

VOLUME LXI | ISSUE III | SUMMER 2024

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

I was able to join a few FA friends for a long leisurely lunch recently. Since the pandemic, our meetings have continued online, something most members are finding convenient in our otherwise traffic-ridden Indian cities. When we do meet in person, conversations flow effortlessly, with little awkwardness or hesitation. At our in-person meetings, I often meet “new” faces—old members who have dropped out, or members who are not able to attend regularly, or members whose voices I've heard online but never really met. Yet, it doesn't take too long to get along.

I was struck by how FA has provided something I lacked for many years. I often tried hard, yet mostly failed, at a genuine connectedness with others. As a child, embarrassment was an all-too-familiar feeling. The public spectacle of my father's addiction made me want to hide myself physically. Sometimes I woke up early and went on runs in an empty playground nearby. I sprinted in circles until I was dog-tired in a frustrating attempt at some relief. Over the years, I became shy, introverted, and avoidant of conflict. In my romantic relationships, I was the forgiving one, absorbing the stresses caused by my partner's erratic emotions. But beneath the layers of this passive personality was my internalized shame as an addict's child and a whole lot of crushing disappointment and heartache at the reality of what life had turned out to be.

I was able to make and “maintain” friendships, but I concealed truths about my life that made it look imperfect. I suffered silently through addiction and emotional abuse. Sometimes I served toned-down versions of my experiences, so the addict wouldn't look all that bad. I didn't even process it as a fear of judgment from others. It was like second skin, a habit, something I had always done, a way to hide.



Contents

02	EDITOR'S NOTE Elizabeth S.
04	WORD FROM THE BOARD Bob and Maria S.
06	WORKING STEP 9 Bev C.
09	REVELATION AND REDEMPTION Bob S.
12	CONVENTION ANNOUNCEMENT
13	WE ARE NOT THE SCULPTORS Bob M.
14	THE GRATITUDE DIARY
15	LITERATURE SPOTLIGHT
17	CALL FOR ACTION
18	RECURRING DONATIONS
19	DONATIONS

EDITOR'S NOTE

(CONT'D)

At FA, I found the fellowship's approach was diametrically opposite to mine. Instead of burying our truths under the carpet, we were encouraged to bring them to light. That simple act of just being able to tell my story was profoundly freeing. These were my own experiences, but when the words rolled from my tongue, the shame was disconnected from the experience. The power that self-contempt and guilt had over me began to lose its grip. It felt odd that a bunch of strangers could understand exactly what I was going through. I was no longer trapped in that dark and damp place of isolation and helplessness. Or at least I had company. They had gone through something similar. Over the years, I've found I share something in common with every FA member I meet. This is a blessing given to me by the fellowship.

To be understood is a rare gift, and FA gives it to us so many times. All I have to do is look back on the days before FA. I remember to be grateful and not take the fellowship for granted.

We live in a social media era that teaches us to crave virtual validation from strangers above all else. Superficial likes, new online friends, sharing of our opinions and photos are all confirmation of our worth.

The relentless cultural messaging of the day has us believe that we must look like we have it all together. Importantly, we must perform these picture-perfect lives on various social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram or TikTok for the voyeuristic pleasure of people we may not even know.

In times such as these, having a real community where we can relate to each other openly and honestly is an act of resistance. FA reminds us what community is really about: a freedom to be ourselves without pretense, judgment or fear. Being vulnerable doesn't drive others away. Instead, we can connect with each other despite our brokenness. Isn't that what has brought us together? We don't chase perfection, but work earnestly on our shortcomings. Our connectedness is a collective gift, a blessing, a superpower.

**IN FELLOWSHIP,
ELIZABETH S.**



Chair

Maria S. - Bradenton, FL

Vice Chair

Chris Y. - Bradenton, FL

Treasurer

Cindy C. - Alpharetta, GA

Recording Secretary

Jan B. - Neptune, NJ

Board Members At Large

Bob S. - Bradenton, FL

Chris Z. - Metuchen, NJ

Cristina B. - Lisboa, Portugal

Greg C. - Alpharetta, GA

Guy W. - Upminster, UK

Helen L. - Corinth, Greece

Lori H. - Marlboro, NJ

Serenity Messenger

Families Anonymous Inc.
701 Lee Street, Suite 670
Des Plaines, IL 60016 USA

newsletter@familiesanonymous.org

Editorial Team

*Elizabeth S., Bob S., Nicole G.,
Ann P., Chris Y.*

Copyright 2024 by Families Anonymous, Inc. ("FAI").
All rights reserved. Except as permitted in
connection with regular FA meetings as provided in
PPG-06, this publication may not be copied or
quoted, in whole or in part, without the express
prior written permission of FAI. FAMILIES
ANONYMOUS, FA, the Stylized FA Logo, and
SERENITY MESSENGER are all trademarks owned
exclusively by FAI.





International Overdose Awareness Day (August 31) is an opportunity to take the hope of FA to those suffering the pain of a loved one's addiction, write FA board members Maria S. and Bob S.



International Overdose Awareness Day

This is the third in a series of articles on raising awareness about FA in our communities. We've dealt with Faith Leaders in our January–February 2024 issue and Behavioral Health Professionals in our Spring 2024 issue. This time around, we'll take a slightly different tack on how groups can raise awareness about FA by participating in events to be held around the country in connection with International Overdose Awareness Day (IOAD) on August 31.

In 2001, The Salvation Army in Melbourne, Australia, held the first IOAD for a number of reasons. They wanted to give people whose loved ones had been lost to overdose a place to mourn publicly in a safe, understanding environment, free of guilt or shame. IOAD is also intended to spread information about the issue of fatal and non-fatal overdose and to send a message to current and former drug users that they're valued and loved.

In addition, IOAD has a number of important broad, forward-looking goals:

- Stimulate discussion about overdose prevention and drug policy
- Provide basic information on the range of support services that are available
- Prevent and reduce drug-related harm by supporting evidence-based policy and practice
- Inform people around the world about the risk of overdose

(from <https://www.overdoseday.com/about-the-campaign/>)

Since that first Australia event in 2001, many community members, government entities, and private organizations worldwide have held IOAD events to raise awareness about this problem. So far, as of mid-June, there are 54 events scheduled to be held in August around the U.S. alone.

We encourage members of local FA groups to go to the IOAD website to see if there's an event near you this August. If so, contact the organizers, and ask if you can attend the event and share FA materials. Perhaps they have a literature or "other resources" table where you can display informational FA literature.

"They wanted to give people whose loved ones had been lost to overdose a place to publicly mourn in a safe, understanding environment, free of guilt or shame."



WORD FROM THE BOARD

(CONT'D)

Here are links to free materials that you may want to distribute, if possible. These materials are also available in Spanish on the FA website:

Electronic Resources


These items can be downloaded and e-mailed or can be printed for free distribution.

- [#7003E](#) - FAMILIES ANONYMOUS - FOR ME?
- [#7009E](#) - ARE YOU TORN APART?
- [#6003E](#) - TO THE CONCERNED FAMILY MEMBER OR FRIEND
- [#7014E](#) - ARE YOU AT YOUR WITS' END?
- [#5003-1](#) - AN INTRODUCTION TO FAMILIES ANONYMOUS

Printed Materials

Each of the following can be downloaded as an editable pdf, and your local meeting information can be added:

- [#7014](#) - ARE YOU AT YOUR WITS' END?
- [#7003](#) - FAMILIES ANONYMOUS FOR ME?



"It's essential that we make efforts to reach as many people as possible who are suffering the pain of having a loved one ensnared by substance use disorder and who don't know where to turn."

You may even be able to join a panel discussion or be featured as a speaker at one of these events. It's always impactful when we share our personal stories of how much FA has improved our lives.

Finally, if no IOAD event is being held near you, you might want to sponsor your own. You can go to the IOAD website for a list of events (<https://www.overdoseday.com/events-2024/>) and for information and ideas on how to start a new event (<https://www.overdoseday.com/register-your-event/>).

It's essential that we make efforts to reach as many people as possible who are suffering the pain of having a loved one ensnared by substance use disorder and who don't know where to turn. If you're enjoying some measure of recovery, the 12th Step calls on you to reach out to others and share this program with them. Through those efforts, you'll also help grow the fellowship, thereby ensuring that FA will be here for those who may need us in the future.

Please consider making an effort, however large or small, to raise awareness of FA. Do it in connection with this year's IOAD, or do it just because it's today, and what better time is there to take action?

You, and your community, will be the better for it.

MARIA AND BOB S.
WSB MEMBERS

WORKING STEP 9

FA member Bev C. shares what making amends to her family looked like for her



If I could author a book, it would be an autobiography. The title would be *I Want to Mend My Broken Family*. When I was a little girl, life was so simple. I had a wonderful mom and dad, two sisters, a nice home, great school (and I walked to school), great teachers who cared about my future, and all of life's trinkets.

Back then, there were no worries because life wasn't complicated. There were rules and values, joy, fun, and happy days. We took baby steps through life. We lived in a world of love, respect, trust and honesty. There were family holidays, family celebrations, and neighborhood parties and picnics. I went to church with my family, and we prayed as a family at the dinner table, giving thanks to the God of my understanding for our blessings. These would be the kind of things that would be in the first chapters of my book.

I always compared my life to Little House on the Prairie. Why? Because family meant everything. Family was the nucleus of life. Family was special. When people stay away from each other, their strengths get divided. When a family remains a unit, they stay strong and undivided, possessing a collective power to withstand all kinds of trials and tribulations. This is why having a family and keeping it bonded is extremely important and vital to life.

So what would I write about in the next chapters? I guess it would be about the true reality, about how my Little-House-on-the-Prairie life changed. Change doesn't happen overnight; it happens gradually. The key factor is the separation of family—deaths, marriages, divorces, second marriages, blended families, and new players trying to become part of the nucleus that once worked.

Technology came soaring in, and instead of family discussions and Father Knows Best, the new norm became CNN, sit-coms (inappropriate for most to watch), cell phones, the Internet, Facebook, blogs, Twitter, TV series with shootings and violence, YouTube, and those appalling video games that held our children captive for hours.

Drugs tempted our youth, and once they took the first pill, drink or fix, their lives would become a nightmare and their only chance for survival would be a commitment to recovery. This would be the final straw that tore the family apart.

"Making amends always felt like a bitter pill for me to swallow, but I knew if I was serious about my family, it would be good medicine for both my spirit and my soul."



WORKING STEP 9

(CONT'D)

The next chapters would be about mending the family. Darts of doubt started flying at me, but I took comfort in knowing that I had done something very right in my life by becoming an active member of Families Anonymous.

Now I segue into Step Nine. Making amends always felt like a bitter pill for me to swallow, but I knew if I was serious about my family, it would be good medicine for both my spirit and my soul. I pondered this Step, experiencing an epiphany about the definition of amends, which once again circles back to change. Normally simple, but how easily forgotten.

And the book of life goes on. I got straight with myself. I had to move on to make things right with others in my life. I began by writing a poem to my youngest son and sent it to him the first time he was incarcerated. I can't tell you it didn't hurt, because it did. I followed my program because it was about detaching with love and letting go. I felt that action was somewhat successful, for the time being anyway.



“

I got straight with myself. I had to move on to make things right with others in my life. I began by writing a poem to my youngest son and sent it to him the first time he was incarcerated.

”

I then moved on to my husband. We had a very long talk and I openly admitted my wrongdoings. Again, this was a change for me. Change is not easy; it's very humbling, but it is part of the healing process. So that worked.

Who was next? It was my oldest son, Scott. He was, and still is, a tough nut to crack. A telephone call didn't work, so I sent a letter. Wrong move, because his wife opens all his mail. I bit my lip and bore the pain. My last hope was an email. I sent an apology in an email to my son. He never acknowledged it. End result: It hasn't worked, so I've turned him and his family over to my higher power which is God. The caveat to this action is patience.

“CHANGE IS NOT EASY; IT'S VERY HUMBLING, BUT IT IS PART OF THE HEALING PROCESS.”

Then came my daughter. What happened between us, I don't really know; I can only surmise. I tried reaching out, but to this day have not been successful. I know that I can only control myself. My three stepchildren did not become part of the blended family untainted. Drugs were a chapter in each of their lives, bearing the bitter consequences of pain and suffering for the entire family. I still suffer, but now I understand that suffering produces perseverance, perseverance produces character, and character produces hope.

I can't write the final chapters yet, but what I can work on is becoming a catalyst for my family. I know I have no control over the outcome or over changing others. Sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't. I have no control over someone not accepting my amends or not recognizing the changes in me.

WORKING STEP 9

(CONT'D)

What I can do is become a better role model. I can wish, hope, think, and pray for unity in my family again. I can believe; I can hope; I can put all my faith in God. When success comes, I can write the final chapters, close the book, and begin a new season in my life.

I can control me; others I can only love. Today, I will continue to thank my higher power, be grateful for the many blessings He has given me, and continue to pray for the restoration of my family.

BEV C.
(REPUBLISHED FROM THE RAG, SEP-OCT, 2013)



"Sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't. I have no control over someone not accepting my amends or not recognizing the changes in me."

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

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

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

Email us at newsletter@familiesanonymous.org. We'd love to hear from you!



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 the Group Outreach Committee at GO@familiesanonymous.org.

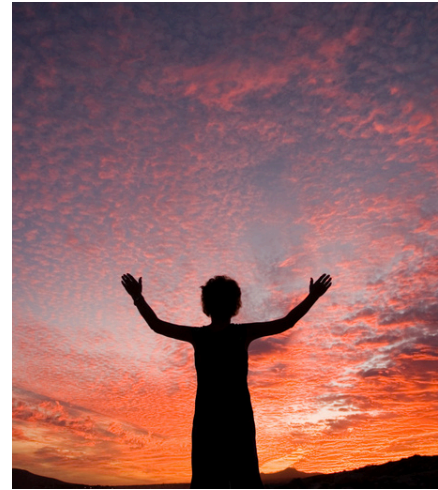
Have a great meeting!

REVELATION AND REDEMPTION

Bob S. reminds us that our redemption lies in working on our shortcomings

It's a standard storyline found in literature: The protagonist is thrown into a situation that forces him or her to confront character traits that before the crisis may have seemed to be positive attributes. In the course of working through the problem, the hero must deal with and recognize these traits for the flaws that they are. He or she has ignored them for years because they were too difficult to resolve or too painful to acknowledge.

Because of the crisis, however, they can no longer be ignored. And once the hero experiences the revelation that these traits are flaws, they're stripped away, or at least start to lose their power over the hero, and he or she is effectively reborn.



Revelation leads to redemption.

A Christmas Carol, with Scrooge's journey through his past, present, and future that is guided by the three spirits, is a classic example of this storyline. He starts out miserly, unkind and alone, cursing Christmas as a humbug. These traits have served Scrooge well so far, enabling him to become rich and avoid close personal relationships which, in the past, have brought him sorrow.

"IF WE TRY TO HELP A LOVED ONE SUFFERING FROM SUD BY GIVING THEM MORE MONEY, FREE SHELTER, CLOTHING, A CAR, OR OTHER MATERIAL SUPPORT, IT SEEMS TO ONLY FAN THE FLAMES AND MAKE THE PROBLEM WORSE."

But after being shown how his mean, selfish ways have hurt both others and himself, he resolves to be a better person. By the end of the tale, he's generous, loving, and exults in the Christmas holiday.

A 2023 film, called *The Holdovers*, follows the same formula: Paul Giamatti plays a curmudgeonly, tradition-bound teacher at a private prep school. Over the course of a Christmas holiday (echoes of Dickens), he learns through a series of confrontations with a young student how his character flaws and foibles have negatively impacted his life and his relationships with others. As a result, he becomes a kinder, more generous person than he was at the start of the film.

Our journey in FA follows a similar path. We come into the program tormented, confused, and emotionally frayed. We're at our wits' end trying to deal with a problem—the substance use disorder of a loved one or friend—that's tearing our world apart. It's a crisis unlike any we've seen before, because it defies explanation or solution, at least using any of the traditional problem-solving techniques we've applied so far in our lives.

In fact, our usual ways of dealing with our loved ones are turned on their head. If we try to help a loved one suffering from SUD by giving them more money, free shelter, clothing, a car, or other material support, it seems to only fan the flames and make the problem worse. We don't know how to separate our loved one from their disease, or how to keep ourselves from spiraling deeper into the madness that arises from living with someone who suffers from SUD. The more we "help," the worse it gets.

REVELATION AND REDEMPTION

(CONT'D)

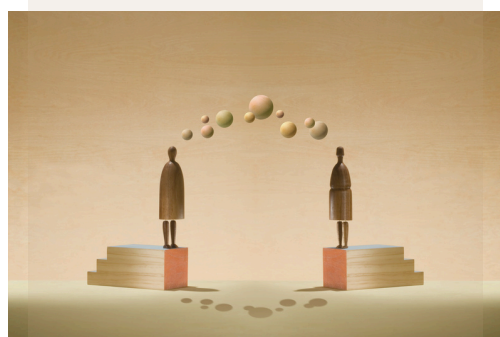
Our strengths—problem solving, caring for others by doing things for them, offering material support—all seem to be liabilities. There doesn't appear to be any way out.

Then, FA tells us to stop and look at ourselves. We go to meetings and talk about what we're doing to try to cope with this baffling disease. We hear how others have found a way to live in peace despite their loved ones' continued poor decisions. We hear and see how others in the program have taken stock of themselves and then changed their own behaviors, thereby making their lives better. Their change at least opens up the possibility that their loved ones might find recovery, too.

But it takes a lot of self-examination to get there. An important part of the process is Step 4, where we take a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves. Like Scrooge and other characters facing adversity who are forced to examine their own faults, we must honestly consider how we may be contributing to the ongoing cycle of craziness that surrounds both us and our loved one suffering from SUD. We can't continue hiding behind those foibles we had thought were strengths, because in Step 5 we must disclose them to ourselves, to God, and to another human being.

“WE HEAR AND SEE HOW OTHERS IN THE PROGRAM HAVE TAKEN STOCK OF THEMSELVES AND THEN CHANGED THEIR OWN BEHAVIORS, THEREBY MAKING THEIR LIVES BETTER.”

It's in the light of that disclosure that we can finally see the harms we may have perpetuated against both ourselves and others. It's only in that harsh light that we can see the true value of our strengths, as well as the danger of continuing to indulge our weaknesses.



“We can't continue hiding behind those foibles we had thought were strengths, because in Step 5 we must disclose them to ourselves, to God, and to another human being.”

By working the Steps, studying the FA literature and *Today A Better Way* readings, and sharing and listening at our regular meetings, we become able to sort out which aspects of ourselves we should keep, and which we need to change, if we're going to learn to live a happy life regardless of whether or not our loved one recovers from SUD.

But it takes time.

In *A Christmas Carol*, Scrooge's revelations and changes take place overnight. In *The Holdovers*, the main character's revelations about himself, and the resultant changes he makes in his life, develop over the course of weeks.

In FA, it can take months or even years of diligently working our program to develop greater self-awareness, make incremental changes in ourselves, and thereby transform our situation. It's well worth it, because if we can reach that level of self-revelation, we have a chance to enjoy the redemption—the serenity in living—that follows.

REVELATION AND REDEMPTION

(CONT'D)



"It's in the light of that disclosure that we can finally see the harms we may have perpetuated against both ourselves and others."

Our choices are simple, yet stark: Change and get better, or stay the same and don't. Change doesn't happen overnight or in a matter of weeks like in books or in the movies. But if we work the FA program, the process is the same: revelation and redemption.

As the saying goes, it works if you work it, it won't if you don't, so work it you're worth it.

BOB S.

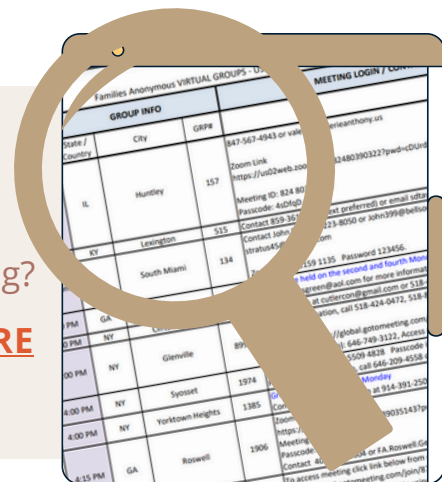
GROUP #2056, BRADENTON, FLORIDA

Looking for a Meeting?!

New to Families Anonymous and looking to join a meeting?

Interested in checking out either a new Virtual or In Person meeting?

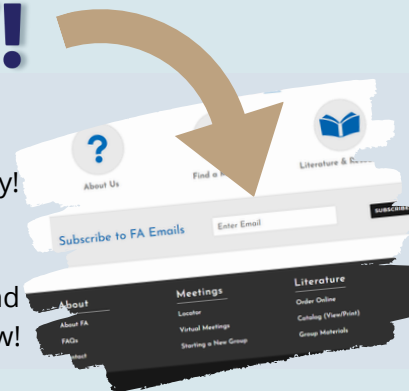
Find all our Meetings Directories on our website, by clicking [HERE](#) or under the "Meetings" > "Find a Meeting" tab.



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!



CONVENTION ANNOUNCEMENT



43rd Annual Chicagoland Families Anonymous Convention

A Beacon of Hope

WHERE

Gloria Dei Lutheran Church

4501 Main Street, Downers Grove, IL 60515

Park in Church Lot or School Lot
(across street)

WHEN

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 2ND

8 AM – 3 PM

SCHEDULE

**Registration/Continental
Breakfast 8 a.m. – 8:45 a.m.**

**Program 8:45 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.
Includes speakers, breakouts,
and lunch.**

Come and spend a day learning how FA can help you relate with a family member or friend affected by mind-altering substances or related behavioral issues. Whether you are an active member of Families Anonymous or have just heard of this group, we welcome you to attend. FA serves as a beacon of hope, reminding others that peace is possible – even in the darkest of times!



WE ARE NOT THE SCULPTORS

We are all merely tools and are not meant to mold the lives of others, says FA member Bob M.



“While I may be part of the plan, this doesn’t mean that I get to create the plan or even that I am somehow in control of it.”

The sculptor, using only their hands and some sculpting tools, can transform a lifeless piece of clay into a work of art, and while each of the sculptor’s creations is unique, they all have one thing in common: They are reflections of the artist. Maybe we’re all sculptors, molding and shaping the people in our lives.

When we see our children acting like us and talking like us, we feel like we’ve done a good job. When we have friends that are like-minded and share our opinions, we think of them as good friends. But when our child doesn’t grow up to be the person that we’ve tried to mold them into, or when our friends disagree with us, it can leave us with feelings of sadness, frustration and even anger. It can make us feel like somehow we have failed.

But what if it turns out that we aren’t the sculptor after all? What if it turns out that we are just one of the sculptor’s tools? And what if the people in our lives are being shaped and molded by other tools as well, by other people, by the environment they live in, even by their health? Then there’s free will that separates us from a piece of clay, that gives us the power to decide the person that we will become. What if, as the sculptor’s tool, all that’s asked of us is that we try—try to make each work of art that we touch the best that it can be?

For me, the Families Anonymous program is a constant reminder that I’m not the sculptor, that I’m merely one of the sculptor’s tools, that while I may be part of the plan, this doesn’t mean that I get to create the plan or even that I am somehow in control of it. Working my Families Anonymous program allows me to love each work of art that I am a part of, to take some pride in each work of art that I touch, but it also reminds me that I deserve neither the credit nor the blame for what each creation eventually becomes.

By coming to meetings and working the 12 Steps, I’ve tried to become a better father, a better spouse, a better friend, a better person. I’ve tried to eliminate mistakes I’ve made in the past so that when I do get a chance to influence people’s lives, I can do it in positive ways, so that I can try to make each work of art that I touch the best that it can be.

But it’s not easy, and it’s always one day at a time. And sometimes I have to remind myself that I am one of the sculptor’s creations, too, that I have been shaped and molded by not only the sculptor but by everyone and everything in my life—and that includes all of you. And I have to remind myself that I, like all of the sculptor’s creations, have free will. And though I don’t get to decide how the people’s lives that I touch will turn out, I do get to decide the kind of person I will be. And so, each morning I tell myself, “Just for today, I will stay on my program.” And when I’m tempted to take control, I will try to remember what I’ve learned: that I can change myself, but others I can only love.”

**BY COMING TO MEETINGS
AND WORKING THE 12 STEPS,
I’VE TRIED TO BECOME
A BETTER FATHER,
A BETTER SPOUSE,
A BETTER FRIEND,
A BETTER PERSON.**

BOB M. GROUP #853, PALOS PARK, IL

THE GRATITUDE DIARY

A Serenity Seeker shares what she is grateful for

Dear FA:

I am savoring a big, bright, glorious bowl of gratitude today.

Gratitude for the peace and presence that steadily grow to fill my mind and disposition, after so many, many lost days of fear, anxiety and despair.

Gratitude for my loving husband who has stayed beside me, especially because my son is not his son, when addiction came into our lives like a tsunami.

Gratitude for my son, who has navigated his way out of homelessness and unemployment, with a new job today and a safe place to live. All of which he accomplished on his own, because he had to, and because he wants to live.

Gratitude for my health, now 18 years cancer-free.
I am grateful for each day that I awake feeling well, strong and free to live without fear of dying.

Gratitude for the simple eloquence of the Serenity Prayer, whose words have comforted me in the darkest of nights and pulled me back up when I have fallen off my path to recovery.

Gratitude for the unquantifiable power to affirm, support and care that is alive in this FA fellowship.

To the new members tormented, crushed and weary; to the practiced members reaching down from the 12th Step to extend a hand of compassion, saying, "Follow me, there is a better way"; to all of them I extend my heartfelt gratitude for making this a place of experience, hope and strength.

Serenity Seeker

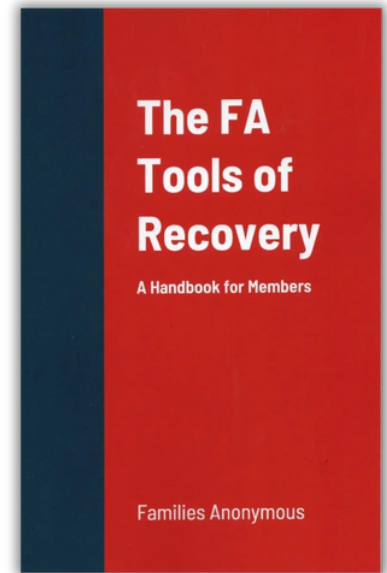
(REPUBLISHED FROM THE RAG, SEP-OCT, 2013)



The FA Tools of Recovery: A Handbook for Members

The FA Tools of Recovery: A Handbook for Members (#5001) is so much more than simply a handbook. It is a treasure trove of information about the FA program. It helps clarify the meaning of “program” and encourages our participation and progress in freeing ourselves from the angst and turmoil that often face families fighting substance use disorder.

Since first published in 2006, it has been an invaluable resource for everyone in the fellowship, regardless of how long or short a time they have been members. Most recently, in 2023, it was updated to reflect the recent changes in our fellowship and in the recovery community in general. The Literature Committee is highlighting it here, in the Serenity Messenger, as a reminder of its unique value in helping members absorb and personally apply the principles of recovery.



The “Toolbook,” as *The FA Tools of Recovery* is commonly called, is meant to be a resource guide for newcomers just learning about FA; for longtimers looking to hone their knowledge; for anyone leading meetings; for sponsors and sponsees seeking guidance; and for everyone working the FA program, thinking about working it, or returning to it to deepen their recovery.

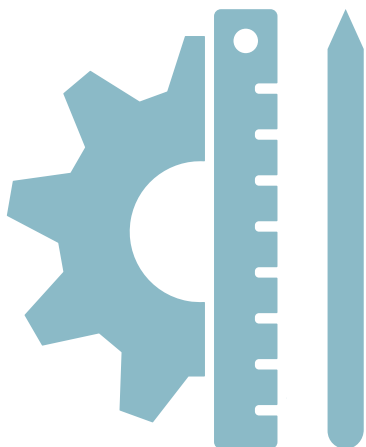
This handbook is divided into 12 chapters or “Tools” (with 12 being a meaningful number in FA):

- | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Meetings | 7. Meditations & Prayer |
| 2. Literature | 8. Anonymity |
| 3. The Twelve Steps | 9. Integrity |
| 4. The Twelve Traditions | 10. Sponsorship |
| 5. Telephone | 11. Inventory |
| 6. Service | 12. Amends |

It is not necessarily meant to be read from cover to cover (although you certainly can do so), but rather to be referred to repeatedly, over time, and as needed.

Each Tool is explained in detail, including its relevance to our personal pursuit of recovery, its importance to our groups and our fellowship, and its value as topics for leading group meetings. Concluding each chapter is a “Tool Application” giving examples of ways to put that Tool to practical use.

As an example, check out the “Seventh Tool (The Dual Tool): Meditation & Prayer” to expand your personal study of the concept of a Higher Power. And use it, likewise, for help in planning meeting leads.

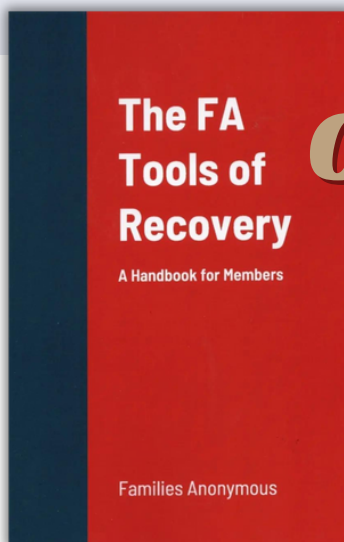


Or take a close look at “Literature: The Second Tool.” After an explanation of FA literature—what it comprises, who produces it, why it is so important to our program, and how to obtain or access over 100 titles published by FA—the Tool Application offers the following suggestion:

Read some FA literature daily! *The more you read, the faster you will understand and absorb what you are learning at your FA meetings, and the better informed you will become. Discover new ways of thinking and acting that will lessen your frustration and stress as you deal with the “problem people” in your life. Reading a variety of FA literature will help you gain understanding and serenity.*

And at the end of The FA Tools of Recovery is a “Toolbook Wrap-Up.” This mini-inventory is ideal for giving ourselves an occasional, brief check-up to see how much we have improved and for identifying the areas we still need to work on.

Keep this key piece of literature close at hand. Rely on it as an in-depth source of FA wisdom and a guide to your personal recovery, your group’s health, and our fellowship’s integrity. Use it often to help change your life and to move yourself, your loved ones, and your fellow group members toward a deeper and more serene existence.

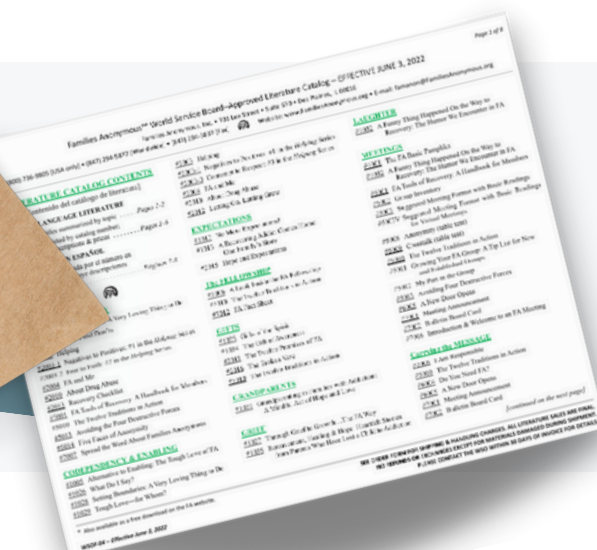


Order Now!

Order copies now for yourself and your group—
Only \$10 each, truly a bargain!

[Click Here](#)

Interested in our full literature catalog? Download your own copy here, or check out our eStore online!



CALL FOR ACTION: VIDEO PROJECTS



*Share
your stories!*



Call or Text
202.631.6236



Email
Pl@familiesanonymous.org

Families Anonymous is seeking participants from its membership for **two exciting video projects**. The videos are designed to support and educate people on substance use disorder and the family disease component to those with a friend or loved one living in long term recovery.

The videos, along with other recent initiatives by Families Anonymous, will **raise awareness about the benefits of FA**, the **program's tools** and its **supportive community**, illustrating ways to process situations and presenting a potential path to serenity. The inaugural video in the, "Don't Do It Alone," series with Mike B. resonated with the fellowship and was distributed on various social media platforms. It also can be viewed at FamiliesAnonymous.org.

The next two video projects are described below. All participants will be members of the FA community. **Participants can elect to remain anonymous via one of many video and audio methods.** Here is a description of the projects and what we are asking of participants.

VIDEO PROJECT #1 **"Don't Do It Alone"**

WHAT? A series of two-to-three-minute videos of FA members sharing, in intimate detail, their experiences with one aspect of their recovery (e.g. enabling).

EXAMPLE:

FA Pilot video "Don't Do It Alone" presents Mike B. describing his extreme enabling and *what it took to transition to letting go.*

STEPS:

1. Short Zoom meeting with the director to learn about the project and answer your questions.
2. Review an info sheet on how to set up your computer to capture the best possible video and audio for the actual interviews (a technician will walk you through it).
3. Participate in 1-to-2 hour Zoom meeting with other FA members and interviewer. Each participant will take turns speaking about one element of their recovery (e.g. letting go, first FA meeting).
4. Review and approve video after editing.

VIDEO PROJECT #2 **"Things I Did"**

WHAT? A series of one-to-two-minute video montages of FA members describing something they did during their road to recovery that was so extreme that it was humorous.

EXAMPLE:

"Once we went late at night to the parking lot of the restaurant where our son worked and my wife kept watch while I slashed a tire on my son's car to make sure he didn't drive home drunk, as if that would ensure anything!"

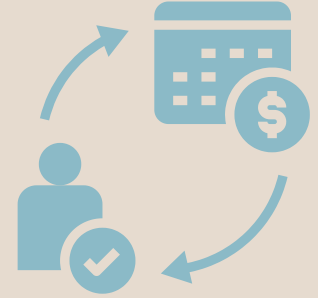
STEPS:

1. Short Zoom meeting with the director to learn about the project and answer your questions.
2. Review an info sheet on how to set up your cell phone to capture the best possible video and audio.
3. Ask someone to film you telling your funny story (or do it yourself by using cell phone tripod or a stack of books).
4. Send video to FA (Pl@familiesanonymous.org).
5. Review and approve the clip after editing.

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	Sarah T
Barbara S	Eileen L	Ina G	Madelyn M	Sheila G
Barbara Y	Eileen L	Jane H	Maria S	Susan T
Deborah M	Eileen M	JoAnne B	Priscilla H	Victoria S
Donna D	Gerald W	Judy G	Robert M	

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



- **Credit Card** - Donate via our website at <https://www.familiesanonymous.org/donate/> ·Click on the credit card image and then choose the “Monthly” option.



- **PayPal** – ·Visit our donation page (use link above) and click the yellow “PayPal Donate Now” button. You will then have an option to select “Monthly”.



- **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 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

DONATIONS

COMMEMORATIVE DONATIONS

- In loving memory of Steve E., on behalf of Group 1844
- In memory of Andrew C., beloved son of members of FA, on behalf of Summit NJ Group 252
- In memory of Kevin H., on behalf of Donald H.
- In memory of Ryan K., son of Lisa and Mike K., grandson of Helen., on behalf of Peoria, IL Group 1348 (Pam and Jerry S., Dan C., Vicki and John G., Alice and Jim B.)



GROUP DONATIONS: March & April 2024

\$101 to \$500

- GR0134 FL, South Miami
- GR0173 IL, Park Ridge
- GR0494 IL, Winnetka
- GR0780 NY, Harrison
- GR1522 IL, Chicago
- GR1615 MI, Birmingham
- GR1812 IA, Dubuque
- GR2056 FL, Bradenton

\$101 to \$500

- GR2085 TX, Dallas
- GR3001 IL, Chicagoland

Up to \$100

- GR0121 CA, Torrance
- GR0279 NY, Amityville
- GR0478 IL, Glenview
- GR0554 NJ, Rockaway
- GR1096 VA, Richmond
- GR1318 FL, Boca Raton
- GR1639 GA, Atlanta
- GR1811 MI, Clinton Township
- 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 and click **DONATE!**

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

Your contribution is tax-deductible.

DONATE

