

My Mom and Me

My name is Cherie Dyer. I am 56 years old and I work in an Adult Day Care Center. This a vocation that I enjoy very much, because I love helping people. I open up the center and make the meals. My Mom, because she knows me so well, knew right away that this work would be good for me.

I am a hard worker and have a beautiful home and a wonderful and sweet husband. I also have an adorable little dog named Sprockette. When I'm not working, I like to go on trips, take walks and swim.

I try to be a good person and I truly believe in the Lord and in helping people.

So that's a little about me, but my story is about my Mom and me and it started out a long time ago. First, there was Mom—Betty Crosby. When she was told I was coming into her world, if she had known what that was going to involve she might have thought twice, being as smart as she is. This is said in humor now. As it was, she felt blessed with her first born child. Mom and I have turned out to be the best of friends, but it took a while. Anything worthwhile takes time. I spent a lot of years being the hard-headed one and the know-it-all. There were a lot of lessons I had to learn the hard way. As my Mom was trying to teach me the ways of life, she must have had quite a trying time with me.

Today, I admire her patience and fortitude—Betty had to have it with me because she had to wait a long time before I came to my senses. Without her, I would not be here today to do the things I enjoy doing so much.

I am very blessed to even be alive and I owe it all to my Mom. It was in 1984 that she was the one who had the guts to take me to my first Alcoholics Anonymous meeting. For much of my life, I had a drinking problem. Along with my Mom, God and A.A. saved my life and I can never thank her enough.

During that first meeting, Mom was more confident than I was. I did not look or feel good. I believe I was close to death. The last drunk I went on was the one that started to save my life. One admission that I was an alcoholic was the start of a brand new life for me—I felt like I had reached home.

Before that first meeting, my Mom and my Dad had to endure the trouble and scrapes I got into for many years, as a teenager and an adult. My drinking always got me into trouble. I'm sure they were ashamed and angry the many times they had to help me move from place to place because I would not pay my rent. I always thought it was smarter to sit in

bars and drink. I remember one time when my Dad went from bar to bar on a very long and busy street to try to find me. Now I realize how embarrassing that was for him. In those days, no matter who you were, you could not have stopped me from drinking. It took being brought into the program by my loving mother.

When you are in your first A.A. meeting, sitting next to your Mom, you dare not lie and I had been a liar from the start—I never told the truth. I never liked or loved myself; I hated everything about Cherie.

But because of my wonderful mother and friend, I have been sober for twenty years. I am alive and well, by the grace of God, and I can do many different things. I am learning new things, like how to use the computer. I study and work hard and I have learned how to live and totally enjoy life.

Mom, with all her courage, patience, and love had to wait a long time to see if I was going to stay in the A.A. program. I did stay in, and I am still in the program of Alcoholics Anonymous, working to help others as I was helped. My husband and I have started our own A.A. group, which we have built up over the last four years. I am blessed to be in the position to do for others what was done for me.

Because of the twelve step program, my sponsor, and my belief in God, I am still sober, but I did a lot of drinking and using before I got to this part of my life.

My Mom is now 88 years old. She is alone now and still lives in her home, where she depends on me to do many things for her. I will never forget all the things, including this most important thing, that she did for me. During the many times Mom and I have spent together in these, her later years, I know that God is sitting with us. They are bittersweet times that I will never forget—anything I do for her is very meager in comparison to what she has done for me.

Every day she shows her three daughters how to be strong and have courage. I had a brother, who was also an alcoholic, but he did not make it. We have a saying in A.A. that some of us make it and some of us don't. Only God knows why.

The love and strength that my Mom keeps giving to me are so precious, they form the backbone of my life. In this, my tribute to her, I say, "Mom, I will always love you and appreciate you. For you see, you and God directed me home to a program that saved my life. Thank you from the bottom of my heart."