

My Dad is An Alcoholic – Author & Illustrator Q&A

Lianna Treitler

You are now a teen, and your dad has been sober for several years. Looking back, how did his alcoholism impact your childhood?

It really didn't. But his sobriety has.

What do you think was the turning point for him? What, in your opinion, made him reach for and access sobriety?

The David Archuleta concert, when I was able to notice how much he drank and told my mom that instead of telling her about the concert, seemed to make him realize what he was doing and that he had to stop.

When he first left for rehab, what did you expect? And how did you respond?

I didn't know what it was, so I kind of just expected him to be gone. I really had no expectations at that point being so young. We visited him all the time.

Were you ever skeptical of his recovery, or did you believe in it from the start?

I really didn't understand rehab or the disease enough to believe in it or not.

How easy – or difficult – was it to forgive your dad?

At the point where he would have needed forgiving I didn't realize it was a bad thing, and he hid it well. And at this point, he has been sober for so long that it is not an issue.

In what ways have you supported your dad's recovery?

I think just being at the rehab and visiting him daily reminded him why he started the recovery process in the first place. Now talking about it, the more he talks about it when teaching us, the more he is encouraged to stay sober.

Are you ever concerned that the 'allergy' will manifest in you? What do you do to avoid it?

I don't drink or do drugs ever, never drink anything at a party. If someone is peer-pressuring me, I have to tell them sorry I am allergic to drugs and alcohol.

What made you want to write a book with your dad?

I really want people to be able to learn from what happened to me because I am sure most people lack the knowledge we do and how to prevent it. And since I was a kid when writing it, I want kids to know they can get help somewhere and they are not alone.

Do you worry about the reaction of your friends and their parents to your book and your experiences?

Yes, because this is something not a lot of them know about me.

What advice would you give to kids living with an addicted parent?

I would tell them to first tell someone you trust because you shouldn't be doing this stuff alone. Be patient and don't let your alcoholic parent influence you. If you have patience, you can deal with the situation and become knowledgeable about the disease and learn from your parent's example of what not to be like.

What do you hope kids – and their parents – take away from the book?

Prevention. They will learn to prevent the gene from turning on and avoid ending up like their parent. And that they are not alone.