



# THE SERENITY CONNECTION

## NEWSLETTER OF NAR-ANON FAMILY GROUPS

Another year - 2023 - has come and gone. During the year - WSO (World Service Office) began to have a renewed normalcy - pre-Covid operations. Thanks to the groups and individuals who purchased literature and made donations, we are seeing an improvement with the finances.

As I have mentioned in several of my reports, being of service is important and helpful to personal recovery and Nar-Anon's growth. We are seeing members stepping up. Still I continue to ask everyone to consider helping your group as a GSR (group service representative), support an area or region event, volunteer to be on a committee, do outreach in your community, consider region and world level service. Your experience helps everyone in one way or another. Nar-Anon continues to move forward and this is possible because giving back what was so freely given works!

Each day at the WSO is different. We never know where it leads when we receive a phone call or email, or someone comes to the office, and our program has prepared us for most of the questions or requests. Some may not realize that service could also be a contact for your meeting. Many phone or email our office not really knowing what they are needing. Some are referred by a hospital or recovery center or even a doctor/therapist. Our staff relies on the group information for contacts, yet it is very frustrating when the newcomer calls back and tells us they were not able to make contact because the information was no longer current or email addresses no longer valid. We need your help with keeping our meeting information/contacts up to date. This can be done on the WSO website: <https://www.nar-anon.org/edit-group>

For the coming year there will be the Interim World Service Conference (virtual), and our Nar-Anon World Convention (in person) in Washington D.C. It's hard to believe six years have passed since the last one. I hope those who have never experienced either will consider attending. For myself - both are experiences I will not forget.

In Gratitude,  
Cathy K.  
Nar-Anon WSO

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### *Learn Love Live!*

**NAR-ANON WORLD CONVENTION 2024**  
**WASHINGTON, DC, UNITED STATES**  
**AUGUST 29 - SEPTEMBER 1, 2024**

Registration and hotel information can be found on the World Service website

If you plan to attend and are willing to be a speaker, contact

[stephanyjones1849@gmail.com](mailto:stephanyjones1849@gmail.com)

If you plan to attend and are willing to help at the registration desk, please email

[wcregistration@nar-anon.org](mailto:wcregistration@nar-anon.org).

## MY CIRCLE OF INFLUENCE

Last week I had a phone call with my siblings. The conversation veered into concerns about another family member and what we should do about it. My brother said, "That's outside of our circle of influence," and my sister and I were jarred back into reality. We might have concerns but they were not under our control and they were not our business. We could let it go.

Much of my experience with the addicts has been trying to find that fine line between what is my responsibility and what is theirs. It has taken time and 12-Step programs to recognize that most of what I think about them and their addiction is theirs—meaning in their responsibility, in their own circle of influence, not mine. Recognizing that helps me bring my focus back to how I can change my own behavior or thinking. For example, I think of a breakthrough that I had with my teenager who drove my car home under the influence of alcohol one evening. Because of my 12-step work, I knew that I couldn't stop him from drinking, but I could stop him from driving my car. The car was in my circle. His drinking was not. So, I took the keys.

Another breakthrough that I had was with a friend who was constantly late. It was straining our friendship. I finally realized I couldn't stop her from being late but I could stop waiting for her. Waiting was in my circle. Her schedule was not.

When my niece's drug issues became apparent, I realized that all I could do was attend meetings and get my own head on straight. And I could pray.

When my grandchild began binge drinking, I spent time in fear and

sadness trying to think of what to do. In my mind, I made dire predictions and tried to find the right things that a grandmother should do or say. Finally, I recognized that all I could do was be in these meetings and handle my own anxiety. So, I did nothing except to keep myself from making things worse with my negativity. I also made a choice not to dwell on what ifs.

When I look back over my reactions to addiction issues in my life, I know that I made many mistakes and most of them had to do with trying to figure out how to take control and change things. Because of this program, my times of worry, sadness, and helplessness are much shorter. I have realized that when I try to step outside my circle of influence, I have actually stepped inside someone else's circle. When I have done that, I now know I have deprived the other person of clarity, consequences, or opportunity for solving their own problems.

Because I was no longer a doormat for my child and said, "You drink and you don't drive my car," he began to look at his choices.

Because I no longer waited, my friend looked at her schedule when we made plans. Her times being late decreased, and it saved our friendship.

Because I attend these meetings, my niece's mother now reads our literature and has attended a meeting.

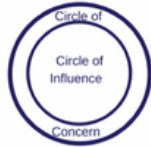
Because I have not wallowed in despair for my grandchild, we can continue to have friendly conversations and I can enjoy the times we had together.

~ Continued on page 3 ~

*My Circle of Influence ~ Continued from page 2 ~*

Staying in my own circle of influence is not always easy. Raised as a helpful and a responsible, good person has often urged me to do things that I thought were caring and responsible. Saying no or doing nothing was not in my nature. It has been the

12-Step program that has helped me realize my so-called caring and responsible acts often



took away the dignity of the other person. It gave them a message that they could not make good choices nor take care of themselves. Or, it saved them for the moment and set them up for a bigger fall because they didn't learn from the mistake that I rescued them from. I now realize that staying in my own circle is not selfish or uncaring. It is the only way to respect others and care.

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### Higher Power or Lower Power?

At one meeting early on in my recovery I was lamenting the fact that I was praying to my Higher Power, but I wasn't getting anything out of it. I went on and on about how I was asking for certain outcomes with my addicted loved one, and I felt that God was ignoring me. "How come God doesn't do this for me? It sounds right to me? It's only a little thing." After the meeting a long-time member took me aside and said "You know, a Higher Power that takes direction from you is not actually a Higher Power, but a Lower Power. You need a Higher Power to guide you, not you guiding your Higher Power." This changed my whole attitude, and I started to learn to pray not for specifics, but to be open to hear my Higher Power's guidance.

## Spiritual Surprises and the Realm of Paradox

On the surface, we are asked to do something so simple in Nar-anon: show up at meetings, find a sponsor, work this set of simple steps.

But once we tap beneath the surface, we find all kinds of things that make absolutely no sense at all. Things that, in fact, seem completely contrary to any kind of common sense.

Things like give up all your power to be empowered, let go of ALL attachment to outcomes to find a better outcome, stop doing for others what they can do for themselves (what do you mean? she's going to die...)

This program is full of Spiritual paradoxes. That's how we know we are in the right territory. That's how we suspend the rational mind for long enough to embark upon and stay engaged with a path of true Spiritual fitness.

Paradox: a statement that seems to contradict itself but may nonetheless be true.

Accept it like you chose it. (Well, who chooses to be ravaged by the disease of addiction?! Who wants to lose the person they love, get cheated on, have their bank accounts drained, and watch their loved ones keep going through irreparable harm?)

If you really want to win, surrender! (What do you mean I have to surrender? Can't you see all I have been doing is losing?) Yes, surrender. Surrender ALL your control to find freedom.

Don't make any big decisions that first year, but then meanwhile, a couple months in, you have to make the biggest decision you have ever made in your life. The one where you place all your power outside of yourself (which is really so deep inside that is beyond this thing you call self).

*~ Continued on page 4 ~*

*Paradox..Contunued from page 3.*

Believe in something you don't understand. In fact, don't only come to believe in it, but turn your will and your life over to it, to this thing you can NOT possibly understand, which—you are now going to call a God of your understanding!

Then, start being wrong to get rightsized. Dive into the mess to emerge with more serenity. Turn the magnifying glass only upon yourself.

Find out that where we thought others had wronged us (and they may have wronged us), something we were doing was also landing us in the midst of disaster. We were harming ourselves and/or others (we just didn't have a map, an inventory, a spiritual foundation to make use of it and a lens yet that could see it).

We watch (in the 4th Step) things we thought were lies turn into truths, and what we thought were truths (about how things went down) turn into lies before our very eyes.

We make amends to the people who we thought wronged us. We keep letting this thing we don't understand inform us about how we injured ourselves and others.

We use the help and guidance of someone else (a sponsor) who also harmed themselves and others.

We keep finding places we didn't believe could be healed, and keep finding that we are being relieved of deeper burdens.

Act in common welfare toward your enemies. (Who wants to do that?)

Finally, if you want to keep what you have, you have to give it away. You are in a place of anonymity. You may never get any credit or any status for anything you are ever going to do again.

If you want to keep it, you have to give it away! That means we have to connect

with other members during their times of distress. It means we have to welcome and connect with newcomers, find and spend time with people in our communities still suffering the most from the family disease of addiction. We have to be willing to talk to them about our own shipwrecks, including, if necessary, telling them some of the worst and most futile things we have done when confronted with the disease of addiction.

Where else do you get told—be willing to look bad in order to be helpful?

Welcome to the world of spiritual paradoxes. Stick around if you love a great mystery—because you have entered the Realm of the Great Mystery!

Like it or not, in Nar-Anon, you have entered a realm of contrarian thinking. A realm where you give up everything you thought you knew to get something unshakeable that can guide you.

We have to embark upon this path to spiritual fitness that is full of koan (riddles), things that by making no sense, are going to lead us to a place of sanity and serenity.

If we are lucky, we find it both the simplest and hardest thing we have ever done in our lives.

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### More Friends of the 3 C's

**Circle** - Stay in my own circle.

**Continue** - Continue to stay strong in my own program.

**Consequences** - I need to be wiling to accept the consequences of my actions.

**Commit** - Commit to helping others.

**Create** - I didn't create it.

**Chaos** - I won't live in the chaos of addiction.

**Contribute** - I won't contribute to it.

**Complain** - Say it plain. Don't complain.

## Q&A from P&G - QUARTERLY APPEAL - IS THIS YOU?

Question - "We do not collect money. Are there other groups in our situation who are not collecting money and not paying?"

We offer our responses below:

The members of the Policy & Guidelines Committee are not aware of any groups who do not contribute funds. We offer the following resources for your group to consider, in our group format, *Guide to Local Services*, page 3-2, *Leader/Chair*.

– *Our Seventh Tradition says that every group ought to be fully self-supporting. We pass the basket around for contributions to be used for purchasing literature from WSO (World Service Office), to pay rent, and to make donations to service areas beyond the group level. These levels beyond the group are areas, regions, and World Service Office (WSO).*

Also, we suggest that our principles, Seventh Tradition, and the guidelines, *Guide to local Services (GLS)* & *Guide to World Services (GWS)* apply to all groups, whether online or in-person.

Further, please see (GWS) page 32, *The financial support of WSO comes primarily from the sale of CAL and donations from our members, groups, areas, regions, and NSOs. This is in accordance with our seventh tradition.*

We suggest if there are any questions from your group on how to donate, please ask other online groups in your region what strategies they use to donate beyond the group level.

Thank you for reaching out to us and please let us know if we can be of any further assistance.

Your Trusted Servants,  
World Service Policy and Guidelines Committee

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\*\* Nar-Anon is self-supporting. Please consider a member, group, or region donation to the World Service Office. Donations can be made online, by PayPal (one-time or recurring), by the Contribute button on the website, by check or money order, and included in your literature order!! Some groups have a separate donation for WSO. What is Nar-Anon worth to you?

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WHAT CHANGED? - Recently I heard a member share "We are currently not donating money to the World Service Office until they can prove funds are being managed responsibly." Starting in 1970's, and up until the pandemic in 2020, it seems that Nar-Anon's donations covered our expenses. Maybe some of the current members were not around to see the funds being handled responsibly? Members didn't complain about the rent or pay much attention to the financial reports as we were solvent. What changed? After the pandemic we lost approximately one-third of our in-person meetings. Many virtual meetings started, however donations from virtual meetings seem to be limited.

What if all meetings decided not to donate until Nar-Anon could pay their expenses?

## ~ MOVING ON ~

The power of step work and fellowship is showing up in my life today. As I went through Steps Five, Six and Seven, I started seeing how my shortcomings are keeping me in the problem. Now I want to move on to the solution. With Step Five I realized I wanted to change. I did not want to deal with life the way I had up to that point. It was easy to admit how isolating, disconnecting from family and social life, keeping things to myself, and many other ways of managing my uncomfortable feelings kept me in the problem. It was easy because I had written all these findings in my fourth step inventory, willingly, with the guidance of a Power greater than myself. I had dug, found, and written all of this with my own hands. When it came to reading it to another human being, I had no way of denying it anymore.

Then I looked at my character defects one by one during my Step Six. With my sponsor's guidance, I looked at how I used them to manage my life, and which spiritual principles could substitute them. During this time, I became extremely fed up with myself, seeing clearly that my defects were coming up time and time again. I was powerless over my shortcomings, and every time I tried to control myself, I failed. My sponsor emphasized the spiritual principles of self-acceptance and humility. The most painful thing for me is that I am aware, and yet I am not ready for change. The Three A's are awareness, acceptance and action. I cannot jump from awareness to action. This is where I find myself right now.

While I was in the middle of my Step Seven, I had a hard time joining meetings. When I joined, I couldn't share. A fatigue took over me anytime I wanted to be attentive and participatory. I kept going to meetings even when I couldn't focus. Sometimes I worried that I didn't have a common problem with the other members anymore. It became harder to make phone calls, too. Having sponsees saved me from total isolation. Each time a sponsee called, I found the energy and faith to call my own sponsor afterwards. Admitting everything that is going on in me, to another, has incredible therapeutic value.



As I continued to call my sponsor and found trust and peace in sharing, I decided to venture to call other members again. I was worried that my problems would not resonate with them, or they wouldn't care, since they were not directly related with an addict or addiction. I decided to just do it, because calling is always better than staying inside my head. I called, and the magic happened. I let go and started talking. At the end of the conversation, I gained a whole new perspective on my situation: I am not alone, I don't need to force outcomes, God is in charge. It's all working for me, not against me. It may even be the case that ultimately everything is perfectly arranged in my benefit! What I'm going through is not out of the ordinary, it is yet another example of human experience.

At the center of all my mess is my need to rely on a Power greater than myself. I want to commit to a new prayer to my Higher Power: God, choose the people in my life, choose my friends, choose my relationships, choose my family. God, choose my profession, choose my income, choose my activities, place me where You need me, choose my home, choose the timing. God, You are in charge of my life. I am willing to follow Your will, guide me.



**WS OUTREACH COMMITTEE  
NAR-ANON ON SOCIAL MEDIA  
MARCH 2024**

In March of 2023, the WS Outreach Committee, with support from the World Service Office (WSO), ventured onto social media with a six-month trial on Instagram. We are happy to report that following the trial the World Service Board approved continuing the Instagram outreach effort. Visit the site at [naranonfgh](http://naranonfgh).

The WS Outreach Instagram Subcommittee, a work group of the WS Outreach Committee, facilitates the process creating posts and coordinating post upload with the WSO. This project is ongoing and service members with design experience are asked to consider bringing their talents to the team. Let us hear from you if this call speaks to you and your skill set.

Posts are uploaded regularly and include excerpts from Conference Approved Literature (CAL), notice of upcoming events, announcement of new meeting start-ups, and highlights of CAL available for download or purchase at the Nar-Anon [WebStore](#). WS Outreach is excited and invites members, groups, and regions to submit posts or ideas for posting to the WS Outreach Instagram Subcommittee. Guidelines for creating posts are available [HERE](#). Once a post is submitted, instructions for completing a release form will be emailed to the submitting body.

If you have questions, skills to share, a post or post idea to submit, please email: [socialmedia@nar-anon.org](mailto:socialmedia@nar-anon.org).

## The Magic of Sponsorship Booklet

Last Page: If this booklet has inspired you in your journey, please write your story and send it to the WS Newsletter Committee.

Sponsor #1: I am writing to tell how the Magic of Sponsorship booklet inspired me to work the steps alongside another sponsor. This encouraged me to look at how I would sponsor others in the future and facilitate their process of recovery. I appreciated the questions and actions being manageable. It also helped me want to sponsor even more.

We agreed to use the booklet, answering the actions for each of the steps. We shared our work each week over several months truly using this exercise to deepen our own recovery.

I would highly recommend this booklet as a tool to use for sponsoring in the future. With gratitude to all members who contributed to the *Magic of Sponsorship*.

Sponsor #2: Thank you for the new literature, the Magic of Sponsorship booklet. My friend, (another sponsor) and I decided to take it out for a test drive. Although it is a short booklet and seemingly unassuming, my work from it brought out experiences and character defects that I had never been aware of. It was surprisingly effective! Grateful for the opportunity to clear out some old dysfunctional thinking and for allowing new and continuing growth. I truly learned so much evaluating the booklet.

For members who may be intimidated by the length and heft of the 36 workbook, I will be proposing the Magic of Sponsorship booklet as a tool for working the steps.

Thank You,  
Two Sponsors from Northern CA

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

**Eastern PA Convention  
2024 - SOAR**

**Sharing Our Amazing Recovery  
March 8-9th**

Arcadia University, Glenside PA  
<https://soarnaranonconv.regfox.com/soar-sharing-our-awesome-recovery?>

**NAR-ANON EVENT @ LSRCNA XXXIX  
NO LONGER ALONE  
Friday March 29th, 2024, 4pm -7pm  
and Saturday March 30th, 2024,  
8am -7pm**

Hilton DFW Lakes Executive  
Conference Center 1800 HIGHWAY 26E  
Grapevine, TX 76051

**Carrying the Message of Hope  
May 31 to June 2- 2024**

NorCal Region NFG, Bi-Annual  
Convention  
Visalia, CA

**Seventh Tradition House Party  
June 1, 2024**

Seventh Tradition: It Matters!

**Nar-Anon European Convention  
July 13-14, 2024**

Nar-Anon A Better Way to Live!  
E-mail: [euronecc@gmail.com](mailto:euronecc@gmail.com)

**Nar-Anon World Convention 2024  
August 29 - September 1, 2024**

Learn Love Live!  
901 L St NW, Washington, DC 20001,  
United States  
Click here [For More Information](#)

**SoCalRegion Narathon  
September 14, 2024**

Sharing Recovery - Better Together  
2987 Mesa Verde Drive E  
Costa Mesa, California

**NAR-ANON 2025**

7 Night Recovery Cruise  
February 2-9, 2025  
Miami to Virgin Islands

**WSLiterature Committee  
- Cover Contest -**

The new 4th Step workbook needs a cover page. We are asking anyone who has an idea for a cover for the workbook to submit your ideas. The design must be your own creation. The title of the workbook must be included on the page:

*Fourth Step Workbook: A Collection of Inventories. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.*

Please send your questions or submissions by May 15, 2024 to [Litcom@nar-anon.org](mailto:Litcom@nar-anon.org).

**Newsletter eSubscriptions**

Subscriptions to date: >7981!

Did you Know - Newsletter eSubscriptions are free to members but WSO pays the bill!

**NAR-ANON FAMILY GROUPS**  
NAR-ANON WORLD HEADQUARTERS  
23110 Crenshaw Blvd. Ste. A  
Torrance, Ca. 90505  
800-477-6291 / 310-534-8188  
Website - [www.nar-anon.org](http://www.nar-anon.org)  
Email - [wso@nar-anon.org](mailto:wso@nar-anon.org)