

**BEHIND EVERY  
FACE, THERE'S  
A STORY...**  
**FOR EVERY  
PERSON, THERE'S  
A SOLUTION!**



# MARTIN

Martin has been in a relationship with his partner for 25 years, and they have four beautiful children. Five years ago, they learned that his wife had bipolar disorder. At first, Martin went through a range of emotions. Some friends drifted away, and he experienced a great sense of loneliness. Five years later, he has found ways to learn to live with the mental health disorder without it taking over his relationship and family. To do this, he had to learn to let go. By his own admission, it was easier said than done... but it was possible!



How do I reconcile my role as a partner, parent and colleague without burning out?

How can I deal with my friends' lack of understanding?

How can I stop feeling isolated in my family environment?



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## Learning to let go

Learning to accept change means learning to let go.

You are probably familiar with the popular expression "letting go." It refers to a form of surrendering control that we can use in different areas of our lives. This concept can be explained and applied in different ways. Therefore, it is important to understand and explore the avenues that can allow us to... let go!

## What is letting go?

To fully understand the concept, you must understand that the opposite of letting go is taking control. However, when your partner is dealing with a mental illness, your first instinct is to help them, even if it means forgetting about yourself. This may be a voluntary reaction, or it may be related to social, cultural or moral pressures.

From your point of view, your attitude is one of responsibility since you are "helping" your partner to manage and organize their life, in light of the symptoms that they are having to deal with. Although the situation is demanding, it is also comforting in that you are in control. That being said, expressions like "I need to..." and "I have to..." may be part of your everyday vocabulary.

When considering events that concern your partner, it is important that you distinguish between what you can control, what you can influence and what you can neither control nor influence. This first step is beneficial in helping you let go, which in turn helps keep you from burning yourself out. Because continuously and obsessively thinking about a problem is often inefficient and does not help solve it. However, if you take a step back from the problem, you may see solutions you had not previously thought of emerge.

## What are different ways of letting go?

Here are a few ideas to get you started. You may also want to enlist the help of someone you trust. When considering the suggestions below, it may help to think of all the times your interventions with your partner did not produce the desired results, thus leading to disappointment.

1. Acknowledge the emotions you have about what is happening to you.
2. Acknowledge the ineffectiveness of trying to control what you cannot change or influence.
3. Acknowledge how much energy is wasted and how your well-being is affected by your actions.
4. Be willing to give up the idea you were holding on to.
5. Be willing to forgive yourself.

Letting go means that you may need to make changes to accept your limitations and uphold your values. To master this concept, you will have to give up some control over the other person without giving up your goals and objectives. Don't forget that letting go is compatible with taking action, but it will sometimes involve taking different and adapted actions.

To illustrate this concept, imagine a fly trapped in your house. Seeing the light from the window, it rushes toward freedom but crashes into the glass. Although ineffective, it will repeat this strategy for hours until it eventually succumbs to exhaustion and death. Don't be like the fly. Be open to trying new solutions in order to free yourself from what is holding you back.

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Source : L'Accolade santé mentale