

SERENITY TIMES

A VIRTUAL NEWSLETTER

BROUGHT TO YOU BY WESTCHESTER UNITED INTERGROUP

3RD QUARTER 2020



SERVICES

OA ZOOM MEETINGS:

Access the virtual meeting schedule, via Google Doc or .pdf, by going to:

Rmd.me/NGoMKEzzfQF

Downloading Google Docs and Google Drive apps will allow you to access the most up-to-date version of the meeting schedule.



THE SAVING GRACE OF SERVICE

I created an affirmation for myself which reminds me that OA is a program of *action*: I live in gratitude and action today, using and developing the gifts that God has given me as evidence of my appreciation for them. One of my other affirmations tells me that the only way that I ensure that I will fail at something is to not try or begin doing something; that is one way my perfectionism (and sloth) sneak out sometimes— "How could I have *possibly* done what you wanted me to do *perfectly*...there was not enough time/help/knowledge (whatever) to do it!"

But once I accept that OA and God call me to do *service, not a JOB*, the paradigm shifts and I realize that I am here serving others and my Higher Power, not myself. God sees the entire picture while I can glimpse through only a small window at any moment; He knows why I am doing what I am doing at any given time—He knows where I'm going and why I am doing something.

Service has provided me with the ability to learn many new computer and communication skills that I would not have had the opportunity to learn had I not been doing service for others in OA. I have met folks from all over the world and learned to work in collaboration with others, neither "bossing" nor "being bossed." I have learned to be a trusted servant in OA.

I have also been taught to do service **just beyond** my comfort level, because that is how I will grow—by doing things that I'm not quite comfortable and competent doing, trusting that God will provide a net if I fall. It causes me to ask for help when I encounter difficult times, and I have learned to become better at doing that too; it doesn't require *as much pain* before I will reach out for assistance and guidance.

Service utilized my unique talents...and we all have them. I don't waste energy or soul power comparing myself to those who came before me in a position that I accept or volunteer for; I look within for *my unique qualifications* that I can contribute to the position and utilize those! We all have something to contribute...I simply get quiet and listen to God to find out what I can do and work with what I have. Those who follow me have different strengths—and they are awesome, and different! What a wonderful community we have. Giving of myself has enabled me to grow exponentially and receive beyond my wildest dreams. It makes me want to give more. As the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous says on page twenty, "Our very lives, as ex-problem drinkers, depend upon our constant thought of others and how we may help meet their needs."

If I am serving others and utilizing my talents at the same time, who has time to think about compulsive eating...I can't think of two things at the same time! And time flies when I'm having fun "...we aren't a glum lot" (*Alcoholics Anonymous*, p. 132).

Mary T





FIND GOD, GET WELL, AND HELP OTHERS

I sent this passage from the AA 12&12 to a sponsee recently. It's from the end of the 12th Step, and it blew me away:

"Still more wonderful is the feeling that we do not have to be specially distinguished among our fellows in order to be useful and profoundly happy. Not many of us can be leaders of prominence, nor do we wish to be. Service, gladly rendered, obligations squarely met, troubles well accepted or solved with God's help, the knowledge that at home or in the world outside we are partners in a common effort, the well-understood fact that in God's sight all human beings are important, the proof that love freely given surely brings a full return, the certainty that we are no longer isolated and alone in self-constructed prisons, the surety that we need no longer be square pegs in round holes but can fit and belong in God's scheme of things—these are the permanent and legitimate satisfactions of right living for which no amount of pomp and circumstance, no heap of material possessions, could possibly be substitutes. True ambition is not what we thought it was. True ambition is the deep desire to live usefully and walk humbly under the grace of God. These little studies of A.A.'s Twelve Steps now come to a close. We have been considering so many problems that it may appear that A.A. consists mainly of racking dilemmas and troubleshooting. To a certain extent, that is true. We have been talking about problems because we are problem people who have found a way up and out, and who wish to share our knowledge of that way with all who can use it. For it is only by accepting and solving our problems that we can begin to get right with ourselves and with the world about us, and with Him who presides over us all. Understanding is the key to right principles and attitudes, and right action is the key to good living; therefore the joy of good living is the theme of A.A.'s Twelfth Step."

I realized that I often overlook the joy in these steps, especially in OA when there seems like so much work to be done. But joy is the point. When I was binging I thought I was joyful. I thought if I could just eat as much as I wanted, I could be truly happy. That's why I loved holidays so much. I could eat what I wanted without feeling guilty. But the day after, I could never get back on the wagon happily. I never wanted that special day to end. Soon enough I was miserable, wondering why God cursed me with this insatiable hunger.

Now I find so much peace in working this program, especially the 12th Step. I used to think people were my problem. Now I love people and have experienced what an amazing support my fellows can be. My attitude was the problem. My unwillingness to forgive, to accept, to love and be loved: these character defects got me into trouble. When I work the 12th Step - by sponsoring, doing service at Intergroup to help carry the message, participate in or lead workshops, even share at meetings - I feel joyful, and maybe even more importantly, I feel free of the food obsession.

I had a sponsor tell me something that changed my whole view of program. I was in a relapse and being generally morose about program. She said to me, "Chelsea, the point of this work we're doing (Steps in the Big Book) is not so you can be skinny and look good; it is so you can find God, get well, and help the next suffering compulsive overeater." Whoa, whoa, whoa. That knocked me out. I had been doing all this work, trying to get an A, trying to be perfect, so I could just stop binging and not be disgusted when I put on a bathing suit. I saw the 12th Step as: Having had a spiritual awakening, we searched deep in our closets and proudly fit into those skinny jeans again. Apparently, not.

We have to give it away to keep it. Yes, I can't transmit something I haven't got, but once I get it, I'll lose it if I don't throw myself into service. And just fitting into those jeans will not bring me close to anything like the joy and freedom that comes through working with others to carry the message of recovery.

— Chelsea, Mt. Kisco



TWELFTH STEP SERVICE

The most rewarding experience in recovery has been through twelve step service.

The service that I most cherish is sponsoring, bearing witness to people that have my problem, and sharing my experience, strength, and hope. Watching each soul change from hopeless to hopeful, insane to sane, and miserable to happy is a life altering experience each time it happens.

Other twelve step service includes speaking at meetings and telling my story. Working on Intergroup activities and providing service to my home meeting provides a real sense of belonging to our fellowship. I am always glad to speak to newcomers and help them begin their journey. Giving back is synonymous with doing God's will. I try not to resist and just do it. The rewards that I have realized include being free of obsessive food thoughts, feeling useful, having purpose in my life, and knowing that I really am okay... as long as I am willing to be of service.

Anonymous



WHAT SERVICE HAS DONE FOR ME

As some of you may know, I love doing service, mostly, usually. Truthfully, I'm lucky to get to a meeting on time, so not generally big on setting up, but will usually stick around to help clean up if needed. I have done almost every service job in a meeting from making coffee to greeting newcomers to leading and to serving as an Intergroup Rep or the Literature person. One of my favorites was chairing the Business Meeting. Why, you may ask? Are you a masochist? Not at all. I liked being able to hear everyone's point of view on things and to work toward a mutually satisfying outcome, or as OA calls it "substantial unanimity." It might be my tendency toward co-dependency or peacemaking, or maybe it has a healthy side to it, let's hope so.

I've heard "service is slimming" for years. And now I believe it. In my early abstinence, I wanted to hit the 30-day mark, and other milestones, so that I could hold service positions. I am a compulsive eater just like the man in the AA Big Book who takes whiskey in his milk has the sudden idea that that would be okay. Sometimes, I get a sudden idea that I can eat normally or that I can have just one of something that is a trigger food. In OA, I have learned to "think through the drink" or "brood about the food," as I call it. When I think it through, I realize that I probably could not eat just one. I realize that, in fact, I've tried that experiment thousands of times, and hasn't worked. Then I realize that I would have to give up every one of my service positions, and I would be letting people down, not to mention my embarrassment, shame and humiliation. And I'm never sure if I will have another recovery in me. Doing service has kept me from picking up on many occasions.

Someone recently called me "patient," and they didn't mean it as a noun. Doing service as the Chair of the Intergroup is truly humbling. At first, I was sure I wasn't up to the task. How could I take the place of the former Chairs who had done such an outstanding job? Some days, I'm still not sure I'm up to it. Sometimes there are so many emails and texts, I have trouble concentrating on my job (the paying one). I am learning to slow down, pause, and ask my Higher Power for help. Recently, I was very nervous about a task I needed to do. I picked up the AA meditation book, "As Bill Sees It," one of my favorites, and looked up fear. It directed me to page 46 which includes: "True ambition is not what we thought it was. True ambition is the profound desire to live usefully and walk humbly under the grace of God." That floored me. All I need to do is align myself with my Higher Power's will for me. If I do service well, it can be a very spiritual experience. I can leave behind my character defects, the ones I used to eat over, and perhaps someone will call me "patient" for the first time in my life. Our former Intergroup Chair has told me that I will learn so much in the role, and she is absolutely correct.

We always need people to do service, and it helps our recovery. Please make a point of talking with Cathy C., our Service Coordinator. You will receive more than you give.

Carol G.

WORKING WITH OTHERS

The Big Book has a whole chapter devoted to the Twelfth Step. It's called, "Working with Others." That's an indication of the importance of service. Step Eleven tells of the importance of the use of prayer and meditation in order to improve our conscious contact with God. I incorporate Step Eleven into my spiritual life, and I serve others as directed in Step Twelve. I know that each step builds on the previous one. What I missed, until recently, is that Step Twelve is necessary in order to enhance Step Eleven.

In telling his own story, Bill W says that we must perfect and enlarge our spiritual life through work and self-sacrifice for others in order to be able to meet any calamity with serenity. He also tells us specifically how to do it: "For if an alcoholic failed to perfect and enlarge his spiritual life through work and self-sacrifice for others, he could not survive the certain trials and low spots ahead. If he did not work, he would surely drink again, and if he drank, he would surely die" (pp. 14-15). Later in the book Bill states, "Just to the extent that we do as we think He would have us, and humbly rely on Him, does He enable us to match calamity with serenity" (p. 68). The word "calamity" would be the "certain trials" noted above.

What this has taught me is that spirituality includes prayer and meditation, building up and deepening a relationship with our Higher Power. It is Step Eleven that gives me the power and strength to participate in Step Twelve. It is through Step Twelve that I perfect and enlarge my spiritual life. I must work and sacrifice my self (ego) for the still suffering Compulsive Overeaters. Even if they don't recover, I will continue to remain recovered. If I stop serving others, I stop growing spiritually, and I begin to grow bodily.

There's another very important fact that I need to share. The joy in giving freely of what I have received is better than anything else I have ever experienced. Don't take my word for it, try it.

Jeanette R.
Croton-on-Hudson



SEVENTH TRADITION CONTRIBUTIONS:



WE ARE FULLY SELF-SUPPORTING THROUGH OUR OWN CONTRIBUTIONS, DECLINING OUTSIDE DONATIONS.

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THE SERENITY TIMES

NEEDS YOUR SERVICE! IT IS WRITTEN BY LOCAL MEMBERS FOR LOCAL MEMBERS. THE THEME FOR THE FOURTH QUARTER OF 2020 IS ON THE FOURTH STEP OF MORAL INVENTORY AND THE PRINCIPLE OF COURAGE: SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCES BY WORKING THE TOOL OF WRITING AND HELPING FELLOW OA'S. YOUR ANECDOTES, POEMS, FAVORITE QUOTES, AND LITERATURE ARE AMONGST SOME OF THE ITEMS YOU CAN SUBMIT. SHARE WHAT INSPIRES YOU TO:

WUIGNEWSLETTER@GMAIL.COM



WUIG USES *REMINDO* TO SEND TIMELY INFORMATIONAL MASS TEXT MESSAGES TO OUR WUIG MEMBERSHIP.

This is NOT interactive texting and is used for WUIG reminders and announcements only. To get connected, enter **81010** in the "To" line of the text message, and **@wuig** in the body of the text message and then send it! Follow the prompts you'll receive after you send it. To stop receiving texts, reply @LEAVE to the number you are receiving messages from.

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

WUIG needs your help. Volunteer your time, enrich your abstinence and recovery by helping in the following positions:

A: Intergroup meeting reps for:

Tuesday Pleasantville 9:30 a.m.

Weds Pelham 5:30 pm

Weds Katonah 7:30 pm

Thurs White Plains 12:30 pm

Fridays White Plains 10:30am

Sat South Salem 9:00 am

Sat Yonkers 5:00 pm

Sun Tarrytown 11:30 am



B: If you're a Facebook fan, we're looking for folks with an interest in answering messages (within one hour) from newcomers...just to let them know they've been heard and we're here. It's not a fulltime job--we'll be rotating service regularly on a schedule so the more people we have, the shorter the time commitment. Text Mary T at 914-420-9529 for more info!

C: The 3pm check-in meeting had five newcomers (some abstinent already!) from around the world looking for sponsors! We've made connections with four of them; if you are an available sponsor, at least willing to get someone started, looking to really soar your program to a new level in this virtual world, text your cell number and email address to Mary T at 914-420-9529

INTERGROUP TRUSTED SERVANTS:

CHAIR: CAROL G WUIGCHAIR@GMAIL.COM

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