



THE SERENITY CONNECTION

NEWSLETTER OF THE NAR-ANON FAMILY GROUPS

Our Members Share



LIFELONG MARATHON

Up every day at the crack of dawn, running my lifelong marathon

The roads are long and never ending, with twists and turns, ever bending

No maps to follow, directions to trace, but others are running the very same race

Plant my feet firm on the ground, stand up for the new "ME" I have found

Uphill climbs with rough roads ahead, remember what my favorite slogan said

Face each turn with strength and power, stay calm and focused hour by hour

Mountains to climb, inclines to face, this journey is truly a lifelong race

Downhill days lessen the stress, allow some time to decompress

Zig and zag through each and every turn, always a new lesson to learn

Bound to stumble along the way but I try to control myself, day after day

I now have something to trust and truly rely on, as I run my lifelong Marathon

Take the time to look up and now I see, a Power so much greater than me

Fill each day with purpose and fun, because this is NO short distance run

I now understand, NOT SPEED..... but GRACE is the only way to run this race.

I am running a lifelong marathon with my program and friends in Nar-Anon!

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Subscription to date <5,000 subscribers!



PICK UP THE PHONE

I was on my way home from work when I suddenly spotted my son. He was supposed to be at the long-term residential recovery facility in town. Yet here he was, walking alone in the rain, hands sunk deep in his pockets, hoodie pulled up over his head. My heart immediately began to race, the acrid taste of fear rising in my throat. Why wasn't he where he was supposed to be? Why was he outside alone, walking? Where was he going? Was he running away? My brain kicked into overdrive; fear and worry clawing at my chest.

I decided to pull over and talk to him. I think he was as surprised to see me as I was to see him! He told me he was walking to a nearby location where he was meeting his counselor. When I asked if he wanted a ride, he told me he wasn't allowed to accept rides. We said good-bye and went our separate ways. I wanted to turn at the next corner and double back to spy on him. Was he really going where he said he was? Or was he running away?

I drove away shaking and pulled out my meeting's phone list. I hesitantly called the first number, no answer. I remembered what I had heard at the meeting, and dialed the next number, answering machine. Finally, on the third try, a voice on the other end of the line said "Hello." I felt like I was

imposing, bothering the person. Would she even remember who I was? I was new and had never reached out for help before. She asked me what was going on and I explained my panic and terror at seeing my son. She understood. She asked me what good would following him do? She suggested that if he had run away, the facility would call me. I had to agree with her. There was nothing to gain by doubting him or spying on him.

She asked me, "What would you be doing if addiction wasn't a part of your life?"

I thought for a second and told her that I would be going home to start dinner. "What's for dinner?" she asked.

And with that, I drove home and started to prepare dinner. I didn't check up on my son. I didn't turn around and follow him. I didn't allow fear and worry to make my choices.

My son was going to make his own choices, good or bad. He was going to bear the consequences of those decisions. He didn't need me to tell him what to do. He didn't need me to express my fears to him. He certainly didn't need me to tell him I didn't trust him. Instead, I picked up the phone. I swallowed my feelings of self-doubt and of being a burden and reached out for help.

That was 10 years ago, and I still remember it like it happened yesterday.

I made chicken and broccoli for dinner, and my son walked to his counseling appointment. It may not sound like a big deal, but it was a huge victory for me. I learned an important lesson that day, to "Let Go, and Let God." Up until that moment, I was still operating under the mistaken sense of responsibility that somehow, I had control over my son's choices. I didn't then and I don't now. However, I do have control over my own choices. Deciding to go home and cook dinner, instead of playing detective and following him from a distance, was a huge victory for me.

I also learned to trust the people in my group whose names were on the phone list. I allowed myself to express my fears, seek their wisdom and suggestions. From that first phone call came a newfound sense of hope. I was no longer alone. The person on the other end of the line understood, as few others could.

Pick up the phone.

Make the call.

Seek help.

Work it! You're worth it!

>> Newsletter Submissions



Please share your experience, strength, and hope with the fellowship. Submit articles to newsletters@nar-anon.org.

Next Deadline : January 31, 2022

Each submission must be accompanied by a signed Copyright Release Form.



FOCUSING ON MY OWN RECOVERY

This morning I went out to check on my garden. I was proud of its growth and beauty as a result of my efforts; I watered, fertilized, and took great care each day. This year I'd planted extra gladiolus bulbs along the side of my house. I couldn't wait for them to grow tall and beautiful in the flowering shades I'd chosen of red, yellow, and orange. I had high expectations for this year's garden.

As I glanced down upon a section with rows of green leafy gladiolus fronds standing straight and tall, I noticed one that was crooked and leaning sideways. Healthy and growing, but nevertheless, crooked. I thought I would help it a bit, just straighten it out so it stood tall like the rest. In my efforts to straighten it, it immediately snapped off at its base. My heart sank when I realized what I'd just done. While I only meant to gently reposition it more to my liking, I had been too firm in my efforts. I had harmed it, rather than helped it.

As I went back inside disappointed by my actions, my mind turned toward our son with the disease of addiction.

For many years, our family had suffered along with our son in his addiction. We grew sick in our efforts to remedy the situation. Our son had been raised in a good home with good parents. None of it made sense when he succumbed to addiction, or at least that was my thought prior to Nar Anon.

Before coming to Nar-Anon, we tried everything we knew to do and exhausted every possible path in our efforts to correct our son's addiction. At Nar Anon, the tools of the program helped us understand exactly what our problem was and spoke to the heart of the matter. In time we would realize the problem wasn't our son's; the problem was ours.

What I mean is not that I am to blame for the disease of addiction, or his choice in recovery. It is that my husband and I became a part of the entire dysfunction, the sickness of the addiction, in our responses and efforts to help. Try to fix it as we might, we were powerless.

I am powerless. The words of the very first step of the program would bring me my very first taste of relief from the pain I was suffering when I first began to work the Twelve Steps of the Nar Anon program.

Turning my thoughts back to my gladiolus plant and my disappointment, I again reflected on our son. I saw how he still struggled with his disease, even in recovery. Everything wasn't miraculously perfect as I thought it would be once he began his recovery. He was having to work to rebuild a life damaged by years of addiction.

Although he was doing well, continuing to grow strong and heal in his recovery, things weren't perfect, but they were good. He was healthy, growing, and healing, as he continued to move forward.

I compared him to the gladiolus plant in my mind. The gladiolus plant wasn't just like the other plants along the row, and it didn't stand straight and tall. Yet it was strong, healthy, a lovely vibrant green, and growing in spite of its bulb being planted sideways. In time, I knew it would likely have straightened upward in its quest toward the sun, all on its own. It would have done just fine if I'd left it alone and not tried to "fix" it.

I attempted to push it in the direction I thought it should go simply because it didn't meet my expectations of what a gladiolus plant in my garden should look like. That's when it immediately snapped and broke off in my hand.

Realizing my mistake too late, I hear my Higher Power reminding me of my son. In spite of my efforts to believe he somehow needs my help in his recovery, I am wrong. I am powerless.

I am powerless over his choices, his life, and his recovery. When I attempt to rescue, remedy, fix, resolve or determine what is crooked and in need of my help, I do harm.

I am reminded yet again, it is me who needs recovery. While our son with the disease of addiction is not "perfect," neither am I.

I appreciate the love and acceptance I've found in Nar-Anon in spite of my own need for recovery. I remind myself of that fact as I extend my son the freedom to grow and heal, free from my expectations of what his recovery should look like, free from my advice or meddling in his recovery.

Just for today, I will ask my Higher Power to help me stay on my own path, focusing on my recovery only and not others'. May I allow others the freedom to grow and heal in pursuit of their own recovery. May I offer nothing more than acceptance and love as they too grow in exactly the direction intended by their Higher Powers.

Just for today, I will ask my Higher Power to help me stay on my own path, focusing on my recovery only and not others'.

>> Just For Today



> Just for today, I will ask my Higher Power to help me stay on my own path, focusing on my recovery only and not others'.



A NEW RECOVERY

I have been a grateful Nar-Anon member since 2006. Recently, I learned my daughter has fallen out of recovery after six happy years. Although I am disappointed and broken hearted by her current choices, I am sustained and buoyed by this fellowship. I am glad that I continue to attend Nar-Anon and work on my character defects.

I attempt to live up to the principles of this wonderful program. Because of the wisdom and support I find in my Nar-Anon family, I have hope that she can and will choose to find recovery again one day. Meanwhile, I will continue to listen and learn and make progress in my own recovery.

PRACTICE COMPASSION—IT WORKS IF YOU WORK IT!

Compassion is a matter of perspective. Years after learning of my daughter's addiction, I came into the rooms of Nar-Anon with fear, denial, resentment, self-pity, and hopelessness.

I was angry at everyone and everything - my family, my friends, teachers, my town, social media. The only one safe from my disgust was my big mushy Great Dane.

I didn't understand how this could happen. My daughter was a model child - well behaved, sweet, a good student, exceptional in sports, with a captivating smile. Our family was intact. We ate dinner together, went to church together, and had many family talks about drugs and alcohol. How could she do this to herself? To us?

Through working the Twelve Steps of Nar-Anon, I learned that compassion can be developed. It was in these rooms I learned that when I can accept addiction is a disease, that my daughter didn't choose to become an addict, and that addiction turned not just my world but hers upside down.

The door was open for me to practice compassion. And once that door was open, the Twelve Steps and the tools

of the program showed me the many ways compassion can be practiced.

By working the steps, I learned that compassion for my addicted daughter and compassion for myself, while seemingly separate, are clearly connected.

Through working the Twelve Steps of Nar-Anon, I learned that compassion can be developed.

By educating myself about the disease; by not blaming or pointing fingers; by acknowledging her struggle; by not enabling; by setting boundaries; by listening to other addicts' stories of recovery and holding on to hope, I practice compassion.

Acceptance of the problem and seeking out others for understanding and support, changing my attitudes and thinking toward positivity, helping and detaching with love, and participating in Nar-Anon meetings are all acts of compassion.

I have found that the practice and de-

velopment of compassion for my addicted daughter and for myself has a ripple effect and inevitably leads to compassion for others.

One of the hardest challenges I have faced on this journey is how I react to people's negative attitudes and behavior toward addiction: Offhand comments, lack of understanding, telling me to take control, etc. I'm sure I am not alone when I silently let people say things while I allow myself to become angry, resentful, and even hateful in return. But when I go back to the acceptance that I don't know everything, that I don't know what someone else's life is like or what experiences they may have had to form their attitudes, and when I change my thinking, I gain a perspective that leads to compassion.

Compassion is something to be developed and cherished. I am grateful for the blessings of this program and what it has done to and for me, changing me for the better.





ENCOURAGEMENT

As I work my steps, at certain points I need a lot of encouragement. Like now. Those difficult times come at different stages for everyone.

With Step One, ***We admitted we were powerless over the addict -that our lives had become unmanageable,*** I had a huge, almost unbearable outpouring of grief. Some of my denial, dishonesty with myself, stuffed down feelings, martyrdom, carefully built defenses that didn't work, came crashing down with Step One. I could hardly stand the emotion, hardly stand to be in my body, and it lasted for weeks.

In working Step Three, ***Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him,*** I hit another dark place. More grief, more pain, more fear. I was actively killing off my ego, my will, the false part of myself I had built for protection. I felt undefended because, while I had tools, I was new at using them. I had a lot of survival fear, a lot of grief.

Now as I work Step Nine, ***Made direct amends to such people wherever possible except when to do so would injure them or others,*** I find myself in another dark place. When I was thinking about my amends, many buried resentments came up. There were two deaths in my family that I believed other family members had contributed to. Pretty dark stuff. I hadn't denied that, but I had pushed down those feelings and all the emotions surrounding those deaths started to come out.

To add to this, we live in a culture that discourages us from fully experiencing grief, fear, or any tough feeling. Run away from it, take a drink, take a drug, take meds, stay on a screen, eat to stuff it down, shop to chase a better

feeling. We are encouraged to numb out, to avoid any discomfort.

In spite of this strong cultural influence, in Nar-Anon WE ARE DOING THE HARD WORK. We can congratulate ourselves on our willingness to do the work. To help us, we have a lot of encouragement built into our program.

The word ENCOURAGEMENT comes from the root COUR-- which means heart. Encouraging means to make strong, to HEARTEN, to give courage. Encouragement truly strengthens our hearts, makes us braver, makes us more able to do the hard work.

Nar-Anon has offered me a lot of encouragement. Here is a list some of the things that encourage me:

1. Nar-Anon is a spiritual program designed to help us when we love an addict and when we need to address our own character defects.
2. The principles apply to any difficulty in life.
3. Nar-Anon offers us a community, a tribe of people who are also willing to do the work, who give one another strength and courage. We are not alone.
4. Nar-Anon guides us to connect with a Higher Power, amazingly, whether we are believers or not. I don't need to believe in a God to find what I need.
5. I can call my Narabuddies when I need support or encouragement.
6. I see people in the program change, night after night.
7. My sponsor has never shamed



me but has always encouraged me and been honest with me. She has never overwhelmed me.

8. There is laughter in the rooms, with my sponsor, and with my friends in the program.
9. The Steps, Traditions, and Concepts give me firm guidance and a clear place to look for it.
10. The Serenity Prayer is there when I can't think of what to do. It calms me so I can think again.
11. I see people I want to be like.
12. Without me working on them directly, things like my self-worth and my concentration have gotten better. Gifts of the program.

Some questions--

1. What encourages you in your program?
2. What encouraged you to get through the times you THOUGHT you couldn't get through?
3. Is there a brief passage of encouraging literature that you can share with another member or in a meeting?

Keep coming back— it works if you work it!



MY FIRST IN-PERSON MEETING & CONVENTION

In May of 2021, I impulsively purchased a plane ticket to attend the Rocky Mountain Nar-Anon Convention in Loveland, Colorado, which was hundreds of miles away from home. I had no plans on where I was going to stay, who I was going to stay with, or how I would get to and from the airport, but my Higher Power pushed me to go and worked it all out for me without me knowing it at that time.

I knew I would be leaving behind my husband and kids and stepping out of my comfort zone. As I began to question if this was a good decision, I soon found out my sponsor, grand-sponsor, and great-grand-sponsor would be attending. What a treat to be able to meet my line of sponsorship! As my doubts started slipping away, another thought came to my mind. It dawned on me a few months before attending the convention that I had never been to an in-person meeting or event before. I have been a member of Nar-Anon since September 2020 when the GOD (Gift of Desperation) brought me to my knees and into the online meeting rooms. What would it be like to go to my first in-person meeting and convention? What should I expect? Would I get the hugs that I have heard so many members talk about? Who will I see first? Will I recognize the friends I have come to know over the last year in virtual meetings?

I arrived early and stayed one day late. Alone for the first few hours, I spent some time with my Higher Power in the beautiful scenic mountain views of Colorado. I hiked through nature and during the hike, many signs of my Higher Power came to me through nature, animals I saw along the way, the clear blue-sky, music I heard through the mountains from an event

close-by, and the people who smiled as I walked along. What a wonderful pregame to the high-spirited weekend I was about to experience.

That evening, I was to meet my sponsor and grand-sponsor for the first time. My sponsor is the person that I have shared my heart and soul with through Steps One through Four. She listened patiently through to my Fifth Step. All the good, bad, ugly, fears, and recovery. She was the person guiding me along my journey to the remainder of the steps. I didn't think the day would ever come, and there I was, sitting in a restaurant, anxiously waiting for her arrival.

When she walked through the door, I kept trying to pinch myself. Was this real? Was I actually meeting the person who is my sponsor, and the other person who sponsored my sponsor? It is a moment I will never forget. They were both as funny, witty, and real as I had imagined.

The next day, I came to the convention early, and slowly all of my virtual friends started appearing. I got the hugs I so desperately needed and wanted. Even with their masks on, I could see their smiles. In my experience in Nar-Anon, there is nothing more powerful and meaningful than when I met my recovery friends and sponsor for the first time. They have been with me through my beginning of the journey and through my recovery moments. They've watched me grow and mature, and I've watched them grow, too.

The convention was everything I had hoped for and more. We were surrounded by more than 2,000 addicts who were cheering each other on. Throughout the convention, we heard

them shouting and laughing with joy. I have shared in meetings that I am grateful for my ALO, or Addicted Loved One, but during the convention, I was grateful for over 2,000 of your ALO's, too.

At the Outreach Table, I was able to speak with those attending NA about the program. I was happy to talk about how Nar-Anon is a safe place for family members. I shared with them my experience, strength, and hope that I needed to get to my first meeting. I can only have hope that their family members find us, too.

I was lucky enough to lead a topic alongside my sponsor and grand-sponsor during the convention. My great-grand sponsor was in the crowd watching the line of sponsorship that started with her, as we shared. What a powerful moment for all of us! I hope one day I will be in the crowd listening to three generations of sponsees share their recovery. It was such a surreal moment to think about how our Higher Powers got us there. Again, I am so grateful for my ALO, and all of their ALO's. Without them, I wouldn't be here. I am grateful to be in the rooms of Nar-Anon yesterday, today, and tomorrow.

As it came to the end, it was time for the goodbye hugs. It was so bittersweet! Tears streamed down my face as I thought of the wonderful time I had with all my friends in the program. As nervous and anxious as I was to attend, share a room with people I've never met in person, I didn't want to leave! At the convention, I met over 55 people that I never thought I would have the opportunity or privilege to

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Our Members Share



MY FIRST IN-PERSON MEETING & CONVENTION

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meet. My tears of joy and sadness kept rolling until I stubbornly made them go away. "We will see you next year... we would love for you to be on the convention committee," many of my friends told me. They know me well. Service keeps me coming back.

I have a notepad full of notes of what I learned through the weekend at the

convention, but a few things stuck out that I will never forget.

1. I learned how grateful I am to have this community of friends that I now call family in my life.
2. I learned how grateful I am for my ALO's and all of their family members and friends who brought my program friends to

the rooms, in-person and virtually.

3. Last and not least, I learned that a real hug from a Narabuddy is the greatest hug in the world!

I look forward to real hugs again very soon! Until next year, I will be in the virtual world cheering you all on and sending you virtual hugs.

World Service Committee Corner



LITERATURE COMMITTEE

In the coming months, the World Service Literature Committee will send the pieces of recovery literature listed below for fellowship review. If you wish to be a part of the review process, please email the Literature Committee at LitCom@Nar-Anon.org.

Each piece of recovery literature will be emailed to volunteer members on the distribution list as a PDF, along with a questionnaire. A deadline for responses will be set for each item.

- [Introduction to the Traditions](#)
- [Tradition Three](#)
- [Tradition Four](#)
- [Tradition Five](#)
- [Step Four Workbook \(Part I of II\)](#)



CONFERENCE COMMITTEE

2021 WSC – What an amazing event – our first Virtual conference is in the history books!

What's next?

The Committee is busy preparing for the **2023 WSC - Progress Through Worldwide Unity**. There are currently three (3) open positions needed for the next conference: a facilitator and two conference secretaries. Any member willing and able to serve can submit an application. To review the duties, responsibilities, and qualifications visit:

<https://www.nar-anon.org/naranon-service-opportunities>.

If you or anyone you know are interested in applying for these trusted servant positions, please send a resume to the Human Resource Committee at wshrcommittee@nar-anon.org.

More will be revealed in the coming months!



OUTREACH COMMITTEE

Happy New Year – we'll all be shouting shortly!

New Year's resolutions will be made some will be kept. Here's a twist to your 2022 resolution: make an outreach resolution! If your group/region is back in action with face-to-face meetings, how about reaching out to treatment centers you may not have visited since the pandemic began. The Public Outreach PowerPoints can be part of a presentation either in person or virtually. You will find these and other outreach resources at <https://www.nar-anon.org/outreach>.

If you've been hesitant to perform outreach because you have no face-to-face meetings, reach out to your region to see which virtual meetings you can recommend while performing outreach. Don't limit your outreach work to just promoting virtual meetings in your region – go to: <https://www.nar-anon.org/virtual-meetings> to see which nearby regions or states have meetings that you can refer folks to.

No matter what your resolution is, consider Step 12: *Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to others....*

Upcoming Events & Activities



>> CLICK ON EVENT LINKS FOR DETAILS OR GO TO THE [EVENTS PAGE](#) ON THE WSO WEBSITE

WORLD COMMITTEE EVENTS

WEBSITE ROUNDTABLE

January 15, 2022 **Web-Based**

6am PST, 9am EST, 5:30pm Iran,

5pm Moscow, 3pm Central European

Zoom ID: 832 7524 4099 (no passcode)

[More Info](mailto:WebCommittee@Nar-Anon.org) - WebCommittee@Nar-Anon.org

CONVENTIONS

WESTERN REGIONS CONVENTION

Web Based

February 12, 2022

Time TBD - [More info](#)

EAST COAST CONVENTION

Wyndham Garden Philadelphia Airport, PA

March 18-20, 2022

[More Info](mailto:ecc7chairs@gmail.com) - ecc7chairs@gmail.com



Appeal!

Wouldn't it be wonderful if money grew on trees? Alas, it doesn't. That's why each of us has to share a little of what we have to ensure the Nar-Anon message of Experience, Strength, and Hope continues to be spread throughout the world.

In spite of inflation, donations to World Service were down 54% in 2020 from 2019. We are counting on you to dig a little deeper this year.

REGIONAL EVENTS & WORKSHOPS

CARRY THE MESSAGE: NAR-ANON & NA

Rocky Mtn Region **Web-Based**

Dec 18 (2021), Jan 22, Feb 26 (2022)

12:30pm EST, 11:30am CST,

10:30am MST, 9:30am PST

[Zoom Link](#)

carrythessageNFG@gmail.com

CHRISTMAS DAY MEETING

Together We Recover

December 25, 2021 **Web-Based**

8am PST, 9am MST, 10am CST,

11am EST, 4pm UTC

Zoom ID: 856 1677 7638

Passcode: 515290

[More info](#)

NEW YEAR, NEW YOU NARATHON

Rocky Mtn Region **Web Based**

24-hour Event - Starts 12/31/21 at 8 pm

EST through 1/1/22 at 8 pm EST

[Zoom Link](#) - [More Info](#)

IN THE SPIRIT OF COOPERATION:

NAR-ANON & NA - NY Region

January 4, February 1, 2022 **Web-Based**

8pm EST, 7pm CST, 6pm MST, 5pm PST

[Zoom Link](mailto:nynfgsec@gmail.com) - nynfgsec@gmail.com

TRADITIONS & RELATIONSHIPS EVENT

Rocky Mtn Region **Web Based**

Feb 20, 2022 - Time TBD

www.naranonrm.org/events

STEP BY STEP 12-STEP WORKSHOP

Every 2nd and 4th Wednesday **Web-Based**

5pm PST, 8pm EST, 12am GMT

[Zoom Link](#) - [More Info](#)

Mtcake15@gmail.com / loischez@gmail.com

STEP BY STEP 12-STEP WORKSHOP

Simi Valley NFG

Every Saturday **Web-Based**

6:30pm PST, 9:30 EST, 8:30 CST, 7:30 MST

[Zoom Link](#) - [More Info](#)

IT STARTS WITH US SPEAKER MEETING

Rocky Mtn Region—Every Saturday

Web Based

9pm EST, 8 CST, 7pm MST, 6pm PST

[Zoom Link](#) - [More Info](#)

THE NUTS & BOLTS OF SPONSORSHIP

Rocky Mtn Region

Every Tuesday **Web Based**

7pm EST, 6pm CST, 5pm MST, 4pm PST

[Zoom Link](#) - [More Info](#)

[Give Today! Click Here to Donate](#)

OR... SCAN THE QR CODE



>> Share Your Events and Activities

Did you know there is a page on the Nar-Anon website where you can share information about upcoming events and activities? Go to www.nar-anon.org/events to see a list of upcoming events and activities. Or send a PDF to events@nar-anon.org if you have a flyer you would like to share.



NAR-ANON FAMILY GROUPS

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