



THE SERENITY CONNECTION NEWSLETTER OF NAR-ANON FAMILY GROUPS



ANONYMITY

When we come to a Nar-Anon family group meeting, one of the first things we hear is "We will respect your anonymity". Why is it important to respect anonymity at Nar-Anon group meetings?

The principle of anonymity has a spiritual meaning: confidentiality (the need to prevent information from being disclosed) and equality. Maintaining anonymity within and outside of Nar-Anon, and in our personal growth, is helped by the Twelve Traditions. The Traditions provide guidelines for serving and solving our common problems.

It is stated directly about anonymity outside of Nar-Anon: *Tradition Eleven: Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, films, internet, and other forms of mass media. We need guard with special care the anonymity of all NA members.*

Although the Guide to Local Services (GLS) allows the possibility of open meetings, due to the negative attitude of society towards the problem of drug addiction, it is sometimes not safe to hold open meetings. Closed meetings are the place where Nar-Anon members can safely share without fear of publicity.

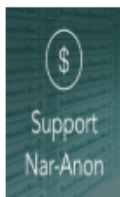
Equality expressed in anonymity also protects us from self-appointed experts. In Nar-Anon, we have but one purpose; to help families and friends of addicts. Following the principle of anonymity as the spiritual foundation of all our traditions will help maintain unity of our fellowship and recovery.

Dear friends, we invite you to recover through the Nar-Anon program!



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Nar-Anon needs your help to weather the current storm. Please consider donating today to support our loyal staff at WSO who answer the phones, keep the literature flowing and provide assistance to Nar-Anon groups worldwide. Head to www.nar-anon.org now!



Approved at WSC 2023
INTRODUCTION-TRADITIONS
ONE-THREE

New Booklet!

Check the webstore

SHOWING UP FOR 17 YEARS WITH A BACKPACK FULL OF EXPECTATIONS

This was hard to write because I was not dealing with my grief to avoid changing fundamental behaviors that kept me stuck. Acknowledging all the ways that I need to let go is a first step to not being controlled by those expectations.

I am letting go of:

- Needing happy memories of my sons growing up. I just need to acknowledge that there were not many, if any. There just were so few. And the intensity of the negative memories so visceral that it is hard to move past those.
- I have to let go of the memories that are painful, or at least make sure I can move past them and feel without anger. That means I have to go into them and through them. And I have to not let any more "PTSD moments" occur if at all possible. So I need to change.

I need to let go of:

- My son wanting to read a book, any book
- My son watching a movie, any movie with me or without me
- My son being able to eat at the kitchen table. My son not eating with his hands
- My son cleaning up anything. My son ever brushing his teeth
- My son bonding with his cousins and sister; or friends
- My son showing up at school and finishing 10th grade; he is 17
- My son not being a bully, abusive and violent, because I am not in control - the 3 C's
- My son being on a sports team

I am going to let go of:

- My son having a job
- My son having a kid, my having a grandkid
- My son driving
- My son going to our beach house and enjoying a vacation there
- My son being warm, kind, and not mentally ill all the time
- My son being sober



I need to let go of it all and grieve. I need to acknowledge reality. I need to recognize that any fear I have of not having the life I thought my partner and I might have with our son together, will not be alleviated by codependence. Hoping it will be better and not changing is not an option.

As I grieve all these things, and I think about how my son could be or should be in my life, maybe I can make some space for how my son is already in my life.

((Continued on page 3)

BACKPACK FULL OF EXPECTATIONS

(Continued from page 2)

Maybe I can make room for changes to put my needs first, then my partner's and my needs first, then maybe – something will shift. But it will shift with me only. And I will be different, a little less of what I wanted to be, but able to grow without the expectations choking off my ability to respond differently in the moment. Just taking those expectations and letting them go, so that I have the room to change. I need to change how I react.

My codependent actions were a consistent attempt to engage with my addict so that I could experience some normality, frankly some normal parent-child fun. For the past 17 years I showed up with a backpack full of expectations... but my kid had a whole different agenda.

Maybe he is just wired differently. But no matter how many apple pies I make, no matter how much money we allow him to have, or steal, or give him, everything stays horribly the same.

I need to let go of my needing him to show up so I can respond differently.

I need to grieve the loss of my expectations.

I guess I am still on Step One: letting go

I deserve to be in relationships that have trust, accountability, peace, serenity, respect, privacy, prayer, self care, honesty, balance, boundaries, joy, warmth.



YOUR TIME IS NOW!

You've been coming to Nar-Anon meetings for a while. You've become active in your group, and you're realizing how your service has enhanced your recovery. You've become excited about the fellowship and want to do more. You may have been given the honor of being elected as a delegate to represent your fellow members. This is your time and your invitation to join others at a world level in loving service.

Some members shared what this meant to them:

- Giving back what they freely received so that we could bring Tradition Five alive.
- Giving service beyond the group level is a privilege.
- Gaining an individual honest understanding of how the Traditions and Concepts of Service work in the World Service Conference, to truly embody our unity and integrity.
- We are all part of this program, and being of service as a World Service Board member lets me give back to the whole fellowship.

Contact the WS Human Resource Committee (wshrcommittee@nar-anon.org) for information regarding service opportunities and qualifications for positions.

Newsletter eSubscriptions

Click here for your **FREE** e-subscription to [*The Serenity Connection*](#).

Subscriptions to date: **7817!**

FINDING MY VALUES

When I discovered that my partner had become addicted to drugs, I thought “I can fix this.” I began to investigate treatment programs and support meetings. I even found a therapist to guide me through the process of saving him. I literally thought that I could be the “hero” in this story.

I set about reading every book I could find on addiction (none of them Nar-Anon books, by the way). I set myself this glorious task. I would find the answers for him. All I had to do was persuade him of the merits of my plan, and “abracadabra” my life would be restored to the harmony and peace I believed I deserved.

And at first I felt great. I had all these brilliant ideas. I even figured out how I would convince him, little-by-little, to submit. I thought I executed my plan perfectly. And it did initially seem to work. He even agreed to it, after a few veiled (and decidedly manipulative) threats from me.

And then it all collapsed. Yes, he went to treatment. But he didn’t want to go. Yes he went to his meetings. But he found them annoying. I drove him to them, and sat in on them. And while I felt everything that was being said was meaningful and beautiful, he found it trite and pointless. Gradually I began to despair.

While my heart was, at least partially, in the right place, I was really doing all this for me, not for him. I couldn’t admit that, of course... not at the time. And my resentments of him just grew and grew. How could he not see how much I was doing for him? How could he be so ungrateful?

I did start going to Nar-Anon, but that was (at first) just to prove a point: if I could do it, he could do it. But he thought I was wasting my time and his. I had begun to submerge myself in insanity, and the values that I thought I held dear were slipping away.

I became a workaholic to try and prove my love and worthiness, thinking (bizarrely), I now

realize that he would see that I was so much better than those using drug addicts he hung around with. I bought him expensive gifts to show my love and devotion (many of which he just lost or gave away). Everything became about him, to the point that I lived in fear and dread. I barely slept; some days I barely ate. I dreaded him coming home, and I dreaded him not coming home.

Thankfully I kept going to those Nar-Anon meetings, which I began to jokingly refer to as my “hour of sanity per week.” Gradually, as I listened more and more at those meetings, and shared my sorrow and hurt, I realized that I had surrendered my whole life to addiction. And that wasn’t helping me. And it definitely was not helping my addicted loved one.

I needed to rediscover my values. But how? Having a coffee with a few Nar-Anon friends after the meeting, I brought this issue up. One person said something that has never left me: “Would you expect the addict to do for you all the things you have tried to do for him?” That was easy to answer: “no, never, absolutely not.” She responded “then haven’t you just identified your values?”

That was like a lightning bolt! Why should I do for someone else what I would never be able to ask someone else to do for me? In Nar-Anon no one tells us what to do, nor gives advice. We let each other figure it out, with gentleness and patience. This helped me change my focus, to stop feeling so sorry for myself, and to start giving myself (and my addict) a break from my demands.

This program works, but it takes time, a willingness to listen, and a desire to change. With Nar-Anon I was able to rediscover my true self and my true values. For this I am forever grateful.

THE WORLD SERVICE TRANSLATION RESOURCES COMMITTEE (WSTRC)

The WSTRC was formed in 2021.

The purpose of the WSTRC is to provide assistance for the translation of conference approved literature (CAL). The committee does not translate literature. This is done by Local Translation Committees.

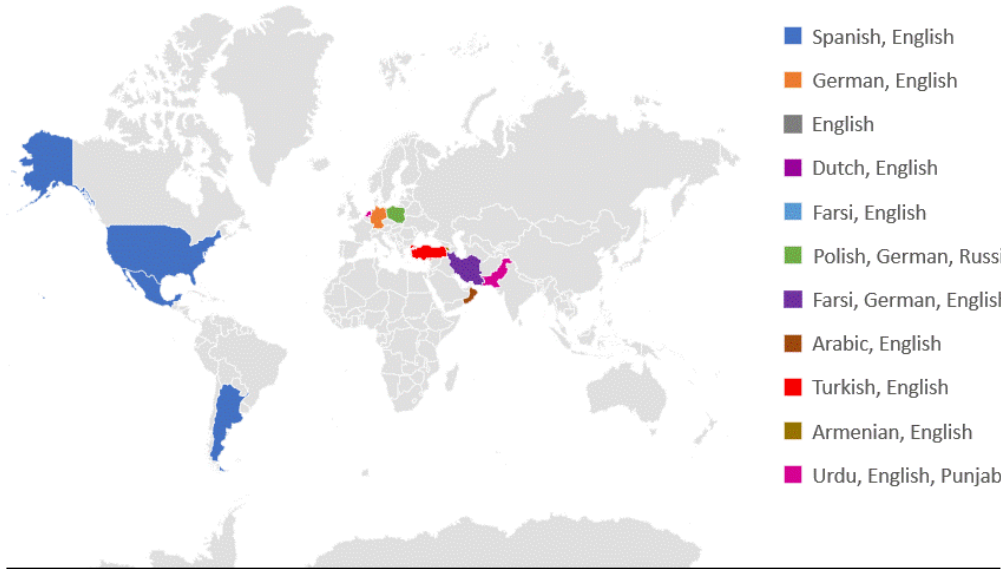
The responsibility of this committee is to ensure translations maintain the spirit of the Nar-Anon message, as well as, make sure the Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions, and Twelve Concepts of Service are upheld in translations.

Number of Members- 20

Number of Countries-11 (Argentina, Armenia, Germany, Iran, Mexico, Oman, Pakistan, Poland, The Netherlands, The USA, Turkey)

Number of Spoken Languages- 12 (Arabic, Armenian, Dutch, English, Farsi, German, Polish, Punjabi, Russian, Spanish, Turkish, Urdu)

Countries and Languages at WSTRC, 2023



The languages spoken by the members are English besides 11 other languages.

ANNOUNCEMENT:

The WSTRC needs members to join the committee who speak the following languages besides English; Arabic, Armenian, Dutch, Farsi, German, Polish, Punjabi, Russian, Spanish, Turkish, Urdu as well as Hindi.

If you would like to join our committee please contact us at wstrc@nar-anon.org

THE HAMPSTER WHEEL - PART II

I had to make a choice and stop being a willing participant by continually riding on the hamster wheel over and over again, allowing it to control my life. I wasn't a victim; I was a volunteer.

During one of those never-ending, all-consuming moments of despair we all go through; I had a real moment of clarity. I realized that not only was my loved one addicted to drugs and alcohol, I discovered that I was addicted to him. The chaos and insanity of his addiction molded us into being co-dependent on each other. I knew if I was to survive, and if I wanted to help him survive, any changes that were to be made had to start with me. What I found through my experience and the experience of others was that it really was true, nothing changes if nothing changes.

When I finally allowed myself to trust and believe in my Higher Power, to let go and let God, believe, feel, and experience His presence, I was able to find the strength and ability to actually think about other things besides my addict. It wasn't until I reached the end of my rope that I allowed myself to find my Higher Power.

Finding Nar-Anon gave me strength and hope beyond my wildest dreams because together we can do what we could never do alone. I listened, I learned, and I gained strength. Getting off of that wheel took all of my strength just to surrender and get out of the way. I worked harder than ever focusing on myself and detaching with love with the purpose in mind of letting him experience his own journey, his own experiences, and yes, his own consequences.

The love I have for my son is forever, but I've learned that he must have his journey and I must have mine. I finally understand the importance of the meaning of live and let live, to allow my addict to make his own decisions good or bad. The only chance he has is to find his Higher Power as I found mine, without interference from me.

It took years of work to remember, appreciate and re-focus on the things in my life that I was grateful for: meeting friends, playing golf, and taking time for myself. As a result of all the chaos, I had forgotten to do the things that once made me happy without feeling guilty about it.

Finally, among all these life-changing things, and probably the most gratifying of all, was allowing myself to use my own suffering and experiences to help others who are going through the same journey as me. Only because I was focused on doing the work in my own recovery was I finally able to step off that dreaded hamster wheel of my son's addiction.



If you have too much on your plate
you probably put it there.



In Nar-anon, I learn that enabling is teaching the addict dependency instead of responsibility. I was enabling him to stay sick in order to feel better myself.

*Sharing Experience, Strength, and Hope
(SESH, page 56)*





World Service Committee Corner

Dear friends!

The **World Service Outreach Committee** is always grateful for your active participation in the quarterly roundtables. The Committee members put a lot of thought and care into choosing topics for discussion. We recognize the importance of any outreach effort made by groups, areas, regions or individual members who are trying their best to spread the message of hope that Nar-Anon offers. We welcome everyone to share their ideas and experience of outreach by emailing outreach@nar-anon.org or taking part in the Outreach Roundtable event: Fourth Quarter Outreach Roundtable will take place on October 29, 2023.

- This time we would like to hear how you first learned about Nar-Anon.
- Was it a public announcement?
- Or maybe a poster in some public place?
- Did you learn about Nar-Anon from a therapist, or was it a word of mouth that reached your ear at the right moment?
- What source of information worked best?
- What ways of informing the public about Nar-Anon seem most effective to you?

Please share this information with us and other Nar-Anon members. Remember, someone who is still suffering from the addiction of their loved one might not know yet that there is hope and a new way of life which Nar-Anon has to offer. Any outreach effort is worth considering.

Yours in service ~ WS Outreach Committee

October 29, 2023

World Service Outreach Roundtable

12 noon EDT; 9AM PDT

Outreach in the Field

The **WS Narateen Committee** has been active recently in our endeavor to expand group recovery resources for teen members.

- A motion passed at the 2023 conference that will change CAL so that all references to Nar-Anon shall indicate "Nar-Anon/Narateen" (some exceptions).
- After substantial, thoughtful and careful work, the new Narateen Safety Handbook (S-336FR) and a supplemental Narateen Facilitator Training Presentation have both been completed and reviewed by the WSB and WS Lit Committee.
 - o Both documents are available for Fellowship review on the website. We highly encourage your feedback before these documents can be submitted for full conference approval. <https://www.nar-anon.org/fellowship-review>

• Narateen's web presence has been updated and upgraded. Narateen can now be found on its own drop-down menu on the main Nar-Anon.org website or simply go directly to www.Narateen.org

• Narateen will soon be available in the Spanish-language meetings for the first time in South America after the committee worked closely with the Colombia region in formalizing their safety and policy guidelines.

• We've added several new, active members to our committee from regions all over the world (including US, Canada, South Africa and Iran).

• We've now added an ad-hoc Outreach subcommittee that meets every 2 weeks. Most recently, this committee hosted a successful, first-ever roundtable discussion with Adult Facilitators from around the world.

*If a Narateen meeting is not listed on the website, it is not affiliated with or sanctioned by Nar-Anon Family Groups, and we cannot guarantee its authenticity or that they are adhering to child-safety standards.

<https://www.nar-anon.org/find-a-narateen-meeting>

Please go to the [Events page](#) on the WS website for more information.

NAR-ANON @ FWACNA
Sept 1st- 3rd , 2023
Carrying the Message of Hope
Fort Worth, Texas

PNW Nar-Anon Spiritual Weekend!
Sept 8,9,10, 2023
Expanding Life's Joy
 Newberg, Oregon

So Cal Region
33rd Annual Narathon
EMBRACING TODAY
Sept 9, 2023
 9:00 A.M. - 12:30 P.M.
 Speakers from Nar-Anon
 Narateen and NA
 Join Meeting ID: 560 611 0072
 Passcode: 374596812

In the Spirit of Cooperation
Sept 10 , 2023
 Sharing our individual stories
 10:00 A.M.-4:00 P.M. (et)
 Hosted by NY Region

Spanish Convention
Sept 15-16, 2023
 Orange, CA

CCR Narathon 2023
Sept 16th , 2023
Dreams of Happiness
& Vision of Hope
 Zoom ID: 836 9671 7629
 Passcode: 6Ncrck

Website Roundtable
 October 8 , 2023
 Mindful Modernization of
 Your Website!

WS Policy & Guidelines
Roundtable
 Saturday - October 28, 2023

October 29, 2023
World Service Outreach
Roundtable
 12 noon EDT; 9AM PDT
Outreach in the Field
 Share your ideas!

Nar-Anon Mid Atlantic
Annual Convention
November 3-5, 2023
The Ninth Step : Making
Amends
 Hyatt Place Dulles Airport
 North
 21481 Ridgetop Circle
 Dulles, VA 20166

7th Annual Rocky Mountain
Convention
November 10-12, 2023
From Desperation to
Transformation
 Embassy Suites by Hilton
 Conference Center 4705
 Clydesdale Pkwy
 Loveland, CO 80538

New Year, New You - 4th
Annual House Party
Dec 31, 2023 - Jan 01, 2024
 24 Meetings in 24 Hours
 Sign up online beginning
 October 1, 2023

QUARTERLY APPEAL - WHAT YOU GIVE COMES BACK TO YOU

I've heard members say what they have given to their Nar-Anon program has come back to them ten-fold. We "give" the gift of our experience, strength, and hope when we share at a meeting. We "give" our time when we take on service roles. And we "give" financial support during the 7th tradition. All of these are important contributions.

What do we get in return? In my experience, I have gained special friendships, learned new skills, discovered healthy ways to manage my anxiety, and acquired valuable skills for setting boundaries - particularly with my addicted loved ones.

Because gratitude and generosity are key parts of my own recovery, I put money in the basket when I attend a meeting and frequently donate to the WSO through the Nar-Anon.org website (look for the "contribute" button). Every donation goes toward helping the fellowship carry the message to others affected by addiction.



Nar-Anon Family Groups
Nar-Anon World
Service
Headquarters
 23110 Crenshaw Blvd.
 #A
 Torrance, CA 90505