

# SERENITY MESSENGER

*The Newsletter of the Families Anonymous fellowship*

*For relatives and friends concerned about another's use  
of drugs, alcohol, or related behavioral problems*

YOU  
ARE NOT  
ALONE



## EDITOR'S NOTE

This is our first issue of the Serenity Messenger for the year. So, this April, we wish you a wonderful rest of the year. Give yourself permission to set new goals, make resolutions, and do more letting go.

Addiction in the family takes away trust. In my case, my dad who was kind, dependable and always available to me had become someone I could no longer fully lean on. There were lies to hide his addictions; he was too lost in their grip to keep his promises to me as he once did. Through time, having relived this betrayal from him and others, I internalised that I was not deserving of better and that I could not trust those around me. More importantly, I lost my own sense of judgement and lowered my expectations to protect myself from pain.

One of the key lessons I learned when I came to the FA program was to let go of past hurts caused by others. Not to minimize any harm done to me, but to fully acknowledge the hurts and learn to let them go. My codependency had taught me to be stuck, to allow the madness of addiction make me feel powerless. It has taken me several years to learn how futile it is to overanalyze others and their motivations.

I learnt instead that no matter the upheavals caused by others' behavioral issues, I could count on myself. I could care for myself and make my well-being a priority. I learnt that I had to work on myself to build the self-confidence I had lost through painful experiences. I had to rebuild connections with fellow FA members and friends who cared and understood me instead of expecting the same connections with people who were emotionally unavailable. I had to break the isolation that addiction had created by moving into community.

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Letting go builds our own resilience to what we cannot control. I encourage you all to read and remind yourselves of the 12 Promises of Families Anonymous that give us hope when we might feel we are not making any progress. Promise 7 reads, "We will lose interest in trying to change others, and we will gain an appreciation for those special people in our lives." Promise 11 states, "We will intuitively know how to handle situations that used to baffle us."

Once in the program, the drama of dysfunctional relationships becomes less appealing, and we learn to disengage intuitively rather than stay in situations that further our pain. The collective wisdom of the fellowship helps us deal with situations we would otherwise find overwhelming.

You can write to us and let us know how the FA program has helped you in your recovery.



**IN FELLOWSHIP,  
ELIZABETH S.**

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## MY BUSINESS OR NONE OF MY BUSINESS

*FA Member Bob S. Writes About How He Learned to Break the Cycle of Enabling His Daughter's Addiction*

A long-timer in our group has a principle for living that he says he has learned in his more than 30 years of attending FA:

“There are only two kinds of business: my business, and none of my business.”

It sounds simple, maybe even simplistic, but it works.

I'm a fixer. I've never come across anyone else's problem I couldn't solve. So when our daughter was actively using drugs and ruining her life before my eyes, I considered it my business (more than that, my sacred duty) to rescue and help her. Everything in her life, or that impacted her life, I considered “my business.”

Of course, I was wrong. She was taking no responsibility for her actions and hardly noticed my frantic efforts to shoulder those responsibilities for her.

Upon her graduation from high school, we bought her a brand new car to attend college. She didn't contribute a penny to buy it or maintain it.

**“She was taking no responsibility for her actions and hardly noticed my frantic efforts to shoulder those responsibilities for her.”**



We already knew she had some emotional problems and substance use issues, but we hoped she was ready to move on. Within a year, she'd partied her way to dropping out of college, and she drove that car from New Jersey to Florida to live with her drug-involved boyfriend.

She finally returned, moved back into our home, and at our urging attended a number of thirty-day rehabilitation programs. She wasn't committed to recovery, so no surprise: Nothing worked. Her drug use didn't slow down, and our home life was ripped apart by constant drama and crisis.

**“SO WE PAID THE RENT FOR AN APARTMENT, WHICH MY WIFE AND I HAD FOUND AND FULLY FURNISHED FOR HER, IN EXCHANGE FOR HER AGREEMENT TO GET A JOB AND ATTEND INTENSIVE OUTPATIENT TREATMENT.”**

After a few failed short-term rehabs, she moved into a residential recovery home, again mostly at our urging. That seemed to go well for a number of months, but she grew increasingly unhappy. Before the program was finished, she decided she'd had enough and walked out.

So we paid the rent for an apartment, which my wife and I had found and fully furnished for her, in exchange for her agreement to get a job and attend intensive outpatient treatment.

## MY BUSINESS OR NONE OF MY BUSINESS

*cont'd*

She did find a part-time job, but she quickly dropped out of treatment, which was the main point. She continued her suboxone regimen, so she wasn't actively using opioids, but she also spent a lot of time just hanging out in the apartment with her boyfriend. It wasn't exactly the picture of recovery we'd been expecting.

A year or two later, after a few more rehabs and relapses, she seemed to be doing better and indicated she wanted to try to restart her life. So we moved her back into our house and bought her another new car so she'd have transportation to her job in a nearby department store.

A few months later she suffered another relapse and, in a drug-fueled frenzy, took that second car and drove herself to Florida again.

It took me a long time, and years in FA, to realize that all my efforts were doomed to fail because I thought changing her life was "my business" when it was actually "none of my business." Until she realized that her life was her own business, she was never going to get better.

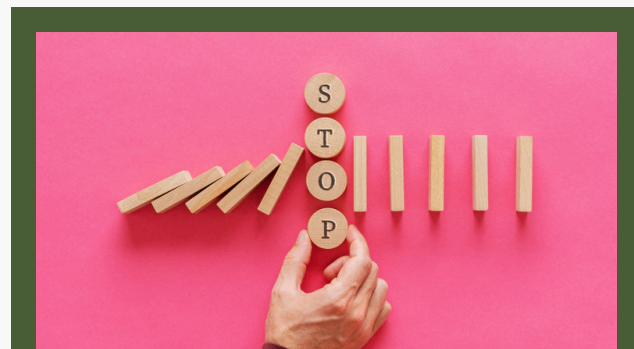
Then we found a promising thirty-day program in Pennsylvania and offered to send her there, but by now we were scared. It felt like the same drill we'd been going through for years. We find a program, we pay for it, and she reluctantly attends. Then, whether she's completed the program or not, she relapses. Then we go back to worrying, planning, and scheming to try to find ways to force her

to find recovery.

We had to break the cycle somehow. This pattern wasn't sustainable, at least if we wanted to have money left in the bank for us to retire someday.

So, to our surprise as much as our daughter's, my wife and I announced that this was the last time we would pay for any kind of rehab. And we made it clear to her before she went in that if this program failed, if she walked out or didn't participate or relapsed later, whatever, she was on her own. We absolutely meant it, and she knew it.

We were also terrified, but we firmly believed it was what we had to do.



"We had to break the cycle somehow. This pattern wasn't sustainable, at least if we wanted to have money left in the bank for us to retire someday."

## MY BUSINESS OR NONE OF MY BUSINESS

*cont'd*

That's when we started attending FA, and with the help of the literature, and the readings, and most important of all the tons of compassionate, honest support from the members of our FA group, we did the hard work of letting her suffer the consequences of her actions. We stopped trying to manage her affairs or direct her recovery. We finally stopped automatically paying for everything she was doing in her life. For the first time ever, we let her earn her way, even though that meant watching her struggle (and sometimes fail) to make ends meet.

In other words, we started minding our own business.

Miraculously, at last, our daughter slowly seemed to "get it." She stopped blaming us for her shortcomings and took on the hard work of living her life as a sober person. She started to treat her life as her own, no longer pretending it was ours to manage for her. It wasn't a straight line, and her life isn't perfect (Whose is?), but thankfully she got there and is still in recovery today.

So am I.

And now, I apply this principle to all aspects of my life. Whenever I'm tempted to do things for someone else, I carefully assess whether they're the kinds of things the person I'm about to "help" should be doing for themselves. I ask myself: Is doing this "my business"? Or is it "none of my business"?

After years working the Steps in FA, I'm learning how to distinguish the two kinds of business. I don't always get it right, but I'm doing better than I used to. And it's surprising—and incredibly freeing—to see how many things now fall into the second category.

My business or none of my business?

Words to live by.



**I ASK MYSELF: IS DOING THIS "MY BUSINESS"? OR IS IT "NONE OF MY BUSINESS"? AFTER YEARS WORKING THE STEPS IN FA, I'M LEARNING HOW TO DISTINGUISH THE TWO KINDS OF BUSINESS.**

**BOB S.  
GROUP #2056, BRADENTON, FLORIDA**



## FA NEWS: DO YOU NEED HELP WORKING THE TWELVE STEPS?



The Twelve Steps of Families Anonymous are the fundamental principles that guide us on our recovery from codependency.

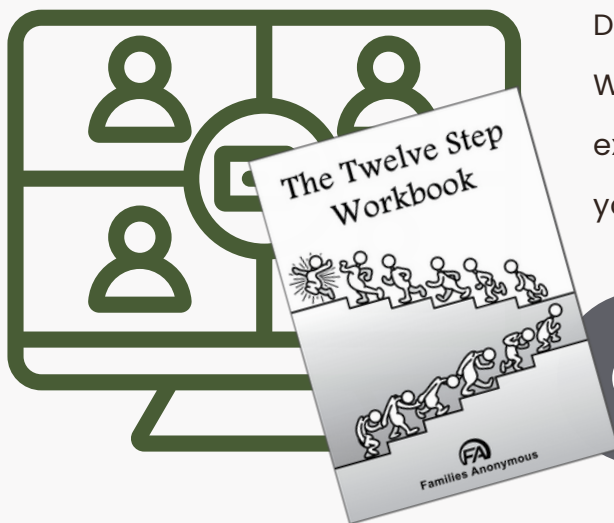
We know that working the steps can be difficult if you try to do it alone. Whether you're a beginner or just need a refresher, we've got you covered with our recorded workshops.

[\(Click here to access the workshops.\)](#)

You can team up with others who are interested in the topic by using a video conferencing app like Zoom and sharing your screen. Or, you can watch the recordings on your own and chat about the steps at a later time, either one-on-one or in a group setting.



Each step presentation is about an hour long. Although we recommend that you complete each step presentation at the rate of one every two weeks, you can take your time and go at your own pace.



Don't forget to order #1019 THE TWELVE STEP WORKBOOK, a personal workbook of writing exercises, used during the presentation to help you on your recovery journey!

**ORDER NOW**



**REMEMBER: IT WORKS IF YOU WORK IT...SO WORK IT YOU'RE WORTH IT!**

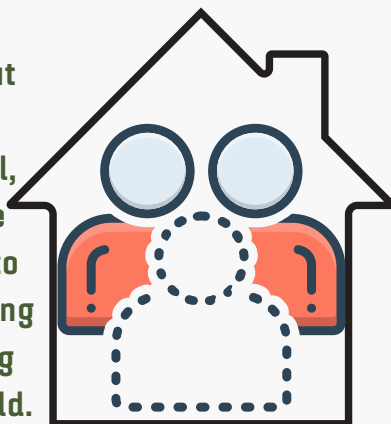
## THE FA EXPERIENCE: I CAN CHANGE MYSELF. OTHERS I CAN ONLY LOVE.

*Jim S. Shares How FA Provides the Tools and the Community to Get Us Through Hard Times.*

Coming into our first FA meeting, many of us probably expected that we were going to learn how to deal with our addicted loved ones and make them better. As it turns out, that was a completely erroneous expectation. In fact, other than our describing their role in the events that have led us to FA, the meetings really have very little to do with them and everything to do with us: with changing our habits of trying to control others, with realizing we are powerless over them and the outcome of their lives, and with discerning productive ways of responding to what they do or don't do.

I have learned about codependency, enabling and denial, which all of us were guilty of from time to time without realizing what was happening within our household. The realization that I cannot change my daughter but can change how I deal with the disease she is battling was enlightening. I could take back control of my actions and reactions. I could once again look at her as a human being struggling with a disease rather than as a troublemaker, liar and the one who threw our family life into turmoil.

**I have learned about codependency, enabling and denial, which all of us were guilty of from time to time without realizing what was happening within our household.**



The FA meetings allow us to speak freely and without judgement. They give us the safe space to express feelings that are not easy to say out loud and that are hard to express to people outside of FA who have not had these sometimes debilitating and all-consuming experiences. It is here in our meetings that we can unburden ourselves to some degree and admit that we have no control over anyone but ourselves.

**WE LEARN TO BACK OFF AND SURRENDER OURSELVES TO OUR HIGHER POWER—AND THEM TO THEIR HIGHER POWER—WHATEVER THAT POWER IS FOR EACH OF US IN OUR OWN WAY.**

We learn to live, and love, one day at a time. We learn to savor the victories, both big and small, that our loved ones achieve by themselves without our interference. We learn to back off and surrender ourselves to our higher power—and them to their higher power—whatever that power is for each of us in our own way.

This surrender is not a giving-up statement but a commitment to allow our loved ones to have full control over the consequences of their actions. It is, as we say, a release with love. It is giving them our trust that they've got this!

I have seen how our daughter has responded to this trust. No longer do I leave the house dreading the possible



THE FA EXPERIENCE:  
I CAN CHANGE MYSELF. OTHERS I CAN ONLY LOVE.  
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outcomes that both she and I felt to some degree. She knows that we trust her to do the best that she can today!

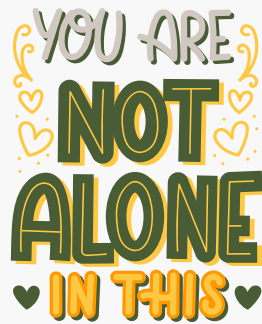
FA is a truly unique experience that is hard to describe outside of this forum. How do you explain being able to talk openly, to people who months before were total strangers, about extremely personal occurrences and behaviors? It is explained by the commonality of our experiences that allows us to open up. Once we hear others sharing, it is a liberating feeling. To be able to unburden without being judged or questioned is truly amazing.

We walk around in our daily lives not knowing what is going on inside others that we meet. While we struggle with the inner turmoil caused by our loved ones' issues, the people we talk to at work or in other situations may have similar problems, but we may never know because those are not places meant for discussion of such issues.

In our conversations with family members, we may hold back for fear of being judged or given "solutions." As a result of our time in FA, we now understand, as they may not, that those solutions dwell within our loved ones themselves, not within us, and depend upon their recognizing that they are addicted to particular substances or behaviors.

That brings it back to FA, the place where we can talk freely, or ask for a shoulder to cry on, or ask for someone to listen, or even just listen to others sharing if we don't

want to talk at that moment. It's like the acronym "W.A.I.S.T.— Why Am I Still Talking?" Listening is a very powerful tool.



JUST KNOWING THAT  
 WE ARE NOT ALONE IN  
 THE FIGHT AGAINST  
 THE DISEASE OF  
 ADDICTION IS  
 COMFORTING.

I have incorporated FA slogans and mantras in many aspects of my daily life: at home, at work, and even dealing with the public. It really has a calming effect.

Just knowing that we are not alone in the fight against the disease of addiction is comforting. And having FA as somewhere to vent, grieve, complain, and have others just listen—or do the complete opposite and rejoice in our loved ones' victories, share milestones and anniversaries of sobriety, or just talk about their growth or journey—is priceless.

All of this has allowed me to regain a sense of calm and serenity. Things are by no means perfect, but now I have a better plan for when troubles arise, and I have no need to wallow in self-pity, play the blame game, or be too quick to offer solutions and be the fixer.

Thank you all for your support and especially to all the long-timers for keeping this group going.

JIM S.

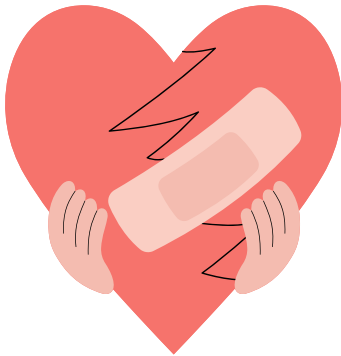
## UNDERSTANDING AMENDS - DIRECT AND INDIRECT

*Making Indirect Amends Can Be Tricky. Mother and FA Member Nadine M. Shares Some Pointers We Can Keep in Mind.*

Amends are an important part of the FA 12 Steps. Step 8 suggests that we make “a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.” Then Step 9 asks us to take action and actually make “direct amends to such people whenever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.”

When I first came to FA, I didn’t understand why I needed to make amends to anyone. All I had done was try to help my son! Why was I the one who had to make amends when he was the one suffering from substance use disorder (SUD), wreaking havoc both in his own life and in the lives of everyone around him?

**MAKING AMENDS HELPS US FACE THE TRUTH,  
CHANGE OUR BEHAVIOR PATTERNS, AND HEAL  
OUR GUILT, HURTS, ANGER AND RESENTMENTS.**



But I have learned through FA meetings and literature (especially Steps 8 and 9 in FA’s The Twelve Step Workbook) that amends are valuable to our recovery. Making amends helps us face the truth, change our behavior patterns, and heal our guilt, hurts, anger and resentments.

Step 9 acknowledges that all of us have said or done things that were unintentionally detrimental to our loved ones. In my case, I discouraged my son’s growth by doing too many things for him too much. Amends help right this wrong.

Still, making amends sounds scary and hard.

The FA literature talks about two kinds of amends: direct and indirect. Direct amends, as reflected by their name, are fairly straightforward. They are made directly to those people we have harmed and can be face-to-face, by telephone, or in writing. We are honest and straightforward about our past actions or words and usually offer an apology.

Indirect amends are trickier because of their very nature. They are appropriate when a direct amend is impossible, perhaps because the person we feel we harmed is no longer physically present in our life, or perhaps because a direct amend could harm them, maybe by reopening old emotional wounds. With indirect amends, the “one-on-one, active exchange of information between ourselves and another person does not occur,” as it does with direct amends [page 51 of The Twelve Step Workbook].

So what are we supposed to do?

As I understand it, indirect amends involve honestly identifying and taking responsibility for our past harmful thoughts and actions, and then making a commitment to, and

## UNDERSTANDING AMENDS - DIRECT AND INDIRECT

*cont'd*

implementing, concrete steps toward changing our attitudes and behaviors going forward. Because indirect amends involve changing our behavior, they are often called “living” amends.

But indirect amends are hard. The persons we feel we have harmed cannot forgive us because they are not present to do so. We are accountable only to ourselves and ultimately responsible for giving ourselves forgiveness.

The following are some examples of things that might constitute indirect amends:



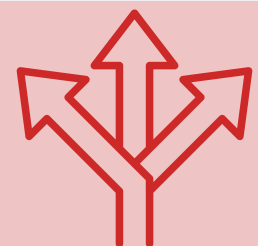
**LOOK FOR POSITIVES IN OUR LOVED ONES.** Being less judgmental or critical is an indirect amend. When I stopped nagging my son about his future, he became more truthful about his feelings and what he was going through. Any expression of love can be an amend. When my son brought me soup when I was sick, I thanked him for being so caring instead of focusing on his negative behaviors.

**FOCUS ON BEING, NOT DOING, FOR OUR LOVED ONES.** It can feel uncomfortable to stop doing things we have done for so many years, but an indirect amend for trying to control our loved ones is to step out of their way. This gives them the dignity to face the consequences of their actions, and the freedom to fail and try again. We can be a “good” and loving parent without doing everything, such as fixing their car, making their doctor’s appointments, or explaining their absences from work.



**LISTEN TO AND ACKNOWLEDGE OUR LOVED ONES’ FEELINGS.** An indirect amend can be to listen to our loved ones without judging, offering advice, expecting too much, predicting failure, or discounting their feelings. Also, letting them know the struggles and fears that led us to act differently in the past can constitute an amend.

**ALLOW THEM TO MAKE THEIR OWN CHOICES.** To stop manipulating our loved ones can be an indirect amend. After all, we cannot fully understand other people’s motives or actions, nor can we control them, yet isn’t this exactly what we have tried to do for years?



## UNDERSTANDING AMENDS - DIRECT AND INDIRECT

*cont'd*



**BE GOOD TO OURSELVES.** It's appropriate to include ourselves among those to whom we owe indirect amends. In focusing on trying to "fix" our addicted loved ones, we often neglect our own physical, emotional, and mental health. Our indirect amends to ourselves can start with recognizing we're all imperfect, accepting our past mistakes, and committing to do better in the future. When I am sad about my son, I pamper myself by calling a friend, going to a movie, reading a book, or simply calming my fears by engaging in quiet prayer.

**THINK BEFORE WE ACT.** By not overreacting or letting our loved ones push our buttons, and by instead responding calmly and rationally, we are making an indirect amend. Walking away from a yelling person is an amend for both them and us.



By forcing us to acknowledge our harmful behaviors and accept responsibility for making positive changes in ourselves, making amends helps us change habits that no longer work for us. For me, making amends has helped heal my resentments and anger and lead a happier life.

Making amends, whether direct or indirect, is about taking active steps to improve our actions and attitudes. Amends are about "walking the walk" instead of just "talking the talk." They are not easy, but they are worth it.

**NADINE W.**



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!

## LETTING GO OF ANGER AND RECLAIMING JOY

*Bill C. Talks About How Families Anonymous Helped Him Come to Terms With His Anger*

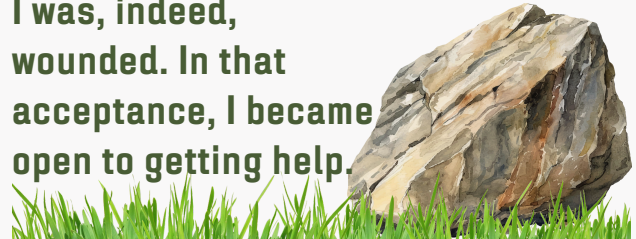
Healing started for me when I first realized I was wounded. I don't mean a physical wound, like a cut. No, what I'm talking about is a psychological wound, which can be even more painful. I carried this deep, open wound around with me for many years. My wound was anger. Not only was it my wound, it had the power to damage and destroy everyone close to me. I knew that this anger was deep within my psyche. I also knew it was affecting my life in ways that were no longer of use to me.

During this period of my life, I was married to a very loving and kind woman. Together we had three children. However, my anger was such that I had pushed even her to her limits. We were now struggling to hold on to our marriage. I had a choice: my anger or my family. I had reached my bottom.

Thankfully, due to the troubling behaviors of one of my children, I was at this time involved in Families Anonymous. FA helped me tremendously in coming to terms with my anger. This was not easy for me, because like so many of us in the early stages of recovery, I truly believed that I had no real problems, no open wounds. I could not believe that this was really happening to me, but yet, it was.

In my heart I knew that if I didn't start working on healing myself, not only would I lose my marriage, I would likely live a life of misery due to my anger. Hitting bottom enabled me to accept that I was, indeed, wounded. In that acceptance, I became open to getting help.

**Hitting bottom enabled me to accept that I was, indeed, wounded. In that acceptance, I became open to getting help.**



I didn't have a formula, and I didn't know exactly how to start. Help came to me in many forms, mostly through attending my FA group meetings. It was there that I learned about "letting go and letting God." It was there that I learned that I could give my anger to my Higher Power. Giving it to my Higher Power provided me with tremendous relief, as though the world was lifted from my shoulders. I felt a natural high that I hadn't felt in years.

Although I was unsure of exactly how to proceed, I knew that with guidance from my Higher Power, I was going to heal. I began talking to my Higher Power and doing my version of beginner's meditation each day. I read the 12 Steps every day. I read them slowly and found deeper meaning within them that seemed to help me throughout the day.

Religiously, I read the "Red Book" (*Today A Better Way*). Because I was doing these things, miracles started to happen. I stopped nursing my resentments, and I no longer concentrated on what I considered to be foul deeds done to me and my family.

I stopped trying to hurt people I viewed as my abusers. I worked on not striking back

## LETTING GO OF ANGER AND RECLAIMING JOY *cont'd*

verbally with anger if I felt personally abused or attacked. I stopped taking everything personally. If I felt that I had hurt someone in anger, I practiced the 10th Step and promptly admitted it and apologized. All these things allowed me to start feeling warm and good about myself. Slowly, I learned to laugh at myself. This was a big step and helped me to relax and enjoy both myself and others.

I started taking notice of the humble people I knew. I realized that these humble friends and relatives had something that I wanted: the peacefulness and serenity that surrounded them. I started noticing that they didn't need me—an angry, anxious person—to help them. Rather, it was I who needed them!

**I LEARNED TO TAKE MYSELF A LOT LESS SERIOUSLY, I STARTED TO HUMBLE MYSELF, I STOPPED BEING SO HARD ON MYSELF, AND THEREFORE, WAS ABLE TO BE EASIER ON OTHERS.**

There was much I could learn from them. I learned to take myself a lot less seriously, I started to humble myself, I stopped being so hard on myself, and I was therefore able to be easier on others. The anger was starting to leave me; the healing process was working. My marriage was becoming more enjoyable; the tension was dissipating. We were enjoying the spirit of life once again. We talked about nothing, yet we talked about everything.



I FOUND THAT A  
LARGE PART OF  
MY HEALING  
WAS FORGIVING;  
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MYSELF  
AS WELL AS  
OTHERS.

We were no longer arguing. We were enjoying ourselves. We were beginning to heal. My relationship with others was improving as well. I found that a large part of my healing was forgiving: forgiving myself as well as others. I chose to not hold on to the anger any longer, the anger that was once such a negative force in my life. I am no longer the "Old Bill" who held fast to the anger until he no longer could. I like to think of myself as the "New Bill," the one that has faced his demons and let them go.

The FA 12 Step program and meetings have changed my life. Goodness is all around me. As I continue to heal, I can feel the power in that goodness. Boy, it sure feels great.

**BILL C, GROUP 262  
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## FA TOOLS IN EARLY RECOVERY

*FA Members Share What Tools Helped Drive Their Recovery*



I'm a very process-oriented person. My son's rehab told me to affiliate with Al-Anon or Families Anonymous, and given that I lived in Taiwan at the time, FA online was the way I could do that. So, my earliest tool was the e-meeting.

At first, things seemed random and confusing, and I couldn't figure out what was going on. But as I kept reading the email exchanges for a few weeks, I started feeling the rhythm of the meeting and identifying the experience, strength and hope (long before I identified the people) that spoke to me and my experiences. So, for me, Tool One was the e-meeting.

Tool Two, for me, was FA's The Twelve Step Workbook, which gave me a structure around which to work the Steps. These were Steps that I thought would help my son and that I quickly learned would help me. (Who knew I needed help? LOL.) Using the workbook and its exercises helped put me on the right path. Every other tool I have gotten has been an "appendage" to the Steps, which are the backbone of my recovery.

— *Paul, E-Meeting*

— *Learned To Let Go,  
Phoenix AZ*

What clicked for me was finally comprehending the meaning of enabling. Ideas like "just for today"—not only about my son but also about all my daily tasks and goals—and "powerlessness"—and along with that shutting my mouth (It was hard to fight my own obsessive suggestions!)—have really made a difference. The mantra "I will have no thought for the future actions of others" is a major help as well.



## FA TOOLS IN EARLY RECOVERY

*cont'd*

“

I think for me the greatest tools have been the FA meetings and the discussions with my sponsor and other members of the fellowship. Specifically, I remember talking with a member about letting go and turning problems over to my Higher Power. The member told me, “You cannot let go and then take it back.” She also used an analogy of turning a light switch on and off. What would be the point of that? It was an ah-ha moment for me. Another analogy she used, this one for Step 3, was of a vacuum cleaner. I do not have to know how a vacuum cleaner works; I just have to trust that it will work. The same is true for my Higher Power. I do not have to know how my HP works; I just have to make the decision to turn my will and my life over and trust that it will work.



—*Sandra B*

Early in my recovery I could hardly get out of bed. Reading FA literature helped move me forward. My favorite readings were “About Drug Abuse” and “Helping.” They confirmed my belief that my child was ill and I must not stand in the way of his recovery.

*Just for today I will have a quiet half hour all by myself, and relax. During this half hour, sometimes, I will try to get a better perspective of my life.*

Just for Today is a favorite piece of literature. I taped it on my bathroom mirror so I could see it every morning. The second-to-last line was my “beginning” of taking care of me: “Just for today I will have a quiet half hour all by myself, and relax. During this half hour, sometimes, I will try to get a better perspective of my life.” I would set a timer and then sit down with a favorite book, spend some time journaling, go through photos, or call a friend. The more I did this, the more I learned to keep the focus on the only thing I can control: me.

—*Maggie*





## SPOTLIGHT ON LITERATURE:

*Parents of Adolescents: One of FA's New Niche Groups*

Although niche groups are focused on particular demographics, they are open to everyone (as are all FA meetings).

In addition to **Parents of Adolescents** meetings, FA currently holds **Bereavement Support** meetings, **Siblings** meetings, **Significant others and Spouses** meetings, and **Spanish-Speaking** meetings.



Is parenting an adolescent more difficult today than it was 20, 30 or 40 years ago?

Has the influence of social media on young people's lives made raising emotionally healthy children an even greater challenge than it otherwise might be?

Has the pervasiveness of dangerous, readily accessible drugs, even a single dose of which can prove fatal, added extra layers of fear and desperation to your life?

Do you find the period of adolescence, generally limited by definition to the teenage years, stretching well into your substance-using loved one's 20s and even beyond?

In today's reality, do your family and others need new and different tools in order to cope?

If you have answered yes to any of these questions, you can find help for yourself and your loved ones in Families Anonymous. The FA community is here for you, with our extensive catalog of member-written recovery literature, our hundreds of regular weekly meetings (in person, online, and by phone), and, more recently, our new "niche group" meetings that bring together people with similar life challenges.

The most recently started niche group is called Parents of Adolescents. The group's members meet on Zoom, twice a month, on the 2nd and 4th Sundays, at 7 PM Eastern time.

In these meetings, parents of adolescents and young adults share their experiences and challenges, successes and failures, strengths and hopes. Outside of the meetings, many of these parents continue their discussions in a dedicated WhatsApp chat group. For more information about the Parents of Adolescents group and how to join it, please contact Lori H, the group secretary, at [frogr129@aol.com](mailto:frogr129@aol.com).






## SPOTLIGHT ON LITERATURE:


*Parents of Adolescents: One of FA's New Niche Groups (cont'd)*

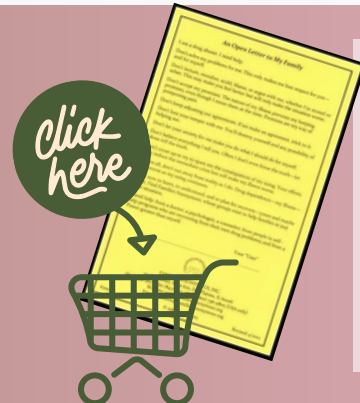
FA has many pieces of literature that can prove helpful during these trying years. The following three speak, in particular, to the difficulties faced by families of young people with substance use disorder (SUD).



***But She's Too Young! (Isn't She?): One Mother's Story*** (#1021 in FA's literature catalog) speaks to how one family finally faced the reality of their daughter's alcohol use disorder. They embarked on their own recovery from codependency, set boundaries to keep themselves safe from the chaos in which they were living, and got out of their daughter's way by no longer trying to control or cover up for her actions, thereby freeing her to pursue her own recovery should she wish to do so. This piece was recently revised and updated. \$2.00

**A Father Faces the Family Disease of Addiction** (#1003 in the catalog) is another poignant read. Through working the FA program, this father describes how he overcame his own desperation and brought love and respect back to his family. \$3.00





***An Open Letter to My Family*** (#2007 in the catalog), is one with which many people are familiar. Written in the words of a person with SUD, this letter expresses a clear message to family members: stop rescuing, enabling, lecturing, believing my false promises, running away from reality, and otherwise getting in the way of my recovery. \$.50

**Wherever and however you get your help, remember that your Families Anonymous family is only a meeting, a phone call, or a text away.**



## FA NEWS: SPANISH LITERATURE NOW AVAILABLE

HOLA

HELLO

We will keep you posted as new translations become available, but for now check out the [FA website](#) where you can find the literature catalog and all Spanish language materials.

Our Spanish translators are working hard at creating a Spanish language library of free downloadable FA materials...28 pieces in total.

Several items are already available, such as

- #5003S - Suggested Meeting Format
- #1012S - No More Expectations

[Click here to access them on the website.](#)

These new Spanish versions are listed in the FA literature catalog and some of them are Spotlighted there as well.

We look forward to seeing the next batch of new Spanish language translations. These translations will include, but are not limited to:

- #2011 - The Twelve Promises of Families Anonymous
- #5011 - Growing Your FA Group: A Tip List for New and Established Groups
- #7003 - Families Anonymous - For Me?



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

For our upcoming issue, the deadline to submit announcements is **May 10th**.

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!



# 2025 FAMILIES ANONYMOUS WORLD SERVICE CONVENTION

JULY 25 - 27, 2025

Welcome to Chicago/Oak Brook as we come together for our 1st FA World Service In-Person Convention since 2019! This wonderful event will take place at the Marriott Oak Brook, just 25 minutes west from Downtown Chicago! Our Theme is **'THE PRESENT – A GIFT YOU GIVE YOURSELF'**, and will include 3 days of professional speakers, entertainment, workshops, and networking. Come join us to learn 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. Learn how you can find serenity in your life despite unsolved problems!



**THE PRESENT:**  
A GIFT YOU GIVE YOURSELF



## When

JULY 25TH - 27TH, 2025

## Where

CHICAGO MARRIOTT OAK BROOK  
1401 WEST 22ND STREET, OAK BROOK, IL 60523

- Convention Room Rate \$139 per night (King/2 Queens) Rate guaranteed 2 days before and after
- 30-35 minutes from O'Hare & Midway airports. Free Parking
- To book a room, call 630-573-8555 and use code M-UM9LWMY or [click here](#)



**questions?**  
EMAIL  
[FACHICAGOLAND@AOL.COM](mailto:FACHICAGOLAND@AOL.COM)  
OR CALL 847-795-8320

## Early Individual Registration

\$225 PP PER REGISTRATION. INCLUDES SPEAKERS, 4 MEALS, AMENITIES  
(Must be received in the office by **July 15th, 2025**. Cash, check, credit card)

2025 FAMILIES ANONYMOUS WORLD SERVICE CONVENTION  
(cont'd)

## Registration after July 16

\$240 PP PER REGISTRATION, INCLUDING WALK-IN REGISTRATION:  
(CASH, CHECK, CREDIT CARD)

Please make checks payable to: Chicagoland FA Intergroup  
Mail to: Chicagoland FA Intergroup 2024 Convention  
701 Lee St., Suite 670  
Des Plaines, IL 60016

**[Click HERE for registration form](#)**

Zelle Payment: [Fchicagoland@AOL.com](mailto:Fchicagoland@AOL.com)

(Pay with Zelle, Credit Card or mail/email Registration Form)



### DINING

Oak Brook Center Mall (across street)



### RECREATION

On-site Fitness Center, Golf Courses, Tennis Courts and Hiking nearby



### SURROUNDING ATTRACTIONS

- Drury Lane Dinner Theater (5 minutes)
- Brookfield Zoo (16 miles)
- Morton Arboretum (15 minutes)
- United Center (30 minutes)
- Downtown Chicago (35 minutes)
- Museum Campus (40 minutes)





# DONATIONS

## COMMEMORATIVE DONATIONS

- In memory of Shannon of the St. Vincent's group in Harrison, NY (Group 780)
- In memory of our friend, Jimmy K., on behalf of Englewood, NJ, Group 1152



## GROUP DONATIONS NOVEMBER 2024 - JANUARY 2025

### Over \$500

- GR0279 NY, Amityville
- GR1152 NJ, Englewood
- GR1359 NY, Clifton Park
- GR1735 NJ, Ramsey/Mahwah
- GR1972 NJ, Voorhees
- GR1974 NY, Syosset
- GR5001 UK NSB

### \$101 to \$500

- GR0133 CT, Hartford
- GR0134 FL, South Miami
- GR0173 IL, Park Ridge
- GR0469 NY, Hicksville
- GR0478 IL, Glenview
- GR0494 IL, Winnetka
- GR0631 TX, Dallas
- GR0780 NY, Harrison
- GR0976 NJ, Colts Neck
- GR1301 NY, Syracuse
- GR1348 IL, Peoria
- GR1522 IL, Chicago
- GR1614 NY, Elmira
- GR1618 NY, Endicott
- GR1849 TX, Plano
- GR1906 GA, Roswell
- GR2056 FL, Bradenton
- GR3001 IL, Chicagoland
- GR5005 Italy NSB

### Up to \$100

- GR0121 CA, Torrance
- GR0162 IL, Des Plaines
- GR0171 IL, Arlington Heights
- GR0262 NY, Garden City
- GR0554 NJ, Rockaway
- GR0746 IN, Evansville
- GR0874 VA, Annandale
- GR1096 VA, North Chesterfield
- GR1097 KS, Shawnee Mission
- GR1187 CT, Bloomfield
- GR1318 FL, Boca Raton
- GR1345 NJ, Cherry Hill
- GR1531 AZ, Scottsdale
- GR1639 GA, Atlanta
- GR1833 Canada, Winnipeg
- GR1978 VA, Richmond
- GR2030 NC, Shallotte
- GR2119 NJ, Mt. Laurel

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**

