

Newsletter of the Nar-Anon Family Groups'

Walking Through the Valley

There are times I feel like I am walking through a valley where shadows loom large and fearful or minimize the realities of life. There is no way to escape; I must go either forward or back. Walking through the valley is not a choice, it is part of my path.

I then remember that shadows cannot exist without the presence of light. I may not be seeing clearly, but I am able, with the help of the light, to see what is real. I must turn my focus away from the shadows and instead seek the light. My Higher Power is the source of light I seek for clarity and guidance as I move through the valley. I ask for the wisdom to accept reality and continue along my path. Acceptance centers me so I am able to move with the flow. I have choices to make and, with the help of my Higher Power, I can make wise decisions.

There is no shame in being unnerved by walking through a valley. There are times when it seems never ending but, by taking baby steps of trust, the atmosphere around me lightens and I feel more secure. I sense I am not alone. The more intently I listen and

look for guidance, the less focused I become on the shadows and circumstances beyond my control.

Today, I am grateful to have the choice to seek clarity and light when surrounded by shadows. I am living in the reality of the moment with a power greater than myself caring for me.

Food for Thought

I received a call from a long time NA friend today telling me he had been asked to speak at a local Nar-Anon meeting. He expressed concern that this may be in violation of Nar-Anon traditions. I pondered this for a while and some thoughts came to mind. I attend Nar-Anon meetings to recover from the effects addiction has had on MY life. I work the steps, am involved in service, and study the principles of the Nar-Anon program. Our Fifth Tradition speaks of encouraging and understanding our addicted relatives. To me that means learning about the disease of addiction on my own time and having empathy and compassion for the addict.

I do not need to hear an NA message at a Nar-Anon meeting. This dilutes the Nar-Anon message of hope for me and my recovery, regardless of what the addict is or isn't doing. I have often heard Nar-Anon members say that hearing an NA message gives them hope. I choose to get my hope by working the Nar-Anon program. Many addicts never recover. I do not want to place my hope in something I have no control over. Our Sixth Tradition speaks of cooperating with NA. Some examples of cooperation are participating in joint outreach efforts, conventions, and unity days. When I go to a Nar-Anon meeting I want to

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THE SERENITY CONNECTION





Our Members Share

Healing

The Nar-Anon program and the meetings I attend each week have a special meaning for me. They've given me back my life. They've given me the tools I need to learn how to live my life in a positive and productive mindset each and every day.

I am thankful for this program because it's for me. I've turned my attention from the addict to learning to focus on myself. I've put the addict's problems aside and I do not feel guilty about doing both of those things. I've learned that my life is valuable and my serenity must be protected.

I started attending Nar-Anon meetings to heal myself. My journey of recovery started the day I reached bottom. I was emotionally sick, filled with mental pain. I realized I needed help in order to heal myself and go on living. That is the reason I started attending and that is what draws me back every week. I don't ever want to go back to the pain I was living with, to that place at the bottom. I want to stay away from chaos and I want to live the life that my Higher Power wants for me.

Once I discovered Step One, that I was powerless over the addict and my life had become unmanageable, I knew I

needed help. Each time I stepped into the addict's life to clean up the mess, I thought I had ended the chaos. I never had. There would always be another and another and another situation. There was no end. I became worn out and finally said I'm exhausted. I can't do this anymore. I saw that I was the one who wanted a peaceful life; not the addict. She didn't seem to care about the effect her actions were having on her life, my life, and our relationship.



In an overwhelming instant, I came to believe that I had to let the addict go; I had to let her suffer the consequences and take responsibility for what she was doing. I had to let go of whatever shame and guilt might come upon me. When I heard about Nar-Anon and that it was here to help the family and loved ones of addicts, I knew it was the place to start. I had to attend a meeting and find out what it was all about. As I sat in my first meeting and listened to oth-

ers speak, I knew I was in the right place. I didn't need to look any further. Here was the help I needed.

Today, I can confidently say I am in a much better place emotionally than I have been in years. I know so much more about myself. I have confidence in myself and my decisions. I have a plan for how I want to live my life and I am not afraid to express it. I start each day by reading from the Nar-Anon literature, praying, and meditating. Throughout the day, I bombard my mind with positive affirmations and I focus on having a good day. I work my steps, I stay away from the addict's problems, and I focus on making my life good and positive. I reach out to spread the message of Nar-Anon to others who are suffering. I have sad times and many times I wonder if I can keep going. I wonder if I am going to fold and let myself wallow in self-pity, but somehow I don't. I keep going.

There is help now. I can turn to my Nar-Anon program, to my friends in Nar-Anon, and be strengthened by them. With a simple phrase or two, I am reminded of what to focus on, what is important, and how to help myself. I am thankful that I am no longer alone.

Food for Thought ...continued from [page 1](#).

hear a Nar-Anon message. That is MY safe place. I live with an addict; I don't need to hear an addict speak in my safe place. I need to hear the clear message of Nar-Anon. My hope for recovery comes by staying true to the Nar-Anon message.

Feel free to discuss this with your group and send us your thoughts.



Sharing Recovery

If you've enjoyed reading the inspirational articles in *The Serenity Connection* over the years, you can now access them in book form. *Sharing Recovery: The Serenity Connection Collection* is available now on the Nar-Anon [Website](#). Get yours today!

Our
Members
Share



Inspiration from SESH

Over my many years in Nar-Anon, I have come to rely on our daily reader, *Sharing Experience Strength & Hope*, as a source of comfort and guidance in my life. The *Just for Today* sayings remind me of the importance of staying in the moment, being at peace with the present, and choosing to live life one day at a time. Here are a few of my favorite excerpts from *SESH* that remind me of the power of this concept:

January 7: “Today, I will live my life in the here and now. I will focus on each hour and each moment.... Each moment will be precious to me, for it is all I am certain of.”

February 5: “I have found that if I live in the moment, I can face anything. I do not need to dwell on the negative or worry about what will happen next.”

February 29: “There are times when I slip back into my old worrying behavior. I bring myself back to the present by concentrating on one day at a time and

one moment at a time. I can choose not to worry. It gives me such a feeling of peace to know that I am capable of living in the moment.”

March 18: “When I live in the present, I have a sense of freedom and calmness because I am not overwhelmed with unnecessary feelings, thoughts, and worry about the future or the past... By living in the moment, I can look at each thought in detail and experience the feelings associated with that thought.”

November 25: “As I learn to practice the Nar-Anon program, I find serenity by focusing on what I am doing at the moment, a moment at a time.”

December 6: “The gift of patience can be as simple as staying in the moment. I want to enjoy whatever is happening while I am waiting for the answer. Whether a smile from a passerby, holding a door for a stranger, a sunset, or the laughter of a child, I want to enjoy it all.”

Just for today

Just for today, I can call a friend and thank them for their friendship and love.

Just for today, I will be of service in my Nar-Anon meeting.

Just for today, I thank my Higher Power for my Nar-Anon meeting.

Just for today, I will take care of myself. I will rest. I will not neglect meals or be angry with anyone. I will not blame.

Just for today, I will step away from my techno devices and take a walk instead.

Just for today, I have decided to find a spot of nature nearby, look at it quietly, observe it, and marvel at the world around me.

Just for today, I will do an activity that I've been longing to do. I'll set aside chores and errands. I'll just do it.

Just for today, I will watch the sunrise or the sunset and marvel at its simplistic beauty. And it's free!

Newsletter eSubscriptions

Click here for your **FREE** e-subscription to [The Serenity Connection](#). Subscriptions to date: **> 4700!**

Newsletter Submissions

Articles are welcomed from all Nar-Anon members. Please focus on the Nar-Anon program and share your experience, strength, and hope from the perspective of a Nar-Anon member. Submit articles to newsletters@nar-anon.org. Each submission must be accompanied by a signed [Copyright Release Form](#) before it can be published.

**** Next Issue Submission Deadline: October 20, 2017 ****



From despair to acceptance to joy

Not long ago I was in deep despair, full of doubt, anger, frustration and fear. Today, once again, I am able to smile, laugh, embrace and love. Though it has taken a while, the transition from darkness back to light began when I first walked into this very room a number of years ago.

Shortly before attending my first Nar-Anon meeting, I became aware of my son's addiction and some of the consequences of his actions. I brought him home from college so I could watch him and plan a course of action. I quickly realized I had no idea what to do. Out of desperation and a need to find a solution to the problem, I began asking anyone who would listen, family members and even strangers, for their thoughts. They all, of course, had different reactions, opinions, and suggestions. Some had stories of their own about a loved one with a similar problem.

I continued to work the phone, seeking advice from anyone who had the knowledge and experience to counsel me. Specific advice was dependent upon whom I asked. In general, a mom would say "this is the time your son needs you the most." A father might ask "how old is he now?" and then add "it's time he grew up." A therapist would want to talk and ask about his childhood. Those 'in the know' said "it's simple, kick him out."

It is absolutely amazing what I was willing to do to 'save' the addict from

his insane behavior. I was desperate to be free from pain, suffering, and loneliness. In fact, I became so wrapped up in the drama of addiction I started to behave just like the addict, doing things over and over again expecting different results. Nothing changed.

I am ashamed of some of the actions I took in the name of 'helping' my son. I know that at times they were dangerous and sometimes illegal, all the while jeopardizing my own health and welfare, and that of my son. I made myself physically and emotionally ill. I felt insane and seemed to have lost my spiritual foundation.

I loved my son and bent over backwards to 'help' him through his trials and tribulations. I did not want to see him suffer. He had so much potential, and I had such high expectations for his success, even if it was simply happiness and contentment.

Something started to change when I attended my first Nar-Anon meeting. I did not know what to expect but I was given an opportunity to introduce myself and share why I was there. Even though I felt a bit uncomfortable spilling out my feelings to those new acquaintances, I did share my despair and pain. Gratefully they listened with-

out comment or visible reaction, and I was relieved to be able to unburden my sorrow.

It was suggested that I keep coming back and I did. It took quite a while for me to begin to understand the nature of addiction, my roll in the drama, and the importance of support in my recovery. But I now make a point of attending Nar-Anon meetings every week to help maintain a semblance of balance in my life.

I wished for and found a path back to sanity that does not depend on how well my son is doing. It is not all about him. In fact, it is all about me. It is essential that I take care of myself first. If I do not, how can I care for anyone else?

I have learned to accept whatever I cannot change. Acceptance comes when I surrender my will to my Higher Power and trust in that power. When I do, I am at peace.

I am grateful for the experience, strength, and hope that has been shared in this room and others like it. At Nar-Anon meetings, we come together out of despair and find tools and strength to regain our sanity and serenity. Before coming to Nar-Anon, I was isolated within the drama of addiction. Now, I have an extended family I can depend on, not only in times of chaos, but also in times of joy.

I will keep coming back!



The Fellowship



Copyright

Are you, your region, or service committee writing literature for submission?

Did you know in order to use your writings, we must have a signed [Copyright Release Form](#)? There are no exceptions! If your region is submitting a document with multiple writers, each writer must submit a separate Copyright Release Form. We cannot accept one form for a submission written by multiple people.

Remember, when your region or service body decides to compile materials, all writings must be original. No matter how much we like a writing from another fellowship or organization, we must apply our Seventh Tradition. Being fully self-supporting includes our literature. Changing words is not acceptable, is not carrying the Nar-Anon message, and will result in us being unable to use the writing. This can slow down the release of our literature and does not support the common welfare of the entire fellowship. We know that no one wants to intentionally bring Nar-Anon into public controversy.

For more information, please refer to the [Literature Writing Guidelines](#), which can be found on our website. Important reminders:

- Only original writings
- All submissions must have an individual release form for each writer

The Serenity Connection needs YOU!

Did you know... that *The Serenity Connection* is written by members just like YOU? That's right, the people who write the inspirational articles you're reading today are Nar-Anon members just like you and me, not professional writers or paid journalists. Likewise, the members of the WS Newsletter Committee are just Nar-Anon members interested in sharing the message of experience, strength, and hope as far and wide as possible. We're learning as we grow!

Appeal

For many years, when the seventh tradition basket was passed around, everyone got out the obligatory dollar. A dollar doesn't buy what it did years ago. What does the dollar in the basket buy today?

- 2 pamphlets
- 2 book markers
- 1 copy of *Personal Stories*
- 1 copy of *A Guide for the Family of the Addict*
- 1 laminated book marker
- 2 copies of other service or outreach materials not in pamphlet form
- 100 e-newsletter subscriptions

A dollar doesn't go a long way in Nar-Anon anymore. It takes at least two dollars to buy a newcomer packet or a *Blue Booklet*. Our groups must still pay rent and make donations to other service levels that need funding to provide the services the groups have requested. These may include websites, phone lines, outreach materials for events, rent for the World Service Office, staff wages, taxes, and printing machines and supplies. How far does a dollar go in Nar-Anon? Not very far.



Please consider sharing your thoughts, experiences, questions, comments, etc. with the fellowship to keep *The Serenity Connection* vibrant and relevant. It doesn't have to be long and it doesn't have to be perfect. We'll help with the editing.

Just think, you too could be a published writer! Drop us a line if you have any questions or suggestions. We're here to help! newsletters@nar-anon.org.



Committee Corner



Outreach Committee

What's up with Outreach?

This quarter we invite you to look at the inner workings of the WS Outreach Committee. The committee, currently eight members strong, meets monthly online to move its agenda forward. Between calls, individuals or small groups take on the development of specific projects and bring their work to the full committee for review and feedback. The process continues until the committee determines the project is completed and ready to be sent on to the next step in the Nar-Anon review and approval process. Several large projects are currently under development including two **PowerPoint presentations** and an **Outreach Handbook**. We are always looking for new members to join this dedicated team of service volunteers. If you are interested in this service opportunity, have questions or need help with outreach, please contact us at outreach@nar-anon.org.



World Pool Committee

A gentle reminder...

The deadline for submitting applications for **Conference Secretary, Conference Facilitator** and **Board of Trustees** members is October 31, 2017. Applications are available on the [World Pool Committee](#) page of the WSO website or you can contact the World Pool Committee at worldpool@nar-anon.org. Please don't miss this opportunity for service at the world level.



Save the Date!

Convention Committee

The World Service Convention Committee is preparing for the 2018 World Convention, **Worldwide Passport – Recovering Together**. The convention will be held **August 30 to September 2, 2018** in Orlando, FL, USA. Visit the website at nar-anon.org for details and to view the online registration.

Literature Committee



New Recovery literature for review

The World Service Literature Committee has presented two (2) pieces of recovery literature for fellowship review. The deadline for input on *We've Been There* is **October 15, 2017**, and for *Men Sharing Their Experience, Strength, and Hope* the deadline is **October 31, 2017**. Please send your comments to LitCom@nar-anon.org. These pieces will go out in the CAR and be voted on at the 2018 World Service Conference.

If you would like to receive the literature for fellowship review, please send us an email at LitCom@nar-anon.org to be added to our email distribution list. We look forward to hearing from you.

Together We Can.

New Service and Outreach literature for review

The Literature Committee is also pleased to present *Social Media* and *So You Have Been Asked to Speak* for fellowship review and input. Per the Development and Approval Process for New Service and Outreach Literature/Materials, the Board of Trustees will accept suggestions and comments from the fellowship for a minimum of twelve months (until June 2018). Please send your input to BOT@nar-anon.org. These pieces of literature are available for purchase in the [web store](#) and as a free download on the [Service Literature](#) page.

Please note: Fellowship Review or draft materials should not be posted on websites. These pieces are for review and input and have NOT received conference approval.

WSC 2018



2018 World Service Conference

Recovery • Unity • Service

April 2018 may seem like the distant future to many of us but work on the next World Service Conference has been well underway for over a year now. The WS Conference Committee invites and encourages all Nar-Anon regions worldwide to attend the upcoming conference. If your region is planning to participate in our seventh WSC, please note the following important deadlines:

Dates for the 2016 - 2018 World Service Conference Cycle

- October 9, 2017 Deadline for all motions to be in final form.
- November 28, 2017 CAR available and distributed to regions.
- December 31, 2017 Deadline to inform WSC Committee of region's intention to participate in WSC 2018 and submissions by each regional treasurer of equalized expense sum.
Deadline for BOT members and world service committee chairs to inform the WSC Committee of their intention to attend the conference.
- January 27, 2018 Conference Approval Track (CAT) material available and distributed to regions.
- February 26, 2018 Deadline for regional reports and minutes showing election or continued endorsement of delegate or alternate delegate.
- March 28, 2018 Agenda for WSC 2018 distributed to all attendees.
- April 26, 2018 Pre-conference orientation – Torrance, California.
- April 27– 30, 2018 World Service Conference 2018 - Torrance, California.

Telephone inquiries regarding the WSC should be made to the executive director of World Service Office at 1-800-477-6291 from the USA and Canada, or 1-310-534-8188 from outside the USA and Canada. Email inquiries should be sent to the WS Conference Committee at wscconference@nar-anon.org or to the executive director at wso@nar-anon.org.

Nar-Anon regional chairs, regional delegates, alternate delegates, Board of Trustees members, world service committee chairs, and National Service Offices have a voice at the conference but only the regional delegates and Board of Trustee members have voice and vote. Alternate delegates have voice at the conference, and in the absence of their delegate, they have vote.

Did you know... that even if you are not a delegate or an alternate delegate from your Nar-Anon Region, you may still attend the conference? The *Nar-Anon Family Groups' Guide to World Services* states that, in addition to the members listed above, "...any other interested Nar-Anon members come together at the WSC to advance the growth of our fellowship." You can contact [WSO](#) or the [WS Conference Committee](#) for further information.

Thought for Today: The Nar-Anon program and fellowship is here for me because of the service given by other members. They carry the message and support the program. Today I will give to the program since I can only keep what I have by giving it away in the form of service to others.

SESH, December 17



Coming Events

Click on event titles for details or go to the [Events page](#) on the WSO website.

Pacific Northwest Region Nar-Anon Spiritual Weekend

September 8-10, 2017

*We Are All of the Same Cloth, Though of
a Different Cut*

Camp Tilikum

15321 NE North Valley Road

Newburg, OR 97132

Cheryl R. 503-550-4640

Southern California Region 27th Annual Narathon 2017

September 9, 2017

Talega Life Church

1040 Calle Negocio

San Clemente, CA 92673

Nar-Anon Spirituality Breakfast

September 16, 2017

Feed the Spirit

The Brass Rail Restaurant

3015 Lehigh St., Allentown, PA 18103

Tanya A. (610) 295-9142

Nar-Anon East Coast Convention Six

October 6 to 8, 2017

Holiday Inn Boston-Dedham

55 Ariadne Road, Dedham, MA 02026

ECC6chair@gmail.com

2nd Annual Colorado Nar-Anon Convention

November 4, 2017

The Joy is in the Journey

Crowne Plaza DIA Hotel

15500 E 40th Avenue

Denver, CO 80237

MD/VA Convention

November 4-5, 2017

Unity

Fredericksburg, VA

Save the date!

Nar-Anon Western Pennsylvania Region Convention

November 17-19, 2017

Wings of Hope

Seven Springs Mountain Resort

777 Waterwheel Drive

Champion, PA 15622

Kate K. (412) 713-5055

VI Convencion Nacional

2-4 De Marzo 2018

*Solo por hoy... Que empiece por
mi...*

Hotel Sede

Aguamarina Beach Resort

Cancun, Mexico

477-475-8389

Nar-Anon World Convention

August 30 to September 2, 2018

Worldwide Passport - Recovering

Together

Orlando, FL

Save the date!

Still reading the Newsletter?

- ◆ If you enjoy receiving *The Serenity Connection*, please click on the link in your email notification "[Serenity Connection—Volume...](#)" and open one of the issues listed on the WSO Newsletter page.
- ◆ If you no longer wish to subscribe to the Newsletter, please "unsubscribe" in *The Serenity Connection* email notification. Nar-Anon pays per subscriber for the newsletter email service.



Nar-Anon Family Groups

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Phone: (310) 534-8188

or (800) 477-6291

Share Your Events

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

