous meals. I found out Luke wants to come for a visit. I told J. I do not want him in our house. I do not want to be worried that he is going to steal things. Please, God, help us.

March 6, 2001

We spent a lot of time together over the weekend, and J. is sleeping over now. It is wonderful. The love is still there. I still want our marriage to continue. It is a lot less lonely when I know I’m going to be seeing him. Then we talked about “our future” for a while, and he brought up when he can move back. I told him I needed to see that he was truly embracing recovery, and he assured me that he was. Time will tell.

March 16, 2001

J. is now sleeping at the house with me on a regular basis. It is so nice to wake up next to him. But this morning he was very grumpy. After a little while I asked him if he was angry with me – he said no. I said it sure feels like he’s angry at me. He said, no, he was just tired.

March 21, 2001

We did our big volunteer project at church together, and met a woman who seemed a little “off,” like she wasn’t quite all there. J. said his perception was that she had done a lot of drugs and her brain had been affected. It was very sad. Once again, I wonder if this is what might happen to J.

March 24, 2001

Today J. went to an all-day conference on addiction at the mental health agency. When he came over for dinner tonight, he said it was really great, and he learned a lot. He seems to be more engaged

with recovery in the past couple of weeks – I hope it lasts. I must say it is HEAVEN to wake up next to him. I don't feel lonely and I'm less sad. He's going to AA meetings on a regular basis again.

However, I still freak out if I call J. and he doesn't call back right away – I panic about the possibility of drinking and driving, even though he assures me he's not drinking now. My own journey of my own recovery continues – it's important that I learn, and live out, the fact that my own happiness and serenity does not depend on the actions of others. In my mind I know this, but obviously not in my heart.

I'm still having lots of weird dreams. A recurring theme seems to be that I see houses that look OK from a distance but as you get closer you see they have crummy siding tacked on. It's supposed to make the house look newer but it's obvious it's cheap and won't last long. Is this about our marriage – it looks OK from a distance but if you look carefully you see there are problems? Another recurring theme is being lost and asking for directions. Hmmm – pretty obvious there.

April 18, 2001

In the past month I have prayed a lot and thought a lot about J. moving back into our house, and it feels like the right thing to do. He's been boxing up things where he's living and bringing them back here. I'm very happy. Am I 100 percent certain that J. won't relapse? No, I'm not, but if I see behavior that shows recovery is his highest priority, and he doesn't drink and drive, then that is enough. When I called him from work, he said he was having "a great day." That makes me happy.

I've been talking to one of the ministers at church about J.'s struggles, and she has many good insights. She's also helping me figure out how to word things so questions come out more calmly. I love this one: "Help me understand why you do/think/choose X" instead of starting the question with "why." That is so helpful. I continue with the daily Al-Anon readings. There is always something helpful, no matter how many times I have read them before. My sponsor and her husband are going to be moving a few hours away to be closer to family. I am happy for them, but sad for me. We will do our best to keep in touch, but she will be much busier with relatives.

April 28, 2001

Today J. sold the furniture he bought for where he was living, and has been back at our house full-time for a week. I tell him that when I wake up next to him, it feels like Christmas Day. We will be spending the weekend on a fun learning/outdoor experience trip a couple of hours away. We are excited.

May 7, 2001

We had a "first" today – we listened to a tape together on embracing recovery, and it was a great experience. This is what I've been longing for all along – that we can share this journey together. I'm hopeful that we've really turned a corner this time. We are doing nice things for each other more frequently, like exchanging back rubs. It feels like we're a real couple again. His unreasonable anger is happening less often.

However, our old pattern of going to bed much later than I would like continues. I'm tired all the time during the week. Why can't we talk about this rationally and figure out something that works for both of us???

May 21, 2001

Earlier in the week I had a work trip out of town that took two days, and when I returned, I could tell J. was very sad. He said he didn't want to talk about it. It's so difficult to watch him struggle with depression, and nothing I do or say makes any difference. But the next morning he went to an AA meeting, and he said it helped. Yesterday he went camping for the weekend, which always lifts his spirits. When he got back today, he was much more chipper, and we had a lovely dinner together.

We got some good news – my family is thinking about having a big family reunion trip at a national park next year in the summer. J. is very excited about the chance to be outdoors, looking at wonderful scenery, and go hiking at a new place. I told my family to count us in.

May 23, 2001

What a dreadful time. It turns out I unwittingly hurt a friend's feelings at work, and as much as I have apologized, it's not getting any better. I am feeling frantic. I tried to talk to her twice, and wrote her a note, but I can tell she is still very upset. There's nothing more I can do. How I hate this feeling of disappointing someone! I have to let it go and move on as best I can. Please, God, help us.

June 4, 2001

It was quite a weekend. It appears the work J. has been doing since his retirement is changing. He wants to move his office from upstairs to our living room so he'll have more space – I told him that was fine with me, so yesterday and today all the furniture was shifted around. It will be different, but I think it will work out OK.

Then we got a phone call today that Luke is back in jail, yet again, for stealing, while he awaits sentencing. He was caught red-handed in his car with stolen items from several homes. We have lost count how many times he has been in jail. Whenever it happens, J. is plunged into a deep depression. I tried to reassure him today, as I always do when we get bad news from Luke, that he has done all he possibly can throughout his life to help Luke, but I can tell I'm only scratching the surface of J.'s sadness. This is another example of something that J. will have to come to terms with himself – I can't fix it for him, as much as I would like to try. I'm very worried about what this will do to J.'s commitment to making recovery a high priority. Please, God, help J. weather this storm. Help me know how to help him.

June 7, 2001

The bad news continues. Last night J. said that I had “snapped” at him a couple of days ago, and his feelings were very hurt. Are we going back to the times when he couldn't tell me at the time that I'd done something inadvertently to hurt him? This makes me incredibly sad.

Then he told me that he had more news about Luke – before this latest arrest, Luke was involved in several other thefts – at least there was no violence – but his name was published in the paper, along with what he was charged with. J. is beside himself with shame and guilt. I am doing my best to comfort him, but nothing is working. We stayed up very late, and today I was absolutely exhausted at work.

June 11, 2001

J. has stopped going to meetings on a regular basis. I'm very worried, but there's nothing I can do – his recovery is his business. I had a dream last night that J. doesn't seem to care about me; he's not interested in making me happy and he feels that I'm acting the same way towards him. I woke up this morning and I was very depressed.

June 14, 2001

J. was very grumpy when I got home after work, and he got angry when I commented that he wasn't eating very well. He said he doesn't want me to tell him what to eat. I'm sad and worried. I can tell Luke's latest arrest is taking a toll on J.'s mental state. Please, God, help us.

June 26, 2001

We went out of town for a couple of days to one of our favorite places. It was lovely and we had a wonderful time. But I can tell Luke's shadow is always in J.'s mind.

July 4, 2001

I'm feeling very sad and anxious. J. has gone to a few meetings, but it's not the daily habit it was earlier. It seems like his consulting work is his highest priority now.

A good friend of mine came for a visit Sunday, we had a great time, and I thought everything was fine between J. and I. Then last night he tells me he went to the store to get his own cookies because I didn't share any with him when my friend came to visit. I was stunned – we didn't even have cookies – we had bread and butter with honey, and of course he was welcome to have some if he wanted. I feel like we are going backwards. I can feel his unreasonable anger and I feel awful. I think of where I was one year ago, with J. reassuring me that we would be together for the next 4<sup>th</sup> of July, and here we are, together physically in our house but we are certainly not together in heart or mind. Oh, I am sad and I keep stuffing myself. When do things get better?

July 9, 2001

I had a dream about us last night. We had bought a huge old house, but it needs a lot of renovations; the kitchen will need to be completely re-done, and right now it can't be used at all. In the dream, I am pregnant. I look at the outside of the house, and it's dirty – can it even be cleaned, or do we have to re-paint it? I wake up and I think of our marriage – it needs a lot of renovating and some parts aren't working at all. I'm very sad. I'm eating a lot when I'm not hungry, but it doesn't help me feel less sad. We can still connect at times, though. We traded backrubs, and that was wonderful.

July 13, 2001

Last night after dinner I talked to J. about getting to bed 15 minutes earlier, and he said I hurt his feelings. Yes, I appreciate the fact that dinner is waiting for me when I get home. Why can't he understand that I'm exhausted all the time, and sleeping in on the weekends isn't enough? He was up late working until after 10. I called a friend for support, and said that I feel like there is a huge mass of disgusting glop on my plate and I MUST eat it – that's the only way I'm going to get rid of it. I have to eat it and digest it, no matter how awful it looks and tastes. She asked if it was nourishing in any way – I said no, it was just disgusting but somehow God had put it on my plate, there it was, and it's not going away until I eat it. I must face the facts, fully digest them, that J. is not embracing recovery, he is full of anger and I'm a convenient outlet for it, he is depressed, the trauma from his childhood is still with him, he is not able to make a commitment to deal with it, his dad is slowing down, Luke's problems are not going away, and Robin is a worry. I'm so depressed.

July 19, 2001

This morning, J. played one of his best practical jokes on me, ever, and he wasn't even home to see my reaction. I called him later to tell him how hard I laughed. How does he think of these things? It reminds me of why I married him. We need more laughs right now. Work is his highest priority, as I had feared it would be, and he only occasionally goes to meetings. I get the feeling that recovery is not a priority at all right now.

July 24, 2001

J. went to visit his dad over the weekend, and I could tell he was very sad about seeing his dad in declining health. His dad did physical labor his whole life and overall is in great shape, but his heart is failing. I held J. for a long time and did my best to comfort him. This is hitting J. very hard. I'm worried about how this will affect his depression. He's only going to meetings a couple of times a week, now – and still no sign of a sponsor. I have learned through bitter experience that if recovery isn't first, it doesn't last.

July 28, 2001

J. did a wonderful job with a special presentation at work on a mutual project. I'm so proud of him and all of his talents. I complimented him over and over and yet I can see he isn't as proud of himself as I am. It makes me very sad that J. has such a difficult time with self-esteem. He is a GREAT person, with so many wonderful qualities, in addition to being very intelligent, and yet he can't believe it in his core self...and once again, I can't fix this for him, as much as I would like. This is what he should be talking about in counseling, and yet he isn't going. I'm very worried.

August 8, 2001

Last night after dinner we talked about what we'd like to do if we made more time for fun. I was glad to hear him raise the issue, because his consulting work is obviously his highest priority. He told me recently that the transition from working full-time to being retired is the most difficult thing he's ever

done...and the solution has been to go back to working full-time – actually more than full-time because he’s working on nights and weekends now, which he didn’t do when he was working for his career.

August 15, 2001

We had another “communication misfire” yesterday. It turns out that J. is very upset with me when he heard I had gone to a luncheon for work a few days ago that he could have attended as well, but didn’t because he didn’t know about it. I felt very bad because I could have invited him, but just didn’t think about it. He told me he feels like he’s “trapped in the house” doing all this consulting work. I’m so sad. He didn’t go to one meeting this past week. I hate being J.’s punching bag. I know he’s having a difficult time, but that’s no excuse to take it out on me.

August 17, 2001

Oh my goodness, what a blow. J. called me at work right before I had an evening meeting out of town – his dad is in the hospital because his heart is failing. I told J. I would go with him tomorrow to be with his dad, and take however much time off work I need to. Please, God, help us.

August 24, 2001

Life never stops. We spent six days with J.’s dad, and he’s stable at the moment. We were with him all day every day at the hospital, meeting with doctors and figuring out what to do next. He was operated on to install a pacemaker, and this is doing the job. The cardiologist was annoyed when I asked how much time his dad had left, but I told him I wasn’t looking for an ironclad prediction, just his instinct based on his years of medical experience. He said although J.’s dad wouldn’t survive another heart attack, he might be lucky and have a couple of good years. So that is good news.

Every night, after being in the hospital all day, we cleaned the house from top to bottom as best we could. It’s obvious that his dad’s failing health meant a lot of things in the house and yard weren’t being dealt with. It was absolutely exhausting. But I feel very close to J.’s dad myself, and I’m glad I could be there. The house is in much better shape now. We got back home last night. Then today when I got home from work, J. told me that Robin has a new, serious medical issue and we need to stay on top of things. I couldn’t believe it. Is there no break between crises? I guess not. And my boss expressed disappointment in my job performance. I will have to work harder. I’m so very, very tired.

J. will be going to see his dad this coming weekend, and will stay for several days. This will be happening for some time to come, I’m sure. I fear all efforts for recovery will end, and all energy will go towards his dad. I’m very worried but there’s nothing I can do. Please, God, help us.

September 3, 2001

Today was the last day my minister friend was at church, because she is moving a few hours away to be closer to her grandchildren. It will be difficult to lose her wisdom and insights, and I love her sermons. She assured me this week that we can keep in touch through e-mail.



Two days ago, J. drove to get his dad and bring him here for a few days, sleeping at a nearby B&B because we don't have a guest bedroom set up. His dad is a very easy guest. J. and I had a huge misunderstanding this evening about family plans for tomorrow. It was all so unnecessary. What is happening to us? Please, God, guide our steps.

September 10, 2001

I have had two dreams very recently – one last night – where my body is mutilated. In the dream last night I did it to myself; it was extremely painful. I woke up and I felt sick. What is happening to me?

September 17, 2001

J. brought his dad here again a week ago, and then brought him back to his home, turned around, and came right back here. We have been talking to his dad every day, and he seemed to be getting stronger. J. went back to his consulting projects, trying to catch up from all the time he's taken off. Last night we talked after dinner, and he told me he felt overwhelmed – from trying to be there for his dad, worrying about Luke who will most like be going to prison for several years (the sentencing has been postponed again so we don't know yet for how long), worrying about Robin's health, and catching up on his consulting work. I sympathize with everything he says – of course he feels overwhelmed!!! Who wouldn't?

And then today we got a call this morning that his dad had fainted at church, so we rushed down there as fast as we could manage to pack. When we got there, we spent time in the hospital with other members of his family and tried to stay calm. It will be a while before we know how serious things are, and therefore how long we will be here.

September 19, 2001

J.'s dad was released from the hospital yesterday and is feeling much better – he did not suffer another heart attack. The three of us hung out together for the rest of the day and people from his family came by to visit. J. cooked another wonderful dinner. This afternoon we drove back home, and when we got back J. immediately returned to his consulting work. Here it is, very late, and he's still working. All efforts toward recovery have disappeared. He's going back to visit his dad very soon.

September 27, 2001

J. visited his dad for a couple of days, and has been working non-stop on the consulting. He was very happy today that his clients love what he's done. This is great news, but I continue to worry that recovery has dropped off his priority list. I'm afraid to bring it up, though, because I know he will be upset at me.

October 3, 2001

Over the weekend we talked about what we want to be doing in five years. It felt good to be thinking long-term. We made some notes in our "dream book" of where we'd like to travel.

Last night after work I could tell J. was very sad, so I put aside some things I was doing to get ready for a work trip that we will go to together, some of which were for him, and just held him. It felt good to be there for him. But this morning when I was scrambling to get ready for work, he was annoyed that I wasn't spending time with him, forgetting that I had given up time last night to get ready so I could be with him then. It made me sad.

October 10, 2001

J. was very sad on Friday night, and told me he felt like his career had not worked out like he had hoped. Oh, he was so down. Then the next morning he went to a meeting, his first in ages – I guess since before his dad got sick. I took this as a hopeful sign. When I got home from work yesterday, though, J. looked terrible. He had the hiccups and a bad headache. He was shuffling around like it was difficult to walk. The kitchen was a wreck. I resented the fact that it took me so long to do all the dishes by myself, which meant I got to bed very late.

I woke up feeling angry this morning, and told J. that he was not taking care of himself. He needs to exercise, eat more nutritious food, and exercise. I left for work, and when I got home, J.s said he was feeling better, and promised he would go to an AA meeting tomorrow morning.

October 17, 2001

We made a trip to visit J.'s dad over the weekend with Robin. It's always nice to see his dad, and he's doing pretty well. But last night J. told me that I'm moving around a lot in my sleep these days and bothering him – he said I even elbowed him – and he wants to sleep apart until this passes. I had no idea this was happening, and I told him that over and over. I get the feeling he thinks I'm doing it to him on purpose. I apologized several times but he still seems angry. We do not need another issue between us. I'm sad.

October 24, 2001

Things are a little better between us at the moment. We shared some nice meals over the weekend, I did some baking, caught up on sleep...like a normal, married couple. On Sunday night we talked about the big trip next summer with my family, and J. got excited. I'm going to order some books so he can start reading up on things to see. Last night J. cooked another great dinner, and we exchanged back rubs. I'd like to believe everything is fine, but he's not going to AA meetings regularly and he's working a lot. However, he did see a different counselor that he has worked with before, who specializes in addictions. J. called me from this counselor's office during the appointment and said he was calling to make a promise to me, on the record. I said I was listening. J. said he would be pursuing his hobbies more and not work so much. This would be great, if it happens.

Meanwhile, Luke's sentencing has been postponed again, but he is still in jail. At least we don't have to worry about him getting into more trouble while he's there.

October 29, 2001

We went on a short weekend get-away, which was really great. I decided this was not the time to bring up any serious subjects, like where is recovery, so I didn't. We still enjoy each other's company and can have fun together, in spite of all of our issues – this is a relief.

November 5, 2001

Oh dear. I'm so very afraid J. was drinking last night. I could hardly sleep, I was so anxious. I couldn't bring myself to say anything today.

November 12, 2001

It's been a challenging week, to put it mildly. I'm having a very tough time sleeping because I'm constantly worried about J, plus I keep feeling I'm on the verge of getting sick. There have been bumps in the road for me at work. Tuesday, J. met a deadline for his work, but that evening got very angry at me for something that seemed like it shouldn't be a big deal. I'm tired of him taking his anger out on me. The next day, I tried to call him from work, but when I couldn't reach him at first, I freaked out. Now I'm back to dreading going home, rounding the corner, and freaking out if his car isn't there. I decided to call the addictions specialist I've met with in the past, and made an appointment to talk to him next week.

I told J. a couple of days ago that I'm worried about his recovery. He said he knows he could be doing better, and will make more of an effort. We went to visit his dad this weekend and had a nice visit. I hope things can be calmer this week.

November 19, 2001

Things are not calmer – far from it. I went to my regular Al-Anon meeting on Monday, and decided afterwards I would talk to J. about my fears. That night I told him I was feeling very anxious about recovery, and he got angry – not a good sign. Tuesday, I met with the addictions specialist and I told him about J.'s behavior. He said J. is not practicing recovery, and that I have options. I heard him say the words, and I know I do not want to go through another separation, not yet. Instead I will talk to J. again about my feelings, and hope he can hear me.

I asked J. to hold me before I left for work on Thursday – we didn't talk, but he did hold me. I told him again how worried I was on Friday before I left for work, when once again I couldn't sleep and was up very early. Yesterday morning J. went to his early AA meeting, and after he got back, I asked him why he seemed so angry and resentful towards me so much of the time. He said he couldn't explain it, and that he was sorry. Today we had a "normal" day, but I am very sad and anxious. What comes next for us? Please, God, help us.

November 27, 2001

We are now at one of our favorite places on earth with J.'s dad and Robin, for our annual vacation. J. and I went for a walk, and I told him that I feel very sad, angry, and resentful because it feels like I'm at the same emotional place where we were two years ago, in 1999, when our second separation of six

months had started. Recovery seems as far away now as it did back then. He said I've given him serious things to think about, and he made three promises: he would make recovery a higher priority, work on finishing our home renovations, and only do consulting after these other things were happening. I said OK.

Then we moved on to do fun things. We had lovely times together all week as a family, and enjoyed our alone time. We ate home-cooked gourmet meals every night, shared kitchen duties, and went sight-seeing. J.'s dad was in pretty good shape. Robin is doing OK at the moment. We saw an amazing event of nature. It was difficult to pack up and drive back. Now what will happen with those three promises?

December 8, 2001

I have written a letter to J. and will give it to him when we meet with our couples counselor next week. I was hoping when we got back from our vacation that he would be inspired to follow through on his promises. I'm very sad to say that nothing has changed.

"When you break a promise to me, it seems like it is no big deal to you because there is not an immediate consequence unless you are drinking and driving. But just because I don't stomp around the house and slam doors doesn't mean I'm not angry and hurt. I feel betrayed again because you have violated my trust again.

You have made promises about recovery that you have not kept. By all rights, if one year ago I could have looked into the future to where we are now, I would not have agreed to end the legal separation.

You called me from your counselor's office in October and promised me you would be pursuing your hobbies and not work so much, and you haven't kept this promise. When we were on vacation last month you said you would do three things:

1. Spend time on recovery.
2. Finish the renovations to our house. Do you realize I've been waiting eight years for you to finish the renovations so I can have an office, and we can have a spare bedroom for guests? I'm tired of waiting – this is very frustrating.
3. Do consulting work – the last thing on the list when the other two were well underway.

If you added up the hours this past week that you spent, how many hours would you have spent on each one? All you do is spend time on your consulting. I am sick with worry and fear because recovery isn't happening.

If I believe you meant your promise at the time, then what in your life is preventing you from keeping it?

I feel like I'm living on the edge, in a fog. I told you my three guiding principles four years ago – that I would seek God's will for me, I will not be an enabler, and I will take care of myself. What are these three principles heading towards? Right now, another separation.

You have no idea how difficult it is to allow myself to be open to trusting you again, and now my trust has been misplaced, again.

We had a great weekend together, and I wish I could just pretend all is well, but I can't. I wake up full of dread. This "when convenient" recovery you are doing now isn't enough. Are you willing to commit to me in writing to seeing your counselor once a week for one year, at a minimum?

When you made the promise in the spring to work on recovery, what did you have in mind?

I do see glimmers of hope from time to time. You did have an appointment with your counselor recently to deal with your life-long depression. I know you have been through in one lifetime what most people wouldn't have to deal with in four lifetimes. I truly do not know how you have survived all your heartache, trauma, and emotional pain and be able to come through it as a kind, sensitive, caring, and all-around wonderful person to be with.

All I want is to spend my life with you – that is all I want – but you must keep your promises and work on your recovery.”

December 11, 2001

At my insistence, we met with our couples counselor. I read the letter out loud. The counselor's insight was that if J. could get a handle on his depression which has plagued him for as long as he can remember, then he would have more energy for recovery. I said I would stick it out for a little bit longer to see if this helps, and J. will make an appointment with his family doctor to start trying medications. He also suggested we try reading a book together, *Growing Yourself Back Up*. He said it might help us communicate better. I said OK.

We talked about the upstairs renovations. Our counselor asked J. several pointed questions about why he hadn't followed through on this. At the end of the appointment, I was feeling slightly more hopeful about our future. I've done what I can to stand up for myself. As they say in the program, baby steps. Please, God, help us move forward.

December 27, 2001

We had a very rocky start to Christmas, but fortunately it got better. Right beforehand, after month after month of rescheduling, we heard that Luke was sentenced to serve 4-1/2 years for the string of burglaries he committed last spring. To be honest, I wish it were longer – at least he is safe, eating, and not getting into more trouble in prison. I'm not sure J. thinks of it this way, though. We don't talk about it because it just makes him so sad.

Thank goodness, we were able to recover from that news, and had a nice Christmas together at his dad's. We also got to visit with some other family members. We see the steep decline of one relative suffering from Alzheimer's, and that is very sad. This person no longer recognized me. The decline is affecting J. The tension between J. and I seems less, thank goodness.

January 2, 2002

Boy, was New Year's Eve a dreadful experience. The holiday started out well; we had a great day and J. cooked a fabulous dinner. I had rented some movies so we could have a quiet and cozy evening.

But the next morning he decided he would look on the state Department of Corrections website, and saw Luke's face and the long list of crimes he's committed through the years. It was a terrible jolt for J. to see it all in writing, in a public place for the world to see. I know he feels that this is a reflection on him so he feels like a failure, no matter how many times I tell him he did all he could to help Luke, and then some.

It didn't stop there. That afternoon was a mess – our unfinished basement flooded from a torrential rain, and our sump pump wasn't working right to handle it all. All J. did for hours was try to get rid of the filthy water and all the junk that was floating around. I wanted to help but he said he was afraid I might get hurt, so he needed to do it by himself. He was exhausted, so our "cozy evening" vanished. I felt so bad for him. At least we could sleep in New Year's Day, and then he got back to trying to clean up. His spirits have recovered a bit, thank goodness.

Oh God, what is one person expected to endure? I don't understand how life can be so challenging for some people, with tragedy after tragedy after heartache and despair, one thing after another with no break in-between, while others just skate along. Please, God, be with us.

January 21, 2002

We've had fewer disagreements lately. J. is taking his new medication for depression, but he says sometimes it seems like it's making him feel worse, and he's having a difficult time focusing when he's trying to work. He will go back to his doctor to discuss this. He's gone to AA meetings more often, but still no sponsor. I think work continues to be his highest priority. I go to Al-Anon meetings, do the readings, and pray every day for guidance on what I'm supposed to be doing. I'm trying a new prescription to help me with moving around during sleep, but it's giving me weird dreams. I strive to be patient and wait – wait for J. to fulfill his promises, and wait for an awareness of God's will for me, if I should change what I'm doing or just keep on my current course of action, which is basically treading water. Please, God, help me know what to do.

February 4, 2002

A couple of days ago J. went to get his dad and bring him back here for a visit; he's just left to bring his dad back to his house, and stay over for a few days. J.'s overall mood seems worse – more depressed – and I'm very concerned. I hope the new medication for depression works better. He told me a dreadful story of witnessing a horrible car wreck on the way to visit his dad. It really affected him.

Work is very tiring when I don't have enough energy, although I enjoy what I do. When I'm feeling down, I worry about how much longer I'm going to have to work full-time. I'm trying to focus instead on just looking what I have to get done in the next week. Please, God, help me to worry less and trust more.

February 19, 2002

J. is still struggling with his sleep and his sadness. We did, however, have a WONDERFUL Valentine's Day, with a home-cooked gourmet meal at home, cards, and presents. I stuffed myself with food, and it was all delicious. This past weekend we went on a spiritual retreat sponsored by our church, and that was also wonderful. Lots to think about. I hope J. and I can continue the discussions we started about discerning God's will in our lives, and how to be more present in the moment. We both share the desire to feel close to God. Please, God, help me to find joy every day, and celebrate what I can. Please guide our steps.

February 27, 2002

Driving home from work, I went through one of the most terrifying things I have ever experienced. I still don't know exactly what was happening, but as one increasingly weird, and then frightening thing unfolded between a car and a truck that were driving around me, it felt like my car was being used as a buffer to escape a road rage or domestic violence incident. I was so glad J. was home – he was so comforting. It was so good to feel him hold me. I am glad we are together.

March 5, 2002

At the Al-Anon meeting, we heard a woman say that her daughter, who struggled with addiction but was now clean, had died suddenly. It was so sad. What can anyone say that is comforting? I told her I was so very sorry, and I care.

March 11, 2002

In the last couple of weeks, plans for our big trip this summer have continued to unfold. We are both really looking forward to going.

J. continues to make work his highest priority. He tells me this is his reality right now – he must finish his obligations before he can spend consistent time on recovery. I believe him, but it really bothers me that all his promises are unfilled. Sleep is still iffy for both of us, and when we're tired it's more difficult to be fully "present" to each other. I'm as guilty of this as he is. J. was very sad last night. But today we did spend some time talking again about what we'd like to be doing in a few years when we're both retired, and that seemed to help his spirits. I wish I could wave a magic wand and take all that sadness away, but it's not up to me.

I struggle all the time with having the desire to do more things than I have time or energy to accomplish. Please, God, help me to know how to help J. and get done what I need to in my own life.

March 18, 2002

Earlier this week, J. had a bad reaction to the depression medication he's taking, so it looks like he will need to see his doctor again and try something different. I'm trying not to say too much or give too many "helpful suggestions" because that bugs the heck out of him. My hands are tied and it's so

challenging. This is my journey, my struggle – how to keep my hands off his recovery and work on my own life. Easier said than done, even though intellectually I know it's the right thing to do.

But we did do something fun and different recently that felt nourishing – we went to an event out of town where we could sing hymns all day, and that was great. I feel like I'm singing my prayers. We stayed at a B&B Friday night and were able to forget about our problems for a while.

April 1, 2002

J. finished another work project two weeks ago, and actually looked at what needs to be done for the rest of the house renovations. However, he was so tired from lack of regular sleep he had to stop after a few minutes. I know this might need to take a back seat for a while until his medications are stable and he can get regular sleep. Plus, there are still more consulting projects he's committed to. And then he had to have surgery on his mouth this week, but he seems to be healing from that. If it's not one thing, it's another. I guess this is what's known as "life" but it would be so nice to have a break from trials and tribulations.

Please, God, help us find the right medications for J.

April 15, 2002

FINALLY it seems J. has found the right medication for his depression! He's hoping he can work through the side effects – insomnia and the inability to focus – but he says he's happier right now than he's ever been in his life. It would be wonderful if this really works for him. He does seem a whole lot better. We danced in the kitchen together! Boy, that was wonderful.

Recovery is still uneven, although he told me he got a message from God this past week that he needed to cut way back on his consulting and spend more time with his dad, on recovery, and finishing the renovations to our house. He's even given me a hoped-for timetable on the house – July. We'll see. That's a lower priority for me than spending time on dedicated recovery.

We made our plane reservations for our big trip. It's so exciting to have this to truly exciting and positive experience to look forward to. Please, God, help to worry less and celebrate. Help me to have more trust in you.

May 17, 2002

I've been too depressed to write. Last Friday, I found J. was drinking when I got home from work. He had a bottle of wine that he tried to hide from me. I was so very, very sad when I saw what was happening. Since he wasn't driving at the time, I just confronted him. I wanted to throw up. He was upset that I was sad. I got the nudge from God to try something different, so instead of telling him what action I was going to take, for the first time I said I would wait for him to tell me what he was going to do. He said he would think about it. I did not ask him to leave the house.

A couple of days later he said he had decided. He said he was ready for a residential treatment program but wanted to wait until after the big family trip in June. He said he would stop drinking in the



meantime. Right now, J. is with his dad – they are taking a little trip this week. He called to say they are having a very nice time.

I wrote to my former minister, telling her what had happened, and she wrote back right away. I didn't ask for any advice and she didn't offer any, but she was very kind and supportive. She acknowledged that I've done and am doing all I can to not be enabler while still giving support to J., and that he is in the throes of an addiction and unable to do what he needs to do to get better.

I've also shared what has happened with some of my relatives. Thank goodness they aren't offering any advice, either. My eating has gone into overdrive – you name it – chocolate, popcorn, crackers – anything I can find to stuff myself with. I'm having a very hard time sleeping, and I'm exhausted. Learning a different language is helping to keep my sane because I can think about something else, and it feels like I'm making progress in one part of my life. Please, God, help me to know what to do about J.

May 20, 2002

J. got back from the trip with his dad last night. He was very sad. We talked for a long time in the kitchen about where we are. He said he found a 28-day treatment place a few hours away that has a good reputation and is more affordable. This place has no medical treatment for withdrawal, but J. says he won't need it. He's going there to visit in a couple of days. It's still tense between us. However, it feels like God is asking me to hang in there – I'm certainly not feeling like the marriage is over. Please, God, guide my steps.

May 22, 2002

J. is back from today's trip to visit the rehab place. He was so very sad as he talked about it. He told me they had a family program one weekend, and asked me if I would be willing to attend – I said yes. I said I hoped this would help him. In the meantime, he's working very hard to finish his work projects. Please, God, help us.