

THE TWELVE STEP RAG



The Bi-Monthly Newsletter of the Families Anonymous Fellowship

FOR RELATIVES AND FRIENDS CONCERNED ABOUT ANOTHER'S USE OF DRUGS, ALCOHOL, OR RELATED BEHAVIORAL PROBLEMS

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Recovery Journeys

My daughter Melissa has an addiction. At first, I did not understand what was going on with my daughter. She was so verbally abusive to me. Her behavior was dysfunctional and put our family in turmoil. My husband and I watched as the drugs took the life out of her. We did not know her anymore. We told her if she did not get help, she could die. She was trying to hide her using. We saw the signs. We searched her room where her five-year-old daughter was sleeping.

Melissa was trying to trick us into feeling sorry for her so we would give her money for gas for the car. But that was not what she was using the money for. We would pay her bills. She would take our things and sell them; she would take money out of my purse. She would tell us she hated us all the time. She was so angry when I didn't have the money she wanted. She would say please, I need it. She threatened me with a knife. (I found out later that she was going through a withdrawal.)

She would sleep all day and night. She would go out and not come home at night. It got so bad that we told her she had to get help or she could not live with us anymore. So she called a treatment center and stayed four weeks, then went to

halfway house. It helped her a lot.

She was thinking about using every day. She fought it. It's a terrible disease. We told her we loved her and that she needed to get control of her life.

Then we found out she was using again, that she had not quit. She wanted to go to the treatment center again. My husband and I wanted to fight for our daughter against this terrible disease. We did not want to lose her to the drugs.

Then Melissa was not home for two weeks. She was staying with a guy that we didn't know, who was using drugs. His mom contacted me and said that we needed to get Melissa some help; that she was using drugs and lying to us about it. We didn't know when we could trust her. We hoped one day she would get clean. My husband and I accepted that God would help us.

Acceptance was not easy. It made us look at a situation that we couldn't change or control. I reacted with anger to her. I felt helpless watching her in pain. It was so difficult to accept that my daughter was taking drugs. We worried all the time she would go back on them. We didn't have to ask; three times she went back on them. She said it was only a little.

We stopped protecting her. That was hard to do, but we had to do it. We did not believe anything she told us. She needed to experience the consequences of her actions and decisions. Sometimes I could not sleep. I stopped blaming her friends for what she had done to her life. She needed to take actions to save her life. In Families Anonymous I found reassurance that I had done the best that I could under the circumstances. We did not cause our daughter to abuse drugs. This was an illness and we could not control it and could not cure it. We needed to stop carrying the burden of guilt. I learned new ways to deal with my own problems and allowed her to work on herself.

And she did it! My daughter did it her way and got clean. She went to the treatment center a second time and then to a halfway house for a month. Then she decided to live with a friend in California, far away. She wanted to be away from all her drug contacts in MD, that she was constantly running into. She changed her phone number, so as not to receive calls from her friends who were using. Living in California with her friend gave her a fresh start.

(Continued on page 4)

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H.A.L.T.

**Don't get too
Hungry, Angry, Lonely, Tired**



**Host Groups Needed
for future FA
World Service
Conventions**

Any questions please contact
the Convention Liaison chair,
Barbara S at:
barbaras@familiesanonymous.org

*When you invite
mindfulness into your life
and endeavor to
practice it always,
every moment
holds the same potential
as the passing of the
calendar year.
~Arnie Kozak~*

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*Is there a topic
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Send your ideas to
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MY RECOVERY HOME

What I like about my Recovery Home is that there is no mortgage. It's mine; free to live in forever, if I am willing. Well, I say it's free, but I actually paid it off in advance with all the hard work I put into working the steps with my sponsor.

When complete trust was given over to my God He allowed me to build the foundation. Once I completed the foundation, I now controlled the type of Recovery Home I wished to reside in.

My only responsibility was to maintain my free home. It did take hard work to keep my new Recovery Home up to date, but the rewards were priceless.

I took my Recovery Home plans to my sponsor, who oversaw every detail. He shared his experiences which I used to make some necessary changes. He kept tabs on the construction progress. He provided me the encouragement I needed. You see, I had never built a Recovery Home before, at least not one I wanted to live in for the rest of my life. This would be my permanent home now.

My Recovery Home entryways are heavily structured and beautified with the literature provided by Families Anonymous. The wisdom I found in Families Anonymous provided the necessary building materials and my Families Anonymous sponsor created the roof and walls which protect me from the continual storms addiction brings. And for added security, I built a heavy-duty fence constructed of the Twelve Traditions of Families Anonymous.

I didn't realize how long it takes to actually build such a home, but my God gave me great strength and patience. I attended every support group meeting and was so excited when I met others who had constructed a home quite similar to the one I wanted. I had the privilege to visit many of their Recovery Homes. I noticed the doormat read "Peace and Serenity" and when I entered their home I noticed the whole house was wallpapered with the Twelve Promises of Families Anonymous.

I was told that storms would test my new home's construction, but even if there was some damage it was all under warranty. If necessary I would file a claim with my sponsor.

I haven't really lived in the Recovery Neighborhood very long but I just love my new neighbors! By the way, we have several empty lots so you are welcome to begin constructing your own recovery home.

The User's Parent

FA LITERATURE SPOTLIGHT

No More Expectations!

Expectations are one of the hardest things to deal with. When we struggle to make our lives "normal" by doing things that others should do for themselves or expecting that what we plan or dream will come true we set ourselves up for failure. As parents or loved ones we continue to place our expectations above the reality of what is happening around us. *No More Expectations!* is a profile of a mother's expectations of herself, her family and her Higher Power. The hope of Families Anonymous is that we can learn to adjust our expectations and seek peace and serenity.

No More Expectations
#1012 - Order a copy today.

ONE DAY AT A TIME

January 5th Reading - Today A Better Way

One day at a time. Families Anonymous members repeat this slogan frequently because it helps them reach some sense of peace and stability during times of chaos and pain. How could I possibly learn to live that way, after a lifetime of planning and managing other people's lives, months and even years in advance?

Yet little by little, out of sheer desperation, I have begun to live one day at a time. And, to my surprise, it works. This day-at-a-time philosophy guides me calmly through the troubled waters of life with rebellious teenagers and the frictions that are a part of marriage. It keeps the little daily irritations in life just that--little.

The calming slogan of one day at a time is one of the most important tools we have for building a better life.

TODAY I WILL think only about this day, without worries about tomorrow or regrets for yesterday.

*Recovery Journeys -
Continued from page 1*

I thank God for Families Anonymous. Without that group I would not have made it. It has helped me so much. It has saved my life. I went to Families Anonymous on April 8, 2014. I was greeted by Carol who gave me a hug and said welcome. My life was changed. I made a decision to turn my life over to my Higher Power. I work the twelve step program. I am in control of my life and I can stop my daughter's addiction from controlling what I do with me life. I still go to meetings. I love going. I talk to the other people at the meetings about my daughter and they tell me it helps them.

I have support now, when I come to Families Anonymous or call the people who are in my group. I have stopped feeling sorry for myself. Now I let go and let God. My Higher Power helps me.

I have found a great release in coming to the meetings. I can be honest with my friends now, and not hide the problem of my daughter. I can laugh again. I have been helped by others with similar problems. I am feeling great because of Families Anonymous and my new friends there.

My daughter has been clean for ten months. That's our miracle.

Dianne S.

BE WILLING & WATCH

It took me so many years to remove my anger and resentment towards my addicted child. How could he continue to make such choices when faced with so many consequences due to his drug use? My peace and serenity were destroyed.

The FA program is about me finding my own peace and serenity. FA does a very good job in accomplishing its primary goal...provided one is willing.

When I became willing, I worked the steps with a FA sponsor. I worked hard, very hard. I turned my life over to the God of my understanding and made the steps a part of my everyday life. What happened? I eventually had no anger or resentments toward my son. Instead, I had nothing but love and compassion.

I came to accept that my son has a disease, a primary disease, a brain disorder. This revelation made it clear that my son was not capable of making appropriate and logical "choices." His brain disease simply would not allow it.

My anger and resentments made my son sicker. It made me sicker. However, through my recovery I would later learn that it was my love that kept hope alive in my son. It was that hope that would eventually ignite his desire for recovery. I also believe that the FA program helped me bring his recovery date in closer than continuing to push it further and further out due to my enabling codependency behaviors.

What I also learned on my journey is that the Families Anonymous Twelve Step program has NEVER failed ANY FA member who worked the steps as suggested. Isn't that reassuring? Isn't that one of the most hopeful things you could ever read? Every one of the Twelve Promises of Families Anonymous came true when I worked the steps as suggested.

I believe there is only one path to true recovery for parents and that is the Families Anonymous path.

My post is truly about hope. Hope for you and your addicted child. Be willing and watch the miraculous transformation take hold.

The User's Parent

Many people look forward to the New Year for a new start on old habits.
~ Unknown ~

At some point you just have to let go of what you thought should happen and live in what is happening.

Let's talk...

Do you think there is such a thing as spending too much time and focus on self-improvement?

Send your reflections to:

RagEditor12@gmail.com

HOPE FOR THE HOLIDAYS

As I reflect on my nearly eight years in FA, (and my seven years dealing with an addict in my family before FA), I remember plenty of holiday seasons that were a bit of a dog's breakfast. I remember trying to have happy holiday memories for the little ones and worrying about where the older ones were spending their time and how they might come home.

As we began to explore how to take back our lives again, my wife and I sought help from a number of sources: professional counselors, our son's IOP, then his rehab and finally, FA. We learned quite a bit along the way.

The Christmas before my son went to rehab was one of our hardest. We were half a world away in Asia, knowing that the day after Christmas I would travel to the U.S. to accompany him to a year-long rehab. It was a lonely trip for me as I helped him pack up his apartment and move him into a storage unit, and then get on a plane and travel to the rehab.

Lonely trip home again after leaving him there, angry, confused, yet resigned.

To his enormous credit, when he accepted my offer of help, he was ready to change. And he worked his program in a place that he did not like. He came out sober on the other end.

Once sober, however, he began slowly at first to demonstrate his underlying mental illness. He moved to California to work and live near his brother. The following Christmas a series of incidents made clear he had to get more help than we knew how to give him.

A promise of FA is that we would instinctively know how to handle things we could not previously handle. And this was one of those times. We found local resources to consult regarding mental illness. After some effort (and force) we got him into treatment for his illness. After a month's long process, the doctors finally found a medicine that helped his MI, and our son continued to maintain his sobriety.

It's now several years later. We enjoy having him in our home for dinner a few times a week (especially when he cooks!). He mentioned early in December that he was finished his Christmas shopping. Something he could never have conceived of when he was using.

The holidays are always stressful for me because I'm not comfortable with the commotion and the upset in my routine (my own anxiety), and yet I know that for today, I can be grateful for my son's choices. And I can be grateful for the peace I found long before he was settled -- the peace that came to me from working the steps.

Peace to all.

Paul B

To Let Go

To LET GO does not mean to stop caring, it means I can't do it for someone else.

To LET GO is not to cut myself off, it's the realisation I can't control another.

To LET GO is not to enable, but to allow learning from natural consequences.

To LET GO is to admit powerlessness, which means the outcome is not in my hands.

To LET GO is not to try to change or blame another, it's to make the most of myself.

To LET GO is not to care for, but to care about.

To LET GO is not to fix, but to be supportive.

To LET GO is not to judge, but to allow another to be a human being.

To LET GO is not to be in the middle arranging all the outcomes, but to allow others to affect their own destinies.

To LET GO is not to be protective, but to permit another to face reality.

To LET GO is not to deny, but to accept.

To LET GO is not to nag, scold or argue, but instead to search out my own shortcomings and correct them.

To LET GO is not to adjust everything to my desires, but to take each day as it comes and cherish myself in it.

To LET GO is not to regret the past, but to grow and live for the future.



Gifts of the Spirit: Self-Control

Self-control, in the ordinary sense, is probably not much of a problem for most of us. We are not likely to act up much. We know how to behave in public.

There is another form of self-control which is fully as important. It is internal self-control. This is a big challenge for most people who are dealing with drug abuse in their family. "How do you control emotions? How do you stop worrying about somebody you love who is destroying himself?"

So what does FA offer us to deal with our internal torture? The answer is simply that FA teaches us to stop thinking as we have been, and to begin seeing our problems in a new light. It challenges us to reconsider the conclusions that we can't live with the awful results of drug abuse, that we must be ashamed that our loved ones are in trouble, that life is meaningless or has to be tortuous if our abusers don't straighten out. We could call it FAlosophy because it gives us a new way to think, a healthier perspective that changes our negative, fatalistic thinking into something far more helpful. This change of thinking explains why members can laugh and converse and go on living, despite their disappointments and realistic reservations. They have taken charge of their thinking with simple yet effective reminders like "One Day At A Time" or "Easy Does it." They find freedom from their old automatic thoughts which make them victims of negative emotions which result from habitual negative thinking. "I can't take it anymore." "I'll never rest 'till she's OK." "I'm a failure." These old destructive thoughts are replaced by our talking sense to ourselves and reacting sensibly as well. Just as negative thoughts lead to fear and depression, they affect our energy and eventually our physical health. So too, does a change to positive thoughts bring renewed energy and improved health in all forms. There is light, even in the tunnel! We have to turn the light on repeatedly, if necessary, until it becomes automatic.

If you would like to read more on Self-Control and other Gifts of the Spirit, order booklet #1025 from the World Service Office, www.familiesanonymous.org.

STEP ONE

We admitted we were powerless over drugs and other people's lives and that our lives had become unmanageable.

FA 12 Promises

#1 - We are going to know a new freedom and a new happiness.


FA 12 Traditions


#1 - Our common welfare should come first, personal progress for the greatest number depends on unity.


God grant me the
Serenity
to accept the things
I cannot
change;
Courage
to change the things
I can;
and **wisdom**
to know the
difference.

*Your story
matters - tell it.*

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My New Life

Calling all members !

What do you do for yourselves to cope with and enjoy life.

Is it photography? Yoga?
Painting? Pottery?
Writing?

Share what you do and how it has helped you. And be sure to send in photos of your work.

Submissions or questions can be sent to:
RagEditor12@gmail.com

Jolly Ranchers, Jedi's and Juicing

I used to feel like I was carrying my whole family on my shoulders. In the beginning, I had no problem taking on the job. I felt I was the strong one and I knew what was best.

During times when my brother was in the hospital or a rehab, visiting schedules went through me. I initiated the "Rehab To Do List." Mom picked up the jolly ranchers and Jedi novels. Dad, paid past due bills. Big brother picked up copies of lost documentations for future job hunt. Sister searched the "Help Wanted." I'd clean his apartment even though he would stay with me after rehab to get some clean time under his belt. I'd have the meeting schedules, acupuncture appointments and vitamins ready. I always looked to try something new: something that would tip the scales toward lasting recovery. Like...juicing! Yup, some beets and green apples to cleanse the liver.

Of course, jolly ranchers and Jedi's didn't make rehab less "boring." Paying bills, standing in line at the DMV, scouring the classifieds, and cleaning house only took reality out of my brother's hands. And well...the other stuff I came up with was just crazy.

New plan, (also initiated through me), tough love. I took all of our house keys away from my brother. Since mom and sister were struggling with enabling, unlike me because I went to meetings and read lots of books, they could no longer receive phone calls. Dad and brother got fed up and lacked some needed compassion; no more calls for them either. All phone calls would go through me.

I was prepared to give this hard-line a chance. There were slip ups. My parents came home from food-shopping one day to find my brother passed out on the living room sofa.

How did he get in? Mom folded and gave him a spare key. How did he get money for drugs? Dad gave him forty bucks "for gas."

It was frustrating. I struggled with having the family keep up with me. Everyone was instructed to attend the next rehab family night meeting.

The meeting went something like this:

Meeting Leader asked me how I was doing. I told her what my brother had been up too. She said, "But how are you doing?" I told her I had to call the cops to get my brother off my parent's sofa because I didn't want him driving wasted and there was probably no gas in the car. She said, "That's not what I asked you." I looked at her like she was crazy - I didn't understand the question.

Anytime I was faced with a situation I couldn't control I would head to the bookstore's self-help section or the Internet. That's how I found FA and the E-meeting.

The first thing I learned was I didn't know everything. In fact, even after 21 years of trying to fix my brother, it felt as if I didn't know anything. But I stuck with the meeting and let the sharing challenge my thinking.

Here's some of what I know today:

I need to respect the individual journeys. Everyone moves at a pace that is coached by their own Higher Power. Not by me.

Being a self-appointed Atlas or an amateur providence is not the best use of my time.

The question I should be working to answer for myself everyday is, "How are you doing?"

And beet juice stains everything it comes in contact with.

Lisa W

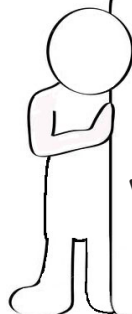
(Reprinted from The Twelve Step Rag, January-February 2012)



Easy Does It

Keep It Simple

One Day at a Time



The time to attend a meeting is when you least feel like going.

TODAY,
I WILL MAKE
THE MOST OF
MY OWN LIFE,
ONE DAY
AT A TIME.

TABW - NOVEMBER 4TH

Now---Today

October 2nd

Today A Better Way

A wise person said, "He who has one eye on yesterday and one eye on tomorrow sees not clearly today."

One thing I surely cannot change is the past. Regretting the past or searching it to find out where I went wrong does nothing to enhance my present, nor does it offer a chance to correct my mistakes. My intentions have been good for the most part.

I can plan my own future activities, but no amount of worrying will influence future outcomes. My worrying will not solve another person's problems and it only creates problems for me.

That leaves today, this moment, for me to live, love, work, and enjoy. All I have is this moment.

TODAY I WILL live in the NOW.

STEP TWO

Came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.

FA 12 Promises

#2 - We will not regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it.

FA 12 Traditions

#2 - For our group purposes there is but one authority – a loving God, as he may express himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants – they do not govern.



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