

VOLUME LVIII | ISSUE I | JAN/FEB 2022

SERENITY MESSENGER

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



THE NEWSLETTER OF THE FAMILIES ANONYMOUS FELLOWSHIP

SERENITY MESSENGER

Newsletter of the Families Anonymous Fellowship

EDITOR'S NOTE

A new year. The same pandemic. It feels as if time hasn't moved in the last two years and we're on a treadmill, running, panting for breath, but not getting anywhere. Dealing with difficult loved ones for years made me feel like I wasn't making any headway in life. There were many false starts, days when it felt like everything would change for the better, new days, new years...grand promises that sounded so sincere at the time that they were made. Only they ended up descending into the familiar, and I found myself stuck just as before. I remember the first time my dad promised to never drink again. He kept his word for a few days before it was business as usual. Each time, I was left feeling more betrayed by my loved one and also by 'what I got' in life. I became resigned in the face of difficult circumstances. Having tried too hard, I was inclined many times to not try at all. I did not want to feel disappointed again.

Experiencing a parent's addiction meant I was scared and often felt paralyzed. I had my 'freeze' mode on and learnt to 'switch off' through situations that caused me anxiety. These situations were not about addiction; they were everyday challenges about work, relationships, and other things in between.

Being in the program, especially in a new year, I am asking my Higher Power for the courage to change only the things I can. Maybe those things won't change. But a little bit of courage to attempt something different will be great. I want to perhaps second-guess myself a little less and move forward with a bit of courage. The decisions we take will be alright in the end. The wisdom to know when we must act will come to us; maybe we'll learn it through some mistakes, but that's OK. Being in the fellowship, we have tools we didn't have before and can draw from the collective wisdom of so many.

As the years roll on, maybe we'll wade through the same waters, the storms may not stop, but having a lifejacket or a boat will make it a different year, a different journey, and, maybe, even save our life.

IN FELLOWSHIP,
ELIZABETH

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WORD FROM THE BOARD

WSB COMMITTEES AND FA: A MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL CODEPENDENT RELATIONSHIP

Like many of you, my wife and I have struggled with a loved one suffering with addiction. Thankfully, we found Families Anonymous, and by attending FA meetings, reading FA literature, and sharing experiences with FA members, we found our own journey and, eventually, peace and serenity away from the crazy world of our loved one's addiction. As my personal journey evolved, I also learned more about the FA organization and how it is supported by the World Service Board (WSB).

As I previously shared in an earlier "Word from the Board," approximately 18 months ago I was asked to join the WSB and elected as a member at large. In this role I attended WSB monthly meetings and supported the various committees and ad hoc groups the best way I could.

The WSB has 11 standing committees that deal with the ongoing business of the fellowship and are essential to successfully supporting FA. These include:

- Budget
- Financial Oversight
- Group Outreach
- International Groups
- Literature
- Newsletter (Serenity Messenger)
- Public Information
- Sponsorship
- Technology

The WSB also has several ad hoc committees, including:

- Convention Liaison,
- Document Review
- Education
- Intergroup Support & Development
- Long Range Planning
- Revenue Growth Task Force

During our monthly WSB meetings, committee chairs report on their committee's activities and share any key information with WSB members.

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SERENITY MESSENGER

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WORD FROM THE BOARD

(CONT'D)

All these committees consist of volunteers, who, because they believe in the need to keep our fellowship growing and thriving, give their time free of charge. Over the course of the last 12 to 18 months, you've probably read different "Word from the Board" articles highlighting the need for additional FA members to give back to the fellowship by volunteering to join one or more of these committees. This is still the case today, and I would like to reiterate this message.

Most committees don't need specific skills or training—just a few hours a month helping in any way possible will have a significant impact. All committee work is being done virtually, so no travel is required. Please consider this request, and if you would like to discuss joining a committee or have any questions about the committees, please contact the WSB Chair at MariaS@familiesanonymous.org



The fellowship can't survive without WSB Committees, and the Committees can't function without volunteers.



Although the WSB is generously supported by volunteers, we do employ two "special workers"—Angel and Nicole—at our World Service Office (WSO) in Des Plaines, Illinois, to keep the fellowship up and running. Additionally, we must lease the WSO facilities to house our literature, office and computer needs.

Angel is the Office Manager for the WSO. She handles incoming calls, mail and donations; oversees literature sales and inventory; prepares mailings to group secretaries; and is responsible for the daily management of the office. Nicole is the Data Management Coordinator. She helps manage our website and e-store, organizes and oversees our electronic files, maintains FA databases, formats the Serenity Messenger, and generates the email blasts from the WSB to our FA membership. Together, Nicole and Angel are essential for our business operations and, therefore, the ongoing viability of FA.

Six months ago, around the time of my one-year anniversary as a WSB member at large, George R announced that he was ready to hand over the position of chair of the Technology Committee to someone else. He had served in that role for a number of years, and, as with all of the WSB committees, rotation of the chair role is a good way for more FA members to help contribute to FA's overall direction and delivery of services.

Like most of us, I have used technology in my various workplace jobs and settings, but I don't have hands-on technology skills, such as website design or maintaining email operations. However, because we didn't have any other volunteers, and despite not possessing these key skill sets, I was persuaded to take on the responsibility of chairing the Technology Committee. I reasoned if I didn't do it, who would?

WORD FROM THE BOARD

(CONT'D)

The Technology Committee is responsible for five key activities:

- Supporting and maintaining the FA website
- Exploring technologies for providing and improving communication
- Maintaining the WSO's computer systems
- Supporting and advising WSB members in the use of technology
- Supporting and maintaining FA's internal and bulk email systems

These functions are critical for the viability of FA, not just for communicating with members and sharing of content, such as education workshops and meeting locations, but also from a financial perspective. The FA fellowship derives its revenue solely from just two sources: literature sales, and donations by FA members and groups. A fully-functioning FA website is critical for sustaining both of these revenue generators, particularly during these COVID-19 times that have seen a reduction in in-person meetings and in the literature sales that traditionally took place at those meetings.

Given my lack of experience in the technology field, George R kindly agreed to hold my hand for the first month or so, giving me crash tutorials on how to access our WSB email server so we could assign FA accounts to new WSB members. I was also introduced to the world of back-end website logon and access to plugins, such as Woo commerce (a plugin that enables FA to list its literature and allows it to be purchased online). Fortunately, Nicole is always available to take on the bulk of the website maintenance, posting new literature or replacing it with updates from the Literature Committee. In this respect, my role is to be available to find ways of supporting maintenance of the website rather than physically doing it.

FA also contracts with a company that hosts our website and that is sometimes available to "fix glitches" or "website failures," but unfortunately the fellowship must pay for this support. Technology continues to evolve, and as users we marvel at what can be done online. However, for the WSB to continue to successfully support the overall viability of FA, we need new volunteers for the Technology Committee who can bring innovative, updated and specific skill sets to the table.

In short, we need FA members, or perhaps extended-family members, who have direct website design, programming, or direct plugin software updating experience. This would allow us to call upon these skill sets when we have specific technological needs. Please don't be shy about reaching out to me to discuss potential support for our team. I can be reached at ChrisY@familiesanonymous.org.

I am grateful to FA for helping establish a normal life for my family, and I will continue to do whatever I can to help FA continue growing and thriving in our modern technology-focused era.

YOURS IN SERVICE,
CHRIS Y.

UPDATE ON ME

An FA member shares how she has learned to sift through issues and to pick only what concerns her

In August of 2005, my granddaughter Jaidyn was born. A few days after her birth, my son, 17 at the time, admitted he had a substance abuse problem. We knew he had a problem but did not realize how severe it was. He had pretty much tried any drug available. As "Supermom," I kicked into high gear to fix it all for him. I was totally engulfed in what I call the "deep dark hole" right along with him. I was angry at everyone: our family doctor, drug dealers, teachers, police, my husband. I could be found standing on doorsteps of houses that I thought my son was in, ringing the doorbell, screaming for him to come out.

Once, my son's paycheck came in the mail and I refused to give it to him because I feared he would use it on drugs. When he told me he was going to come get it, I packed up my granddaughter and went to the police station. I told them my fear, tears rolling down my face. I thought they would side with me and say he couldn't have it. They calmed me down, said they understood how I felt, but I had to give him the check. Looking back, I can see how insane I was.

Fortunately, I found FA and the E-meeting and began to get my act together. Recently, I sat reading the posts I've sent to the E-meeting. This folder, which holds six years of my posts, is like my recovery journal.

The first year and a half, most of my posts' subject lines were titled "Update on Son/Addict." Then, I found one titled "Update on Me." That was when I really started to get it. Instead of focusing on what my son was doing, I was concerned about how I was doing.

“I started working the Steps and reworking the Steps. I learned how to breathe again and stepped out of the "deep dark hole.”

I started working the Steps and reworking the Steps. I learned how to breathe again and stepped out of the "deep dark hole." Many wonderful people helped me through this. Sometimes gentle with their words, sometimes not so gentle, but always telling me what I needed to hear at the moment I needed to hear it. As I learned to listen instead of fighting it, the healing began. There have been many ups and downs over the years, but I can deal with them. That is, if they are mine to deal with. I have learned to sort out what is mine and what is not mine and to focus on me.

I started my own business eight years ago, and I love it and the work I do. One of the reasons I decided to run my own business was to make myself more available to others. Available to help my kids more, available to make sure I was home to put dinner on the table, available to coach high school soccer.

Recently a job opening dropped into my lap. This job involves all the things I love to do, yet I struggled with how it would make me not so available to do all the things I do for others. I wouldn't be available to watch Jaidyn when she is sick. Well, her parents would have to do that.

“The first year and a half, most of my posts' subject lines were titled "Update on Son/Addict." Then, I found one titled "Update on Me." That was when I really started to get it.”

UPDATE ON ME (CONT'D)

Supper might not be on the table when my husband gets home. Really, would the poor guy starve? And as far as coaching high school soccer, I really felt like I was done with that last year but did not have anyone good to take my place. Hello, why is it my job to find a coach to take my place? With that attitude, I probably would coach until the day I die! So, I decided to apply for the job and had a great interview. I may or may not get the job, but this process has opened my eyes to more changes I need to make in my life.



“There have been many ups and downs over the years, but I can deal with them. That is, if they are mine to deal with. I have learned to sort out what is mine and what is not mine and to focus on me.”

When I stopped by the high school to give the athletic director a heads-up that I had applied for a job and might not be coaching this year, I saw a teacher that my son had had in 8th grade. He asked about my son. He knows my son's history and what our family has been through. I told him my son seems to be doing pretty well and had started classes at a community college. There was another teacher standing nearby who asked how we did it. She said she has a 20-year-old that sits around doing nothing. I proudly proclaimed that I did it by not doing for him what he could do for himself.

This program has taught me to take care of me, and that is what I am going to do.

CONNIE, NH, E-MEETING
REPUBLISHED FROM THE TWELVE STEP RAG, JULY-AUG, 2011, VOLUME XXXX



Want to learn more about how your FA group can thrive and grow? Go to familiesanonymous.org, 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!

HOW TO SUBMIT ARTICLES TO THE SERENITY MESSENGER

Original articles, poems, photographs or artwork can be emailed to the Serenity Messenger at newsletter@familiesanonymous.org.

Even if you don't think so, your story and experiences are unique and important and can help someone else in ways you can't imagine. Write down your thoughts in whatever way you can, and send them to us. Our editor will work with you to help you tell your story!

Below are some of the formats that we usually publish. You can also read older issues of the Serenity Messenger on our [**website**](#) to know what kinds of stories we publish.

Cover stories: Personal essays between 700 and 800 words. If you have a story idea in mind and want to work with our editor while you write it, feel free to send a few lines explaining what your essay will be about.

Articles: Shorter articles between 300 and 450 words. These can be on any subject of interest to FA members. Some of the themes we often include are –

- Reflections on the 12 Steps
- How you came to FA
- How FA has impacted your life
- Your relationship with your addicted loved one
- Reflections on self-awareness
- Gratitude



Think of something you may have shared at a meeting that you felt seemed particularly enlightening or interesting, and explain that in a few simple paragraphs. If you need ideas to awaken your creativity, open and browse through some past issues of our Newsletter under the archived section of that page.

Focus:Group: This section gives a different FA group in each issue the opportunity to tell the fellowship what's special about its approach to meetings and/or the 12 Steps. If you'd like to volunteer your group, or if you know of a group you think would like to write a Focus:Group article, please let us know.

We welcome your poems, too.

SUBMISSION SPECIFICATIONS

- Articles must be typed in Word.doc (preferably in the font Times New Roman, size 12 pt, single-line spacing) and attached to your email.
- Mention your group if you're comfortable.
- Scanned artwork and photographs (originals only!) must be attached to your email. They should be in .jpg or .png format and no greater than 5 mb in size.
- Include a line or two in your email explaining the context of your submission, and mention your group if you're comfortable.

We encourage you to think about answering this call TODAY!

FINDING PEACE IN SIMPLE TASKS

Bob S writes that recovery has meant regaining his love for baking and the simple joy it brings him



I like to bake—cookies, cakes, pies, bread, you name it. If it's sweet or crunchy or gooey or some or all of the above, and it comes out of the oven, I want to make it—and eat it, for that matter. The holidays are a great time to spread the cheer by baking and sharing with family and friends, so I've been especially busy these past few months.

For years, baking has also been one of the things I do to keep myself centered. When I'm mixing a batter, greasing a pan, pouring out cupcakes, or doing any other part of the baking process, I'm totally involved with the task at hand. Even cleaning the mixing bowls, measuring spoons, and beaters allows me to relax in the moment and enjoy a quiet mind-space where other worries of the day can't intrude. In a sense, it's one way I meditate.

When our addicted loved one was actively using drugs and we were driving ourselves crazy trying to force her to change, I lost sight of my love for baking. It felt wrong to take time out for such a seemingly frivolous activity when we were frantically trying to save our daughter's life. How could I take time off for myself when she remained at risk and there was something I could possibly do to help her?

Or, worse, I took up baking projects but didn't fully commit to them. I was sick at heart over our loved one's disastrous life decisions and preoccupied with worry about what that meant for her future—if she even had one, I thought. With these dark thoughts constantly playing over and over in my mind, baking was no longer a joy but a hopeless charade. Everything I did felt drab, lifeless and gray.

But from FA I learned that to find the joy in baking (and in life) again, I needed to stop obsessing about our addicted loved one and focus instead on myself. How could I redirect the energy I was wasting in the futile effort to cure her addiction or alter her behavior, and use it to make my attitudes and reactions more positive and self-affirming? How could I react in healthier, non-enabling ways to her unreasonable, selfish demands? How could I detach lovingly from the constant drama she brought into our lives?

When I replaced the endless worries about her life with thoughts directed toward positive changes in myself, I could start to reconnect with the things I loved to do. The FA program tells us it's okay to do those things just for yourself—in fact, it's essential, because only by separating from your loved one's problems and embracing your own life can you ever hope to shed the burdens of useless worry and harmful enabling. Only then can you be truly peaceful and happy.

“It felt wrong to take time out for such a seemingly frivolous activity when we were frantically trying to save our daughter's life. How could I take time off for myself when she remained at risk and there was something I could possibly do to help her?”

FINDING PEACE IN SIMPLE TASKS

(CONT'D)

For me, it's as simple as measuring, mixing, baking, and cleaning up. These straightforward, almost mindless tasks occupy my hands and my thoughts, bringing me a sense of order. While I'm doing them, I'm not in my addicted loved one's world, or my own world of worry about what may befall her if she doesn't recover or relapses: I'm in my own quiet, happy space.

“ But from FA I learned that to find the joy in baking (and in life) again, I needed to stop obsessing about our addicted loved one and focus instead on myself. ”



When I'm done, I've got something complete, tangible and enjoyable to show for my efforts. And although the particular task may only take a couple of hours, the feeling of peace stays with me throughout the day.

Baking is a bit of a trial-and-error process. The first time trying a new recipe, you precisely measure or weigh each ingredient, faithfully following the baking time and temperature instructions to the letter. You don't change anything.

But as you become familiar with the recipe, you may add more sugar, or less salt, or bake it at a higher temperature, or leave it in the oven for a bit less time. You make these adjustments to tailor the flavor and texture of the finished product to fit your tastes. You make the recipe yours.

The same is true of my recovery in FA. I started out trying to follow exactly what I thought the readings and shares at meetings indicated I should do, and the results were very good. I started feeling better about myself, and I began to handle ongoing issues with our addicted daughter in healthier, more productive ways.

As time went by, things changed with our addicted loved one. Thankfully, she found recovery, and for today she remains clean and sober. I also changed: I've become less angry, more accepting, always keeping my focus on the things I can control and leaving everything else to my higher power. It's an ongoing growth process.

“ For me, it's as simple as measuring, mixing, baking, and cleaning up. These straightforward, almost mindless tasks occupy my hands and my thoughts, bringing me a sense of order. ”

FINDING PEACE IN SIMPLE TASKS

(CONT'D)

So I still follow the principles of the program, but I've made it my own. I go to a meeting every week and share freely in the hope that others can benefit from my continuing journey of recovery from this deadly disease. I regularly read my TABW, and other FA materials, so as to keep the 12 Steps and all the other helpful principles that go with them at the top of my mind. Even writing articles like this helps me stay with my program.

I've adapted how I apply the program to the realities of who I am today, and where I am in my personal recovery. That's what works for me. And doing things I love to do, just for myself, is an essential ingredient in that recipe.

BOB S., BRADENTON, FL
GROUP 2056



SIGN UP TODAY!

If you don't want to miss an issue of the SERENITY MESSENGER and other FA announcements, subscribe to FA Emails today!

Visit familiesanonymous.org, scroll to the bottom of the homepage, fill in your email and hit Subscribe. It only takes a minute - do it now!

NEW
SLETTER



EDUCATION COMMITTEE ANNOUNCEMENT:

JOIN US FOR OUR TWO MONTHLY ONLINE TRADITION AND STEP MEETINGS!



The WSB and Education Committee invite you to Step UP and join us for the following two monthly meetings:

MEETING ONE: THE TRADITION AND STEP OF THE MONTH



All are welcome to attend this interactive group meeting using the GoToMeeting virtual format (see below). At that meeting, we will study the tradition and step of the month. These will generally be held on the first Saturday of each month from 1:00 pm to 2:30 pm (ET). (For specific dates, please refer to the following page.)

We will be using Literature Catalog #1004 The Twelve Steps of Families Anonymous. We hope you'll join us, and that you'll continue this type of combined meeting in your own groups.

MEETING TWO: TWELVE STEP WORKSHOP USING #1019 *THE TWELVE STEP WORKBOOK*

This individualized workshop is a great opportunity for personal growth and recovery. Workshops will be held from 4:00 pm to 5:00 pm (ET) on the same dates as the The Tradition and Step meetings. (For specific dates, please refer to the following page).



WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

- The Twelve Step Workbook (#1019): The latest edition, published in 2017 includes the text of the Blue Booklet, The Twelve Steps of Families Anonymous (#1004)
- Older editions of the workbook can still be used along with the Blue Booklet, The Twelve Steps of Families Anonymous (#1004), available for \$3.25
- Notebook or loose-leaf paper and a binder
- Willingness and commitment
- Honesty and Humility

Please refer to the following page for dates/times and login information!

QUESTIONS? EMAIL DONNA D AT DONNAD@FAMILIESANONYMOUS.ORG

2022 EDUCATION COMMITTEE VIRTUAL MEETINGS

TRADITION & STEP MEETINGS OF THE MONTH	WORKSHOP USING 12 STEP WORKBOOK #1019 & STEP OF THE MONTH	LITERATURE TOPIC & OTHER EDUC. MEETINGS
1:00-2:30 pm ET	4:00-5:00 pm ET	1:00-2:30 PM ET
Interactive	Independent Work	Interactive
*January 8	*January 8	^January 29
February 5	February 5	February 26
March 5	March 5	March 26
April 2	April 2	^April 30
May 7	May 7	NONE
June 4	June 4	June 25
*July 9	*July 9	^July 30
August 6	August 6	August 27
*September 10	*September 10	September 24
October 1	October 1	^October 29
November 5	November 5	NONE
December 3	December 3	NONE
1 st Saturdays	1 st Saturdays	4 th Saturdays
*2 nd Saturdays	*2 nd Saturdays	^5 th Saturdays

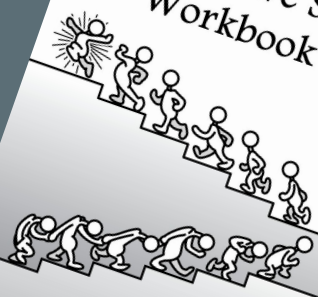
ALL MEETINGS WILL BE
HELD USING
GOTOMEETING APP ID#
705-976-781 OR CLICK
LINK BELOW:

[HTTPS://GLOBAL.GOTOMEETING.COM/JOIN/705976781](https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/705976781)

Questions? Email
DonnaD@familiesanonymous.org



The Twelve Step Workbook



Families Anonymous

NEED TO PURCHASE "THE TWELVE STEP WORKBOOK"? **CLICK HERE** TO ORDER YOUR OWN COPY FROM OUR ESTORE FOR \$10.00 + S&H.

AND SO YOU SAY "I DON'T KNOW"

We can keep moving forward without having all the answers at once, reflects an FA member

If you are reading this, we already share a lot in common. We have had conversations with our loved one and ourselves that sounded like:

You said you could quit anytime. So when are you going to quit?

"I don't know"

I thought you were going to get some help with a counselor.

"I don't know"

Aren't you going to work today?

"I don't know"

I asked you to clean your room last Sunday. When are you going to do it?

"I don't know"

When are you going to get out of bed?

"I don't know"

And then there is the silent conversation, the one we have with ourselves:

How did I get here? What happened to my life?

"I don't know"

What am I going to do with them?

"I don't know"

Perhaps I need to be sterner, set the rules, and make them toe the line?

"I don't know"

Should I let them face the consequences and let them get arrested?

"I don't know"

Should I get them out of jail and get a lawyer to help?

"I don't know"

I can't go on like this. Should I throw them out of the house, let them go to a shelter?

"I don't know"

They're going to have their car repossessed; they never pay on time. Maybe I should make the payments and they can pay me back?

"I don't know"

We find ourselves vacillating, second-guessing ourselves. No matter what we do, we can't get our loved ones to make the changes we think necessary for them to get better. We decide to try being more positive in our conversations. Maybe that will get the desired result. So we go back to what Mom told us growing up. We try to practice thinking before we speak. We want to be more positive in our communication with our loved one, no matter how frustrated and mad we are. In my head I heard, "I see that you're struggling with that. Do you want to talk about it?" However, what came out was, "How could you be so stupid!"

Where did that come from? That's not what I practiced.

"I don't know"

You get the picture. We are too soft on him, too harsh on her, just plain conflicted on how to make it better and fix this; we feel lost, angry, sad, hurt, worried, etc. And, sometimes, all these feelings at once.



“

We find ourselves vacillating, second-guessing ourselves. No matter what we do, we can't get our loved ones to make the changes we think necessary for them to get better.

”



INVITING ALL TO OUR CHICAGO INTERGROUP SPEAKER SERIES VIA ZOOM. EVERY 6-7 WEEKS WE PRESENT PERTINENT INFORMATION AND TOOLS FOR HEALING.

JUST GO TO [FACHICAGO.ORG](https://fachicago.org), CLICK ON THE NEWS HEADING AND FOLLOW US THROUGH THE YEAR.

AND SO YOU SAY "I DON'T KNOW"

(CONT'D)

We share our thoughts with a good friend. Despite the best of intentions, the great advice we get is, JUST TELL HIM NO AND MAKE HIM STOP. Now why didn't I think of that?!?

Somehow, we found our way to Families Anonymous. At first, we hoped, like a doctor giving us antibiotics for an illness, that FA would have the answers for how to fix our loved one. What a tough pill it is to swallow when we finally realize we can't fix him! However, we also realize that perhaps the only place where we don't have to explain ourselves, feel embarrassed that this has happened in our family, where truly they do understand what we're going through, is FA. We also come to realize that we can, if we want to put in the work, fix ourselves and get our life back.

How? We commit ourselves to a Step program. It's not one giant step; it's 12 Steps. The program is a process. We practice the Steps because, like it or not, we, too, screw up. But, with the program, we can recognize it, admit it, apologize for it, and move forward. The road may twist, turn, have potholes, a few U-turns, but it's the road to our recovery.

“We practice the Steps because, like it or not, we, too, screw up. But, with the program, we can recognize it, admit it, apologize for it, and move forward.”

So, here's the roadmap. Step One to Step Twelve and all the Steps in between. Each week during our FA meeting, we read and discuss the next Step in sequence and how it pertains to our lives. Everyone who wants to share does. No two people hear the Step or its message in exactly the same way, so the take-aways are different, too. And that's OK! It is during the sharing of comments about the Step that I learn the most, especially about myself.

Now you have a choice. You can continue trying and repeating the same actions to get your loved one to change (It's like hitting the replay button and expecting a different outcome), ultimately asking yourself, "What do I do now?" and your answer will be, "I don't know." Or you can choose to help yourself. The choice is yours.

AND SO YOU SAY "I DON'T KNOW"

(CONT'D)

A final and personal note: My loved one has been living with us for the past three years, working on his recovery. As I am writing this, my loved one, my baby boy, came to his mother and me and announced he had relapsed and needed to go to inpatient. He apologized for letting us down. My reply was, "You let yourself down." And when he went to give me a hug, I told him I did not want a hug from him. You may think that was a cold response. In truth, I am hurt, mad, afraid, disappointed, and more. I am also thankful for FA. I realize that I am powerless over drugs and other people's lives and that a power greater than me can restore me to sanity, and I decided to turn my will and my life over to the care of that Higher Power! In short: I can't do it, but God can! I also can admit that my response came across defensively (which it was), and for that I apologized to him before he went to rehab. I'm not perfect. FA doesn't promise perfection. It does provide the tools for me to make my life more manageable. For today, that has to be enough. What will be tomorrow?

"I don't know"

So, back to Step One I go.

AL L., SYRACUSE, NY
GROUP 1301

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VIRTUAL MEETINGS

Because of the COVID-19 crisis, many FA groups are now meeting online. Go to familiesanonymous.org; then in the [Virtual Meetings](#) section, click on the [Directory of Face-to-Face Groups Meeting Online](#) 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 additions or corrections to Nicole at dmc@familiesanonymous.org, and she'll update the spreadsheet.

Thanks, and stay safe!

EDUCATION COMMITTEE ANNOUNCEMENT:

JOIN US TO EXPLORE "THE GIFT OF AWARENESS"



Online Literature Study - Join us to Explore "The Gift of Awareness"

Do you want to...

- Identify and nurture your true self?
- Learn how to be more effective in working the 12 Steps?

The World Service Board and Education Committee invite you to our literature study meeting on "The Gift of Awareness" which will be held on January 29 from 1:00 to 2:30 PM (ET) using the GoToMeeting virtual format (see below).

Meeting objectives:

- Model how to run an effective literature topic meeting for your group
- Explore how awareness can help you in applying the principles of the FA program

"The Gift of Awareness"

Saturday, JAN 29, 2022 1:00 PM - 2:30 PM (ET)

Join us from your computer, tablet or smartphone

Meeting Link: [HTTPS://GLOBAL.GOTOMEETING.COM/JOIN/705976781](https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/705976781)
or

Dial in using your phone: +1 (571) 317-3122, access code 705-976-781



GoToMeeting

New to GoToMeeting?

Get the App now and be ready when your first meeting starts:
[HTTPS://GLOBAL.GOTOMEETING.COM/INSTALL/705976781](https://global.gotomeeting.com/install/705976781)

#1034 "THE GIFT OF AWARENESS: A TOOL OF RECOVERY IN FAMILIES ANONYMOUS" WILL BE THE FEATURED PUBLICATION. (PURCHASE ENCOURAGED, [CLICK HERE](#))



QUESTIONS? CONTACT DONNA D (DONNAD@FAMILIESANONYMOUS.ORG)

JOLLY RANCHERS, JEDI AND JUICING

An FA member recounts her experiences from enabling to setting boundaries

I used to feel like I was carrying my whole family on my shoulders. In the beginning, I had no problem taking on the job. I felt I was the strong one and I knew what was best. During times when my brother was in the hospital or a rehab, visiting schedules went through me. I initiated the “Rehab To-Do List.”

Mom picked up the Jolly Ranchers and Jedi novels. Dad paid past-due bills. Big Brother picked up copies of lost documentation for future job hunts. Sister searched the “Help Wanted.” I’d clean his apartment even though he would stay with me after rehab to get some clean time under his belt. I’d have the meeting schedules, acupuncture appointments, and vitamins ready. I always looked to try something new: something that would tip the scales toward lasting recovery. Like...juicing! Yup, some beets and green apples to cleanse the liver. Of course, Jolly Ranchers and Jedi didn’t make rehab less “boring.” Paying bills, standing in line at the DMV, scouring the classifieds, and cleaning house only took reality out of my brother’s hands. And, well, the other stuff I came up with was just crazy.

New plan (also initiated through me): Tough Love. I took all of our house keys away from my brother. Since Mom and Sister were struggling with enabling—unlike me “because I went to meetings and read lots of books”—they could no longer receive phone calls from my brother. Dad and Big Brother got fed up and lacked some needed compassion; no more calls for them either. All phone calls would go through me. I was prepared to give this hard line a proper chance.

There were slip-ups. My parents came home from food shopping one day to find my brother passed out on the living

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

room sofa. How did he get in? Mom had folded and given him a spare key. How did he get money for drugs? Dad had given him forty bucks “for gas.” It was frustrating. I struggled with having the family keep up with me.

Everyone was instructed to attend the next rehab family-night meeting. The meeting went something like this: Meeting Leader asked me how I was doing. I told her what my brother had been up to. She said, “But how are you doing?” I told her I had to call the cops to get my brother off my parents’ sofa because I didn’t want him driving wasted and there was probably no gas in the car. She said, “That’s not what I asked you.” I looked at her like she was crazy; I didn’t understand the question. Anytime I was faced with a situation I couldn’t control, I would head to the bookstore’s self-help section or to the Internet. That’s how I found FA and the E-meeting.

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

Here’s some of what I know today: I need to respect the individual journeys. Everyone moves at a pace that is coached by their own higher power, not by me. Being a self-appointed Atlas or an amateur providence is not the best use of my time. The question I should be working to answer for myself every day is, “How are you doing?” And beet juice stains everything it comes into contact with.

LISA W.

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SPOTLIGHT ON LITERATURE

FAMILIES ANONYMOUS AND THE PROFESSIONAL COMMUNITY

Are you aware there is a wealth of material available to you for **FREE** download on the FA website?

Are you aware of the website's "PUBLIC INFORMATION" section that describes how your Families Anonymous group can coordinate with various professionals in your community?

If your answer to either question is No, you can bring yourself up to speed by reading #7010 Families Anonymous and the Professional Community (found on the FA website at Literature >> Free Downloads >> Publication Information Literature).

You can also browse the individual #7010 pamphlets targeting seven categories of professionals:



Each pamphlet describes how FA and the respective organization or individual can work together in addressing the difficult topic of finding serenity amid the chaos of drug abuse in the family. Each pamphlet is free and available only online at the FA website. All these pamphlets are ideal for spreading the word about FA to professionals and, through them, to the public at large.

The #7010 series addresses the following topics:

- What is Families Anonymous?
- Why is Families Anonymous needed?
- How does Families Anonymous work?
- How can Families Anonymous and professionals cooperate?

SPOTLIGHT ON LITERATURE - FAMILIES ANONYMOUS AND THE PROFESSIONAL COMMUNITY (CONT'D)

Select whichever pamphlets meet your and your group's needs. Print them out, and use them to reach out to professionals who in turn can be resources for referrals to FA of clients, patients, employees, and others.

Do you want to do even more to help the fellowship? If so, go to FA's website, look under the Literature tab, and explore Free Download topics (such as literature to help groups get started and grow, brochures aimed at suffering family members and friends, and press releases and sample newspaper articles announcing your meetings). The time you invest in this endeavor could well lead to new members joining your group and to outside organizations becoming more familiar with FA. And, again, keep in mind that this public information material is FREE!

We cannot remain the "best kept secret" any longer! This current time is our best opportunity to act!

WE ARE FAMILIES ANONYMOUS!
LET US ALL PULL TOGETHER TO **STOP**
FAMILIES ANONYMOUS FROM BEING A
"BEST KEPT SECRET!"

REVEAL SECRET



Interested in our full literature catalog? Download your own copy [here](#), or check out our [eStore online!](#)



DONATIONS

SPECIAL THANKS

Congratulations and thank you to the Englewood, NJ Group #1152 for their generous donation commemorating their 32nd anniversary as an FA group. The WSO appreciates your financial support, and your service to the many family members you've helped over the years.



Group Donations

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- GR0288 OH, Pepper Pike
- GR0478 IL, Glenview
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- GR0853 IL, Palos Heights
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- GR1301 NY, Syracuse
- GR1318 FL, Boca Raton
- GR1773 WI, Madison
- GR1906 GA, Roswell
- GR1958 SC, Columbia
- GR1972 NJ, Voorhees
- GR2027 IL, Glenco
- GR2085 TX, Dallas
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- GR5004 Spain NSB

As per the Seventh Tradition, each group should be self-supporting. Your donations also help support the activities of the World Service Office. For more information on how to donate, please [click here](#) or 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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