

THE TWELVE STEP RAG



The Bi-Monthly Newsletter of the Families Anonymous Fellowship

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

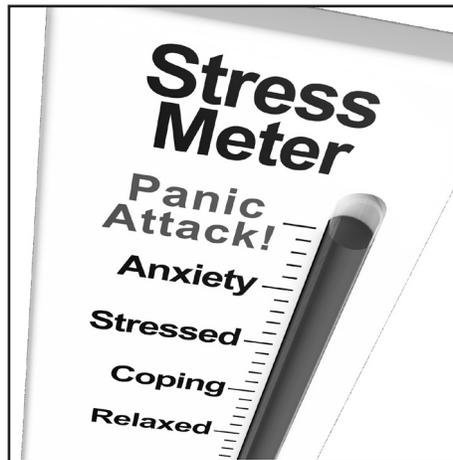
VOLUME XLV

January-February 2016

NUMBER 1

ACCEPTANCE, OLD FEARS, and HUMOR

It was Election Day in N.J. I worked the polls as I usually do. There are four of us that have worked the same district for years, but someone was sick, and a quick replacement from a list was sent over. It was a gentleman in his 50's and I partnered with him. He seemed to get agitated easily. He had some quirks like having to sit at the end of the table and only having one thing in front of him at a time. Within an hour, he displayed more than quirks. This could have been so annoying for me to deal with years ago, but I made some small talk to ease what was obviously a stressful time for him. He opened up to me, telling me he had mental health issues, he was out of work with child support responsibilities, and needed to move. He was overwhelmed and uncomfortable around "normal" people. His story, his life, was what I feared for my son when I future tripped during his teens and twenties. I treated this man with kindness. I didn't even get frustrated with the tediousness of the 15 hour work day with him. I realized I was treating him as I would want someone to treat my son if he was in this man's shoes. At the end of the day, I had great respect for his struggle to control himself and his environment. I appreciated



how hard he worked to do what was second nature for me. It was a long day but one I needed to experience.

When I got home, I felt good about the day and its challenges. I checked my text messages and saw one from my son. He has a new job and a new apartment that he likes. A week prior, my son had, what he called, excruciating neck pain. In a panic he took a bus to the ER with fears of a fracture and being paralyzed. His neck was inflamed and strained and he was out of work for a week to avoid heavy lifting. Now there were money problems because of no pay for a week. The rent was due and it wasn't cheap. He felt a cold coming on and worried about it turning into a sinus infection. He could lose more pay and the apartment. Worse, he could lose his job and not be able to afford a lesser apartment.

He wasn't drinking and was trying to do the right thing, but everything was going wrong. I understood having fears and future tripping. Some of those things might happen, I thought, but not likely if he was doing well at work.

He sent another text a couple hours later. He made a Neti pot with foil and made salt water mix, which helped relieve his cold. Turned out, work was not a problem because he had paperwork from the ER. He will be broke for a month trying to meet his rent from pay loss but he thinks things will work out. I smiled thinking about my 15 hour tedious day and saw how hard the gentleman worked at doing the right thing. My son is different but not so different. He has to work very hard to quell anxiety and do the next right thing, as well.

I humorously sent him a reply. I told him I was happy to hear all was well in Oz and that he was getting good at playing the cards that are dealt. I have come to realize I took everything way too seriously with him in the past. I am sure he was surprised by my light response, so I added a P.S. - Not drunk. In his teens he used to tell me to drink and lighten up!

(Continued on page 6)

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or fax them to 847-294-5837, or mail to

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You can subscribe to have The Twelve Step Rag automatically emailed to you by clicking on the WSB NEWS link found at the bottom of the home page of the FA web site. There is a spot to sign up for our bulk emails labeled "FA News."

**HAPPY 10TH ANNIVERSARY
GROUP 1735
RAMSEY/MAHWAH, NJ**

**Last Call for
*Tails of Recovery***

We are looking for people to share their stories about the ways our pets also experience losses with a loved one in addiction? The deadline for submissions is March 31st. Send your stories to:

RagEditor12@gmail.com



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847-294-5877

800-736-9805 (USA only)

FAX: 847-294-5837

EMAIL:

12steprag@FamiliesAnonymous.org

EDITOR: Lisa W

RAG STAFF: Judith H

Topic Ideas

*Is there a topic
you would like to see
covered in the Rag?*

*Send your ideas to
RagEditor12@gmail.com*

Emeeting:
www.tabw.org

&

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<http://tabw2.fr.yuku.com>



From Pain to Gain

February 19th

Today A Better Way

Everyone in Families Anonymous has know a lot of painful feelings: anxiety, fear, resentment, anger, hurt, grief. Such emotions are a natural part of being human, although we often wish we didn't have to experience them.

With time, I have learned not to shy away from emotional pain because I realize it signals the need for some kind of change in my life--an attitude, a reaction, a different choice. When I am hurting emotionally, something in my life is out of balance. Am I clinging to self-pity, continuing to focus on the other person's problem, or hanging back from some new behavior that will enrich my life? "No pain, no gain," our recovering friends tell us.

Pain invites me, first of all to acknowledge and accept it, then to seek its origins, and then to take what prayerful action I can to restore balance to my life.

It is in passing through the fire that the metal of our lives is purified and made strong. I will accept my emotional pain as an invitation to wholeness. I will make it an asset instead of a liability.

TODAY I WILL try to discern the purpose in any pain I encounter. It may be an opportunity to grow.



Plans and Results

Trying to plan results brings disappointment. This is true for big things and little things.

I can plan a nice dinner at a favorite restaurant but I have no control over the meal I get.

I can save for three years and take my family to Disney only to find upon arriving that the tour company I booked with went bankrupt and my hotel and car rental vouchers are worthless. (Oh and it rained four out of the five days).

I can set important work deadlines and make a detailed To Do list for each day in December then welcome a new baby, lose a loved one, have a virus run through the house, and another virus kill my work computer.

Plans and results are two different things. Plans we make. Results happen. We can control the plans, we can't control the results. All we can do is control our reaction to the results and make new plans.

Sometimes you just need to look forward to dessert, or dance around penniless in the rain, or take deep breathes and realize, This Too Shall Pass.

Lisa/NJ

It's so important to realize that every time you get upset, it drains your emotional energy. Losing your cool makes you tired. Getting angry a lot messes with your health. — Joyce Meyer

FA LITERATURE SPOTLIGHT

**Looking for a meeting
to attend for comfort
and relief?**

**Familiar with Families
Anonymous?**

Wishing you could attend a meeting, but there aren't any located near you?

How about setting up a group in your area? If this is something you would consider, Starting A New FA Group (now available through the catalog) would be a great beginning.

This brochure covers such issues as Who Can Start a Group?, How Do We Register Our Group?, Where Might I Find a Suitable Meeting Place?, and many more pertinent questions which may be circulating in your mind, as well as some you may not have yet considered.

Additional topics include: *How Much Should a Meeting Place Cost? What FA Literature Will We Need?* and *How is the Meeting Conducted?* But again, this short, but quite comprehensive brochure, will get you started in establishing your own local FA group and more importantly -- your journey on the path to relief from dealing with the problems of substance abuse and addiction in the family.

So, please consider ordering this brochure. You will not only be helping yourself, but you may also potentially be helping many others, in your area who are seeking the same type of relief and comfort as you.

**Order #8004
Starting A New FA Group**

The Pain Box

What is this recovery that Families Anonymous speaks of?

Is recovery an out of body experience that leads to instant healing and transformation in a moment of mystical enlightenment?

Is recovery an experience of mysterious visions that lead you to a moment of immediate clarity?

No, it's the pain due to addiction that builds over many years and then recovery's flame is ignited. Pain overcomes you and you realize your negotiating abilities with addiction have all been in vain.

Imagine a box sitting in front of you. It is marked "The Addiction Pain Box." When you reach inside what do you pull out? Arguments with your spouse, missing jewelry and cash, drug dealing, ER visits, car accidents, shame and blame from extended family and friends, attorney fees, bail bonds, treatment programs, detox, sober living homes, incarcerations, collect calls from jail, lawsuits, sleepless nights, fear, stress, ill health, your bank account drained, your 401 withdrawn, second mortgage, alcohol/drug counselors, continuous calls for help, visits to jail and the list goes on and on. But here's the problem: each time you pull out an event, you deal with it then put it back in the box just to draw it out again and so it goes until..... until when? Until you reach your pain threshold.

Addiction has betrayed you time and time again. Now you are willing, prepared to believe, consumed then transformed through acceptance and action, which will lead you to the life renewing power of the Families Anonymous Twelve Steps.

Can you give up your present knowledge - pour it all out and then be filled with the knowledge of recovery found in the FA literature, face to face meetings and the FA forum posts?

Can you reach out in honesty to another member of Families Anonymous and ask them to become your mentor, your sponsor, your guide?

Before now, all you had was addiction. But now you will be guided by the God of your understanding; fueled by the compassion of your fellow travelers in Families Anonymous.

You will never be left alone again with addiction. Never!

Your pain box is replaced with the Twelve Promises of Families Anonymous.

The User's Parent

The Cure for Addiction

Think about this. Take a piece of paper and begin writing down every situation with your addicted child that you allowed yourself to become involved with. On another piece of paper list every situation that your addicted child was left alone to handle on their own without any involvement from you. You will find that the second piece of paper will be comparably quite short and ends in recovery but the first one is absolutely a chaotic horror story that is endless. The first piece of paper is entitled "Selfish Denial" and the second one is called "Experiences of Consequences."

Of course, there is no cure for addiction but if there were it just might start with a piece of paper called "Experiences of Consequences." Your second piece of paper is found in FA.

The User's Parent

LIFE IS NOT
A SELF-
IMPROVEMENT
PROJECT.

Keeping busy and
living our lives doesn't
remove the sadness.
Still, the sadness
shouldn't stop us
from living our lives.

--Lisa/NJ

*Life can only be
understood backwards;
but it must be
lived forwards.
Soren Kierkegaard*

Let's talk...

Do you think there is such a thing
as spending too much time and
focus on self-improvement?

Send your reflections to:

RagEditor12@gmail.com



FA Convention Miami, Florida June 3-5, 2016

“STEPS TO SERENITY”

We are pleased to announce that the South Miami Group 134 will host the 44th Annual FA Convention June 3 through 5, 2016. Make plans to join us for SERENITY and RECOVERY, FUN and FELLOWSHIP. The convention activities begin Friday evening and conclude before noon on Sunday. The convention will be held at the Hilton Miami Airport Hotel, which has free shuttle service to and from Miami International Airport.

Registration: The convention registration fee is \$175 before March 15, and \$185 thereafter. Information for registering online or by mail is available at www.2016famiamiconvention.org.

Hotel: The special group room rate of \$114 is available on a first-come, first-served basis until May 1, so register soon to get that attractive rate. The special \$114 per night rate will be extended for 3 days before and after the convention (subject to availability) for those wishing to extend their visit to the Miami area. For reservations, contact the hotel directly at: Hilton Miami Airport Hotel, 5101 Blue Lagoon Dr., Miami, FL 33126, (305) 265-3800, www.hiltonmiamiairport.com. Use Group Code "FAS" when registering for our special convention rate.

For more information, visit the convention website at
www.2016famiamiconvention.org
or email 2016famiamiconvention@gmail.com.

SILENT AUCTION

The 2016 FA Miami convention planning committee is working hard to make the June convention a fun and meaningful experience for our Fellowship. The South Miami Group is pleased for this opportunity to give back in appreciation of what FA means to all of us. How can you help?

The convention allows us to meet and thank our World Service Board, and gives them a venue to meet face to face. It also allows for seed money to next year's host committee.

Help us make this year's Silent Auction a success, whether or not you are able to attend the convention. Everyone will benefit from your generous assistance to this worthwhile cause.

We have established different ways a FA member or FA Group can support this year's Silent Auction.

Monetary Donation- Your donation of \$5.00 or more will help underwrite items to be placed in the Silent Auction.

Donate Items for the Silent Auction - If you like to donate items by mail, some suggestions include;

Artwork * Jewelry * Gift baskets
National chain restaurant gift cards
National movie theater gift cards
Sports Authority gift cards
BN gift cards * Amazon gift cards
Spa or Victoria Secrets gift cards
Starbuck gift cards or Dunkin
Doughnut gift cards

Mail all items to FA 2016 Miami Convention – Silent Auction, 6619 South Dixie Highway, Suite 339, Miami, FL 33143.

Any questions please contact us at 2016famiamiconvention@gmail.com.

Visit the committee fundraising page for other ways to support this years convention: www.2016famiamiconvention.org/fundraising/

There's nothing wrong with pursuing personal development and new contexts. The problem is when "improving" has become more than a means to an end.

When you're so gung-ho on improving, it can be easy to lose sight of the reason for it in the first place: to make life better. But if you're just preparing to live and not actually living, what's the point? --Jonathan Mead

What do you think of the quote printed above by Jonathan Mead?
Send your reflections to:
RagEditor12@gmail.com

ACCEPTANCE, OLD FEARS, and HUMOR

(Continued from page 1)

A text was quickly returned with ha-ha's. That, oh no, he had driven me to drink was his first thought.

He doesn't work a program or go to meetings. He still struggles with alcohol; wins some weeks, loses others. He knows I care and he doesn't need me to rescue him. He knows who to turn to when I don't rescue. When he got the new job and was approved for the apartment in one week, he came over to tell me and he looked up at the sky, threw his hands up, and said "thank you." I smiled and said, "Gratitude to your Higher Power. Sweet, isn't it?" Letting go and letting him grow.

Not a perfect ending, but we are works in progress.

June K.

STEP THREE

Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God, as we understood Him.

FA 12 Promises

#3 - We will comprehend the word serenity.

FA 12 Traditions

#3 - Individuals concerned with another's abuse of drugs or related problems of living, when gathered together for mutual aid, may call themselves a Families Anonymous group, provided that, as a group, they have no other affiliation. The only requirement for membership is a concern about the use of mind altering substances or related behavioral problems of a relative or friend.

My New Life

Calling all members !

What do you do for yourselves to cope with and enjoy life.

Share what you do and how it has helped you. And be sure to send in photos of your work.

Submissions or questions can be sent to:

RagEditor12@gmail.com

Memorial Donations

In Memory of devoted member
Marilyn S
by
Group 1533
Tenafly, NJ



In Memory of
Marc
son of Christine and Tom U
by
GR 1027
Troy, MI



In Memory of
Curt
son of Colleen G
by
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In Honor
of past, present, and
future members of
Group 1735
Ramsey/Mahwah, NJ
Happy 10th Anniversary!



*Your story
matters - tell it.*

DRIVING MY OWN CAR

Have you heard the story about a man who drove 45 minutes to and from work on the freeway every day?

“How can you do it?” his friend asked. “I’ve tried, and I can’t go a mile in such traffic without screaming at the crazy drivers who cut in, go too slow, change lanes. Nobody listens. I’d lose my mind if I had to do that every day.”

The man replied, “Your trouble is you’re trying to drive every car around you. Relax and drive only one car - your own.”

There was a time I did just that; try to drive every car around me. It was difficult having different family members at different points in recovery. I tried to push, direct, and rush everyone around me. In time, I learned that in trying to “help” other co-dependants we may get in the way of their reconciliation with detachment by rushing them through the grief that needs to be experienced from just the idea of letting go.

Confessing to my parents that I am powerless over drugs and other people’s lives - that my life had become unmanageable - was a beginning step in my recovery. Just as I would tell my brother, “I love you, so I am getting out of your way” - I would tell my parents,

“I love him so I am letting him go.” Making those intentions known sent a powerful message to my brother, my family and me. I was no longer willing to live my life controlled by my brother’s choices. By anyone’s choices for that matter.

“The Serenity Prayer” tells us the key to serenity is finding the wisdom to know the difference between what they can and cannot change. The hard part for me, and I know I am not alone in this, was the realization that I could not change the one thing that I was most desperate to change. How could I find serenity or happiness when someone that I love suffers?

For anyone who has spent time living with addiction and who has tried everything possible to keep the situation from growing worse, the thought of finding serenity or happiness while our addicts remain in active addiction seems impossible. First, we have to try to remember what serenity or family health and happiness feels like. For too many

years my family reality was dealing with one crisis after another. Even during the times when my brother was in recovery and attending meetings, I waited for the moment when it would fall apart. Always jockeying to get a better look at his

eyeballs or inhaling deeper when he walked near me. There was no serenity or happiness; there was stress and pressure and doubt. When someone asked me how I was, my answer was “My brother is doing well this week.” It felt like I was just as obsessed with my brother’s behavior as my brother was with his addiction. I missed who my brother was and could have been. But what about who I was before addiction entered my life and what about what I could have been? Who’s responsible for that wasted life? I was. I am.

My recovery program helps me to put the focus on myself and not on my brother or my mother or anyone. Just me.

Some family members might feel panicked about us wanting to change our role because it’s one less person to “share the load,” so to speak. So we may need to draw our sole support from groups outside the family, like FA.

People come to a point of change in their own time. You can’t give someone else what you have found in recovery, but you can make them homesick for what you have.

Lisa/NJ

Deadline for **Tails of Recovery** is March 31st.
Send your pet stories to: RagEditor12@gmail.com



TODAY,
I WILL CLAIM
MY POWER TO
BRING ABOUT
MY OWN
SERENITY.

TABW - JANUARY 19TH

Hope and Encouragement

July 5th

Today A Better Way

It's hard to come into the Families Anonymous program at first. We don't want to admit our lives are in shambles and all our efforts have backfired.

When I came to my first FA meeting, I thought no one in the world had ever been as miserable as I. At that meeting, I just cried aloud and voiced all the pain that had built up inside me. But a seed was sown at that meeting, too, and somewhere in the dim reaches of my awareness, I began to recognize the acceptance and understanding offered by the people in that FA group.

New hope sprang up within me that just possibly I might someday be restored enough (as the others obviously were) to be able to risk loving again. I had a new sense that I might once again know the joy of a relationship that had been lost in the seeming rejection of my children, whose problems had brought me to that meeting.

TODAY I WILL find hope, encouragement, and serenity in my FA group, rather than expecting family members to make me happy.

STEP FOUR

Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.

FA 12 Promises

#4 - We will know peace.

FA 12 Traditions

#4 - Each group should be autonomous, except in matters affecting other groups or FA as a whole.

One Day at a Time

Let Go, Let God



FAMILIES ANONYMOUS WORLD SERVICE

Contribution Form

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