

Gratitude in Action (GIA)

4th edition – 2019

What is GIA?

GIA is a quarterly email publication of the WSI 12th Step Committee. Its purpose is to inspire FA members to engage in service and to carry the message of FA recovery to those who still suffer from food addiction.

Personal Reflections... Why Do Service?

I am a woman who likes comfort. I highly identify with the concept of being a “comfort seeking missile.” I have come to learn that “staying comfortable” is also a synonym for “stagnating.”

This has presented a dilemma for me. Although the AA Big Book states that we are capable of “limitless expansion” and I *want* to grow, I also don’t want to be uncomfortable. Thankfully, I have had sponsors who have told me it is “ok to be uncomfortable.” They have also pointed out that the discomfort is worth the end result.



My initial experience of being a voting conference member at the FA Business Convention was one of discomfort: I was uncomfortable traveling somewhere with people I did not know. I was uncomfortable being in a large crowd of food addicts (our local meetings are small). And mostly, I was uncomfortable voting on motions because I feared I would make a mistake.

While at the convention, I heard a wise member say that “service is not designed to be convenient or easy.” The purpose of service, such as being a voting member, is to keep me abstinent by helping other food addicts. Even after many years, this lesson still resonates for me. Today, I understand that the quality of my recovery is directly related to my willingness to do service.

My own recovery program is stronger today because I continue to do service when I can. I don’t just volunteer for the comfortable jobs at my meetings. I have been blessed to lead a phone AWOL and serve on a WSI subcommittee. Today, I feel blessed because I continue to know that service makes me stronger—especially when it is uncomfortable.

Becky M., Florida

Spotlight on Service: The World Service Business Convention

The World Service Business Convention is held annually in accordance with our World Service, Inc. (WSI) bylaws. All are invited and encouraged to attend, regardless of length of abstinence, and guests are also welcome at this event, which regularly draws together over 500 food addicts to strengthen our fellowship, conduct WSI business, and improve our ability to carry the message of recovery to those who still suffer.

One category of attendee—World Service Conference (WSC) Members—are selected by FA meetings as voting members of the conference. WSC members must have at least five years of continuous abstinence in FA and have completed one FA AWOL within their current term of abstinence. Election of one WSC member per meeting is held during the December or January business meeting to ensure that the member has sufficient time to plan travel and, if necessary, apply for financial aid. (See the Highlight section on page 7 for more information on financial aid.)

WSC members have specific responsibilities related to participating in the convention:

- Register as a WSC member at www.foodaddicts.org. (Choose “For Members,” “Convention,” “Business Convention,” and select “Conference Member Registration.”)
- Make sure your contact information is accurate in your online FA profile, in order to receive important material pertaining to business motions to be considered at convention.
- Carefully read all materials sent to WSC members in order to prepare for the convention.
- Attend the convention, including all business sessions as a member of the voting body.



Important Points About Being a Voting Conference Member

WSC members are elected by individual meetings. However, they represent the full body of FA as trusted servants, acting and voting in accordance with their consciences and in faith that our Higher Power will guide our fellowship. In this regard they function in the same way as any elected representatives, bearing in mind the needs and concerns of their meetings while listening and responding to the wisdom of other FA fellows who are seeking guidance through a shared commitment to service.



Typically, motions that have been placed on the convention agenda are sent to all WSC members at least one month prior to the convention. **All WSC members are asked to read this material as soon as it is received.** The WSB welcomes questions and feedback prior to the convention. The goal is that all WSC members can arrive at the convention feeling fully prepared and having a clear understanding of the intent and impact of all motions, prior to casting a vote.

Personal Reflections... Attending as a Non-Voting Member

The Transformative Power of Service

The 2019 business convention was the first one I ever attended, and I wasn't sure what to expect. The idea of going was initially brought to me in 2018, but I didn't think it was worth it, since I wasn't a voting member.

Originally, I had planned to go with other fellows, but when the time came, I was traveling solo, except I wasn't really alone. Thanks to the service of other fellows in the program, not only was I able to see who would be arriving at the airport at the same time as I was but also who else was needed to share a ride from the airport to the hotel! I ended up connecting with two other fellows, and we three were able to get to the hotel easily.

When I arrived at the convention I was immediately greeted and shown where I needed to go. Everything ran so smoothly thanks to the service of fellows who helped organize and coordinate the events, committees, and programming. Without their efforts, there wouldn't even be a business convention.

In the early days of my program, I had the same attitude towards business meetings that I initially had toward the business convention. "What's the point, if I can't vote?" But there's so much more to service than just voting. Attending the convention reminded me that "Any amount of service adds to the quality of our recovery" and that "it's never too soon to start serving." It makes me want to give back what I've so generously been given so that more and more people can have the same wonderful experience that I had.

Ro L., Texas



Experiencing Power in Fellowship

There are many reasons I attend the FA business convention, even though I am not eligible to vote since I don't yet meet the requirements to serve as a WSC member. I come from a small fellowship and I enjoy meeting fellows who gratefully share their experience, strength, and hope in this journey of recovery. The convention also helps get me out of the isolation and aloneness I once felt in my disease. I am encouraged by witnessing firsthand the immense power of so many individuals who are committed to carrying the message of recovery to food addicts worldwide. I am also struck by the spirit of love and support among members and the palpable presence of a Higher Power in the rooms, especially following the 10 minutes of quiet time and the reciting of the Serenity Prayer that proceeds each business session. Attending also provides the opportunity to consider a variety of ways to serve current members and attract

new members. My experience of the convention today means that, in the future, voting will just be a natural “next step.”

Jan W., Michigan

Seeing Group Conscience at Work

When I first attended the WSBC we were still calling our voting members “representatives,” and I was annoyed that I couldn’t be one since I didn’t meet the abstinence requirements. “I have something of value to share,” I told myself, and I felt it wasn’t fair that my voice wouldn’t count. I went anyway because I wanted to see for myself how we conducted business in FA, especially on issues that I felt strongly about. What I saw was really surprising. I had expected to see groups of people voting as blocks in favor of their special-interest ideas. Instead, I heard individual members voicing their suggestions and concerns and other members listening in response, offering new ideas and often changing their perspectives. The process was messy at times, which I found frustrating, but it was always tempered by the spirit of service and a willingness to consider all viewpoints. My sponsor had reminded me to “Let Go and Let God,” and I saw for myself that our fellowship was in good hands, even when I wasn’t a voting member of the Conference.

Anonymous

Personal Reflections... Attending as a WSC Member

Benefits of Being a World Service Conference Member

When asked how being a conference member has changed me personally, I have to say, “In many ways.” I did not have any confidence in myself, as far as the business of FA was concerned. I learned so much by just watching the process of voting on motions and how our Traditions and Bylaws were taken into consideration. I also learned about our organization and our World Service Board. As my confidence grew, so did a desire to be part of the team working together for the improvement of FA. I developed a passion for the Traditions and for the Bylaws, and by joining these WSI committees, I was able to do service at a different level than our local meetings. I have developed friendships with people from all over the world who attend the business convention annually, and it has become like a large family reunion. For someone who wanted no part of the business, I look forward to being a part of all of it now. It has certainly gotten me out of my isolated world of food.

Sue G., Florida



The Challenges and Obstacles I Overcame to Attend the Business Convention

I refused to go to convention for my first 11 ½ years in FA. I had a million excuses: my wife wasn't supportive, our kids were too small, and I would miss synagogue on Saturday (never mind that I eventually stopped going every Saturday and that I would always go out Saturdays anyway.) Then my wife spent a year in the hospital, and she could not be left alone at night, and our kids were just about to enter high school.

One day, my sponsor asked me about attending the fellowship convention. My only response was, "I had no plans to go and have never gone to any convention previously." With further thought, I realized I had no valid reasons for not attending. I committed to going and made the plans necessary to get me there. Not enough money? I set aside money every month just for the convention (the same way I did for other things). Not enough vacation time? Truth is I get plenty of vacation time, so I just set aside that time. My wife does not go to the business convention with me (she is not in FA), and she still needs assistance at night, so we either pay somebody to stay with her, or our daughter, who is 21, comes to stay with her. Once I got clear about how important this is for my recovery, my wife and children became supportive. It was like magic.



Since attending the business convention and now acting as a voting member, my program has gotten stronger and stronger. I have made connections with more fellows around the globe, and I have been able to gain more strength from those connections. Being around hundreds of people doing what I do, one meal at a time, has helped me understand myself better and be able to have feelings today and be able to express them and share them. I believe everyone in FA would benefit from going to the business Convention regularly, whether they are a voting member or not. The fellowship alone is worth every effort needed to attend. It has been a great benefit for me to see how FA works to support our local groups.

I now see that the things that kept me from the convention were keeping me from deepening my recovery. I am thankful my sponsor challenged me to attend, and I was willing to take the step despite the challenges.

Michael P., Texas

Hello Convention! Connecting in Service!!

My sponsor had previously been involved as a note taker at the business convention. This particular year, she was passing the mantle and recommended me as a note taker to the committee in charge of this service. I thought, "Yikes! Note taker? *Me?*" I never took good notes in school, so how could I keep up at the business convention? Fortunately, a group of us were serving as note takers. I found solace in the collective body, and in the fact that I was not

up at the front table alone. It was during this process that I formed a wonderful bond with a fellow. She was also recommended to be note taker. As we sat together, discussing our thoughts, fears, and logistics, we got to know each other. A comment on her beautifully handwritten notes sparked a discussion about her life. I found out she used that beautiful penmanship in a profession that was linked very closely to mine. We exchanged numbers (hers was international), and that was at least 4 years ago. In the time since, she and I have kept in touch. It refreshes my recovery to have connected with a fellow who understands when I call to talk about the demanding nature of our clients. She knows exactly how I feel, helps me to know I'm not alone, and shares how she gets through these times.

How wonderful that each time I do service at convention I connect with someone from another country or state whom I would not have ever known. Service at convention has allowed me to make connections, strengthening the ties that carry me through life and connecting me to God and this fellowship. Thank you, God, for service, convention, and my ever-widening fellowship!

Akia W., District of Columbia



Traditions Corner – Using Seventh Tradition Funds to Support World Service Conference Members

Document 8, *From a Traditions Perspective*, addresses a common inquiry of FA meetings about using the meeting's Seventh Tradition funds to defray some of the costs of WSC members who will attend the FA World Service Business Convention. As stated in this document, the Traditions Committee suggests that meetings *not* use their funds in this way, for three reasons:

1. Seventh Tradition funds are designed to be used at the meeting level "to carry the message of recovery to the food addict who still suffers." Intergroups are better positioned to provide financial assistance to conference members, based on established criteria for financial assistance.
2. Providing financial support for individual FA members to attend the business convention as voting members can lead to controversy. FA members in a meeting group could rightfully ask why Seventh Tradition funds would be used to benefit a particular member attending convention rather than helping us meet our primary purpose of helping food addicts.
3. If FA members were to be financially supported or sponsored by their meetings to attend the business convention, they might feel obligated to share specific concerns of the *meeting* rather than trusting their individual consciences and representing the fellowship at large.

Highlight: FA World Service Business Convention Information

The next FA Business Convention will take place on June 12-14, 2020, at the Doubletree by Hilton Hotel in Danvers, Massachusetts. The convention will begin with an FA meeting on Friday at 10:00 a.m. followed by the FA Forum from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m. Business sessions will begin on Saturday morning, June 13, and will last through the close of convention on Sunday, June 14.



JUNE 2020						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

Need-based, partial financial aid is available for all WSC members who qualify. The application is available by sending an email request to your respective intergroup:

waiconventionresource@foodaddicts.org or eaifinancialaidandres@foodaddicts.org. For detailed information, including instructions on how to register beginning in January 2020 and on service opportunities at convention, please visit the [Business Convention webpage](#).

Words to Live By

“No longer suffering ourselves, we want to help those who are still struggling with addiction. Our perspective shifts. We look at FA in terms of what we can give, rather than what we can get, and we make the needs of those who are new our first concern.”

Food Addicts in Recovery Anonymous, pp. 410–411.

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Share your experience!

Sharing experience, strength, and hope is essential to our recovery—and to *Gratitude in Action* (GIA). Your submissions can help inspire all of us to do service. In particular, we're looking for brief paragraphs on how service in FA has enriched your life and strengthened your recovery.

Please email your stories of experience to GIA@foodaddicts.org by **December 15**. Other submissions are welcome on a rolling basis. We're also looking for FA members with 2 or more years of abstinence to join the GIA subcommittee. Please contact us at the email above to let us know your interest.