

## **THE LITTLE BOOKSTORE AROUND THE CORNER**

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When I joined Al-anon, it was suggested that in order to experience the full benefits of the program, I should choose a sponsor and work the 12 steps. So I chose a sponsor, who told me to purchase the book, "Paths to Recovery." The good news is, I was able to work my steps with that sponsor, and to successfully treat my malady, learning tools and gaining the support of a group that has changed my life for the better forever. The bad news is, I had to drive all the way to a remote Al-anon office deep in the valley to purchase that book (which was out of stock at the meeting I attended). I wished at that time, that I had known about a store conveniently located in the heart of Hollywood, California, called "My 12 Step Store."

Let me back up. I joined Al-anon because I was obsessed with the alcoholics in my life. I thought about fixing and saving them constantly. I had little interest in my own life, and I was miserable. In Al-anon I learned the priceless gift of how to detach from difficult personalities, and to let go of the results of other people's lives. To allow them the dignity of their own paths, and to trust in a higher power who had a plan for them. I learned that I didn't cause it, can't cure it, and can't control it (*it* meaning their disease, the disease of alcoholism). I learned to focus on my own life, and to stop trying to control people and things out of my control. I learned this prayer, which is a variation of the serenity prayer: "God, please grant me the serenity to accept the PEOPLE I cannot change, the courage to change the PERSON I can, and the wisdom to know it's ME. Thank God my life is so much more peaceful today, because I'm not trying to run the show.

I've also joined Debtor's Anonymity, to gain control over my finances, debiting, and under-earning. Those books are pretty much available at the D.A. meetings themselves, but for everything else, there's this store I mentioned. It's

been there for 2 years in September, says owner R. J. His store is a boutiquey, quaint little store with a refreshing atmosphere. He says he allows the customers to dictate what books the store should sell, and what books the customers need to read.

R. J. opened the store because he felt that the neighborhood could use a store that would have the items that people in recovery most needed, so that said people wouldn't have to drive all over town for their recovery backup. He gets a lot of positive feedback from the community, from people who love the store's easy-going and positive vibe. He wanted it to have the energy of celebrating life, focusing on reading that can help recovery—to get to the place they want to move to.

Ironically, initially R. J. was going to open a tobacco store in the location. After deciding on a 12-step store instead, he decided it was hypocritical to be a smoker and to own a 12-step store, so he quit smoking.

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