

VOLUME LV | ISSUE 1 | JAN-FEB 2020

SERENITY MESSENGER



THE
NEWSLETTER OF THE
FAMILIES ANONYMOUS
FELLOWSHIP

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

Letter from the Group Outreach Committee

Fellowship in the Time of Coronavirus

To Our FA Family,

In response to the coronavirus crisis and the cancellation of face-to-face meetings, the World Service Board is announcing an expanded program of virtual meetings using GoToMeeting software. Effective immediately, the MWW meeting room will be offering open meetings, available DAILY for all face-to-face members to use from 6 PM until MIDNIGHT Eastern Time. Some meetings may coincide, but we must all be flexible during these difficult times. Our on-going MWW and Phone meetings will also be available at the regular meeting times shown on the website under MEETINGS>VIRTUAL MEETINGS. Please download the GoToMeeting instructions for using your computer, cell phone, tablet or landline phone. The set-up must only be done once. The MWW meeting number to join is always the same (115-381-933). We are all in this together!! Stay Serene and attend a meeting!

We are very grateful to MWW (Meetings Without Walls) for setting this up and opening it up to all of our members. The MWW meetings, phone meetings and e-meetings are open to all, from every part of the fellowship; in keeping with our Traditions, the MWW groups are autonomous in the same way as F2F (Face-to-Face) meetings. Newcomers and current members are welcome to join these meetings.

Some groups may prefer to hold their own virtual meetings during these difficult times. Some groups have already done this by using various venues such as [FreeConferenceCall.com](https://www.freeconferencecall.com), [Zoom.us](https://zoom.us), or even their own [GoToMeeting](https://gotomeeting.com) which allows a free 30 day trial period. (Another member can set this up after the first 30-day period expires). These groups have already begun meeting at their usual meeting times.

Feel free to join our virtual meetings or set up your own Group meetings. Many of you may find it more comfortable to be with only those members from your regular meetings. The MWW Script, found on the virtual meetings section of our website gives a perfect meeting format which has already been modified for virtual meetings. You may also pick a time to tell your members to sign onto these MWW GoToMeetings. A few others may be in attendance, but remember, we cannot exclude members from other groups.

We wish you all good health and serenity during these difficult times. Please remember to work your program, read FA literature, call your sponsor and attend a virtual meeting when possible. Now may also be a perfect time to dust off your 12-Step Workbook and begin working or re-working the steps. Our program works if you work it, so work it you're worth it. And remember, many of us have lived through tough times before so be a beacon of positive light. We can do this!!

If you have questions or concerns, feel free to email me at GO@FamiliesAnonymous.org Thank you.

In Service and Serenity,

Donna (Group Outreach Chair)

2019-2020

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SERENITY MESSENGER

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EDITOR'S NOTE

As you've surely noticed, this newsletter has a new name – SERENITY MESSENGER. The old name, THE TWELVE STEP RAG, served us well for many years, but for a number of reasons it was time to move on; time for a change. You can read about the World Service Board's rationale for the change, and about the history of the old name, in the first article in this issue, entitled '*New Name, New Beginning.*'

In our journey to recovery, as in all facets of life, change is a constant. As a parent of a child with the disease of drug addiction, I knew it was time to make a change once I realized that behaviors I'd felt were helpful were actually not in my best interest. I'd gotten used to dealing with our addicted loved one in certain ways. I tried to control them; to support them with money and shelter and unsolicited offers of advice. I tried to force them to seek recovery when they weren't ready to accept it. I blamed myself for their problems and made myself miserable trying to solve problems I hadn't caused and couldn't control. Then, through working the Twelve Steps of FA, I began to understand that the way to restore sanity and serenity to my life was to let go of those misguided thoughts and instead let my higher power take over. And what was even harder, I had to let go and allow my addicted loved one to be guided by their higher power as well.

Many people begin the new year with resolutions – to exercise, lose weight, read more, smoke less, be kind to others...to change for the better. By working the steps, we're better equipped to understand the personal changes we need to make to keep us on the road to self-discovery and recovery. I hope you'll find inspiration in this issue to help you on that journey.

In fellowship, Bob S.

New Name, New Beginning

We're now called the Serenity Messenger

Families Anonymous was founded in 1971 by eight groups in Southern California that had formerly been part of Nar-Anon. Approximately fifty members attended the first organizational meeting on April 29, and the fellowship grew from there. About a year later, in June 1972, FA's first official newsletter was published under the name *The Twelve Step Rag*, which had been selected from among 31 suggested titles.

*FA's first official
newsletter was
published under
the name The
Twelve Step Rag in
June 1972*

By August, the *Rag* banner had been designed. It's a cartoon drawing of a gender-neutral individual, with no facial features (an anonymous person), walking across the page in twelve separate

postures. At first, he/she walks dejectedly with head down, hands in pockets, and shoulders slumped. Gradually, presumably as he/she progresses through the Twelve Steps, the person evolves to standing upright, confident and proud. The figure ends in a gleeful posture, leaping with hands outstretched and head flung skyward.

The banner design is a graphic depiction of how the Twelve Steps impact our lives: We start off in FA feeling hopeless, lost, disappointed, and confused, just like the figure on the far left side of the banner. But as we work the Twelve Steps, we regain our self-respect, confidence, and hope for the future. We find joy and serenity. Life is good again, and we can rejoice in each new day, just like the figure on the far right.

'Ragtime' or 'rag' music is a musical style, characterized by a syncopated or 'ragged' rhythm that was popular between 1895 and the early 1920s. If you imagined that the cartoon figure was prancing to ragtime music, the banner and the title *The Twelve Step Rag* arguably reinforced each other. It took a few logical leaps, but the connection was there.

Since 2018, however, we've modernized the look of the newsletter by eliminating

the banner cartoon. Each cover now features a full-page color photo of a tranquil or inspiring nature scene, with the title *The Twelve Step Rag* superimposed on top. It gives the periodical a cleaner, more professional look.

Without the cartoon banner, the title *The Twelve Step Rag* – or *The Rag*, in shortened form - seems inapt. In fact, the word *Rag* today can be a derogatory term, meaning “a newspaper or magazine regarded with contempt or distaste,” as defined in Dictionary.com. Today’s FA newsletter is a high-quality publication deserving of admiration and respect. Continuing to call it a *Rag* sends the opposite message.

FA’s newsletter serves a number of important purposes. It’s where the fellowship is kept up to date on the WSB’s efforts to keep FA moving forward, and how your donations are put to use. It’s where our peerless Literature Committee introduces new and inspirational FA publications. There’s a regular feature that recognizes the generous donations from FA groups, including *In Memoriam* announcements which allow members of the fellowship to honor departed colleagues and loved ones.

The newsletter also keeps the fellowship apprised of news about our conventions and annual business

meetings. Perhaps, its most important purpose is that members of the fellowship can share their experiences, strength and hope through articles, letters, poems, and anecdotes. As a whole, the FA newsletter is designed to help each of us in our journey toward living joyful, peaceful, and productive lives, despite whatever paths our addicted loved ones may choose.

The World Service Board (WSB) believes that the title of FA’s newsletter should reflect its mission, not denigrate its quality. We began the process of selecting a new name almost a year ago, and after much discussion concerning a number of potential alternate titles we’ve selected a new title that we believe embodies what this publication is about – SERENITY MESSENGER.

We’re committed to making this publication as attractive, readable, informative and helpful as it can be, and to living up to the high standard set by this new name. We hope each issue brings you some measure of serenity and joy, or at least insights on how the Twelve Steps can help you achieve those goals.

Bob S, On behalf of the World Service Board



WHAT I LEARNED FROM 35 YEARS IN FAMILIES ANONYMOUS

A long-term Families Anonymous member ponders over what FA has given him over the years

Thirty-seven years ago, my wife and I drove into the parking lot of a church in Levittown Long Island, NY, to meet a clergyman I had asked to bring us to a Naranon meeting. It was my first exposure to a twelve-step program. It came about because my son's behavior was completely out of control and despite all our efforts was getting worse, not better. At that time, he was sixteen and in jail accused of assaulting a police officer.

I had heard the clergyman talk about his own addictions and twelve step programs at a religious retreat and was impressed enough to ask him for help. My wife and I were totally obsessed with our son and his behavior. Our lives revolved around him when we went to that first meeting. The idea I took away from those early meetings was that I was entitled to be happy and I could not let my happiness depend on the behavior of another person no matter how close to me they might be. It was the beginning of a healing process

In the addictive family each member plays a part every time there is a crisis and continues to play that part with the same result. When one member of the family decides to get well and stops playing their part then there is hope that all members may choose to get well

in my life that continues to this day. I was initially very zealous to promote Naranon, starting several new groups with my wife at first and by myself later. After a few years of being active in Naranon, we heard of Families Anonymous and to the

best of my knowledge all the Naranon groups on L.I. at that time elected to affiliate with FA. While the programs seemed almost identical, we liked the FA name and the fact that it included behavioral problems since so many people are in denial that their children are abusing alcohol or other drugs but can more easily admit

the behavioral problems.

So after some thirty-five years in FA what have I learned? I cannot possibly put all the things I have learned in this note but I will try to list the most important to me. That the God of my understanding loves me just the way I am and loves my children far more than I ever can or could. That this is truly a family disease that deeply affects everyone in the family and it did not start with the behavior of the

son who brought me to the program (it took many years to accept this). That in the addictive family each member plays a part every time there is a crisis and continues to play that part with the same result. When one member of the family decides to get well and stops playing their part then there is hope that all members may choose to get well because the family system is suddenly out of balance and they have to adjust. That when I do for any of my children what they should do for themselves, I am not loving them but telling them in an off-handed way they cannot do it themselves but need me. That enabling is a perversion of love and seriously damages the enabled person. That this is an insidious awesome disease and denial is one of its strongest characteristics. That I didn't cause it, I can't control it, and I can't cure it. That I myself grew up in an alcoholic home and that alcoholics and other addicts can often function well in the material world but the spiritual carnage, which occurs in the family, can be devastating. That I am entitled to live a sane life and do not have to accept unacceptable behavior in my home. That addiction is not a moral issue.

From the hundreds of people I have met in the program, to whom I have reached out and who have reached out to me, I have learned how to love. To many FA members, and to me when I first started, success in the program means the person whose behavior brought them to FA

decides to get well and goes on to have a normal life. By that standard, I have not had success. Two of my addicted sons have died of drug overdoses although both were in their own programs at the time, and another of my sons was killed in a car crash where the other driver was DUI. I had a lot of rage at the God of my understanding for allowing my sons to die but my arms are too short to fight with God and have come to believe that healing is still possible.

The God of my understanding is not confined by time or space in providing healing. I believe the measure of success in the program is what we are doing with our own lives. That the objective of the program is to heal us enough so that we can release the one who brought us here with love. If we can do that not only are they freed but we are freed too.

I attend my weekly FA meeting without fail and am involved in many activities, which try to reach out to others. I talk to the God of my understanding a lot about my family tree and healing all the relationships in it; me and my wife, our children and grandchildren, our parents and grandparents and great grandparents. The root of that healing is forgiveness, so for me FA is truly Families Anonymous and I continue to be filled with great hope.

Harry K

ANONYMITY

Protecting Others from Harm Can Override Anonymity in Rare Cases

“Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions...” So says our Tradition 12. But, is practicing anonymity always the right thing to do?

First, let's set the record straight on our own anonymity. The World Service Board (WSB) has spent many hours discussing this and our Traditions' intended meaning on this subject.

WSB members agree that for each of us, it is our right and our decision on whether or not to keep our own anonymity. We must, however, at all times remember that it is our responsibility to protect the anonymity of others around us. “What we say here stays here.” We hear this at every meeting. We share our stories and those of our loved ones within the safety of our meetings; this is the foundation of our program. We do this so others can learn and draw from our words when similar problems happen to them.



Speaking publicly, or outside of a meeting, is a totally different situation. Has our loved one given us permission to speak about them? My daughter and I reached an agreement long ago because we realized the power of our stories and how they might help others. Of course, speaking about other FA members, using

their names, even by accident, is never our right.

OK, with that out of the way, when is it, or isn't it, ok to share information, and with whom? My answer, and that of the WSB, is: “When the safety or well-being of others is at imminent risk.”

When an FA group was confronted recently with a report about sexual abuse and murder, a decision was made to go to the police. This decision became an issue within that group, with some members expressing the opinion that they had no right to report this, citing our 12th Tradition. Was this the intent of our Tradition, to protect people who would do harm to others? At what point does taking action to prevent or report a crime become more important than anonymity? The WSB was called upon to give our opinion and end the dispute.

In this instance, where it appeared clear that a crime threatening serious bodily harm and/or death had been or was about to be committed, the WSB believed it was, indeed, the responsibility of the members receiving this information to protect innocent people by reporting the matter to the authorities. We realize this is an extreme case - but it did happen! The WSB is making the Fellowship aware of this because, although we strongly believe in the paramount importance of honoring Tradition 12 whenever possible, we also believe that in rare cases such as this, protecting others from imminent serious physical harm or death overrides the right to remain anonymous. **Barbara S. - Chair, World Service Board**

LETTING GO AS A VERB

My personal experiences with my son have given me a new perspective and insight into his life with addiction. This new awareness of his reality occurred once I fully grieved the loss of the child of my dreams. This led to my honest acceptance which then led me back to the life I had left behind when my son's addiction began. A life of peace and serenity. A life of joy, love and purpose. It is good to be back. I have learned that the fear I had for him was not the fear he had. He had no fear. I experienced great emotional pain when I learned he was living on the streets, under a bridge. He

This is my son's life, not mine. I no longer pass judgment, as I have no right to judge him. I will allow him the dignity to experience his life in his way.

felt no pain, emotional or physical. I cried when I learned he was in jail. He did not shed one tear. I felt overwhelming sadness when I saw how addiction was destroying his opportunities for a career, a loving wife, children and discovering his purpose. He experienced no such sadness over these things. This is my son's life, not mine. I no longer pass judgment, as I have

no right to judge him. I will allow him the dignity to experience his life in his way. Perhaps this is too radical a concept for other parents to accept but it is an understanding that keeps my codependency in check. It is what keeps me sane and focused on my own recovery.

The User's Parent Group 1806

January 4 - Today A Better Way

When I find myself in mental and emotional turmoil because of my anxieties and fears, I have the ability to put those thoughts "on hold" and shift from negative to positive thinking. Instead of feeding my anxieties, I can foster a sense of wonder and gratitude. I can notice a beautiful sunset, watch children as they laugh and play, marvel at a bird's flight, or smell the fresh countryside after a summer rain. What beauty and serenity can be found just by observing! When I am quiet and still, I can be in touch with my Higher Power. Knowing my God is there, I allow my fear to be replaced by faith. TODAY I WILL work to replace anxiety and fear with gratitude and serenity.

Is there a topic you would like to see covered in the Serenity Messenger? Send your ideas to newsletter@familiesanonymous.org

Starting a New FA Group

No Family Anonymous group near you? – If so, do you have a desire to start a new group? That would be great, and to help understand what you would need to do, please read on!

There are only five components needed to start a new group. What are these components? Glad you asked...

- 1) A regular place to meet
- 2) A Starter Kit (#8003)
Note: Kit is available at no charge by calling the WSO at 847-294-5877 or 800-736-9805
- 3) A copy of FA's Suggested Meeting Format with Basic Readings (#5003)
Note: This is part of the Starter Kit and can also be downloaded free from FA's website
- 4) Some additional FA literature pieces to hand out or offer for sale
- 5) A few potential members

We're sure you have additional questions, which may include topics such as:

- What's involved in finding a suitable meeting place?
- What can I expect to pay for the meeting room?
- How will my group be financed?
- How should the meeting be conducted?

And probably many more questions come to mind, which is certainly understandable.

The good news is, FA has a publication– ***Starting a New FA Group (#8004)*** – which addresses all of the above questions, as well as additional questions which you may have in mind. The even better news is, this publication is available for **free** download from FA's website.

So please consider downloading your free copy if you are thinking about starting a new group. This brief publication (single sheet, printed front & back) will be an invaluable tool for answering your questions!

From Group Outreach Committee on Sharing Service Within Your FA Group

Sharing Service Within Your FA Group

A common pitfall of group secretaries is to try doing everything themselves. This practice is very unhealthy for the group.

FA's First Tradition states the importance of group unity in achieving personal progress for the greatest number of the group's members. Unity and personal progress are more likely to become realities when everyone shares in giving service to the group.

The phrase *trusted servant* does not mean that one person waits on everyone else. FA encourages periodic rotation of the secretary, treasurer, and other group-chair positions, optimally taking place every six months but at least once a year. Rotation of leaders can go a long way toward avoiding the ‘Third Destructive Force’ which is dominance.

Issues of *service* and *unity* can be ideal topics for a meeting, especially prior to a business meeting at which rotation of leaders is to be discussed. *Today A Better Way™* (#1015) has a number of readings on these topics, including on pages 81 (March 21), 142 (May 21), 191 (July 9), 247 (September 3), and 342 (December 7).

Below are descriptions of group positions, which can be combined, depending on the size of your group. In addition to the secretary position(s), groups may designate a treasurer, a program chair, a literature chair, a refreshment chair, a welcome chair, and so on. Groups whose members share in performing service to the fellowship are more apt to grow and prosper.

Group Secretary

- Helps the group run smoothly.
- Stays mindful of other group positions, and offers assistance if needed.
- Notifies the WSO of any changes in secretary or meeting information.
- Reregisters the group annually, either online or by mail, and provides the WSO with current contact information for the group and the secretary.
- Receives email and mail communications from the WSO and the WSB, and relays these to the rest of the group.

Back-up Group Secretary

- Serves as group secretary in an emergency or when the group secretary is out of town or otherwise unavailable.
- Takes over the group secretary position when ready and at his or her discretion.

Treasurer

- Keeps the financial records of the group, including accounting for all income (from “passing the basket” and, if appropriate, from FA literature sales) and for all expenses (rent paid or donated for the meeting room; refreshments; FA literature purchases; donations to the WSO; etc.).
- Sends regular or periodic donations to the WSO, per the group’s decision. (Many groups send donations to the WSO, observing the tradition of remaining forever poor.)
- Manages the group’s checking account, if any. (For more information, refer to the “Financial Records” section.)

Back-up Treasurer

- Performs the functions of the treasurer when the treasurer is absent.

Program Chair

- Schedules meeting leaders, and encourages different members to assume the role of meeting leader each week.
- Maintains a calendar or sign-up book (if the group so chooses) that shows whether a meeting is a Step meeting, a topic meeting, or a literature meeting, and that lists the members who have volunteered to lead or been asked by the program chair to do so. (Information on how to lead a meeting can be found under “Service – The Sixth Tool: Tips for Leading Meetings” in *The FA Tools of Recovery* (#5001) and in a special flyer available from the Group Outreach Committee [GO@familiesanonymous.org].)

Literature Chair

- Orders FA literature from the WSO.
- Oversees the display of FA literature at the meetings.
- Organizes and collates the FA literature items that the group may have chosen to include in the *Welcome!* (#6002) packets given to newcomers at their first meeting. (Note: Only FA literature may be used, displayed, sold, or given away at FA meetings.)
- Attaches blank Greeter/Contact Card (#6002) to the front of the *Welcome!* (#6002) packet or to other materials handed out to newcomers.

Greeter

- Ensures that newcomers are greeted promptly and made to feel as comfortable as possible during their first few meetings.
- Takes newcomers “under their wing” by giving them a *Welcome!* (#6002) packet (put together by the literature chair) and a *Greeter/Contact Card* (#6006) on which they have written their first name and phone number.
- Asks for newcomers’ phone numbers, and calls them after they have skipped one or two meetings, to chat and let them know they are missed. (This relationship sometimes leads to sponsorship.)
- Reviews the group’s phone list with newcomers when the meeting has ended.
- Note: This position can be rotated frequently or assigned casually whenever a newcomer arrives. (The member who hands out the *Welcome!* (#6002) packet fills in his/her own name and phone number on the *Greeter/Contact Card* (#6006).)

Public Information (PI) Committee Chair (and Members)

- Attends local functions and distributes FA literature.
- Makes copies of and distributes FA flyers (such as *Are You At Your Wits’ End?* [#7014]).
- Sends press releases and meeting information to free newspapers.
- Undertakes other activities to inform the community about FA (*Spread the Word About FA* [#7007] offers a variety of suggestions for increasing community awareness of FA. (For more guidance, contact FA’s Public Information Committee at PI@familiesanonymous.org.)

Phone List Chair

- Creates a list of current phone numbers of all group members, using first names only. (Be sure members have given permission to be included on the list.)
- Gives everyone a copy of the phone list to facilitate their calling each other between meetings, or provides a copy to the Email Chair for distribution to the group.

Email Chair

- Creates a group email list (on his/her own computer), to be used for sharing important information among group members regarding world service or special group meetings or for forwarding copies of *The Twelve Step Rag*, FA's bimonthly newsletter.
- Always uses "blind copy" (bcc) to protect members' anonymity, since email addresses often include last names.

Refreshment Chair


- Purchases and prepares coffee, tea and/or snacks, as determined by the group's needs.

Group Contact

- Receives phone calls and/or emails from prospective members and other interested parties.
- Always keeps in mind that the group contact represents FA each time he/she takes a call or responds to an email.
- Communicates to the caller that he/she is responding only as an FA member and never as a counselor or any other type of professional (even if he/she is one).
- Tries to confine the conversation to the FA program; the location, day and time of the group's meeting; and his/her own personal experiences.
- Stays alert for individuals who might initiate improper conversations pertaining to counseling, professional referrals, asking for advice, and so on.
- Considers obtaining a free generic email address (such as faXXXX@gmail.com, with XXXX being the group's FA ID number or location) so as to allow for easy rotation of this position.
 - Directs people with Internet access to the FA website (www.familiesanonymous.org) for more information about the FA fellowship.
 - Considers keeping on hand a list of referral information for other Twelve Step fellowships that might more appropriately meet callers' needs as well as for local health or social service agencies. (Note: FA never recommends or endorses commercial institutions [such as rehabs or hospitals], individual physicians, psychologists, counselors, religious institutions, clergy, etc.)

Check out the revised version of the [Group Secretary's Handbook WSOF-14](#). It is available as a free download on the new [Families Anonymous Website](#)

GROUP DONATIONS

| OCTOBER 2019 | NOVEMBER 2019 |
|---|--|
| GR0134 FL, South Miami GR0554 NJ, Rockaway GR0631 TX, Dallas GR0641 CA, Redlands GR0888 MI, Essexville GR0976 NJ, Colts Neck GR1096 VA, Richmond GR1097 KS, Shawnee Mission GR1227 WA, Richmond GR1561 VA, Charlottesville GR1773 WI, Madison GR1833 MB (Canada), WPG GR1836 FL, Delray Beach GR1961 IL, Chicago (Gold Coast) GR1961 IL, Chicago (Gold Coast) GR1974 NY, Syosset GR2027 IL, Glenco GR2049 OH, Olmsted Township GR2056 FL, Bradenton GR3001 IL, Chicagoland | GR0171 IL, Arlington Heights GR0177 IL, Gurnee GR0278 NY, Amityville GR0478 IL, Glenview GR0746 IN, Evansville GR1444 MB (Canada), Winnipeg GR1972 NJ, Voorhees GR1974 NY, Syosset  |
| DECEMBER 2019 | JANUARY 2020 |
| GR0162 IL, Des Plaines GR0173 IL, Park Ridge GR0468 NY, East Rockaway GR0494 IL, Winnetka GR0665 NJ, Lawrenceville GR0831 IL, Skokie GR0853 IL, Palos Heights GR0899 NY, Glenville GR0976 NJ, Colts Neck GR1187 CT, Bloomfield GR1416 NY, Baldwinsville GR1533 NJ, Tenaflly GR1615 MI, Birmingham GR1639 GA, Atlanta GR1806 OK, Oklahoma City GR1820 IL, Westmont GR1906 GA, Roswell GR1989 KY, Louisville GR2023 IL, Buffalo GroveGR2099 GA, Eljay GR5003 Portugal NSB | GR0134 FL, South Miami GR0262 NY, Garden City GR0270 NY, Massapequa GR0279 NY, Amityville GR0288 OH, Pepper Pike GR0493 IL, La Grange GR0641 CA, Redlands GR0746 IN, Evansville GR0795 MN, St. Paul GR0888 MI, Essexville GR1424 TX, Dallas GR1681 VA, Mechanicsville GR1735 NJ, Ramsey/Mahwah GR1836 FL, Delray Beach GR1849 TX, Plano GR1972 NJ, Voorhees |

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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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PLANS AND RESULTS

We Can Make Plans, But Results Are Not in Our Hands

Trying to plan results brings disappointment. This is true for big things and little things. I can plan a nice dinner at a favorite restaurant but I have no control over the meal I get. I can save for three years and take my family to Disney only to find upon arriving that the tour company I booked with went bankrupt and my hotel and car rental vouchers are worthless. (Oh and it rained four out of the five days). I can set important work deadlines and make a detailed To Do list for each day in December then welcome a new baby, lose a loved one, have a virus run through the house, and another virus kill my work computer. Plans and results are two different things. Plans we make. Results happen. We can control the plans, we can't control the results.



All we can do is control our reaction to the results and make new plans. Sometimes you just need to look forward to dessert, or dance around penniless in the rain, or take deep breathes and realize, 'This Too Shall Pass.' [Lisa/NJ](#)

LYING

What a hot button topic for family members of addicts. I, too, always assumed my son/addict was telling the truth, until it was clear he was not. By that time, we were in the weeds and he was on the rehab trail. I always say I am fine, whether I am ill or sad or devastated or anxiety stricken, or happy and ecstatic. It can be a cosmic description, such as "I am standing here and talking to you, so therefore I am fine." I have never felt that

That moment when we discover our loved one is an addict is a terrible moment.

my son's illness is anyone's business, and that includes me. It is between him and his doctor, and whoever he might bring into confidence. That moment when we discover our loved one is an addict is a terrible moment. I found out through an email from my niece, who found out on social media or some such thing. Addiction admitted through a text message. Who knows? It was crazy and very uncomfortable to understate the situation. However, time passes. FA is a strong and healing river to help us navigate very treacherous territory. I am always grateful that a casual remark brought me to this group. Be well.

[Ellen](#)