

## WHY I SAY SORRY!

I was "Daddy's Little Girl". I looked like him. I admired him. When I look back at pictures as an infant and toddler I am always right at his side. In fact everyone seemed to like my Dad. There were few places that I went where someone didn't stop me and ask, "Are you Bill's kid", your lucky or I wish that was my dad. As I got older I saw two sides of my Dad.

-He was a leader in church, a volunteer with boy's clubs and popular among his peers.

- He also was the same man who came home late from work. He could be unpredictable and angry. He was an alcoholic.

At first, I believed him when he told us it wouldn't happen again, his hostility, his drinking. Then I prayed that he could stop. He promised for years to stop. He didn't. Ironically, I also became disappointed, angry and .....

Over time, keeping alcoholism a secret became a necessity. Everyone thought so highly of my Dad.

- Would they even believe me? - How embarrassing would it be for us to say that our Dad was an alcoholic?

- Had I disappointed him?

- What if it was my fault?  
So many questions, so alone on this, so young, naive, and innocent

During these years, many of my characteristics were developed. I became an individual choosing clothes that made a statement that were my own style. I wanted to be my own person. I was adamant that "I could take care of myself". Often the suggestion that I could take care of myself is and was hilarious, even to myself, but I took comfort in making the claim. I became apologetic and often went overboard to prevent conflict and confrontation. I worked just as hard at covering up alcoholism in our family as I did attempting to cover up my own insecurities.

Finally, eighteen years later, my mom shared our "secret" with the right person and was led to Family Outreach Ontario. Through an intervention, God's grace and my father's determination he overcame his addiction to alcohol. He admits he still has cravings for alcohol, but finds the strength to resist. With the passing of time I worry less about whether disappointment will mean a setback and I can believe in him and his recovery.

Alcoholism is a disease that

controlled my father's life when he allowed it to. Similarly I had emotions I allowed to control my life and dictate who I was.

For the most part I am proud and thankful of whom I am. Perhaps sometimes I try harder than I should to please others. I am apologetic, painfully so. (My best friend has teased me for apologizing when she stubs her toe.) I usually take on more than I should and measure myself against high standards. My Dad's recovery made it easier for me to let go of both anger and guilt. I know that it wasn't my fault, or even my Dad's fault that he was an alcoholic. I have learned to trust and lean on others, but still like to believe I can take care of myself.

I'm ashamed to admit that I sometimes rationalize that God owes me for the painful times, forgetting to credit him for Dad's recovery and the other great things in my life, focusing only on disappointment.

While I may apologize for a hundred meaningless things in a day, I am not sorry for the person I am. I consider my weaknesses and strive to turn them into strengths. I am sorry for the time that was wasted, but grateful to God for healing in my Dad's life and my own.

*Anonymous*