

FAN & FANonline



Voice of the Families
Anonymous fellowship

Spring 2016

Attitudes

“Attitude is a little thing that makes a big difference”. - Winston Churchill

“My general attitude to life is to enjoy every minute of every day. I never do anything with a feeling of, ‘Oh God, I’ve got to do this today’.” – Richard Branson

Families Anonymous is a self-help organisation for relatives & friends concerned about another’s use of drugs or related behavioural problems.

£1

Dear All,

Spring has sprung!!



Welcome to the Spring FAN and my second edition as FAN editor.

The topic this issue is attitudes. Attitude can influence our progress with working the steps, and influence our own recovery choices. An improved, more positive attitude may aid our recovery and help us to grow. Whilst working through Step One, we learnt the painful truth that we are powerful over drugs and other people's lives. Something we do have power over however is our own attitude. Attitude can be everything. We can have a negative outlook or a positive outlook. By looking for the good in things, our lives can be enriched. By changing our attitudes and the way that we think, we can change how we feel.

What is included in this edition?

- Attitudes!
- Skype as a meeting option?
- Contributions from the Groups, the **most important input** to this Newsletter – **your** response to the editor's requests for individual or group efforts
- BoardWalk – what is going on with the FA Board
- Open letter from a sibling
- Selected Quotes and Clip Art

Please remember that all of your views about FA and FAN can be made known on these pages. All you need to do is email me at sullivan.k2@sky.com or contact me through the office.

WLITF Kate –FAN Editor

'Attitudes' as seen in 'Today a Better Way'

With the help of my Higher Power and the Families Anonymous program, I believe I am finally recovering. My recovery has required a change in my attitude. Now I have a clear conscience and a heart free of resentment, because I have worked the Steps and let their power heal my wounds and me. I don't feel others' shortcomings constitute a personal attack on me. I take care of my own well-being.

I have almost eliminated my compulsive behaviour with respect to family matters. It is no longer necessary for me to involve myself in every family discussion, every decision, and all responsibilities.

In addition, and with humility as my guide, I have been able to move out of self-imposed isolation and grow in the ability to share with others my feelings and my needs.

TODAY I WILL enjoy my new attitudes and the joy they give.

[Page 344 in *Today A Better Way*, ©Families Anonymous]



FA Convention 2016 - "Let it begin with me"

A quick appeal for members attending this year's Convention in Birmingham this month. I'd like to publish people's thoughts and feelings in the Summer edition of FAN. If anyone would like to put pen to paper, please email me at sullivan.k2@sky.com or contact me through the office.

Thank you in advance! - Ed



Addiction on T.V.

Did you watch War and Peace or Dickensian? How about Stan Lees lucky man or The Blacklist? You must be watching Happy Valley (isn't everyone)? Or Mr Selfridge and Call the Midwife? Oh and Elementary, I've dozens of those stacked up in my recorded shows, waiting to be watched.

Well these shows all have something in common. A character with addiction.

It seems whenever you switch on the t.v. the theme of addiction is running through it. We have been noticing it for some time. It is in every programme we choose to watch at the moment.

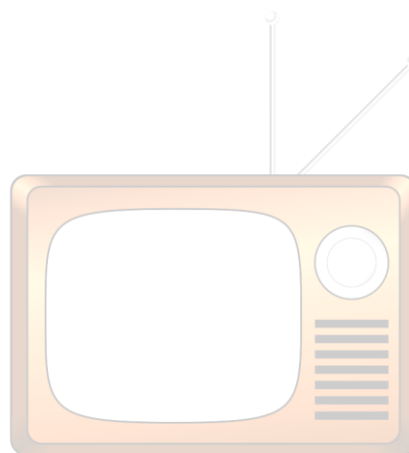
I don't think that writers are trying to get a specific message across; I just think it reflects everyday life. We are all touched by the hand of addiction.

It was probably always there in the story lines of our favourite shows, but it wasn't until we knew what we were looking for that we spotted the characteristics of an addict and knew how a certain character was going to be portrayed later in the story line.

A particularly well observed instance is the sister of Happy Valley's main character Catherine. Her recovering heroin addict sister is seen as doing really well in series one. In the beginning of the second series we see a stressful situation (a bereavement) effecting the character of Clare. She very quickly reverts back to her old ways of using and her sister can only watch, beg, scold, cajole and threaten her.

Catherine reverts so quickly to her old controlling ways. We can certainly identify with the situation. It is imperative for scenes like that to be portrayed on mainstream t.v. Others, who haven't a clue about the effect addicts have on their loved ones need to see the situation for what it is.

Until all of society sees the problem as one we all share, we will never put the resources and time into helping our addicts to help themselves to get well.



Phillipa, Gants Hill group

Open letter from a sibling

- Anonymous

Dear Mum and Dad,

Drug addiction, alcoholism and other related behavioural issues have taken hold of our family. I'm not sure you realise, but this illness is affecting not only the addict and you, but us siblings too.

I understand that you believe that you are helping, the thing is, you may be making it worse. As an onlooker, I see the situation somewhat differently to you.

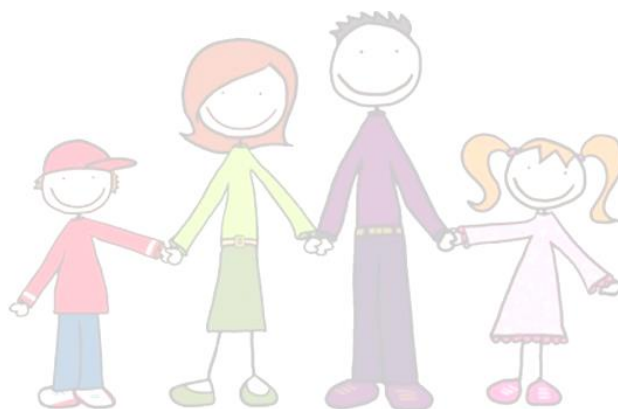
It's a strange phenomenon; I can see you take full responsibility for something you don't need to, whilst in other areas you take none. You're only responsible for your own actions and behaviour, not the addicts. You have the right to set boundaries and limits on what happens under your roof. You absolutely have the right to a secure and peaceful house. Without ground rules the addict is totally in charge. You cannot control them no matter how hard you try. Neither can you deliver them from temptation or protect them from harm. By taking responsibility for their problems and issues I don't think you're helping, I think it may actually weaken them. They need to experience the natural consequences of their own poor judgement and behaviour. By changing your attitude, you shift the responsibility for their actions and lifestyle into their shoulders. They need to face up to the consequences – at the moment it feels like you're standing in the way. By rescuing them and covering up their bad behaviour you may unintentionally encourage them to keep up their destructive conduct. Without them feeling the physical or emotional pain that can follow, they see no reason to change. When such behaviour means only pleasure or escape, it's unlikely they will ever see a reason to change. Especially if this behaviour is rewarded by the pleasure of getting high with no unpleasant results such as having to pay their own way, clean up after themselves, doing their own washing, cooking and ironing, the list goes on. I feel that you are preventing them from the very valuable opportunity to experience the consequences of their poor choices and may be setting them up for low self-esteem. By detaching and allowing some of the destructive consequences of their behaviour to affect them, there is a chance that they may decide there is a need for them to change.

It's ok to say that you find their behaviour unacceptable; that if they get intoxicated tonight, that they can't come home. I don't think that you have to live like this; I believe you now need to switch the focus onto yourself. To coin a phrase from the 60s; if you are not part of the solution, you are part of the problem.

If you feel fed up or ill then I think now might be the time for you to seek help or change the way that you are thinking and behaving. Go along to an FA meeting and maybe try to detach with love. You don't need to say anything, just go along and listen to others speak. You may be surprised, there are people going through similar problems to us. We are not alone.

Love from,

Your other children.



BoardWalk

BOARD MEETINGS HELD AT BATTERSEA OFFICE ON 5th December 2015
& 20th February 2016

- A discussion was had about using video conferencing as an alternative to “traditional” meetings.
- Ideas for the forthcoming convention in April were looked at.
- Any member is welcome to receive full Minutes of these, or any other Board meeting or AGM, simply by asking the Office to email or post them out a copy. Please do get involved!
- All groups are asked to liaise with their allocated Board member if they wish to raise anything at these meetings.
- All members of the Fellowship are reminded that they are more than welcome to come along and observe any Board meeting. Please discuss with your Board member about the possible reimbursement of travel costs by FA.



Remember! Please raise any concerns you may have with your Board Member.

Future Board meeting dates: AGM: Sunday 10 April 2016

Why not consider giving SERVICE to FA?

As ever FA is in search of volunteers of all descriptions! Please do consider giving service, it can make a difference to FA and to your own life! If you don't live near London and are worried about the distance this can be got around. With today's technology you can play your own part through attending a meeting without even being there via a conference call. Please give it your consideration! Thank you.

Skype

It had been suggested that a “video call” could be an alternative to attending a meeting in person. Maybe someone is unable to be there in person because of transport or childcare issues. Simon and I had a test run at this last month and were successful! Simon called me via his tablet and I chatted face to face with him from my laptop. Neither of us had to buy any special equipment. I have also video called people via my smartphone. Skype recently launched free group video calling on mobiles and tablets and you can get up to 25 people together for a group video call. Of course this will require an internet connection if you wanted to use it for a meeting and a little forethought, however, it could be an option. Further information is available via the help pages on the skype website: <https://support.skype.com/en/faq/FA10613/what-do-i-need-to-make-a-skype-video-call>

Of course if someone was worried about their anonymity, there is the option to use Skype in the same way you would a conference call.



Advance date for your diary.....

FA has been invited to take part in the Recovery Walk 2016. It's the weekend of 9/10 September 2016 and is in Halton near Widnes.

More details can be found here:

www.facesandvoicesofrecoveryuk.org/halton-2016/



This issue has focused on attitudes.

The content, unless specifically identified as from another source, is written entirely by FA members and presents each author's personal experience, strength and hope as part of their individual Twelve Step journey. Every editorial effort is made to ensure that the articles present a positive attitude "in spite of unsolved problems".

Once again, if you read something that does not agree with your viewpoint, please try to apply what we read at meetings: "take with you that which you can accept and leave the rest". As before, active feedback is welcomed about any changes you, the membership, would like to see in this newsletter. You may, for instance, want the focus to be on particular aspect of our recovery.

In the next Summer issue

The focus will be "be kind to yourself". Any and all contributions will be more than welcome! They certainly do not have to be about our focus subject. The more topics on offer the better! Write a letter to the Editor, get something off your chest, or offer perhaps the most valuable and important element in our fellowship – a share.

For the coming Summer 2016 issue, the following groups are asked to make a special effort: Brighton, Clydach, Glasgow Tuesday and Harrow. If you can't think what to write about, I'll give you some suggestions. Together, we can work it out! Of course nothing is compulsory!

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& in: USA (HQ), Australia, Canada, Gibraltar, Greece, India, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Mexico, Portugal, Russia, Spain and online meetings

