

Newsletter of the Nar-Anon Family Groups'



Take what you like and leave the rest

This slogan is often used to help those new to Nar-Anon accept what they can, as they can. No one will make you accept that addiction is a disease, get a sponsor, work the steps, perform service, or attend when you don't want to. It's a simple program that grows on each member who wants it and is willing to work as much or as little as they see fit.

What does this not mean? Nowhere in this slogan does it suggest you have to change what you don't like. At first we come to Nar-Anon thinking we are here to learn how others fixed the addict in their lives. We are sneaky and think we will slide in, listen to others, and slide out, and life is going to get back to normal. As we continue coming, we hear

things we might not like; we even fight or resist the suggestion to get a sponsor, work the steps, and perform some service. Those are the things the addicts need to do to stop using drugs. Some of us resist for years but continue to come to meetings.

There is a magic in the rooms that gives us enough to stay. Yet there is a magic we have yet to experience once we decide to embrace the spiritual principles. Reading, studying, and applying all of the principles helps some of us become better people. We soon learn it was never the addict that needed to change. All along it was ourselves.

Alert! Update! **Newsletter Mailing List**

In adherence to Nar-Anon Concept 11, "Nar-Anon funds are used to further our primary purpose to carry the message, and must be managed responsibly," the World Service Newsletter Committee will remove recipients from the mailing list if they have not opened the notification email for 5 consecutive issues. This policy will begin in January, 2020. Recipients will be removed without notice and will need to re-enroll if they wish to continue receiving email notifications. If you have questions or concerns, please contact the World Service Newsletter Committee at newsletters@nar-anon.org.

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THE SERENITY CONNECTION





Our
Members
Share

The Climb

The addict in my life and I went for a hike this weekend. The hike was along a path with a beautiful waterfall at the end. The ranger warned us of trails veering off the main one and advised us to stay on the designated path.

We set off, eager to get to the waterfall. One step in front of the other we continued along our journey, out of breath, through overgrown grass, over rocks, under trees, and over streams. Slipping at times, we had to lean on each other and encourage each other not to give up. We maneuvered our way separately down a rock face. We did not listen to the ranger as we were tempted to see what was down the other paths. As a result, we ended up near a dangerous cliff.

We quickly got back on the correct path where there were red arrows to show us the way. I scraped my knee climbing over some rocks and my addict held out his hand to pull me back up. We stopped for breaks, out of breath, taking in the beauty of nature around us, enjoying and appreciating our journey. We would not give up. We kept going knowing what

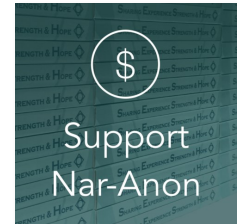
awaited us when we finally reached our destination.

Our recovery journey is like this. Sometimes we take the wrong path, but we keep moving even when we want to give up. We stay on the path of the Twelve Steps, work together, communicate, and live our programs separately. We experience the beauty the Higher Power has blessed us with.

We felt peace
and serenity,
a sense of
accomplishment.

When we reached the waterfall, everything we had been through to get there was overshadowed. We felt peace and serenity, a sense of accomplishment. Nothing else mattered.

Nar-Anon has taught me to be resilient, to be patient, and to keep moving forward one step at a time. Thank you Nar-Anon for opening my eyes to a better way to live. Thank you for my spiritual awakening.



Appeal

Please remember the Seventh Tradition:

"Every group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions."

Your contribution helps Nar-Anon World Service...

- Stay staffed to answer 20,000+ calls and emails a year
- Continue upkeep of Nar-Anon.org and our webstore
- Send outreach literature to providers and institutions
- Continue printing new conference-approved literature

Help support Nar-Anon's continued mission by contributing what you can. Please remember that in order to avoid affiliation with outside enterprises, only Nar-Anon members may donate.

Excerpt from the Nar-Anon World Service website:

<https://nar-anon-webstore.myshopify.com/products/donate-to-nar-anon>

Living one day at a time is the path to serenity. Staying in today, I deal with the reality of what is actually happening. I learn not to trade my serenity for worst-case scenarios. *SESH*, November 25

Newsletter eSubscriptions

Click here for your **FREE** e-subscription to *The Serenity Connection*. Subscriptions to date: **>5000!**

Our
Members
Share



Breaking Down Step One

Recently, as I was beginning work with a new sponsor on the steps, he asked me to break down the main parts of Step One and see what each meant to me. At first, I thought the step was pretty obvious, but I did it anyway, and found that I learned a lot from the exercise. Specifically, he asked me to think about each of the following: admit, powerless, addict/addiction, and unmanageable. Here is what I learned:

ADMIT: Admitting is tough to do. It means leaving denial behind and changing my whole attitude to the subject. It means changing my whole attitude towards myself. It means shattering my illusions and breaking down my defensiveness. It means being convinced that prior to this admission I had been engaged in self-defeating behaviors.

POWERLESS: Powerlessness is equally difficult. No one wants to be powerless. But to me, powerlessness is simply a condition of reality. There are always going to be things more powerful than me in this universe. It is better, therefore, to start from this position and to know my own limitations. Powerlessness is not unfair, yet I resent it. This resentment infects my thoughts and actions such that I lose even the power I had. I also fail to see where I might have some actual power because I am obsessed with matters over which I have no power. This is about being realistic.

ADDICT/ADDICTION: Addiction is a huge problem in our society. But it is an especially big problem for me because substance abuse has come to dominate my life, my thoughts, my dreams, my hopes, and particularly my fears. Although I am not the one using the substance, I enable it. I obsess about it. I manipulate the user (or hope to). I blame him. I take it personally. Yet addiction is an illness. No one chooses it. Remembering that it is the addiction that is the issue – not the good person I love hiding underneath it – helps me avoid believing I can

This step breaks down my barriers to healing and growth.

control it or cure it. It is a disease. It requires treatment which I cannot myself provide. Referring to the “addict” as “my loved one” reminds me there is a hurting person behind all the chaos.

UNMANAGEABLE: Unmanageability is a condition of addiction. If it were manageable it would not be addiction and it would not be so destructive. I also participate in this. I add to the chaos. I hurt, I wound, I drive a wedge between us with my anger, my judgement, my blame. I nurse my wounds, keep them open, lose all sense of serenity, act out, lose my temper. I even come to hate myself in my frustration over my inability to fix

things. Unmanageability is evidence that I need help. It tells me I am adrift in a restless sea without an anchor. I am not on the solid ground I need to make sound decisions that are good for me and those I love.

Pondering Step One and what it means to me helps me to see my fundamental condition; a condition that demands from me not resoluteness nor dynamic heroic actions, but humility and acceptance of reality as it really is, not as I would like it to be. This step breaks down my barriers to healing and growth. It is an essential precondition to bettering my life and finding the wholeness I need.

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 [Copy-right Release Form](#) before it can be published.

**** Next Issue Submission
Deadline:
October 20, 2019 ****



Our Members Share

The Addict I Thought Would Never Get Clean

My step brother has been an addict my whole life. He is a very smart and talented man but never held down a job long and always managed to use people. One day I asked my step brother if he ever wanted to get clean. He replied “no,” he loved doing drugs and was happy. That was probably fifteen years ago. I decided then I was done and knew I would never let him take advantage of me. I watched him continue to take advantage of the rest of the family, but that was their choice.

Recently my step brother has changed. He is going to a recovery program with meetings and treatment. He is humble and caring. I watch him with his grandson as he worries about his daughter and her drug problem.

We recently had a talk and I told him about my program. I told him to enjoy his time with his daughter and not try to give her advice. I asked him to try and just be there for her. I said, “you never know when your perception of your daughter will change.”

We continued talking and he shared a

lot of things with me. I said I was proud of the man he is becoming. I told him I see and feel something different in him. I never thought I would ever see him stop using. I only wish his father could have seen the man his son has finally become. His father, my step father, passed away two years ago. We lost my second step brother a

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few months ago to an overdose. I don't know if that contributed to my first step brother's decision to change.

My step sister is having a hard time seeing these changes. For me, it is the program that allows me to forgive and be willing to see the change.

Just for today, I will apply my program and give the addict the opportunity to grow. I will encourage him and treat him with respect, the way he deserves to be treated.



I looked back at the days, weeks, and months of recovery and the newfound love, respect and admiration that had developed between my son and me. I banked those days in a fixed deposit account. I told myself that nothing and no one could take those days away from me. Nothing could turn the clock back and erase those days. Our mutual recoveries were mine to keep forever. *SESH*, January 6

Nar-Anon World Service Conference 2020

Growth Through Service ~ Crecimiento a Través del Servicio May 1-4, 2020

An invitation was sent to all regions, delegates, and alternate delegates. Questions? Please contact the [WS Conference Committee](#). Invitations are available at:

- [WSC 2020 Invitation](#) (PDF)
- [Invitación CSM 2020](#) (PDF)

Upcoming Deadlines

Oct. 14	Deadline for CAR motions to be in final form
Dec. 3	CAR available and distributed to regions
Dec. 31	Deadline to inform WSC Committee of region's intention to participate in WSC 2020 and submissions by each regional treasurer of equalized expense sum
Dec. 31	Deadline for BOT members and world service committee chairs to inform the WSC Committee of their intention to attend the conference

Our Members Share



Freedom

Freedom can mean a lot of different things to different people. Here are some of the things "freedom" means to me in my recovery:

- Reflecting on the past and recognizing how far I have come in my recovery.
"Progress not perfection."
- Breaking away from destructive behavior that is damaging to me physically, mentally, and spiritually.
"Surrender."
- Embracing the positives, joys, and accomplishments when I can look beyond the negatives.
"One day at a time."
- Learning valuable lessons that help me see what I need to see.
"Listen and learn."
- Practicing spirituality using my Higher Power to guide and protect me when I get out of the way
"Let go and let God."
- Having a self-care attitude by looking after me.
"Let it begin with me."
- Living in the present moment because it helps me stay focused in my recovery
"Just for today."
- Being of service to others by sponsoring, or taking on service positions that help the fellowship.
"Together we can."
- Evaluating situations as they arise in my life.
"This too shall pass."
- Allowing others to live their own lives on their own terms as I live mine.
"Mind my own business and detach with love."
- Letting go of fear, "false evidence appearing real."
"First things first."

- Working a program that helps me live with more peace and serenity.

"Live and let live."

- Having an attitude of gratitude and acceptance. It keeps me sane.

"Keep an open mind."

"What a wonderful life I've had! I only wish I'd realized it sooner." (*SESH*, December 1)



What Nar-Anon Means To Me

I started in despair, was lost in life,
Was confused, crushed, along with my wife.
Then I found Nar-Anon in 2015 and started to heal,
Gradually got over the feeling of a rat on a wheel.
Joined a wonderful group and started to believe,
All past life experiences would start to relieve.
Weekly meetings, talks, readings all seem to work,
Now I'm a better man, dad, pop and not such a jerk.
My Higher Power always seems to ease my pain;
I no longer get that sick feeling or feel insane.
By working this program all can see how I feel,
Working the steps, going to meetings are a big deal.
So in closing, poetry is not really my thing,
But Nar-Anon has turned out to be my golden ring!

Keep coming back!!!



Our Members Share

Buttons

The disease of addiction pushes my buttons. The big red fear button, the shiny silver expectation button, the black anger button, the yellow disappointment button, the pea green of resentment button, and the “oh so blue” taking things personally button.

I have had these buttons for a very long time. They took root in me as my loved one progressed into the disease of addiction. My reactions to the symptoms of this disease cultivated these easily triggered buttons. The buttons grew more painful and attached themselves more strongly to me every time I practiced fear and desperation. I enabled, did caretaking, prevented consequences, assumed responsibilities of another, and abdicated the choices that were truly

mine. Instead of looking to my own choices, I manipulated and attempted to control another powerless soul. In turn, I was controlled by this cunning, baffling, powerful disease.

The insanity of the disease stirs up my emotions and affects my ability to think clearly. These painful buttons belong to the disease – my recovery can only begin when I cut the cords to these buttons. Now when I feel the pain of a button being pushed, I have learned to examine that button and its attachments. Recovery links me to a power beyond myself that helps me recognize and accept that I was not created to have buttons. My true reality is now based on a connection to a Higher Power who helps me live and let live without buttons.

The 3 Cs give me permission to be me. We have all learned through our own circumstances and consequences that we are powerless over this disease. When I turn my focus to my Higher Power and connect to his will, I can acknowledge that the buttons are not useful and ask for help in letting them go.

I now view my buttons from a recovery perspective. Just for today, when I recognize that my buttons are being pushed, I will choose to examine myself to see what is happening within me. I will seek my Higher Power’s help to detach from the buttons, and live a life of peace in the spirit of acceptance and compassion for myself and others. Today I will pause, love, and let be.

Unexpected Learning

After years in Nar-Anon, I thought I was working a pretty good program. But. Ahh, the “buts” in our lives. But, then one of our addicted loved ones moved back home with her two little girls. I kept up with my reading, writing, and of course attending meetings. As old behaviors reappeared and semi-chaos reared its head, my life started bouncing.

I worked harder to improve my program. I talked. I listened. For me, thinking and writing usually helps the most. But this time nothing worked very well.

Then I had a “*Nar-Anon Moment*” in my home group. When no one signs

up for a specific topic, our meeting defaults to a different approach. Each of us chooses a slip of paper with a Nar-Anon topic written on it and shares.

It’s totally unpredictable. In a recent meeting, I shared a thought I didn’t even know I had. Ah Ha! Sitting there, I wondered if my writing/thinking could use a jolt.

Sure enough, reading through what I had written, I realized my thinking often fell into a pattern because I was concentrating on a particular step or approach

to life. Good insight, but was there more? Had I discovered something outside my normal pattern?

Now I am writing down as many Nar-Anon sayings and slogans, ideas and questions, thoughts from our literature, etc. as I can. (This is a great activity all by itself!). They go into a box.

Regularly, I pull out a topic and write about it. Will I get a lot of new ways of looking at my life? It is too soon to tell. I do know, however, that my brain now has to constantly shuffle, and that is good. New ideas surface when I am not tied into a pattern of thinking.



Committee Corner



Outreach Committee



It's Back to School Time and an Opportunity for Outreach

September means a return to school and routine for many families. It can also be a time when families become aware of an addiction issue. Our fellowship often sees an increase in meeting attendance during this time of year. School and university counselors may be the first professionals that families turn to when faced with the addiction problem of a loved one; whether it be the student, sibling, or parent. Outreach directed at elementary, middle, and high school counselors and university counseling centers can ensure Nar-Anon's message of hope is readily available to those families.

Visit the Outreach landing page at www.nar-anon.org/outreach for downloadable cover letters, pamphlets, and other print resources to support your outreach efforts to schools and universities in your community.

Have a question or need help with an outreach effort? Email outreach@nar-anon.org

Newsletter Committee



Unleash your creative genius!

As you read *The Serenity Connection*, have you ever wondered how it is put together, who decides what it will look like, who gets to pick all the little illustrations that adorn the pages? Or do you have a brilliant idea for a vibrant new look?

Now's the time to raise your hand! The Newsletter Committee is looking for a volunteer to help format *The Serenity Connection*. No experience needed! Just bring

your creative enthusiasm and we'll show you how it's done.

Tradition Eight reminds us that we don't have to be professionals. Newsletter Committee members learned by doing and so can you. Online meetings are held twice per quarter.

Want to give it a try? Please contact us at newsletters@nar-anon.org and get started today. It's that easy!

Tradition Eight: Nar-Anon Twelfth Step work should remain forever non-professional, but our service centers may employ special workers.

Literature Committee



The Recovery Literature Priority List includes The Twelve Traditions for the *Nar-Anon 36*. The World Service Literature Committee is asking for text and personal shares on your experiences with Tradition Seven. Here are some thoughts to consider when writing on this tradition. Using the questions below, please describe your personal experiences applying Tradition Seven:

- Why is it important we pay our own expenses?
- A groups' needs should be paid by the group. What does a group need?
- What might be an inappropriate use of group funds?
- What is our promise to those who contribute to the Seventh Tradition basket?
- What are some other ways we should be self-supporting?

Send your original recovery writings along with a signed [Copyright Release Form](#) found at www.nar-anon.org/literature-submissions to Litcom@nar-anon.org

Please share our request with your groups, areas, and regions.

We look forward to receiving your submissions.



Coming Events

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

[Southern California Region](#) [29th Annual Narathon](#)

Together in Recovery
September 14, 2019
Rose Drive Friends Church
4221 Rose Drive
Yorba Linda, CA 92886
Bridget 760-447-1219
porschies@gmail.com

[Nar-Anon Convention of the](#) [Central California Region](#)

2020 Vision for Serenity
January 17-18, 2020
Monterey Conference Center
One Portola Plaza
Monterey CA 93940
Mary marmarodo@gmail.com

[East Coast Convention 7](#)

March 20-22, 2020
Wyndam Philadelphia—Bucks County
Trevose, PA
Save the date!

[Nar-Anon WS Conference 2020](#)

Growth Through Service
May 1-4, 2020
DoubleTree Torrance – South Bay
21333 Hawthorne Boulevard
Torrance, CA 90503
wscconference@nar-anon.org

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.

Where is my Country?

The Nar-Anon World Service Office would like to provide a page for every country that has Nar-Anon groups, but we cannot do this alone. We need help from Nar-Anon members in each country to provide the appropriate page. If you would like to see a page for your country, go to <https://www.nar-anon.org/where-is-my-country> to find out what to do. We can't wait to hear from you!



Declaración de la Misión

Los Grupos de Familia Nar-Anon son una confraternidad mundial para todos aquellos afectados por la adicción ajena. Como programa de 12 Pasos ofrecemos nuestra ayuda al compartir nuestra experiencia, fortaleza y esperanza.



Nar-Anon Family Groups

Nar-Anon World Service
Headquarters
23110 Crenshaw Blvd. #A
Torrance, CA 90505
Website: www.nar-anon.org
Email: wso@nar-anon.org
Phone: (310) 534-8188
or (800) 477-6291

