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THE 12 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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THE 12 STEP RAG

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Sometimes, the trials we go through can feel futile and pointless. What justification can there be for time eaten away by addiction – our loved one's to a substance and ours to a compulsion to fix our lives. The realization that life in dealing with addiction has become unmanageable brought each of us to FA. It is here in sharing our stories, even if the script of our lives doesn't read like a fairytale – where we live happily ever after - that our tragedies become useful. The pain of what we've been through turns into a blessing for others. What we thought was without reason or purpose can be a story that someone else can relate to, the time we squandered making mistakes can help others avoid the very same ones.

The 12 steps remind us that our healing cannot stop with us, "Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to others and to practise these principles in all our affairs." As we heal carrying the message to others must be a step we need to 'work on'. *The Rag*, where we share our stories is a way of keeping the fellowship and the hope it brings alive. It gives us the opportunity to become a light to others even when we're in the middle of our own storms. In recent years, submissions to the Rag have reduced and have become erratic. Sometimes, we receive many submissions, sometimes we're pressed for stories to share. We want to hear from you about your experiences in FA - what brought you here, your struggles and your serenity journey. It can feel strange to tell your own story, but when you begin to do it, you'll know there's nothing quite magical. Looking forward to hearing from many of you!

In Fellowship, Elizabeth

Letting Go of the Past

We need to prepare for the gifts of today

Walt Disney Pictures released an animated film in 2009 called UP. It's about a curmudgeonly widower named Carl Fredericksen who ties thousands of balloons to his house, rendering it airborne. His goal is to fly the house to Paradise Falls in South America to fulfill a promise he'd made to his late wife Ellie. The couple had saved over the years to fulfill their childhood dream of making the trip, but life gets in the way and the money has to be spent for medical emergencies, home repairs, and other more urgent needs. When they're both older Carl finally plans the trip, but Ellie takes ill and dies before they can go. Life – and death, in this case – gets in the way again.

The first ten minutes of the film is a clever, touching montage showing their entire life together, from childhood romance to Ellie's death. The movie's worth seeing just for that. Fast forward to the present, years later: Carl still lives in the house he and Ellie had lovingly restored and

decorated and where they'd shared so many happy years. He's surrounded by and dotes over her scrapbook, their side by side easy chairs, photos, and other keepsakes. He needs a cane to walk and probably shouldn't be living alone but he stays, cherishing his memories of life with Ellie. He even talks to her sometimes.

The weight of our accumulated regrets makes us sluggish and prevents us from making new beginnings

But there's a problem: the neighborhood's gone and huge skyscrapers are being built all around the little house. Carl still lives as a holdout, his cherished home an

island in the middle of a bustling construction zone. After Carl assaults and accidentally injures a construction worker, a judge orders him to move to a retirement home.

That's when he decides to tie thousands of balloons to the house and fly it, keepsakes and all, to South America to fulfill his and Ellie's dream of exotic adventure. A young "Wilderness Explorer" named Russell, trying to earn a merit badge for

assisting the elderly, is on the front porch when Carl sets the house aloft, and becomes Carl's traveling companion and ally. Carl grudgingly accepts Russell but continues his mission to fulfill his dream and honor Ellie's memory.

Inevitably, there's trouble – they encounter a bad guy who's determined to prevent them from reaching their goal. How and why he enters the picture is unimportant for purposes of this article. But there's a point when Russell is being threatened by the bad guy.

The helium balloons have been slowly popping one by one, and as the house becomes less buoyant, Carl and Russell pull it along near the ground like a Macy's Thanksgiving Day parade balloon. It doesn't matter because they're in sight of Paradise Falls and can drag the house there, where Carl intends to leave it to fulfill Ellie's dream. But Russell decides he has to rescue a friendly exotic bird from the

clutches of the bad guy, so he appropriates some of the balloons and flies off to do that, leaving Carl alone with the house.

Carl's torn. He's come to care about Russell and he knows the boy will be in grave danger confronting the bad guy alone. He desperately wants to help his new friend. But he can't possibly help unless he gets the house aloft and follows Russell, and he can't do that because the house is too heavy to be supported by the remaining balloons.

The only way to make the house light enough is to offload most of the stuff inside. He drags out the refrigerator, furniture, shelving, and anything else that's not nailed down. The house is budging a little, but not enough. It doesn't start to float again until he's abandoned all the keepsakes and photos, including Ellie's precious scrapbook. He's even had to throw out the side by side easy chairs where they'd enjoyed so many peaceful hours



together. Finally the house can float again. Carl can move forward and help his new friend.

Sound familiar? Sometimes we hold on to the past and its emotional baggage so tenaciously that we don't have room for the gifts of today. The weight of our accumulated regrets makes us sluggish and prevents us from making new beginnings. Like Carl, we need to drag them out of the house and throw them away so we can move on.

That doesn't mean we entirely forget the happy times we once had, or our fond thoughts of times when we and our loved ones may have been

healthier and in some ways perhaps happier. To the contrary, it's critically important to remember those good times, because they can give us inspiration and hope for the future. Carl, even after losing the house entirely, never forgets his love for Ellie or their shared dreams. He just doesn't let them drag him down any more.

We should follow Carl's example and offload the heavy, backward-looking emotional junk that's keeping us from moving forward. Only then can we truly appreciate today and soar, in every moment, with optimism and joy.

By Bob S, Group No. 2056, Bradenton, FL

FA's DO's and DON'Ts

DO focus on your own reactions and attitudes

DO allow other people to accept their own responsibilities

DO manage your anxieties one day at a time

DO invest time reading helpful literature

DO learn to be open and honest

DO involve yourself in Families Anonymous

DO encourage all attempts to seek help

DO seek the good in others and in yourself

DON'T accept guilt for another person's acts

DON'T overprotect, cover up, or rescue from consequences

DON'T neglect yourself or be a doormat

DON'T yearn for perfection

DON'T manipulate or make idle threats

DON'T overlook the growth opportunities of a crisis

DON'T underestimate the importance of "release with love"

DON'T sit at home feeling depressed, when you could be attending a Families Anonymous meeting, helping your- self and others

Reflecting on Step Nine

Made direct amends to such people whenever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others

If I could author a book, it would be an autobiography—the title: *I Want to Mend My Broken Family*. When I was a little girl, life was so simple. I had a wonderful mom and dad, two sisters, a nice home, great school (and I walked to school), great teachers who cared about my future, and all of life's trinkets. Back then, there were no worries because life wasn't complicated. There were rules and values, joy, fun and happy days. We took baby steps through life. We lived in a world of love, respect, trust and honesty. There were family holidays, family celebrations and neighborhood parties and picnics. I went to church with my family and we prayed as a family at the dinner table, giving thanks to God for our blessings. These would be the kind of things that would be in the first chapters of my book. I always compared my life to "Little House on the Prairie." Why? Because family meant everything. Family was the nucleus of life. Family was special. When people stay away from each other, their strengths get divided. When a family remains a unit, they stay strong and undivided, possessing

a collective power to withstand all kinds of trials and tribulations. This is why having a family and keeping it bonded is extremely important and vital to life. So what would I write about in the next chapters? I guess it would be about the true reality... how my Little House on the Prairie life changed. Change doesn't happen overnight; it happens gradually. The key factor is the separation of family -- deaths, marriages, divorces, second marriages, blended families and new players trying to become part of the nucleus that once worked. Technology came soaring in, and instead of family discussions and Father Knows Best, the new norm became CNN, sitcoms (inappropriate for most to watch), cell phones, the internet, Facebook, blogs, Twitter, TV series with shootings and violence, YouTube and those appalling video games that held our children captive for hours. Drugs tempted our youth and once they took the first pill, drink or fix, their lives would become a nightmare and the only chance for survival would be a commitment to recovery. This would be the final straw that tore the family apart. The next

chapters would be about mending the family. Darts of doubt started flying at me but I took comfort in knowing that I had done something very right in my life by becoming an active member of Families Anonymous. Now I segue into Step Nine. Making amends always felt like a bitter pill for me to swallow, but I knew if I was

serious about my family, it would be good medicine for both my spirit and my soul. I pondered this step experiencing an

epiphany about the definition of amends which once again circles back to change. Normally simple, but how easily forgotten. And the book of life goes on. I got straight with myself. I had to move on to make things right with others in my life. I began by writing a poem to my youngest son and sent it to him the first time he was incarcerated. I can't tell you it didn't hurt because it did. I followed my program because it was about detaching with love and letting go. I felt that action was somewhat successful, for the time being anyway. I then moved on to my husband. We had a very long talk and I openly admitted my wrongdoings. Again this was a

change for me. Change is not easy; it's very humbling, but it is part of the healing process. So that worked. Who was next? It was my oldest son, Scott. He was, and still is, a tough nut to crack. A telephone call didn't work so I sent a letter. Wrong move--because his wife opens all his mail and is

instrumental in predisposing my intents. I bit my lip and bared the pain. My last hope was an email. I sent an apology in an email to my

son. He never acknowledged it. End result—it hasn't worked, so I've turned him and his family over to my higher power— God. The caveat to this action is patience. Then came my daughter. What happened between us, I don't really know; I can only surmise. I tried reaching out, but to this day have not been successful. I know that I can only control me. My three stepchildren did not become part of the blended family untainted. Drugs were a chapter in each of their lives, bearing the bitter consequences of pain and suffering for the entire family. I can't write the final chapters yet, but what I can work on is becoming a catalyst for my family. I know I have no control over the

*I still suffer, but now I
understand that
suffering produces
perseverance;
perseverance, character;*

outcome or the change in others. Sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't work. I can't control those who won't accept my amends or recognize the change in me. What I can do is become a better role model; wish, hope, think and pray that there will be unity in my family again. I can believe; I can hope and I can put all my faith in

God. When this does happen, I can write the final chapters, close the book and begin a new season in my life. I can control me, others I can only love. Today, I will continue to thank my higher power, be grateful for the many blessings He has given me and I continue to pray for the restoration of my family. **Bev C**

The FA Formula

Patience + education equals understanding and understanding leads to forgiveness which creates renewed love and compassion which gives the child hope and it is this hope that ignites long term recovery.

The User's Parent, Group 1806

FAMILIES ANONYMOUS



The FA Literature Committee has produced something **extra** that will accompany the current catalog starting in June 2019!

**A NEW COVER SHEET WILL BE ADDED TO THE CATALOG
SHOWING EVERY PIECE OF FA LITERATURE
ORGANIZED BY TOPIC!**

Now you can look for an FA piece of literature according to your Interest. Some pieces fall in more than one category. Here are a few of the 22 topic headings:

- Facing the reality of a child's addiction
- How to help without enabling
- Spiritual healing
- Putting FA's concepts and principles into action

LESSONS OF LIFE

What Parents Learnt from a Daughter's Addiction

Nearly 8 years ago, we received a call from the police that our daughter was being arrested for a DUI. While this might not seem unusual in today's world, our daughter had just turned 16 and did not have her driver's license yet. The following year and a half included courtrooms, attorney fees, driving her to AA meetings and community service. We thought this was a one-time incident; however over the course of the next 4 years, we found out it wasn't.

Our daughter played the part. She went to private schools for 13 years, made good grades, went to college, joined a sorority and was addicted to heroin. I've told several people I didn't even know how to spell the word 'heroin'. Heroin was not part of our world. After finally accepting her addiction, we spent months trying to find her in one of the worst areas of our city where people are shot daily. She could not keep herself from her dealer and just waiting for her to call us would give us some temporary piece of mind. Looking back, I don't know how we kept our jobs. We couldn't understand why she was stealing from us, stealing our money,

pawning the items in our house including the wedding rings of my late parents, who she adored more than anything in this world. Nothing could stop her from stealing to support her addiction. We found her purse filled with pawn slips.

Fortunately our daughter surrendered and no longer wanted to live that life, chose recovery and so did we. Short of losing our minds, we found Families Anonymous through a parent at our daughter's recovery center. Through the Families Anonymous Program, we have learned about enablement, gratitude, letting go, changing, and acceptance and have met some amazing parents whose children all suffer from the same disease of alcoholism/addiction. As our daughter celebrates 4 years of living a sober life this August, we will also celebrate our own recovery through Families Anonymous which continues to help us in all aspects of our lives.

Through our Families Anonymous Program, we have gained the following:

1. We learned how to say “I love you, No”. That every time we made it comfortable for our addict we were sustaining her disease and if she was happy with us, we were probably aiding her addiction. We learned that our addict lost respect for us every time she could fool or manipulate us.
2. We learned that our preoccupation with our addict caused our own health to suffer. During recovery when our daughter made her amends to us, we apologized to her for forcing her out of our home during her madness. She immediately informed us that she would have made us sicker, had we allowed her to live in our house.
3. We learned to stay in our own lane, and to work our own FA Program. We learned we needed to work our Program as hard as we expected her to work hers or we could continue to enable her disease.
4. We learned that if nothing changes, nothing changes. We had to change ourselves to gain peace and had to change ourselves to give our addict any chance at recovery.
5. We learned how to be still and how not to react and that we didn’t have to attend every argument we were invited to. An argument with oneself will eventually end.
6. We learned how to set boundaries and how to stick to them.
7. We learned that this is not a Self Help Program; that we needed our Higher Power and our FA fellowship to heal; that there is power in a number greater than one.
8. We learned we didn’t Cause it, we couldn’t Cure it and we can’t Control it. And we also learned that we couldn’t take credit for our addict’s sobriety.
9. We learned that we had choices and our sick addict could no longer run the show under our roof. We learned that we no longer needed to tell our addict what to do; however could tell her what we were going to accept and not accept. We realized the insanity we were living in and learned that we no longer needed to remove the cash from our home, sleep on our purses and wallets, hide our car keys or analyze pictures our

- addict sent us of places she really wasn't at.
10. We learned we had nothing to lose by going to a Families Anonymous Meeting. That Families Anonymous was not going to magically fix our problems, but it allowed us to open ourselves up to receive help from others in the same situation that we were in. We learned to be humble.
 11. We learned to stop playing God and that we were powerless over anyone else's life.
 12. We learned to allow our addict to face the consequences of her own actions. If we were always there to pick her up, bail her out, she had no incentive to do anything different.
 13. We learned to stop asking questions; which was only contributing to our family insanity. We learned that our addict has a disease that tells her she doesn't have a disease and many times she could not distinguish between the truth and a lie. We learned that most times, her disease caused her to work an angle.
 14. We learned that it was a waste of time to explain to our addict what she was doing to herself and our family; it was like trying to describe to someone what water tastes like.
 15. We learned not to coach our addict; that our brains do not think like hers and our addict has a chronic disease that changed both her brain structure and function. We learned that we could not fix her nor determine her path for recovery. Only through her fellowship of other recovering addicts, Higher Power and a 12-step program could she gain long

term recovery that included a full exit plan of becoming an



independent adult.

16. We learned that NOTHING we were trying to do to fix our addict was bringing a lasting change.
17. We learned that the kind of day we had, needed to depend on OUR attitudes, not our addicts. That ruining more than one life with this sickness was one too many.
18. We learned the difference in enabling and loving and that helping many times draws a straight line to enabling. We learned to not do for her what she should and could do for herself.
19. We learned that we could not stop our addict from using, but we could definitely stand in the way of her recovery. We learned that she needed to own her recovery to stay sober.
20. We learned to follow the path of other recovering people but we also learned to allow ourselves to slip and have set backs. As with alcoholics/addicts, most exceptions who try to create their own recovery path, end up relapsing.
21. We learned that saying “No” to drugs does not necessarily work and our addict’s

sobriety would only last if she chose to say “Yes” to a new life with no reservations.

22. We learned to allow our addict to have her own dignity, self-worth and allow her the opportunity to grow up. She is an adult; she is not a child.

23. We learned to always help other people in need through a FA Meeting, on the phone or through a text and to always carry the message.

24. We learned to gain the 12 Promises of FA in all our affairs. We continue to learn every day how to be more grateful and to live one day at a time.

25. We learned that you cannot put a price on the friends, fellowship and support we have gained through Families Anonymous. Through this Program, we’re grateful parents of a Recovering Addict. **By Scott and Andrea**

FA LITERATURE SPOTLIGHT

THE GIFT OF AWARENESS

A Tool of Recovery in Families Anonymous



While we have all received many “gifts” throughout our lives, both material as well as inspirational, be they for Christmas, Hanukkah, birthdays or whatever the occasion, can we ever receive a more valuable gift than “awareness”? Only you can answer this question. But a mindful awareness of yourself, others, and particularly a loved one with an addiction, can certainly be an invaluable tool to your well-being.

What does *Awareness* provide for me?

As this booklet describes, awareness is a gift that brings a totally new perspective to our moment-by-moment interactions with people whose lives we touch. A mindful awareness brings us a new and more thorough consciousness of our words and actions. Using this tool we are better able to anticipate the impact of our words and actions, prior to saying or doing something, which in retrospect, we may wish not to have said or done. This careful awareness can also work in another positive manner for us, by allowing us to say or do things that make us pleased by the manner in which we have handled a situation.

Does *Awareness* work hand-in-hand with the Twelve Step process?

In a word, absolutely! Awareness ties in with each Step. And improving your mindful awareness only enhances the value obtained from living each Step.

So, if sharpening our *Awareness* seems positive to you,
what do *you* do next?

We suggest, picking up a copy of the new booklet, (or possibly several copies to share with others). Order from the FA Literature Catalog or the FA website.

THE GIFT OF AWARENESS

A Tool of Recovery in Families Anonymous

#1034

\$ 2.75

Happy Recovery to Us

Unlearning the Dysfunctions We Pick to Cope with Addiction

It's that time of the year again when I celebrate first having walked into an FA meeting a few years ago. When I first entered a room with strangers, my mind was blank – I knew I wanted helped, I wanted to be understood. I had read “Codependency No More” written by Melodie Beattie and watched an online counselor who spoke to ‘Adult children of Alcoholics.’ Until then, I had no idea I was an ‘Adult Child’.

I've always been embarrassed to talk about myself and avoid any advice that encouraged me to look inwards – something I felt was uncool. I often would make fun of ‘self-help’ and brushed it aside as new age mumbo-jumbo. Positive thinking, I believed was for those who were not as critical as me. I felt inadequate always, but I also

had very high standards of what would be helpful to me. My entry into FA was preceded by a series of expensive counseling sessions that I was talked into by a friend. These therapy sessions, where the counselor sat with a timer on her mobile phone, were uninspiring to say the least. I threw out incongruent thoughts at a very empathetic woman, who asked me several times what I was feeling or what I thought. She explained ‘good strokes’ and bad and encouraged me to have friends I could fall back on. Soon the crisis in my romantic relationship that had convinced me that spending significant amounts of money on counseling was valid had mended itself temporarily. A few months later, when I found my partner had been lying to me about where he was and who he had been with, the world was pulled from under my feet again.

Almost two decades ago, a counselor had suggested to me as a teenager in school that I attend a support group for children who had addict parents. My mother rubbished the idea and I couldn't figure out the logistics. How would I attend these meetings without



my parent dropping me or giving me pocket money to travel to the sessions. My family was convinced that I needed to pray my adolescent depression away. “Teenagers are temperamental,” my teachers consoled my mother who was worried that I was aloof and lonely in school.

So I walked into FA two decades later, with a regretful voice telling me I could have done this years ago. I realized that how I had coped with a loved one’s addiction was how I coped with love,

work and every crisis in my life. I shut my eyes and prayed that things would change or that they would go away. The way I was taught to forgive my father’s

relentless attachment to a substance, I forgave irresponsible adults. Especially in romance I recreated many emotional habits I employed to cope with addiction – I was in despair. I put up with men who treated me poorly and I was nice to them in the hope that they would change. I was passive so as to not push my partner’s buttons or ‘make’ him angry. I had no plans other than caring for another. At work, I was overcommitted, taking more responsibility than I should have,

I was passive so as to not push his buttons or ‘make’ my partner angry. I had no plans other than caring for another.

sometimes exhausted, expecting a raise, but never asking for it, so I didn’t look too assertive. I learnt to hide my truths, the way I had for several years hidden the truth about addiction in my family. When friends asked if they could come over, I would make excuses and the habit of living an isolated life has always meant a messy house I struggle to keep in order.

FA is not a substitute for counseling or dealing with personal problems, so after coming to FA I found another

therapist who I felt understood me better. But coming to FA finally put me at peace, to know that I wasn’t crazy. There seemed to be a diagnosis for why I

felt so out of control that made some sense. Finally. It isn’t that the loved one who is struggling with addiction has caused my problem, but I understood that my own coping mechanisms were many times dysfunctional. Maybe I didn’t know better, but now I had a chance to. I now could move my focus from everyone and everything else to my own serenity, I could at least try to stop controlling the world around and control who I really could. Myself.

By Rebecca

FA Humour

Being a “Good Mother”, I was still doing all the laundry for my three teenagers. One day I was loading the washing machine with jeans when the phone rang, so I just threw in the last pair and started the machine. After the phone call I opened the machine only to discover many small perfume sample size vials floating around...some open some not..... I hadn’t checked the last pair of jeans!! I started to laugh out loud as I thought whereas most people have April Fresh/Lemon scented laundry... I had drug [marijuana/hash] scented laundry!!! Thank God for having FA in my life showing me that I still have a choice in responding to a crises and I have regained my sense of humor even in frightful situations...

.....
Before marijuana became legal in Canada, I discovered that my son was growing marijuana plants in our home. Of course I was upset but prayed about what to do about this situation...The saying “You can lead a horse to water but you can’t make it drink” came to mind. At first I thought that this always meant that you cannot control what another person does...Then it hit me... "yes you can take action" and so I added salt to the watering can beside the plants... Voila!!!The plants died a natural death!!

That Wacky Woman from Winnipeg Canada.

Misery is Optional

Was I given a choice? I don’t remember choosing misery. In fact, I denied it existed by putting on rose-colored glasses to give the appearance that all was well. It wasn’t until I came to FA that I began to see reality. Amazing – I’d been an enabler rather than helping! I learned to make a gratitude list and that “no” was a complete sentence. I’m still a work in progress, but I’m not dwelling on the past and my stomach is no longer churning. I’m starting each day anew and focusing on that day only. No more “what if’s” or “if only...” for me. What a release this has been! Indeed, misery is an option. ***Karen B. (Group 121)***

Misery loves company. I really do not believe that. Unhappiness is misery and no one wants to be unhappy. You can make yourself miserable very easily. It is easier to be negative than positive for many people. Misery is a dark room where you will not know what way to go because you cannot see the light. ***Viola, (Group 121)***

I believe when a person first joins Families Anonymous, they usually feel guilty. They think that they did something wrong to make a family member addicted. They must focus on their own life. They must take care of themselves and their own life so that they can be of more assistance, You separate yourself from the addicted one but still love that person. You must assist but not enable that one. ***Jack R., (Group 121)***

CONSIDER SPONSORSHIP

Volunteering to be a sponsor means making a commitment to help someone else in the FA program recover from the throes of the family disease of addiction. We who love a drug-dependent person suffer from codependency. That is, our lives are run emotionally, socially and financially by an addicted loved one. Life is a dizzy merry-go-round of confusion, lies, cover-ups and crises.

It is especially helpful that a member who is plodding through this misery has a sponsor guide him or her through the Twelve Steps to recovery. A sponsor is an experienced FA member who is trustworthy in respecting anonymity, who can listen with understanding, provide guidance in studying the Steps, and who does not give advice.

If you have thought about sponsorship, but don't know enough about it, purchase a copy of *FA and Sponsorship* #1020 (\$3.00) from the WSO or on the FA website, and find out more about it for yourself. One section of this little booklet provides information on how to be a sponsor. A second part is written for a sponsee (the person who is helped).

The satisfaction you will find in helping someone else recover can help you maintain the integrity of your own recovery. Isn't this goal worth your consideration? Those who have chosen to sponsor others will give you a resounding YES!

Save The Date!

41st Annual Chicagoland Families Anonymous Convention

Sunday, November 3, 2019

Location: AMITA Health Resurrection Medical Center Chicago,
7435 W. Talcott Ave, Chicago, IL 60631

Journey to Recovery is the theme with speakers and workshops.

Please join us and continue on your journey to recovery.

Donations

*In Memory of Michael L,
Son of Lisa L
NY, Hicksville
GR0469*

*In Memory of Dick B.
Long time devoted member and inspiration from
Families Anonymous GR 1187
Bloomfield, CT*

*In Memory of the life and passing of "C.J." Charles Allen T R
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by Don and Kristie R
San Jose, CA*



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As per the Seventh Tradition, each group should be self-supporting. Your donations help support the activities of the World Service Office. For more information on how to donate, please visit

www.familiesanonymous.org and click **DONATE NOW!** Thank you for supporting the many activities of FA World Service. Your contribution is tax-deductible

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VOLUNTEER WITH THE RAG!

The Twelve Step Rag is critical to helping keep the Fellowship connected, inspired, and informed. It's published every two months under the expert guidance of its current Editor, Elizabeth S, but she can't do it alone.



Here's how you can help:

1. **"Content is King."** The rag team can't do anything without raw materials - your written work. We're always desperately in need of content, whether it be an article, poem, slogan, or anecdote - please just write.

The topics are as broad as your interests: your growth in the Fellowship, your journey toward a more fulfilling life following the Twelve Steps, your struggles, setbacks, victories, hopes and dreams, the list goes on. Just talk about whatever moves you and that you believe will be helpful and/or interesting to others in the fellowship. And don't worry if you're not a great writer - that's what editors are for. We're looking for

heartfelt and truthful writing, not literary masterpieces (but if you write like John Cheever, so much the better!). Please send your work to our editor at 12steprag@familiesanonymous.org. The submission deadlines for upcoming issues of the Rag are provided at the end of the guidelines (the Step and Slogan listed for each issue are suggestions to focus your efforts, but not mandatory).

2. **Calling all Tech-Oriented Graphic Designers and Editors!** Each issue must be designed and laid out with appropriate graphics, headlines, and artwork so the final product continues to be attractive and fun to read. Right now the Rag is particularly in need of people with graphic design and editing experience. Can you please contribute some of your time and skills to helping ensure that the Rag continues to be of the highest quality, and that it comes out on a timely basis? We're looking for volunteers to work with us.

Please contact Elizabeth at 12steprag@familiesanonymous.org or Bob S at bobs@familiesanonymous.org if you have the skills, the time, and the desire to help, or if you have any questions.

Keep those submissions coming!

Yours in the Fellowship,

Bob S

WSB 12 Step Rag Liaison

TWELVE STEP RAG 2019 PUBLICATION SCHEDULE

ISSUE	FEATURED TOPICS	ARTICLES SUBMISSION DEADLINE	ANNOUNCEMENTS/ DONATIONS/ADS SUBMISSION DEADLINE
JULY/AUG	-Step 4- First things first	August 10	August 23
SEPT/OCT	-Step 5 - Help is only a phone call away	October 10	October 23
NOV/DEC	-Step 6- Just for today	December 10	December 23

The Kiss by Gustav Klimt (1908)

