

## Relationships and the City

*Setting: Four women are sitting at a table at a local diner drinking coffee, discussing their personal issues of the day.*

*Characters:*

*Carrie: unsure of herself—trying to find her way, knowledgeable about romantic relationships though she is often unsuccessful in her own*

*Charlotte: perky, optimistic, idealist*

*Miranda: well-educated, professional, ambitious, a bit sarcastic*

*Samantha: free spirit with a taste for finer things in life*

Carrie: *(Begins standing, speaking to audience, to provide narrative introduction)*  
Relationship problems are a part of life. Once you think you have it all figured out, something happens and realize you don't know a thing. But where does that leave us, then? Since we can't figure it out alone, we turn to our friends. And the wisdom in their experiences often helps us deal with ours.  
*(Carrie then sits at the table, joining the others)*  
So how was everyone's day?

Charlotte: Good, as always.

Samantha: Fabulous. Smith is so good to me.

Carrie: *[sarcastically]* That's a surprise. What about you, Miranda?

Miranda: Steve's mom is staying with us, and she's been drinking again. I can't stand it. I don't know how Steve handles it. I'm starting to resent having her around and I can't focus on Brady. The situation with Steve is already complicated—I don't know how I feel about him, but this certainly isn't making it any easier. I'm a partner in a law firm, for crying out loud, I should be able to handle this.

Charlotte: Maybe you need a Twelve Step program.

Samantha: What, like A.A. or something? How is that going to help her?

Charlotte: No, really. When Trey and I were having problems because of his drinking, I found out about Al-Anon Family Groups. They're for the family and friends of alcoholics, and they really did help. Al-Anon taught me how to change my reactions to Trey's behavior.

Samantha: Right, and now you're divorced.

Miranda: *[to Samantha]* And your uncommitted lifestyle's any better?

Charlotte: Okay, so Trey and I divorced. He wasn't the right guy for me anyway—we all know that. But I didn't know that at first. I tried to make him be what I wanted

him to be. Thanks to the help I found in Al-Anon, I was able to avoid making the same mistakes with Harry. I learned what it was that I wanted and how to communicate my needs with him. Now, I take care of myself first, I don't try to change who he is.

Carrie: You know, Charlotte's right. The way you approach the situation changes the outcome.

Miranda: And how am I supposed to change? His mother's so drunk that talking to her wouldn't make any difference, and Steve just brushes it off like he does everything else. I just don't know what to do.

Carrie: Well, you know Steve's laid back. That's just the way he is. But you don't have to struggle. You have choices.

Miranda: Choices? Really? What would these "choices" be? The only choice I see is kicking his mother out.

Samantha: It doesn't have to be that way. Smith is a recovering alcoholic, and I have never kicked him out.

Carrie: Samantha, when have you been known to kick a man out?

Charlotte: Girls, can we get back to Miranda?

Samantha  
and Carrie: [*at the same time*] Yes!

Miranda: Yes, we were discussing my "choices."

Charlotte: I was at a meeting the other day, and they had copies of the new Al-Anon book about recovery in relationships. It's called *Discovering Choices*. I think I have one in my bag. Let me check. [*Digs through and pulls out book.*] Yup, here it is.

Miranda: A book is supposed to help?

Charlotte: Just try it. Here, there's an entry for change on page 24. Read what it says.

Miranda: "At some point, we find someone else's behavior greatly disturbing to our peace of mind. We want to help them because we believe that is the best way to help ourselves. We think if only they would stop drinking, everything would be well again. Our effort and energy have shifted almost exclusively to what we can't control—someone else's drinking. As a result, we lose touch with what we *can* control—ourselves and our attitudes. With the focus off ourselves, we lose a balanced perspective on life without realizing quite how it happened."

Wow, that really does sound like me.

Charlotte: Keep reading.

Miranda: “Trying to fix someone else’s problem is like stepping uninvited into someone else’s shoes. The shoes don’t fit—they pinch or they’re too loose...”

Carrie: I know that feeling.

Samantha: Don’t we all?

Miranda: “As difficult as it is to walk in them, we remain determined to make it work. We don’t realize that we have choices. It doesn’t occur to us to take the shoes off and look for a pair made specifically for us.”

Okay, it’s starting to make some sense.

Charlotte: Just read another paragraph.

Miranda: “It took more than one day for this situation to develop, and it will take more than one day to find a solution. With the acceptance, understanding, support, and friendship we find in Al-Anon meetings, however, we can begin to feel better today. There’s more to the Al-Anon program than can be absorbed in a day, yet its elements are simple enough that there’s always something that can help right now—the Serenity Prayer, a slogan, Al-Anon literature, or a conversation with a program friend.”

Carrie: See? You do have choices.

Miranda: [*Reluctantly*] Yeah, you’re right. Maybe I should go to one of these meetings.

Charlotte: I’m going to one tomorrow night. Would you like to come?

Miranda: Okay, I’ll go. But in the meantime, can I borrow your book?

Charlotte: Super!

Miranda: [*Holding onto the book*] I can do that. I can do that.

Carrie: [*Stands and speaks to audience for closing narration*] As we change, so will our relationships. Some relationships will be new; some will become stronger; some will take us in a direction we never expected. While there’s no simple way to solve all of our problems instantly, there’s comfort in knowing that we don’t have to know it all. For this, we can rely on the wisdom of others to help see us through.