

VOLUME LX | ISSUE III | MAY - JUNE 2023

# 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

Growing up in a house with addiction meant I often felt trapped. I was too young to evict myself from the chaos around me. I wondered what it might mean to be in a 'peaceful' home without the drama of my father's drunkenness each day. As I grew older, I carried this sense of helplessness with me to other areas of my life. I could not say no. I didn't feel like I had the right to. When I was in circumstances that made me uncomfortable, I didn't even know I had a choice to opt out. I felt too weak or felt obliged to endure the discomfort. I was programmed to think I was trapped.

This sense of powerlessness often left me in depression. Coming to FA, I learnt that my feelings were both valid and exaggerated. It was true that I was powerless—over addiction, over others; but it was untrue that I couldn't do anything about my life. The latter was a lie of resignation that I had internalized for many years. I learnt through the program that I always have a choice. Perhaps as a child I could do little to rescue myself. But now, I could learn the skills I need to lead a life of serenity.

A part of my recovery journey has been to keep reminding myself that I have choices, even when I feel otherwise, even in the worst possible circumstances. This choice might be a small one—perhaps to ask for help, meet a friend, do my daily reading, or think one less negative thought. At other times it may be a big choice—to have boundaries I have never held



## Contents

- 02** EDITOR'S NOTE  
Elizabeth S.
- 04** FOCUS: GROUP  
Englewood, NJ
- 07** JUNE EDUCATION  
COMMITTEE  
ANNOUNCEMENT
- 08** UNPREFERRED REALITY  
Sondra B.
- 11** MAKING JOY A DAILY  
HABIT  
Rita M.
- 12** ANNUAL BUSINESS  
MEETING  
ANNOUNCEMENT
- 13** THE PATH TO  
RECOVERY IS ONE OF  
HOPE  
Bob S.
- 15** LITERATURE  
SPOTLIGHT
- 18** PLANNED GIVING
- 21** DONATIONS

## EDITOR'S NOTE

(CONT'D)

before, to stand strong even when alone, to stop providing financial or other assistance that enables addictions to continue. I have the choice to do what I can, to have 'the courage to change the things I can.'

Even though sometimes I am discouraged that my progress is slow, I am learning to cultivate the strength I need to make my choices. It is through the fellowship that I find this courage. I am able to reprogram myself from being an abject victim of circumstances to being someone with agency to help myself ease my pain.

**IN FELLOWSHIP,  
ELIZABETH S.**



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

For our upcoming issue, the deadline to submit announcements is June 23rd.

We gladly accept submissions of original articles, letters, poetry, or artwork at any time!

Email us at  
[newsletter@familiesanonymous.org](mailto:newsletter@familiesanonymous.org).  
We'd love to hear from you!

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*Elizabeth S., Bob S., Nicole G.,  
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## FA members Sue N. and Sue F. share about their FA journeys at the Englewood group's 32nd anniversary meeting

The FA group in Englewood, New Jersey, recently celebrated its 32nd anniversary of helping families dealing with a loved one's substance use disorder and related behavioral problems. These are snippets from the evening, in which two members—both named Sue—share the lessons they have learned in FA.

### Sue N.

My husband and I found FA eleven years ago this month. When we walked into our first FA meeting, our twenty-six-year-old daughter had been abusing drugs and alcohol for about ten years. Like so many others, we were overwhelmed, in despair, and taking it out on each other.



**"I work to hold onto myself, and I learned through FA the value of a daily practice. For me, it's meditation, yoga, and being in nature."**

FA gave us the support, understanding, wisdom, tools and teachings to be able to say to her, "We can't be in your life unless you get and stay sober." This time she went to rehab—and stayed almost a year. For today, she continues to be sober, works her program, and has a satisfying career, marriage, and two healthy, wonderful daughters.

She and her husband don't take any of this for granted. Like me, they use the teachings of the Twelve Steps every day. That wisdom is integrated into a way of being in one's life and in the world.

It's not always easy. I can often feel, even in my body, that life is presenting a test: Will I choose despair, being overwhelmed by whatever pain I'm facing? Or will I choose to more deliberately use the FA teachings—one day at a time, manage my expectations, know the limits of my power—recognizing what I can change and what I can't.

The power to change what I can and accept what I can't. The choice to strive towards serenity.

I work to hold onto myself, and I learned through FA the value of a daily practice. For me, it's meditation, yoga, and being in nature.

The last few years have been hard. My husband died at the very beginning of the pandemic shutdown after suffering a long, crisis-filled medical condition. He was in hospice in our apartment. No one could physically be there with me.



I read the FA teachings, reached out to keep myself from being isolated, and did things that gave me some pleasure, trying hard to hold onto my serenity. And it helped. It was still very painful, sad and exhausting. But I remembered words spoken in a meeting: "Pain is part of life. Worry is optional."

And I knew I had to accept. I have little power to change the basics. I could only work on myself in order to make some difference.

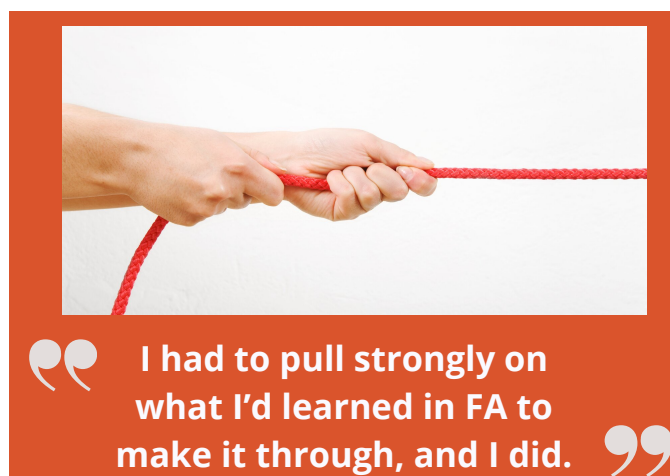
Then recently, a beloved niece was killed in a drug-related incident, and once again, memories of the horrors when my daughter was using came back. I felt that vulnerability on many levels, and I experienced the pain, anger and helplessness all over again. I got triggered. It was hard to stay in the present and not go back.

I had to pull strongly on what I'd learned in FA to make it through, and I did. So I know there are times when the FA experience is just there, in my body and my mind. Other times, I need to consciously pull it up, reminding myself, "It works if you work it."

Today, I feel gratitude for the program and all the ways it has affected me. My daughter and I can talk about the past in a healthy way. We can put it where it belongs and live life in the present. Never would I have imagined we'd have the relationship we have—but we do.

To those of you who are at the beginning of the journey, I can only say: Stay with it, hold onto hope, and reach out to others.

You are not alone.



**Sue F.**

The day after Thanksgiving 1999, my husband, Gary, and I went to our first Families Anonymous meeting. Our 22-year-old son, David, was out of control, mainly from drinking. He had dropped out of high school, and we didn't know how or where he was living. We worried about him 24/7.

What had happened to the wonderful child we used to have?

I didn't know. But I felt this change in him was somehow my fault. I avoided social events, neighbors, even friends, as much as I could. I did a lot of crying and feeling helpless.

The first thing I felt when I walked into that FA meeting was relief. I finally was in the company of people who were going through what I was going through. I hadn't felt this feeling for the past ten years. During all that time, I'd thought I was alone.

I cannot put into words how wonderful that feeling was. I listened to every word said at that meeting, taking it all in. And that's how my experience with FA began.

Gary and I attended those Friday night meetings faithfully for at least 13 years. Within the first year, David became sober and remains so today. Our younger son, Zachary, also had a drinking/substance abuse problem that we became aware of later. He, too, became sober for a while, then had several relapses. The relapses have been further apart, and for today, he is sober.

Here are some of the things I learned through FA:



**"I had the right to enjoy things in life even though my sons were living chaotic existences."**

- I wasn't a bad mother, and I didn't cause my sons' addictions. This was BIG for me—another weight lifted from my shoulders. A big part of this realization was that, when I looked around the meeting room each week and heard from other members who were in similar situations, I saw good and caring parents.
- I had the right to enjoy things in life even though my sons were living chaotic existences. I began to socialize again, I got a job I enjoyed, and I stopped self-pity. My sons made their choices; I made mine.
- I was unable (Trust me, we tried everything!) to change my sons. But I could—and did, with the help of FA—change myself. I learned from my mentors at FA that if I changed, my sons just might also change; if I stayed the same, they probably would, too. People who abuse drugs or alcohol don't like it when the enablers in their lives change and stop enabling. Each of my sons, in turn, became confused and angry when Gary and I changed; for example, we refused to have ANY contact with them until they were at least six months sober and could figure out a way to convince us of the truth of this. Once they realized we would stick by these changes, they—yes—changed themselves. Trust me, most children want to be part of their family.

In conclusion, I'd like to say two more things:

- There are no guarantees in life. Although our sons are living productive lives today and we have wonderful relationships with each of them, they may relapse in the future. If that happens with either of them, I'll be very sad and disappointed, but I won't cry and feel helpless. I'll accept that it's their choice, offer to help them find assistance, call a trusted FA mentor, and then go out with friends.
- Through FA, I've acquired concrete advice, wisdom and wonderful friends who I know will always be there for me. I'd like to thank all the members of FA whom I have met since that Friday after Thanksgiving 1999 and, in particular, the four founding members of the Englewood FA group, Geri and Joel and Terri and Jesse. Terri, Jesse and Joel have died, but I wouldn't be a bit surprised if their spirits are still with FA on Friday nights, and that they're fully aware of not only my gratitude, but that of countless other FA members who've been in the Englewood group throughout the years.

**SUE N. AND SUE F.**  
GROUP #1152, ENGLEWOOD. NJ



# JUNE EDUCATION COMMITTEE ANNOUNCEMENT

**DON'T  
MISS  
IT!**



**Feeling a bit out of balance?  
Struggling with letting go?**



Are you feeling a bit out of balance with a tendency to give from the core instead of the surplus? Do you struggle with letting go of worry, resentment or regret? If so, please join **Betty Hill Crowson**, retreat director and author from **TheJoyIsInTheJourney.com**, as she presents some doable solutions for getting our feet back under us and moving towards emotional freedom.

Learn to **regroup**, **refill**,  
**recover** and **release**.

## *Creating* **Personal Balance** *ACHIEVING* **Emotional Freedom**

**FREE**  
**Online Workshop**

**Saturday, June 3, 2023**  
**1:00-2:30pm EDT**

**Join us on Zoom**  
**Meeting ID: 291 935 4542**  
**Passcode: 4mPTGf**

Phone dial in options:  
+1 305 224 1968 US  
+1 646 931 3860 US

Meeting ID: 291 935 4542  
Phone Passcode: 649935

Click Here  
to Join the  
Session

**JOIN THE  
WORKSHOP**

**Questions?**

[DonnaD@FamiliesAnonymous.org](mailto:DonnaD@FamiliesAnonymous.org)

**FamiliesAnonymous.org**

*Note: Workshop will be hosted via Zoom.*

# UNPREFERRED REALITY

FA member Sondra B. was torn between caregiving for her brother and protecting herself from his addiction to medications. She writes about her recovery journey in FA.

I sat quietly on the edge of the bed holding his thin, cold hand. He was wearing a ball cap because he only had a few strands of hair that had grown back, but he didn't care because he was surrounded by his family. While the golden oldies played in the background, we tried to laugh about the good ol' days, but then reality again was upon us: My dad was going to die, and I could not stop it from happening.

As daylight started to fade, his breathing became more and more shallow. He continued trying to speak, but his voice was unable to be heard. So I, along with my aunts and uncle, did most of the talking.

We mostly talked about fun vacations and funny things each of them did as kids. Then, as the sun set and evening fell upon us, my dad and I had our final conversation that would forever change my life. I promised my dad that I would “watch out for and take care of” my younger (adult) brother.

In the moment, they were just words. No hidden meaning, nothing that I thought could go wrong. Only words to reassure my dad that his younger child, who was unable to be at his side at that moment, would be OK.

Although we have an eight-year age difference, my brother and I had a wonderful adult relationship. We were fun and funny together. We have been compared to the brother and sister characters in the television comedies “Modern Family” and “Schitt’s Creek.” So, as the older sister, assuring my dad that my brother would be OK was part of who we were. I treasured our relationship and assumed it would always remain the same.



**For years I lived what FA describes as the ‘insanity’ that we all know. My brother had become addicted to his multiple medications, and I had become obsessed with trying to control his behavior.**

But then months passed, and after he was injured at work, things changed. My brother had to have multiple back surgeries from which he would never fully recover. My fun, energetic younger brother was now living the reality of being disabled.

But that’s OK, right? He has a nurse for a sister who had promised to take care of him— and that’s what I did.

For years I lived what FA describes as the ‘insanity’ that we all know. My brother had become addicted to his multiple medications, and I had become obsessed with trying to control his behavior. I am a wife, a mother, a nurse, a nurturer, and a caregiver. I knew if I just tried hard enough, used tools and tactics that I use as a mom and in my nursing practice, I could solve his problems.



But I couldn't fulfill both his needs and mine. I had been plunged into a messy life that I didn't recognize as my own. I, too, was now living in an unpreferred reality.

The reality, preferred or not, was that my relationship with my brother had been turned upside down, underwater, and I was drowning. I had given him every ounce of love, money, sweat and tears that I had to give, and it wasn't enough. I continued day after day, month after month, year after year, to try having rational conversations with the irrationality of addiction.

— “  
**Though his choices were his own, the consequences created a domino effect that impacted all who were around him**  
— ”



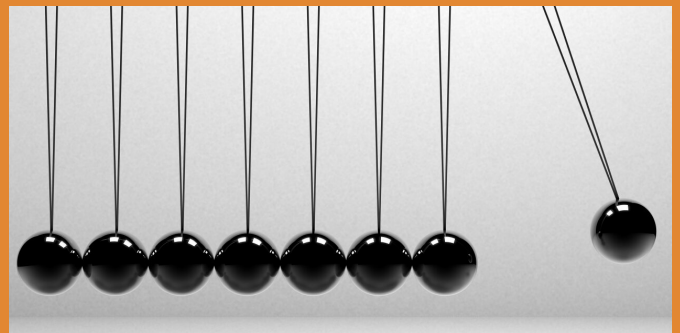
The entertaining and rewarding relationship we once knew was gone. There were now lies instead of trust, tears instead of laughs, and worry instead of peace. I didn't understand it. Why couldn't he just listen to me? Why couldn't he just do what I was telling him to do and everything would work out just fine? Each day I would wonder, what else could I do to make this better?

Though his choices were his own, the consequences created a domino effect that impacted all who were around him. Many times I carried the weight of those choices and consequences for him. For a while the weight was fine, but then it became heavier and heavier until I was flat on the ground, unable to crawl and barely able to breathe.

I knew the reality of what I was doing was unhealthy for me, but I thought if I just rescued him one more time, it would be that time that worked. Many “last times” came and went. Year after year, I bounced from being angry with him to being angry with myself.

Then one day in January 2021, I broke. I couldn't do it anymore. I broke down into tears in the hallway of the ICU at work with a co-worker whose daughter also suffered from addiction. We talked, and she said, “I have a red book on my desk that I want to tell you about,” and within the hour she sent me a photo of Today A Better Way (TABW).

**"Year after year, I bounced from being angry with him to being angry with myself."**



# UNPREFERRED REALITY

(CONT'D)

Over the next two years, I did a lot of reading, listening, sharing, crying, and sorting through how to detach with love while simultaneously detaching from the guilt of breaking a promise I had made to my dad. But then I would ask myself: Did I really break the promise? I will always love my brother unconditionally while allowing him to be his own person and make his own decisions.

The week I finished writing this piece, I attended a concert with my son, where we heard a song that we had played at my dad's funeral. The lyrics, both spiritual and inspirational, speak of being set free to enjoy endless love and grace through the intervention of a higher power.

Typically I have a really hard time listening to that song because it reminds me of the sorrow and emptiness I felt on that dark November day.

This time, after all these years, thanks to what I'm learning in FA, the words were no longer sad, but rather they were freeing.

**SONDRA B.**  
GROUP #2056  
BRADENTON, FL

— “ —

**Over the next two years, I did a lot of reading, listening, sharing, crying, and sorting through how to detach with love while simultaneously detaching from the guilt of breaking a promise I had made to my dad.**

— ” —



Want to learn more about how your FA group can thrive and grow? Go to [familiesanonymous.org](https://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 the Group Outreach Committee at [GO@familiesanonymous.org](mailto:GO@familiesanonymous.org).

Have a great meeting!



# MAKING JOY A DAILY HABIT

FA member Rita M.'s resolution this year is to look for joy every day. She shares photos on social media of small delightful finds that make her happy.



Photo Credit: Rita M.

I'm not much for New Year's resolutions, as their shelf life is usually short. But this year, as January 1, 2023, was coming into view, one word kept popping up all around me: joy. This was frankly irritating because I haven't seen or felt much joy in the past seven years. Yes, there were some happy moments, but joy? No.

When my Higher Power pushed me to look deeper, I found two reasons for the lack of joy in my life. The first will be familiar to anyone reading the Serenity Messenger: an adult child with substance use disorder, self-harming behavior, and various mental health diagnoses, all of which have caused me years of despair and worry. Worry can take up a lot of space in the head, leaving little space for joy.

But the second reason was just as important: Maybe I didn't know what joy was. So, I started reading all those articles about joy that were coming into my inbox and saw a consistent theme. Joy can be found in the pleasant, nice and sometimes routine experiences of everyday life. All that is necessary is to recognize and appreciate those experiences. Just today, a bright orange oriole visited my bird feeder for the first time this spring, and I marveled at its beauty. That is joy.

On this journey to find joy, I committed to myself that every day, I would post a photo on social media of something that gave me joy. That was a bit ambitious and was turning into "work" (the antithesis of joy), and so I now post a few times a week. One particularly joyful find was an Elmo balloon in a tree. It was totally unexpected and made me grin from ear to ear. That is joy.

While the things that bring joy may differ from person to person, the important thing I have learned is that the opportunity to recognize joy is out there. We just have to be open to it.

**RITA M.**  
GROUP #288  
PEPPER PIKE, OH

# ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT

The World Service Board will be holding a virtual (on-line) Annual Business Meeting (ABM) this year on **Saturday, June 10 at 2:00 pm ET**, utilizing GoTo™ videoconferencing capabilities. All members of the fellowship are welcome to attend the ABM. Those attending can connect to the meeting using the following information:



## Families Anonymous Annual Business Meeting Jun 10, 2023, 2:00 – 4:00 PM (America/New\_York)

**Please join my meeting from your computer, tablet or smartphone.**

<https://meet.goto.com/586951389>

**You can also dial in using your phone.**

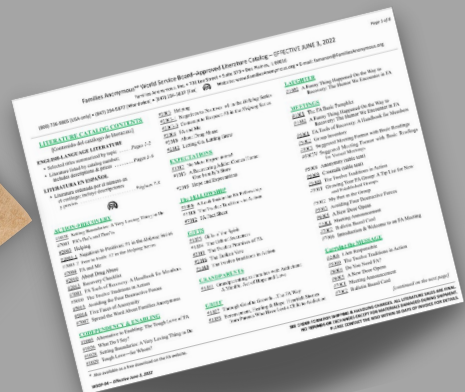
Access Code: 586-951-389

United States: [+1 \(312\) 757-3121](tel:+13127573121)

**Get the app now and be ready when your first meeting starts:**

<https://meet.goto.com/install>

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# THE PATH TO RECOVERY IS ONE OF HOPE

FA teaches us to look at ourselves clearly, but with compassion, writes Bob S.

I'm writing this article for the May/June issue of the Serenity Messenger and can't believe we're already almost halfway through the year.

Major holidays, birthdays, New Year's, even changes of season, seem like good times to step back and look at where we've been and where we think we're going. Perhaps we see ourselves in a more objective light during special days because they don't blend in with the relatively unremarkable days that make up our everyday lives.

So why not the year's midpoint?

Step Four calls on us to "make a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves," and Step Ten requires that we continue to take that inventory. That continuing reassessment could be weekly, daily, even hourly if circumstances call for it.

There were times when my wife and I were dealing with our loved one's erratic, drug-driven behavior that we were forced to take our personal inventory seemingly minute by minute: Are we being unfair in telling her she can't live in our home while she's actively using drugs? Is it wrong for us to refuse her money and shelter?

Introspection under duress—in the hot glare of the drama that our loved one's substance use disorder brought to nearly every interaction we had with her—was hard. We were forced to look at our motives and methods in real time, with threats being thrust in our faces.

"Do this or I'll die!" was her message. "Decide now!" was her demand.

**Introspection under duress  
—in the hot glare of the  
drama that our loved one's  
substance use disorder  
brought to nearly every  
interaction we had with  
her—was hard.**

**But with the support of our FA family, we decided we had to make the hard choice and stop enabling her bad behaviors.**

Of course, that's the ultimate terrifying scenario: Will something we do or say cause her to die from this horrific disease? And that was exactly why our daughter pushed those buttons so hard—because she knew that, in the past, our fear had always induced us to continue our enabling behaviors.

Based on FA's teachings, we were fairly sure that more money and support would only deepen her dependence on our misguided generosity and further erode her already minimal self-esteem. We also feared she might suffer illness, injury or worse if we didn't help. But with the support of our FA family, we decided we had to make the hard choice and stop enabling her bad behaviors.

It took a lot of introspection and soul-searching. We couldn't have done it when we were early in the program because we didn't yet believe we were powerless over outcomes. We still



# THE PATH TO RECOVERY IS ONE OF HOPE

(CONT'D)

wrongly thought that our financial support of our daughter's unacceptable behaviors somehow gave us control over what she ultimately would choose to do with her life.

For today, thankfully, our daughter is in recovery from her disease of substance use disorder. My wife and I are deeply grateful that we're also in recovery from our disease of enabling and controlling. Because these are chronic conditions, we can't say any of us is cured; we're only in remission.

While we hope that remission is permanent, we continue to attend our weekly FA meetings, and to practice the Twelve Steps of FA, so that we can enjoy the full measure of joy to be found in today—and can feel confident we're equipped to deal with whatever may come tomorrow.

Regardless of where we or our loved ones may be in our respective journeys, FA is a place of hope. In this program, we look at ourselves clearly, but with compassion: What have I done; why have I done it; and what have been the results? How can I do better today? this hour? this minute?

With the help of our FA groups, our FA sponsors, the readings in *Today A Better Way*, and the other FA resources, we find our own best ways forward.

The year may be half over, but my glass is half full.

Where there's life, there's hope.

**BOB S,**  
GROUP #2056  
BRADENTON, FL

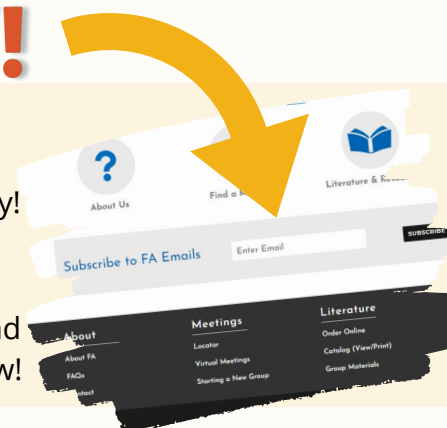
**"My wife and I are deeply grateful that we're also in recovery from our disease of enabling and controlling. Because these are chronic conditions, we can't say any of us is cured; we're only in remission."**



## 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](http://familiesanonymous.org), scroll to the bottom of the homepage, fill in your email and hit Subscribe. It only takes a minute - do it now!





## ***FIVE FACES OF ANONYMITY (#5014)***

As early as your first Families Anonymous meeting, you were most likely introduced to the subject of anonymity during the group's recitation of FA's Twelve Traditions. And then, as you continued attending meetings, you heard anonymity discussed again and again, in its various contexts.

Anonymity is perhaps the most critical principle within our groups as well as the entire fellowship worldwide. It is the sole focus of our highest Tradition—Tradition Twelve—which states, “Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, placing principles above personalities.”

Anonymity means much more than just not using our last names. It is, in essence, the great equalizer within our fellowship. It keeps all FA members safe, whether while attending meetings or being elsewhere in the company of others.

In FA there are five aspects—or “faces”—of anonymity that are especially impactful. What are these “five faces”? As described in *Five Faces of Anonymity*, they are:

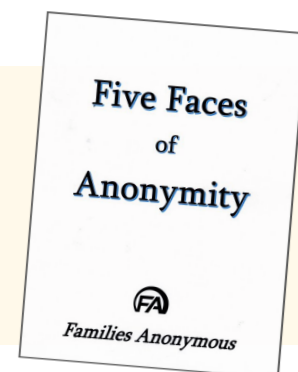


1. ***The Face of Anonymity in Meetings***
2. ***The Face of Anonymity and Group Unity***
3. ***The Face of Anonymity in Sponsorship***
4. ***The Face of Anonymity with Friends Outside the Fellowship***
5. ***The Face of Anonymity in the Public Eye***

*Five Faces of Anonymity* is a key FA publication that delves into the overall concept of anonymity, especially as it pertains to the categories listed above. It explains the value and importance of respecting anonymity in all the varied situations in which we find ourselves.

Within each of the “five faces” sections is at least one quotation from an FA member (anonymously, of course!) expressing the importance of anonymity to that person. Some of these members describe how their original view of anonymity changed—or, more accurately stated, expanded and grew as time went on.

We invite you to fine-tune your knowledge and appreciation of anonymity by purchasing a copy of *Five Faces of Anonymity* (#5014). This 20-page booklet—renamed, completely revised, and expanded well beyond its original edition—can be yours today for just \$3.00 per copy. Find it on FA's website ([click here to purchase](#)), or order directly from the WSO.







# LITERATURE SPOTLIGHT



## A SHOUT OUT TO FA GROUP SECRETARIES:

THANK YOU FOR ALL YOU DO!  
YOU ARE A SPECIAL HELP TO YOUR GROUP.

Do you know how important the secretary is to the group's regular functioning?!

Do you realize that the secretary holds the resources that can help smooth the wrinkles out of difficult meetings?

Does the job seem to be *too much work*? ... But then, when you think about it, isn't your recovery worth this effort?

Maybe it's time to rejuvenate your own program of recovery or, perhaps, switch jobs with someone else in your group.

THANK  
☺ YOU

Some groups change secretaries regularly, others barely ever. Whether you have been a secretary for weeks, months, or even years, or whether you are just now considering taking on the role, now is the time—for the good of your group—to read the updated Group Secretary's Handbook if you have not already done so.

In this revised handbook, secretaries will find wide-ranging information: from forming a new group to holding a group conscience meeting; from welcoming newcomers to growing your group. And how many of you knew that a back-up secretary and a back-up treasurer are suggested? Or that your group could have its own literature committee? Or how about having a designated greeter at each meeting? There is a wealth of knowledge in this handbook, surely with something new to consider for everyone.

Most importantly, please, when your group changes secretaries, make sure to let the WSO know the name and contact information for the new secretary. As you know, email blasts and phone calls go out to secretaries regularly, so it's critical that the WSO always have your group's up-to-date contact information. And when you do make a switch, remember to pass along the *Group Secretary's Handbook* to the new group secretary.

**Where do I find a copy of this revised WSOF-14 Group Secretary's Handbook, you ask? It's easy—just check the literature catalog or the website ([click here](#)).**

Now, for the first time ever, selected WSOFs (WSO Forms) and PPGs (Policies, Procedures and Guidelines) are listed on the last page of the literature catalog.

These WSOFs and PPGs (and others not listed in the catalog) can be downloaded from the FA website for free.

**Here is the entire Contents page of the revised handbook. Take a look at the wide range of information it includes!**

**Hop on the website now, and get your Group Secretary's Handbook today!**



## Table of Contents

<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>GENERAL TIPS FOR THE GROUP</b>	<b>1</b>
CONTACTING FA	1
FIRST ORDER OF BUSINESS	1
MEMBERS' HANDBOOK	2
SHARING SERVICE WITHIN YOUR FA GROUP	3
GROUP SECRETARY	3
BACK-UP GROUP SECRETARY, GROUP TREASURER, BACK-UP GROUP TREASURER, PROGRAM CHAIR	4
LITERATURE CHAIR, GREETER	5
PUBLIC INFORMATION CHAIR, PHONE LIST CHAIR, EMAIL CHAIR, REFRESHMENTS CHAIR	6
GROUP CONTACT	7
<b>YOUR FA MEETINGS</b>	<b>8</b>
WHO CONDUCTS FA MEETINGS?	8
MEETING FORMAT	8
ROTATION OF MEETING LEADERS	8
KEEP IT FA AT THE MEETING!	9
MEETING TOPICS	9
PREVENTING CROSSTALK	9
MEETING ROSTER (TELEPHONE LIST)	10
FOCUS ON RECOVERY, NOT "WHO'S TO BLAME"	10
LITERATURE DISPLAY AND SALES	10
OUTSIDE SPEAKERS	11
<b>BUSINESS MEETINGS (GROUP CONSCIENCE)</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>STAY ORGANIZED</b>	<b>12</b>
FINANCIAL RECORDS	12
GROUP CONTACTS	12
THE FA GROUP OUTREACH COMMITTEE: A RESOURCE FOR YOUR GROUP	12
MAIL FROM THE WSO	13
FA MEETING DIRECTORIES	13
NEARBY FA GROUPS	14
SUPPORTING THE FELLOWSHIP	14
<b>NEWCOMERS: FA'S LIFEBLOOD</b>	<b>15</b>
WELCOMING NEWCOMERS	15
SUGGESTED HANDOUTS FOR NEWCOMERS	15
<b>GROWING THE GROUP</b>	<b>16</b>
SPREADING THE WORD	16
TELEVISION / RADIO / SOCIAL MEDIA	16
PUBLIC INFORMATION SERVICE	16
KEEP COMING BACK	17



## SUPPORT FA'S MISSION FOR GENERATIONS TO COME

Estate Planning & Legacy Donations

### Did you know planned giving is an option to support FA?

Most people who draw up a will want to leave something to the people they love, such as family and friends. Many will also make monetary bequests to support organizations or institutions that helped them during their lives, such as a house of worship, university or medical center.

If Families Anonymous has helped you, remembering the fellowship in your will is a good way to help us continue to help others who, like yourself, have a friend or family member afflicted with substance use disorder. You might also make FA the beneficiary of a life insurance policy or investment account.

FA's 7th Tradition states that "Every group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions." This means that we, the members of the FA fellowship, are solely responsible for making the monetary and personal service donations needed to keep the fellowship alive. A legacy donation from you is a meaningful investment for future FA members and is a great way to give back.

### How do I make a legacy donation to FA?

It's a simple, two-step process:

#### **Step #1 - Designate Families Anonymous in your Will or Other Financial Document**

**If you want to remember FA in your will**, please consult your attorney or other estate planning specialist. Whether you already have a will, or are preparing one from scratch, he or she can help you insert the appropriate language to make that gift.

When consulting with your attorney or other advisor, simple language such as this is probably all you'll need:

*"I give and bequeath, for its general purposes, the sum of \$\_\_\_\_\_ to Families Anonymous, Inc., 701 Lee Street, Suite 670, Des Plaines, IL 60016 (Tax ID: 95-2373095)."*



If you're making a bequest by way of designating FA as a **beneficiary of a life insurance policy or investment account**, you'll need to check with your insurance agent or investment professional to determine how to correctly reflect that on your financial or insurance records.

*Families Anonymous, Inc.'s Tax ID number is 95-2373095, which you may need to make these designations.*

## Step #2 - Send FA a Letter or E-mail Confirming your Membership in the Fellowship

Families Anonymous can only accept donations, including bequests, from FA members. For that reason, it's very helpful for FA to have a document on file at FA's World Service Office before your will is probated to show that you were, in fact, a member of the fellowship.

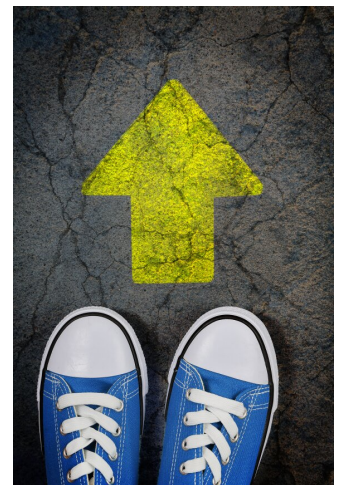
Thus, once you've created or amended a will leaving a bequest to FA, or you've designated FA as a beneficiary on an insurance policy or investment account, kindly send a short letter (or email) to the World Service Office stating that you're a member of FA, and briefly detail the bequest that you've made. That will allow FA to confirm your status as a member of the fellowship when we're contacted by the representative of your estate about accepting your donation.

We offer sample text that you might use:

*Dear Families Anonymous,*

*My name is \_\_\_\_\_, and I would like to confirm my membership in Families Anonymous. I have included Families Anonymous, Inc. (Tax ID: 95-2373095) in (my will/as a beneficiary of an insurance policy/financial investment). Please let this document serve as confirmation of my membership in Families Anonymous and participation in Group (insert Group# or City/State).*

*Thank you,  
(signature)*



## Thank You!

Families Anonymous is here for you, and it's here because of you. We thank you for your support of the World Service Office and for helping to sustain our mission of bringing the benefits of the FA fellowship to current and future FA members throughout the world.

*Families Anonymous, Inc. is a not-for-profit California corporation under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Please direct all correspondence to Families Anonymous, Inc. at our World Service Office located at 701 Lee Street, Suite 670, Des Plaines, IL 60016.*

**Questions?** Please e-mail us at: [info@familiesanonymous.org](mailto:info@familiesanonymous.org).

# 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](mailto: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!**

# DONATIONS

## COMMEMORATIVE DONATIONS

- In memory of Taylor W., on behalf of Kim and Trey F.



## GROUP DONATIONS: March & April 2023

### Over \$500

- GR1318 FL, BocaRaton

### \$101 to \$500

- GR0134 FL, So Miami
- GR0173 IL, Park Ridge
- GR0494 IL, Winnetka
- GR1906 GA, Roswell
- GR1972 NJ, Voorhees
- GR2056 FL, Bradenton
- GR3001 IL, Chicagoland

### Up to \$100

- GR0162 IL, Des Plaines
- GR0171 IL, Arlington Heights
- GR0262 NY, Garden City
- GR0279 NY, Amityville
- GR0288 OH, Pepper Pike
- GR0478 IL, Glenview
- GR0554 NJ, Rockaway

### Up to \$100

- GR0641 CA, Redlands
- GR1096 VA, Richmond
- GR1301 NY, Syracuse
- GR1614 NY, Elmira
- GR1833 Canada, Winnipeg
- GR1836 FL, Delray Beach

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](http://www.familiesanonymous.org) and click **DONATE!**

*Thank you for supporting the many activities of FA World Service.*

*Your contribution is tax-deductible.*

**DONATE**





# thank you thank you thank you



**THANK YOU** to the following members of the fellowship who have generously supported Families Anonymous this past year through our **Recurring Donation program**. Every donation is important to us, and your consistent monthly investment in Families Anonymous allows us to continue to share our program – thank you!



Anonymous Donor	Doreen R	Harry L	Lizette P	Priscilla H
Barbara S	Eileen L	Ina G	Madelyn M	Robert M
Barbara Y	Eileen L	Jane H	Maria S	Sheila G
Deborah M	Eileen M	JoAnne B	Michelle S	Susan T
Donna D	Gerald W	Judy G	Peggy H	Victoria S

## We offer several ways to set up a Recurring Donation to FA:



- **Credit Card** - Donate via our website at <https://www.familiesanonymous.org/donate/> and check the “Make this donation monthly” box.



- **PayPal** – Scroll to the bottom of the donation page (see link above) and click the yellow Donate button. You will then have an option to check the “Make this a monthly donation” box.



- **Zelle** – Automatic withdrawals from a bank account are also available. From your online banking website or app, set up Families Anonymous as a recipient using [donate@familiesanonymous.org](mailto:donate@familiesanonymous.org) as the email to which funds will be sent. Set the “Repeating payment” option to the on position.

If you have benefited from Families Anonymous, we hope you will consider giving back so that we may carry our message to others for years to come. Your support of the fellowship is vital, and we are grateful for each and every donation.

**Questions? Please email: [treasurer@familiesanonymous.org](mailto:treasurer@familiesanonymous.org)**