VOLUME LVI ISSUE 4 OCT- NOV. 2020

SERENITY MESSENGER

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE FAMILIES ANONYMOUS FELLOWSHIP

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FOR RELATIVES AND FRIENDS CONCERNED ABOUT ANOTHER'S USE OF DRUGS, ALCOHOL, OR RELATED BEHAVIORAL PROBLEMS VOLUME LVII ISSUE 41 OCTOBER - NOVEMBER 2020

SERENITY MESSENGER

Newsletter of the Families Anonymous Fellowship

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Some of us have tried to control the behavior of others and have had our hearts and confidence broken in the process. We know exactly what changes someone else should make; we feel their pain and struggle; and yet we've grown distanced from ourselves. The crisis of addiction has kept us fixated on others, and we find ourselves hiding from our own lives. Moving our gaze away from our addicted loved ones and looking within ourselves is an important turn in our own recovery.

It has been so long since we've catered to ourselves that learning to care for ourselves may require practice. This may seem difficult, but we must take courage. In my home FA Group we have just finished pondering Step Four and have moved on to Step Five. This has made me think about how Step Four, in calling us to look within ourselves, encourages us to make a 'fearless moral inventory'. We may be afraid, but we must do it anyway.

Step Five urges us to admit the exact nature of our wrongs – to God, to ourselves and to another human being. As we do the work and are honest, we are opening up to loving, accepting and helping ourselves.

This may stir different emotions for each of us. Some of us may find this easy; some of us may find it excruciating to open up. Along with having courage, this requires us to be humble, to let go of our fears of judgment.

We are learning to not suffer alone, to share parts of our lives with trusted friends so that we can recover and heal. Being vulnerable, after being hurt and let down, can feel impossible. We learn to open up again, little by little, and enjoy community even while our lives are imperfect. Our loved ones may not always change the way we want them to, but we learn to not let this stop us from living.

The pandemic has fostered mental and physical isolation. It has reminded us, as clichéd as this may sound, that life is indeed too short to be squandered in worry. Take this time to deepen the relationships that matter, make the most of the FA fellowships available to you, and reach out to each other. We're also looking for articles for the next issue of the Serenity Messenger, which will be the last issue of the year. If you've wanted to publish your writing, this is your opportunity!

IN FELLOWSHIP, ELIZABETH

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SERENITY MESSENGER

IT HAPPENED LAST FRIDAY

Even in our despair, life offers little miracles. We only need to see them, writes FA member Susan

I've had a recent slip in my program. My hopes were up when my treatment-resistant homeless son agreed to enter treatment. I became overly involved with his care team and obsessed with planning his healthy new future. Then he relapsed. I spiralled. That piercing anxiety in my chest returned along with insomnia and fear. My husband, not my son's father, his patience worn to a shard, for the first time was afraid for our future. My codependency was pulsing through my veins, and my heart was dripping for my son. Serenity evaporated. My response to my son's addiction was drowning me, again.

Then last Friday happened. I awoke determined to be present for the day. My husband and I were away for a planned long weekend. We went for a walk on a wintry Pacific Ocean beach. With a painted azure blue sky and the waves sleepily breaking in the quiet still morning, I breathed in the ocean air. Long, deep, calming breaths. After walking hand in hand we turned into a cypress grove where 30,000 monarch butterflies were gathered for their short six-week life after flying hundreds of miles from points north. Clustered on tree limbs, they protected themselves by looking like leaves. Suddenly a quick gust of wind dislodged the monarchs and the entire sunlit sky was glittering with deep orange butterfly wings. Later, a docent who had volunteered at this site for many years, her face beaming, said it was a rare display and the best she had ever seen.

Walking back through a parking lot I saw a young man. He was dirty, unshaven and shabbily dressed. Clearly, he was homeless and down-andout. I surprised myself when I involuntarily called out his name. "Ethan?" He looked up, greeted me, and we embraced. It was Ethan, my son's buddy mentor from his long-term rehab of over three years ago in a location a thousand miles away. Ethan was the rehab superstar that all the parents bet the farm on. Ethan, dearly loved by his proud parents. Ethan, now homeless and addicted, struggling to stand proud as he extended his hand in introduction to my husband. Suddenly, randomly, there is Ethan, lost in his addiction.

Boundaries are meant to protect us from danger. But when substance abuse disorder or alcoholism takes hold of a loved one, family members may struggle setting boundaries due to guilt, shame or denial.

IT HAPPENED LAST FRIDAY

(cont'd)

Look, look, look at all the wonder in this world. Look and open yourself to the beauty, the magnitude, the stillness, the unexplainable wonder that is a cypress grove ablaze with orange butterfly wings

And I thought, there is a higher power trying with unfathomable wisdom to get my full attention: Look, look, look at all the wonder in this world. Look and open yourself to the beauty, the magnitude, the stillness, the unexplainable wonder that is a cypress grove ablaze with orange butterfly wings, the beauty of a still, clear morning on the Pacific Ocean. Here is Ethan, who is back living in addiction. Whose parents love him but cannot save him, just as you cannot save your son. You can save yourself. And only you can do this. Your free will gives you a choice: live in anguished fear and obsession for a life out of your control, or live fully present for the only life you can control -- your own. This is it; your one precious life. I am writing this all out to remember what happened last Friday. Each day, each minute is a choice. Live in wonder, or live in anguish. Either choice will not save my son, but there is a choice that will save mine.

SUSAN, WA - REPUBLISHED FROM JAN/FEB 2014

CANHR

HOLDING AN ONLINE MEETING?

Go to familiesanonymous.org, place your cursor over the Literature tab, and click on "Free Downloads." Look for our new publication #5003V, entitled "Families Anonymous Suggested Meeting Format with Basic Readings for Virtual Meetings," which features a version of the face-to-face suggested meeting format that's been tailored for the virtual world. It also includes the familiar Basic Readings, plus publication #5003V-7, "Special Considerations for Getting the Most out of Online FA Meetings," which has practical advice on how to look your best on camera, new opportunities for volunteering in your group, and how to donate electronically to the fellowship. Have a great virtual meeting!

LEARNING NOT TO FIX OTHERS

A counselling professional shares the lessons he has learnt in Families Anonymous

I am a professional, state-qualified drug counselor. I am also an active member of FA and have been for many years. As a professional, I am acutely aware that I must face and uphold the integrity called for in our Traditions – especially in Tradition Eight. This charge is of vital interest to me because I am in a "helping" profession. Should I forget and give advice or counsel, I could easily damage the unity and humility of the group—both of which are so important and necessary for members to grow in the program.

Unity: The importance of unity in our program could easily be compromised by member-professionals who might present themselves as authorities. We all come to the program as equals among equals. Members need to feel that they have something to offer others in the way of their experiences, and that there is something greater than they that has the power to heal them—as well as, possibly, the power to heal another member. In this commonality, we truly can be gifts to each other.

Humility: The importance of humility becomes apparent when each member honestly searches for and identifies his or her own destructive behaviors and is willing to share them within the fellowship where there is no blame or shame. When professionals try to share within the fellowship, they need to keep in mind that they are limited to sharing what they have found to be their own destructive behaviors and how the program is helping them overcome these character defects. It is with humility that we all can find ways to mend the hurts we have caused to ourselves and to others. Humility allows us to search for the truth about ourselves. When that truth is acknowledged, it has the power to help heal what is broken. All my training as a professional did not give me the gifts that the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions have given me

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Out of respect for the significance of unity and humility and to honor our Traditions, I have asked my group to confront me if they ever feel I am crossing the line. The professional side of me recognizes that the deep healing that occurs in our program is greatly dependent upon the telling of our stories. The honest sharing of our lives is the healing grace that allows each of us to be a gift to one another in our recovery. It connects us in a bond of unconditional love where the connectedness we all need, intimacy, can unfold making possible the acts of forgiveness that are necessary to maintain relationships. We are all equal and simply just good people trying to be better.

In our FA program we find a new way of listening, a way of hearing from the heart and not the mind. This opens us up to the gifts of compassion and empathy. We find it is possible to love an addict we can't trust and to be able to forgive the unforgivable. We can find a true identity—one where false faces are put aside— and become free to be who we were created to be. All my training as a professional did not give me the gifts that the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions have given me. They are the way to love ourselves, our families, our friends and our Higher Power—who loves everyone unconditionally.

ANONYMOUS

SERENITY MESSENGEF

WORD FROM THE BOARD

A New WSB Member Shares His Expectations and Experiences

Like many of you, my wife Leigh and I were suddenly and rudely introduced to the world of family addiction. Our daughter Lucy's addiction led us down that increasingly chaotic pathway of a family trying to control a disease that ultimately we had no control over. This realization and our road to recovery was only obtained after joining and attending an FA group, learning from other members' experiences, and reading the FA literature.

During these meetings it became clear that some members were also active outside of our specific group, supporting, as I perceived at the time, some sort of broader FA administrative group. I later learned this was the FA World Service Board (WSB). As my personal recovery continued, and I learned more about FA as a broader organization and the WSB, I realized it was more than just an administrative group.

Sure, there were ongoing activities/services that needed operational administrative support such as website, literature, newsletters, email blasts etc. However, overall direction-setting of the organization, content of all the various communications, and how to deal with the Covid-19 impact required just as much if not more time. At this point, through the example and enthusiasm set by some of my FA group members already on the WSB, I was encouraged to apply to become a member myself. In June 2020, my application was approved, and I was elected to the WSB.

I must admit I wasn't entirely certain what I'd signed up for. What would be my role? Who were all the board members? How did they work together? Many of these questions were answered at my first monthly WSB meeting, in which I was essentially an observer. This meeting and subsequent meetings were held as video conferences led by the WSB chair with approximately 17 board members invited. Each board member provided a report prior to the meeting that was shared with the other members. The report included the member's individual activities that month supporting or leading various committees, and consistent with the FA organization approach, there was also a quick summary of the board member's own recovery work that month.

WSB members are predominantly based in the US but there are some international members who are active contributors. The monthly meetings usually last about 90 minutes and follow a structured agenda that includes various committee updates, including a financial review. Also included are proposals for new board activities and approvals of official FA documents/procedures. There's a degree of formality with official approval of minutes, financial statements, documents and the like needing a proposer and seconder. The meeting closes with the Serenity prayer.

CHAIR Barbara S. - Cherry Hill, NJ

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Word From The Board (Cont'd)

As to my role - well, that essentially is up to me to determine. There are several established committees such as literature, technology, document review, and the Serenity Messenger, to name a few. They all have chairs and are always happy for any support that can be offered.

In addition, the Covid-19 virus impact on face to face meetings has generated a project to help FA groups maximize virtual meetings utilizing video call technologies such as Zoom. There's also a group looking into how we can support more families during this period and how to raise public awareness of FA whilst honoring FA's core principles of anonymity and attraction, not promotion.

After three Board meetings I'm beginning to understand where I can use my past experiences and expertise to best support FA. I believe that, more than ever, a key activity of the WSB committees and working groups is to better communicate with and support the fellowship. So for now, that's my focus: I've joined the technology committee, agreed to help develop articles for the Serenity Messenger, and I'm also part of the special projects to support virtual FA meetings and to raise public awareness of FA.

In terms of my fellow Board members? Well, for me, they were all as expected - working consistently on their individual and group recoveries but also strongly focused on using their experiences to build the FA organization so that it can reach out to and support all its groups and individual members. This is crucial to maximizing tools and resources at the individual and group level to facilitate recovery to an increasing number of family members worldwide who are directly impacted by their loved one's addiction.

CHRIS Y., GROUP #2056, BRADENTON, FL



FOCUS ON YOUR OWN RECOVERY

We each have to discover that our lives are vital

Why is focusing on my own recovery so important? Because I am the only person I can change. As I change my actions and reactions, others in my life have no other alternative than to adjust their actions and reactions to the new me.

In recovery I no longer jump in where I don't belong. I especially don't jump in when not asked (something I did all the time). I have learned the value of silence. 'Silent' has the same letters as 'listen.' I don't have to join every fight I'm invited to. I can walk away. I can pray for my own peace instead.

Your loved one may not get sober, but there is hope for you.

In recovery I am always checking my motives. Why do I want to interfere in my loved ones' lives? Is it because I am fearful? Is it because I don't want to feel pain? Is it a lack of trust in my Higher Power? Is it because I grew up always fixing everyone else's problems and that's my go-to mode? Do I not know anything else? Is my life empty without all the drama and chaos?

As I search within myself, I begin a journey of selfdiscovery. What makes me tick? What triggers me? What are my strengths? What needs to change? Are my choices working for me or against me? Who am I? What do I like? Yes, I know exactly what everyone else likes, but do I know what "I" like?

As I delve into areas that I've never even thought about before, I start to wake up. I learn who I am, what I want to change, and what I want to keep. I learn how to check in with myself and provide what I need. My Higher Power connection becomes stronger. I begin to regain trust in my own intuition. I don't do this work alone. I have my program and the Steps to guide me and my Higher Power, sponsor, and this fellowship to keep me on track.

So, what can I do for others? I can pray for their highest good. I can release them to their Higher Power. I can hold space for them to grow, loving them from afar if that is what's best for me. I have learned to place value on my life. I am important. My needs matter. No more playing the victim. No more 'poor me.' I am a vital person with a lot to give, and I will act as such. When I gave up being the self-righteous martyr (After all of the things I've done for you! This is how you repay me!), I was left with owning my own behaviors. I saw that I was rigid, always right, stubborn, smothering, whiny, manipulative....the list goes on. I have learned a lot. I have changed a lot. It wasn't easy. The "new me" was met with resistance. From myself and others. But there is absolutely no turning back for me now. I like this new way of being too much to turn back. I have a good life today. I know who I am. I know what's mine and what's not. I have a Higher Power that I am in tune with, who guides me.

I release my loved ones every single day. Because, at my core, I am a codependent, I have to remind myself daily that helping is often enabling. And that enabling is actually crippling. I remind myself that my loved one's pain has the potential to lead to their growth and transformation. It is important for them to feel it. Just as it was important for me to feel it. I trust in the journey.

I encourage anyone reading this to dive into the FA literature. Attend meetings. Work the Steps. Find your Higher Power. There is light at the end of the tunnel. Your loved one may not get sober, but there is hope for you.

DEANNA

I can hold space for them to grow. I can love them from afar if that is what's best for me. I have learned to place value on my life.



FAMILIES ANONYMOUS IN A VIRTUAL WORLD

When we came into our first Families Anonymous meeting my wife and I felt such warmth and relief in finding others who understood our tears and our fears. They were smiling, and they were encouraging. It wasn't long until we actually looked forward to our weekly meetings, not only to feel better ourselves, but to try to help others who were tracing our footsteps into the group – who were also hurting and seeking support.

And so we have continued attending FA for 24 years, almost never missing a meeting. After all, our best friends are in those meetings each week.

Then suddenly the word came down that group meetings would no longer be allowed and that our building would be locked. How could our group continue?

Several among us had been using Zoom and other digital platforms for business and not-for-profit group meetings, and that quickly came up in discussions.

"Let's give it a try," said one veteran member.

"I have to have my group," said a newcomer mom who was just finding her way.

"I can host the meetings," said a third who regularly sets up Zoom meetings for the people at her workplace. They use the paid platform that doesn't limit the duration of the meetings, and she got it all cleared for our group.

We never missed a lick. Zoom has been our great new FA member, and our attendance totals never blinked. Fact is, they've gone up just a bit. And everyone figured it out – even those who were sure that they couldn't.

Here are a few of our observations after more than 25 virtual meetings:

Positive sides of virtual meetings...

• Allow group to meet when pandemics, weather, holidays and other things would make it impossible.

- Allow people from great distances to attend people who would not otherwise have been able to participate. Especially good for grandparents, siblings, etc. in faraway places.
- People in online meetings seem to be more willing to speak than in group meetings.
- Allow someone who is homebound with illness, surgery to attend.
- Allow single parent with younger child to attend.
- "Share my screen" option with Zoom can be really useful in showing illustrations.

Then suddenly the word came down that group meetings would no longer be allowed and that our building would be locked. How could our group continue?

FOCUS: GROUP

GROUP 1391

McKinney, TX

SERENITY MESSENGER

Focus: GROUP (CONT'D)

Down sides of virtual meetings...

• Still not the same as an in-person meeting where you can feel the comfort of someone's arm around your shoulder.

- Not everyone has stable Internet.
- People forget to mute their mics and steady their cameras (no hand-held, please).

• It takes an extra step to get newcomers to meetings since they aren't yet on distribution list for each week's meeting link.

• Awkward to say Serenity Prayer in unison to close meeting since voices don't sync up. Easier just to let the leader pray it for the group.

- Even veteran members are timid to lead online meetings. They don't realize it's really no different.
- More difficult to take local donations.

All of that said, our group is quite fond of our virtual meetings. I hear them saying it would still be nice to meet this way once a month once our lives return back to normal.

NEIL, GROUP 1391

VIRTUAL MEETINGS

Because of the COVID-19 crisis, many FA groups are now meeting online. Go to familiesanonymous.org, in the <u>Virtual Meetings</u> section, and click on the <u>Directory of</u> <u>Face-to-Face Groups Meeting Online</u> button to find out when those meetings are being held, and how to access them. If you're part of a face-to-face FA group that's now holding an online meeting and your information isn't there, or if your information is incorrect, please send your corrections to Nicole at dmc@familiesanonymous.org, and she'll update the spreadsheet. Thanks, and stay safe!

LITERATURE SPOTLIGHT

Good News for E-Book Readers!

The digital edition of *Today A Better Way* (TABW) now has an INTERACTIVE INDEX!

Do you wish to focus on the daily readings in Today A Better Way ("The Red Book"), but prefer to do so on your tablet, smartphone or e-book reader?

Would you like your TABW e-book to contain an index, so you could look up topics just as you do in your hardcover TABW?

Behold, your wishes have come true!

Our new, improved TABW e-book now contains an INDEX with the same listings as in the hardcover TABW. But the e-book's INDEX has a special added feature: It is INTERACTIVE.

An INTERACTIVE INDEX means you can click on an entry and be taken directly to that page. Say you're looking for readings on "Serenity." Find the word "Serenity" in the INTERACTIVE INDEX; click on one of the page numbers listed under that word, say "292"; and you'll be taken directly to that reading, in this case, "October 18: The Serenity of Boundaries" on page 292.

The INTERACTIVE TABLE OF CONTENTS in the new e-book is the same as in the previous e-book. Say you're planning to lead a meeting on March 30th and want to use TABW's March 30th reading. Click on "March 30" in the INTERACTIVE TABLE OF CONTENTS, and you'll be taken directly to the "March 30: Step Eleven" reading.

The TABW e-book is economical and easy to download. It goes with you wherever your tablet, smartphone, or e-reader goes. You can explore personal issues anywhere and anytime you are moved to do so. You can refer to it readily during meetings.

And you'll find that planning and leading a topic meeting is easier than ever. With the new e-book's INTERACTIVE INDEX, you can easily select and research any topic you wish.

Of course, many people still enjoy holding and reading a hardcover book. If you're one of those people —and the hardcover TABW is your first choice—you can still find that adding an e-book to your library will give you greater flexibility and ease of use.

LITERATURE SPOTLIGHT (Cont'd)

If you're purchasing the TABW e-book for the first time, you can choose from one of the following options (all priced at \$7.99), depending on your personal device:

Kindle users – Purchase #1015-EK from Amazon's Kindle Store.

iPad/iPhone/iPod users - Purchase #1015-EP from Apple's iTunes Store.

Nook users - Purchase #1015-EP from Barnes & Noble's Nook Store. (See Note below.*)

Or, if you already have the TABW e-book, you may be able to UPDATE to the new version for FREE. (See Note below.*)

You can also continue purchasing the hardcover TABW (#1015), either through FA's e-store (https://www.familiesanonymous.org/product/1015-today-a-better-way-tabw-2/) or by calling FA's World Service Office (847-294-5877 or 800-736-9805).

* NOTE: After becoming aware that the original TABW e-book files ended at December 31 and did not contain an index, we were able to obtain corrected files (containing the INTERACTIVE INDEX) and upload them to the Kindle Store and the iTunes Store; if you bought your TABW e-book through either of those vendors, you should be receiving (or have already received) a notice to update for free with the new version. We have so far been unable to upload the corrected file to the Nook Store; we apologize and are still working on this.

Shop online for a full selection of FA's literature offerings for your group or personal use. Read through our comprehensive literature catalog, or search for specific publications (such as Today A Better Way or The Twelve Step Workbook). Browse through our books, booklets, bookmarks, pamphlets, cards and more, and explore materials for new members, groups, and public-information purposes. Discover our e-books. Glance through the list of our Spanish translations. And check out our free downloads, some of which are available only online.

www.familiesanonymous.org/shop

LESSONS IN WILLINGNESS

Our willingness to change is critical to our recovery

Over and over I have come to see that the 12 Steps are a unified whole. When I initially worked the steps, I worked them one step at a time, without realizing that by working one step I was really working them all. Each step is linked to every other. They cannot be separated from each other; they are dependent on each other and lead to each other.

I didn't realize when I first began working the 12 Steps that I was entering into a contract with myself. The contract is to do everything in my power to recover

"'—

The reason for this unity is spelled out in the words 'became willing.' Each step requires that we become willing; that we are ready to undergo change and development and accept that the greatest change is in our thinking. I came to the steps reluctantly. But two things that helped me overcome my reluctance were my need for change and the healing the steps provided me – but these helped me only as I became 'willing' to make the necessary changes.

Here is where I had to lay down my ego and accept that people who have successfully gone before me knew something that I didn't. They found the path to healing that was so desperately needed, and they laid out the steps for all of us.

The work is not easy. Sometimes it can be excruciatingly difficult. And it can only be done when we have become willing: willing to persevere through the pain; willing to allow our Higher Power do His part; willing to let go of control of the entire process; willing to become humble as we walk this path and admit to our own failures. Anyone who embarks on this 12 Step journey is actually on a journey of 'becoming.'

There is always more to see and learn on this journey if we are true and faithful to it. In the end, we will hopefully be surprised and pleased by the person we have become.

The 12 Step Contract

I didn't realize when I first began working the 12 Steps that I was entering into a contract with myself. The contract is to do everything in my power to recover. The contract is 'written' as I work each step, and it continues to be written and refined as I work the steps over and over.

Now, after four years in Families Anonymous, I understand that if I remain true to the steps and my contract, my recovery will continue and deepen. If I abandon the work, I lose ground and either my recovery stalls or I relapse.

LESSONS IN WILLINGNESS (Cont'd)

Working the steps is difficult and demanding. Sometimes, with all the other demands of life, it becomes impossible for me to stay the course, and then relapse is inevitable. Sometimes my anger or depression, anxiety or self-pity, resurface and I just can't 'work it.' I allow the relapse to happen. I know that it is my responsibility to at least keep up with my program, but sometimes the exhaustion is just overwhelming and I can't.

A relapse is not a reason to further beat myself up. It can actually be a positive if I realize that it is a warning sign that I am not working the steps as I should. It doesn't invalidate my contract with myself. It shows me that I have not been as vigilant about my recovery nor as committed as I need to be.

Recovery is only one part of my life, but I need to make it a priority. Without it, the rest of my life will collapse into a long-term or permanent relapse where anger, anxiety and depression will once again overwhelm me. I could not function well before recovery; I will not be able to function well without it. So I press on. I cannot skip this or the next step or any of them. They are HARD. I don't want to work them. I don't want to be humbled, but that is a crucial part of the becoming, part of the change.

Can I arrogantly expect or require that addicts have to change but not I? No. I have to do this for myself and for them. I have to set the example. I have to make all of my relationships right. Before I can actually do it, I have to become willing to do it. Willingness has to become a part of me. It will change me. It will be healing for me.

DIANE

THINKING OF SUBMITTING AN ARTICLE OR ANNOUNCEMENT TO THE SERENITY MESSENGER?

For our December issue (coming out in the first week of January), the deadline for articles is December 1, and the deadline for announcements is December 10. The corresponding deadlines for our January/February issue are February 10 and February 23. We'd love to hear from you!

Recovery and Hope

WORK THE STEPS EVERY DAY. THERE IS NO GRADUATION

It was Jan 2, 2008, when I delivered my heroin-addicted son to a one-year rehab and was told I needed to find a 12-step group for myself. Since I lived in Asia and the only English-language AlAnon meeting I could find in Taipei was really struggling to get going, I was thrilled to find the FA E-meeting group online. With them I've worked the steps more than once. I've been remarkably blessed by their strength, experience and hope, by their struggles, and by their humility in the face of incredible obstacles.

My son has been clean of heroin since his most recent rehab just over six years ago. But his life has been complicated by mental illness and other challenges, some perhaps a result of his drug use and some not. In any case, my happiness is no longer dependent upon his.

Another son in the meantime has acknowledged his own alcoholism and has decided he does not need help (and for now he seems to be functioning well, so he's finding something that is working for him). My happiness does not depend on him, either.

To those of you who are new and scared, I say welcome! To those of you who are "old" and tired, I say I know how you feel! To those of you who are on a peaceful plateau, I say rest while you can. To myself I say, work the steps every day. There is no graduation. Recovery is a journey, not a destination, and that is at least as true for me as it is for the addicts in my life. I have been fortunate to know the promises of FA, and that is because I have worked the steps -- all the steps. There is a temptation sometimes to stop when we learn to manage the pain in the early steps. But I hope you will not stop. For me, the real learning came in those "gold mine" steps, four through nine.

PAUL B., REPUBLISHED FROM MARCH/APRIL 2014



Want to learn more about how your FA group can thrive and grow? Go to <u>familiesanonymous.org</u>, click on "Members" and go to "Group Materials," where you'll find an array of helpful, informative publications concerning group dynamics and management.

Still have questions? Send an email to GO@familiesanonymous.org.

Have a great meeting!

DONATIONS

Commemorative Donations

The following have made donations in memory of Mark Joseph James S., son of Richard and Barbara S.:

- His grandmother Marie M. (Grandma Re Re)
- Karen and Jim M.
- Charles and Diane F.
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