

The Serenity Times

A Westchester United Intergroup Publication

Second Quarter 2023

Love of God/HP



Exemplified in Love for Self & Others:

OA Fellows Share Their Journey

OA Zoom Meetings:



Access the virtual meeting schedule, via Google Doc or pdf:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/18bXW0gCJEVsxVYO-WGe_ZqSTsOjOtx83l94zBV0wuY0/edit

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

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Keep Your Meeting Details Up-to-Date

If your meeting makes any changes (i.e., returning to face-to-face, becoming hybrid, or transitioning to two meetings) or the meeting has closed entirely, please:

Update World Service: <https://oa.org/add-a-meeting/edit-a-meeting/>

Update WUIG: laurensprogram@gmail.com



Westchester United InterGroup Welcomes:



New World Service Delegates, Cindy C and Cathy C.

New Region 6 Representatives, Rob M and Annie A.

WUIG Workshop Topics for 2023:

10th Stepping Throughout the Day/How to do a 10th Step; **Body Image**; **Steps 1-12**; **Wisdom of the Big Book**: Instructions, Warnings, Prayers & Promises; **Robert's Rules of Order/Feeling Safe in Meetings**. We need fellows to run the 10th Step and the Steps 1-12 workshops. Please contact Deborah S. (mopandbean@gmail.com) or Cathy C (clcprogram14@gmail.com).



WELCOME
home

REGION 6 WELCOMES YOU TO OUR FIRST IN PERSON
CONVENTION SINCE 2019

SAVE THE DATE
OCTOBER 13-15, 2023

TO BE HELD AT THE SONESTA HOTEL, WHITE PLAINS, NY



Region 6 Convention needs volunteers.
Please contact thechuckfarmer@gmail.com.

WELCOME home

WHITE PLAINS NY

Region 6 of Overeaters Anonymous
invites you to attend the
2023 Region 6 Convention!
JOIN US IN PERSON

TENTATIVE HIGHLIGHTS

Friday, October 13

3:00 pm Registration opens
4:00 pm Workshops begin
6:00 pm Buffet
8:00 pm Grand opening/keynote speaker

Saturday, October 14

8:30 am Workshops continue throughout day
6:30 pm Banquet
8:00 pm Keynote speaker

Sunday, October 15

9:00 am Workshops begin
10:30 am Closing session

General Service Opportunities

We need your help with service
Email will arrive in late-summer
with all the service options

Workshop Speakers

Information to follow in late summer

For additional information, please contact:

r6conventionchair@oaregion6.org

For registration information, please contact:

r6conventionregistrar@gmail.com

2023 REGION 6 CONVENTION WELCOME HOME

CONVENTION REGISTRATION

Registration is online only to Sept 28th:

Click here to register

Credit Card/PayPal accepted

****No refunds or transfers****

- \$55 USD to August 15
- \$65 USD - August 16 - Sept 28
- \$75 USD - Registration at the door
- \$45 USD - Friday Night Buffet Dinner
- \$60 USD - Saturday Night Banquet Dinner

HOTEL INFORMATION

Sonesta Hotel

66 Hale Ave., White Plains, NY, 10601

Hotel Occupancy Rates

- King/Double Room \$179 US + tax/night
- Triple Room \$189 US + tax/night
- Quad Room \$199 US + tax/night

Room Reservation Information

- Hotel reservations must be made by September 12 to guarantee the R6 Convention rate
- Cancellation Policy:** Cancel by 3pm 48 hours prior to arrival to avoid charges

Additional Hotel Information

- Self Parking is \$10 per car per day

2 Ways to Register for the Hotel

1. OA Region 6 website:

Click Here

2. Phone reservations 1-866-594-6747



Raffle Tickets

OA Region 6 Convention - 2023



WELCOME
home

[2023 Convention - Welcome Home - Region 6 of Overeaters](#)

Raffle Tickets

Prizes:

1st prize: Convention Registration and Hotels

2nd prize: Full set of Convention Recordings

3rd prize: Convention Registration (prizes are transferrable)

\$10.00 USD for 5 chances

Unfortunately, no refunds are available.

Prize drawn during the Fall assembly on 9/23/2023.

Purchase your raffle tickets by 1:30pm ET 9/23/2023:

<https://square.link/>

VISIT STEPPING STONES



Historic Home Of Bill and Lois Wilson

Join the Special Events Committee of Greater NY Metro Intergroup of OA.

Saturday April 1, 2023

12:00 Fellowship Lunch/Meeting. (Bring your own Lunch)

12:30 Tour Intro followed by 1:00-2:30 Tour

RAIN OR SHINE (If Raining, bring an umbrella, as part of the tour is outdoors)

Meet At Stepping Stones

62 Oak Road

Katonah, NY 10536

Directions by Car and Public Transportation are on the website.

Register ASAP: 20 person Capacity.

1. <https://www.steppingstones.org/>
2. Tour Request Form
3. Select 04/01/2023 (When asked for alternative date, enter 4/1/2023 again.)
4. Enter group: Greater NY Metro Intergroup of OA

Email confirmation sent at time of request, and reservation acceptance within a day or two.
WHEN YOU RECEIVE CONFIRMATION, PLEASE EMAIL NAME, EMAIL ADDRESS, AND
PHONE NUMBER TO:

specialevents@oanyc.org

Suggested Donation of \$10.00 can be made at Stepping Stones

Donations Can also be made online, as well as in person, to: <https://oanyc.org/contributions/>

Email Questions to Jeri S. specialevents@oanyc.org



You're Invited to an
**OVEREATERS
ANONYMOUS BIG BOOK
BIRTHDAY BASH**
Celebrating the 84nd
Anniversary of its
Publication!

Everyone invited to listen and/or share
on favorite passages in the Big Book
& **how we** use the Big Book in recovery!

April 10, 2023, 7-8PM, Fellowship after
Zoom link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81741958563?pwd=OHh0cnFqK1hmRDlvaEVNek5sZnlPZz09>

Meeting ID: 817 4195 8563

Password: 048782

Dial in: 1-646-558-8656

In Person: St. Mark's Episcopal Church, 15
Pearl St, Mystic, CT

Hosted by the Ocean & Bay Big Book Celebration Meeting
Questions: Contact John @ 860-304-7210 (Call or text)

Mass Bay Intergroup invites you to
Coming Back to OA: A New Beginning



Saturday April 22, 2023, 10:30 am - Noon

Come hear a panel of speakers share their journey from relapse to recovery

Join via Zoom or Telephone (can join at 10:15am)
Zoom meeting ID: 84101180358 Passcode: 790766

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84101180358?
pwd=aks4SXp5eWdMWm51QTNad1NUd0JQUT09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84101180358?pwd=aks4SXp5eWdMWm51QTNad1NUd0JQUT09)

Phone only, call 929-205-6099 US, same ID and password.

For questions, please contact: info@oambi.org

Phone: 1-781-641-2303



Security Updates for Virtual Meetings



Overeaters Anonymous - Region 6

*New York, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New Hampshire, Maine,
Vermont, Central & Eastern Ontario, Quebec, Newfoundland & Labrador,
New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, and Bermuda*

We are concerned about a new type of Zoom meeting intrusion, called Deepfake videos. Please read the information below to learn more about what they are and how we can prevent this from happening.

Deepfakes are new sophisticated ways to disrupt our Zoom meetings. The disrupters are using Artificial Intelligence coupled with video to pretend to be a regular member of the group. The current host is tricked into giving the host code to another member that they think is someone they know. Once the troublemaker has the host code, they take over the meeting and ruin it.

What can I do to prevent this?

Zoom has a helpful guide here: [Securing Your Zoom Meetings.pdf](#)

To prevent Deepfake takeovers, here are some tips:

- Verify that you are using the most updated version of Zoom with access to the latest security measures.
- Immediately update all your host codes used on your Zoom Account.
- Keep host codes as sensitive information. Set parameters as to who can access them.
- During a meeting before transferring the host code, ask the person to whom you are giving the code to turn on their video. Have a conversation with this person, asking questions that require more than a yes or no answer. If possible, use personal questions that only that person would know or info not readily available on the internet. Verify that the answers are correct and that the person seems "right."

Oa.org has published a guidebook on Zoom meetings and security: [Videoconference Meeting Training and Security/Preventive Measures \(oa.org\)](#)

If you have been impacted:

1. Enable a Waiting Room
 - When the waiting room is enabled, participants can't join the meeting until you admit them.
2. Come up with a Code Word with your Host and alternative Hosts
 - Set up a code word with all of your hosts that only the hosts would know.
 - Do not write this code word down.
 - Ask for the code word when you are asked for the host codes (Only on Camera)
3. Only allow host to Share Screen
4. Move the Participant into the Waiting Room
 - If you suspect or have an active Zoom intrusion in your meeting, you can select the three dots on their picture or in the participants list and select Put in Waiting Room.
 - This will keep the participant out of the room and disables their ability to disrupt the meeting.

[Visit Region 6 Website](#)



Southwest Connecticut OA Tranquility Self Care Through the Steps

Weekend Retreat – June 23-25 2023. Fifteenth Annual Retreat
Incarnation Conference Center
253 Bushy Hill Road
Deep River, CT 06417

Enjoy the serenity.
Beautiful, natural setting situated on 700
wooded acres with hiking trails and a lake.
Hiking, canoeing, and kayaking are available.

DEADLINE FOR REGISTRATION FORMS AND SCHOLARSHIP REQUESTS: JUNE 10, 2023

https://www.swctoa.org/uploads/9/3/6/3/93630392/tranquility_retreat_swct_3.15_early_bird.pdf

Visit the OA Virtual Region



Home of twenty-two intergroups and fellowship meetings around the world
including meetings in English, Spanish, French, and Greek.

<http://www.oavirtualregion.org>

OA World News & Resources



Overeaters Anonymous has more than **US\$85,600** to support groups in translating OA literature and materials, such as the OA, Inc.

Bylaws and the Business Conference Policy Manual.

<https://oa.org/news/calling-all-translators-funding-available-now/?news-category=0&page=0>

SATURDAY APRIL 1ST, 2023

WORKSHOP

APRIL 1ST FROM 1-3PM (PST)

TOPIC

TWO LONG-TIMERS TALK FOR A LONGTIME.

Q&A following each share.

ZOOM LINK

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82532602765?
pwd=ZS9EMjJEN2U5ZEdNa0d8ZUQ1UVFhZz09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82532602765?pwd=ZS9EMjJEN2U5ZEdNa0d8ZUQ1UVFhZz09)

Meeting ID: 825 3260 2765
Passcode: 976699

One tap mobile
+16699009128

Suggested Contribution: \$10

<https://oasfvalley.org/event/two-long-timers-talk-for-a-long-time-workshop/>



Twelfth Step Within Workshop

Living the OA Promises

These gifts are available to all of us

Saturday, April 22, 2023
10:30 A.M. – 12:30 P.M. PDT
(1:30 P.M. – 3:30 P.M. EDT)

Zoom Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85429749682>
Zoom ID: 854 2974 9682 (no passcode)

Freedom is not free.

Learn how we can earn the 12 Promises of OA.

Be inspired by listening to speakers and participants share how the Promises enlighten their lives with inherent joy and freedom!

This workshop is offered by OA San Diego Intergroup's Twelfth Step Within Committee. No registration or fees. The 7th tradition will be observed. All are welcome! Questions? Please contact Elyesse at tsw@oasandiego.org.



2023 OA Literature

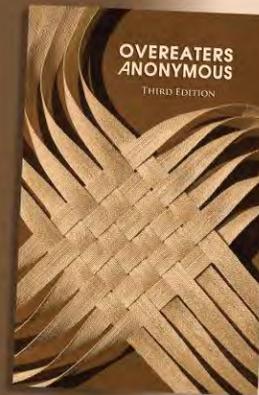
Catalog and Order Form Available Now:

<https://oa.org/news/2023-literature-catalog-and-order-form-available-now/?news-category=0&page=0>



APPENDIX A

The Role of
a Plan of Eating
in
Recovery from
Compulsive Eating



Audio Recordings of Appendices to *Overeaters Anonymous*,
Third Edition Now on Lifeline.oa.org:

<https://oa.org/news/audio-recordings-of-appendices-to-overeaters-anonymous-third-edition-now-on-lifeline-oa-org/?news-category=0&page=0>



Responsibility Pledge

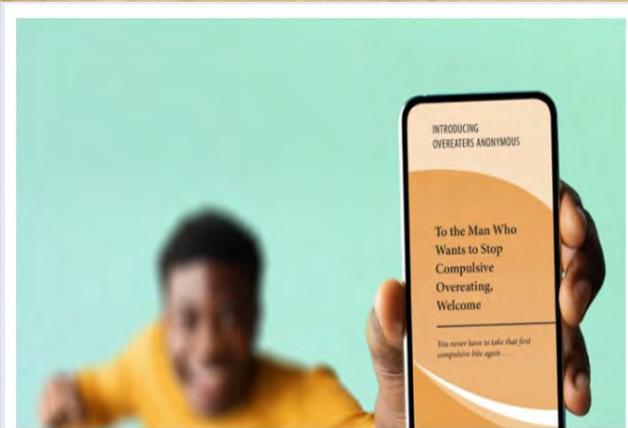
**Always to extend the hand and heart of OA to all
who share my compulsion;
for this I am responsible.**

Use this One Piece of Literature Skit to present a fun reminder of the diversity of our literature and our approaches to the Twelve Steps.

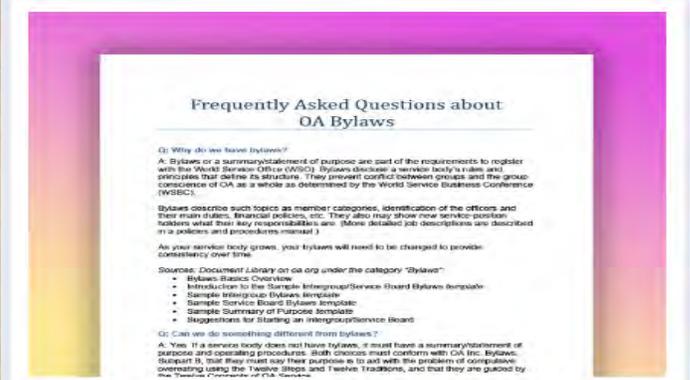
Rozanne's Prayer (the OA promise)

I put my hand in yours, and together we can do what we could never do alone. No longer is there a sense of hopelessness, no longer must we each depend upon our own unsteady willpower.

We are all together now, reaching out our hands for power and strength greater than ours, and as we join hands, we find love and understanding beyond our wildest dreams.



New! To the Man E-book



Bylaws FAQs Answered in New Document



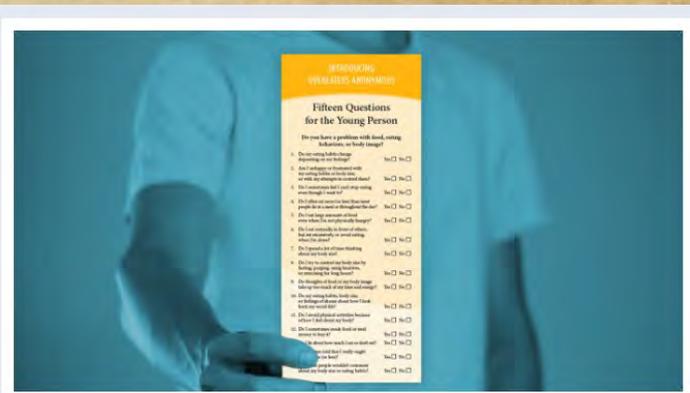
New Free Digital Download on OA.org: Service, Traditions, and Concepts Workshop Manual and Presentation



Updated Lifeline Meeting Format Available



NEW Videoconference Meeting Training and Security/Preventive Measures



JUST IN: Fifteen Questions for the Young Person Outreach Flyer

WORLD SERVICE BUSINESS CONFERENCE

CONCEPTS OF SERVICE: THE HEART OF FELLOWSHIP

SPONSORED BY: OA WORLD SERVICE

EVENT TYPE: FACE-TO-FACE, ALBUQUERQUE, NM



The World Service Business Conference (WSBC) is **the annual business meeting of Overeaters Anonymous, Inc.** WSBC serves as the collective conscience of the Fellowship of Overeaters Anonymous. Held annually in April or May, this week-long meeting is attended by delegates representing OA service bodies around the world.

<https://oa.org/events/world-service-business-conference-2023/>

From Him and To Him



I believe God created me, and the rest of mankind, in His image. I also believe that when I die, I will return to Him. During this lifetime, a tiny piece of sand on the beach of eternity, my mission is *all about the dash*, as described by one of our Arizona fellows. What I do with the life and gifts the Creator has given me, from the time of my birth to the time of my death, hence, the dash, is all about cleaning up my act enough that I can follow His will. Being of maximum service to God and my fellows, or God and every single person I encounter, is the role He has laid out for me. He has gifted me with life. What I give back to Him, in this life, is my gift to Him. The specifics vary, but all have the theme of being filled with His light and love, a courier of sorts, and channeling His grace to others. Being filled with the Creator's grace suffuses my entire being with love. Through diligently working the OA program, I am closer to God and privy to events where every cell of my being shines and vibrates with His love and grace. His love beckons me, and magnetically returns, my love for Him and for all of life. These moments of divine grace are what I live for, as they fuel my work in carrying out His will, regardless of how difficult the challenges may be.

In the journey to become as holy, humble, and healthy as He would have me be, I have been setting the bar higher, when making even the simplest of decisions, by asking, "Is it holy?" It could be something as mundane as whether or not to recycle a plastic bottle or as difficult as making a healthcare proxy decision. When I choose what is holy, even if it is a sacrifice, I feel I am in closer conscious contact with God, and that is worth any discomfort. In being closer to God, I am in harmony with myself and with all of life around me. Holy acts, the often non-ordinary behavior of an ordinary person, are the new code I have chosen to utilize.

I think of saints, famous religious people, and children—those known by being pure of heart—and how their simple acts have been, or are, oft created with extraordinary love, and this is the template I choose to follow. May I see God in every person, animal, plant, and living thing, so that I may love all as God does. May I continue to grow in love and acceptance of the physical vehicle He has gifted me with, and may that radiant channel, of physical body, be the instrument through which I love and serve others.

(continued on page 20)

(From Him & To Him, continued from p19)

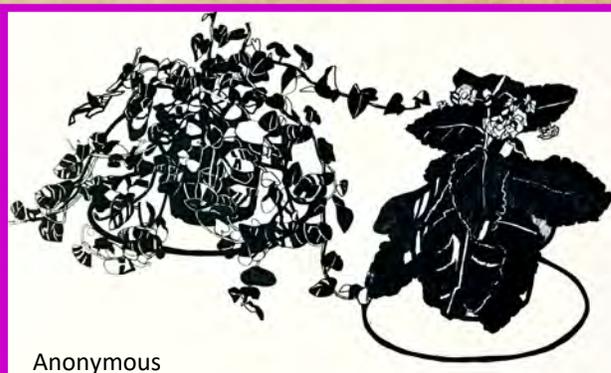
Lofty meanderings aside, the *holy* project has become a more frequent part of daily living. I had returned several items to Amazon.com and, since they hadn't arrived back by a specified date, I was recharged for them. I had considered getting on the wire with the credit card company and commence a billing dispute, but I thought of how crappy I'd felt about myself when I'd recently returned other items for reasons other than specified on the return questionnaire, or had received a larger refund than I should have. And so, in asking myself if what I was about to do was holy, the answer was clearly no. Yes, it would have been easy to rationalize otherwise, but in this instance I chose to do what was holy. I offered it in acceptance to God as His invitation for me to right a wrong. Doing His will put me back on the beam.

When someone wanted to talk with me, after mass, and I was in a hurry to go somewhere, I stopped and made time. When a foster cat, I am taking care of, had surgery and was uncomfortable, I laid down on the floor next to him, even though I was tired and wanted to go to bed. When I was watching a television show, and a committee chair from the Virtual Region reached out for editing assistance, I stopped watching the show and did what was asked of me. When I wanted to snack before dinner, I chose not to. When a disabled, curmudgeonly neighbor asked me to run to the store for him twice in one day, I did as he asked. I suppose the theme here is sacrificing what is comfortable and easy in exchange for doing what is loving, for what is holy.

Altruistic? Not so much. I live to be in God's grace, and by doing His will, I am often gifted with that blissful state. Yes, like my favorite saint once said, "I am greedy for grace."

Hey, I know my picture is nowhere near the word *saint* in the dictionary; in fact, I am listed a few pages forward, amidst the ranks of *sinner*s with a capital S. I am a recovering sinner, not recovered. ;)

Diane T, New York



Step 12: Service



Having had a Spiritual Awakening as the result of these Steps, we tried to carry this message to compulsive overeaters and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

Your job now is to be at the place where you may be of maximum helpfulness to others, so never hesitate to go anywhere if you can be helpful. You should not hesitate to visit the most sordid spot on earth on such an errand. Keep on the firing line of life with these motives, and God will keep you unharmed (AA/Alcoholics Anonymous 102).

Those of us who live this program don't simply carry the message; we are the message. Each day that we live well, we *are* well, and we embody the joy of recovery, which attracts others who want what we've found in OA. We're always happy to share our secret: the Twelve Steps of Overeaters Anonymous, which empower each of us to live well and to be well, one day at a time (OA 12 & 12 87).

True ambition is the deep desire to live usefully and walk humbly under the grace of God (AA 12 & 12 125).

Faith without works was dead, he said. And how appallingly true for the alcoholic! 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. Then faith would be dead indeed. With us it was just like that (AA 14-15).

Practical experience shows that nothing will so much insure immunity from drinking as intensive work with other alcoholics. It works when other activities fail. This is our *twelfth suggestion*.

Carry this message to other alcoholics! You can help when no one else can.

You can secure their confidence when others fail (AA 89).



Do it Anyway!

Don't believe in attending OA meetings? Do it anyway!

Don't believe in using a sponsor? Do it anyway!

Don't believe in reading the AA Big Book? Do it anyway!

Don't believe in working through all twelve Steps of recovery? Do it anyway!

Don't believe in following a Food Plan? Do it anyway!

Don't believe in seeking a Higher Power? Do it anyway!

Don't believe in doing inventories? Do it anyway!

Don't believe in making amends? Do it anyway!

Don't believe in sponsoring others? Do it anyway!

Don't believe you can recover from compulsive eating?

Do it anyway... And cherish the miracle!

By Nancy, J. Geneva, Illinois.



Hosted by the VR Bylaws Committee.

Meeting ID: 889 909 0869 | Passcode: 120912



Why Bylaws?

Take away the mystery of these necessary rules. Become comfortable with the tool that is used to keep our meetings simple and productive.

APRIL 1
1:00 PM ET - UTC 6:00 PM



BYLAWS COMMITTEE



I See God

In a sleeping cat's curled paws
 In a new leaf unfurling and growing deeper green
 In the soft, morning hues, gently cradling the sky
 In the joy and wisdom of a baby's playful gaze
 In my grandmother's gentle caress upon a bowed head
 In a mother's patient arms in the middle of night
 In the wave that melodiously rolls in and out of the shore
 In the gift of a resilient and forgiving body
 In the lifeless friend, arms folded, finally at rest
 In my father's expressions on my brother's face
 In the blanket of snow that enchants and transforms us with its stillness, beauty, and purity.
 In the passion He infuses in me to follow His will.

Diane T



A Blessing for my Fellows

May you always have...

Happiness to keep you smiling,

Trials to keep you strong,

Success to keep you confident,

Faith to keep you going, &

Gratitude to protect you.

V. in Alabama, USA

There is only one happiness in life, to love and be loved. George Sand

A sense of loving and being loved is not restricted to one's spouse, children, parents, friends, or associates. It can be applied to everything and everyone in God's world.

To love and feel loved is nothing less than to have a reverence for life.

Recovery in OA means regaining the freedom to love without expectation of return.

As a speaker once put it,

"I love you; I don't care whether or not you love me!"

To love unconditionally is a difficult concept for many.

Only spiritual recovery can give us an understanding of what that means.

For today: Has my thinking about love changed in OA?

For Today, December 6.

Sinner in Recovery



Dear A.J.:

You recently asked why I refer to myself as a sinner in recovery. I am a compulsive overeater in recovery, and I want to become a saint. Several years ago, I heard it said that saints are sinners in recovery. 'Wow, right!' I thought. 'They were/are ordinary people who lived extraordinary lives, and the way they were able to do so was by living in God's will. They cast aside their will and all the defects of character that had been sounding the battle cry of basic instincts run amok. There's a game plan I can get behind.'

My *sins* are words and actions I use that hurt others, God, and myself. The *near occasion of sin* occurs when willful, selfish, fearful, angry, manipulative, and dishonest thoughts preempt my misdeeds. Living in Steps 10-12 helps keep me vigilant, honest, and increasingly humble. As long as I am above ground, I will have basic instincts that I may mistakenly, or correctly, feel are threatened. As a fellow I love often says, "As long as you are alive, you will never rise above the level of a human being."

My roadmap is simple: God is my guide, and my job is to place my faith in Him, avoid the nearest occasion of sin, and, when I do sin, clean it up lickety-split, so that I may better do His will and live in His grace.

I was in a Zoom meeting the other day when a fellow bemoaned, once again, all the trials and tribulations she had been going through and without sharing hope. 'Here she goes again,' I thought, annoyed and rolling my eyes. This near occasion of sin, the ugly thoughts and feelings, snatched me right out of God's grace. 'How does God see her?' I thought. 'She is one of His children who is in pain. He loves her unconditionally, and He asks me to do the same.' I said a silent prayer for her and asked God to forgive me my inner transgression.

A close friend told me his son decided against a career in finance and instead wants to paint cars. I was surprised, disappointed, and worried that his son would have to work exceptionally hard to make ends meet in that career. I asked Pat, "What happened? I thought he was set with a stable career ahead of him? If he's interested in cars, I can put him in touch with a friend of mine who used to design Corvettes." Pat said again, "He wants to paint cars." Insert foot in mouth much, Diane? I apologized and said what his son wanted to do was none of my business. I also fessed up about being afraid his son wouldn't make a decent living. I sin against God, myself, and my fellow when I am living in fear instead of faith.

(continued on p 27)

(Sinner in Recovery continued from p 26)

These are just a few examples of the day-to-day issues that can easily interfere with my relationship with God. Working my program, especially hitting up a Step 10, as often as necessary, helps set me right as rain. For me, program is like the *Cliff Notes* version of the compendium of spiritual and religious teachings I've learned and wanted to embody to become as holy as God would have me be. As they say in the big book, It's simple but not easy.

I don't expect I'll reach anywhere remotely near the league of sainthood during my lifetime, but my recovery is based on the journey I follow in getting there.

Diane T

OA Podcasts & Videos

Interviews, Readings, and Meetings.

Young People's Podcast

Podcast en Español (Spanish Podcast)

Traditions Videos

Virtual Workshops

Founder Recordings

Breaking Out of Relapse

Short Videos for Registered Groups and Service Bodies to Share on Social Media

Public Information

Public Service Announcements

<https://oa.org/podcasts/>





“Cling to the thought that, in God’s hands, the dark past is the greatest possession you have—the key to life and happiness for others. With it you can avert death and misery for them” (AA, 124). Every piece of shit that you ate; every embarrassment that you went through; everything in your life that you swallowed, not in food. I’m talking embarrassment. I’m talking B.S. Everything that you went through in your life has a purpose in God’s world. God doesn’t waste anything. God is going to use your pain, your torture, your hell to save somebody else’s life, and in saving their life you will help God save yours, too. What a world we live in today! All of the embarrassment, and all the kids that laughed at me, and all of the times that I looked around at a world that I literally did not fit into, I’m going to use that for God’s good. What a miracle.

Harlan G (Scottsdalebigbook.com. Week 83/season 2, 58 minutes in.)



“Our real purpose is to fit ourselves to be of maximum service to God and the people about us” (AA 77).

The biggest reason people don’t stay sober is that they do not do Steps 10, 11, and 12. (Steps 2 and 10 are the most underutilized of the Steps. Steps 3 and 4 are the most misunderstood Steps.) If you’re not doing the work, you will not stay abstinent, because the emotions will continue to build.

People say they are too busy to sponsor. We found the time to eat. We found the time to practice the disease. We found the time to feel sorry for ourselves. We found the time to rehearse resentment and fear. We have to make that time to recover, and an integral ingredient to recovery is sponsoring. If you’ve had a spiritual awakening as the result of the Steps, you need to be working a twelve Step program. This is not an eleven Step program.

Harlan G (Scottsdalebigbook.com. Week 72: 13, 21, 26 minutes in)

The 7th Tradition in OA: Where Your Contributions Go



Aside from the expenses that help keep our meetings running smoothly, contributions are needed for our intergroup, Westchester United Intergroup, Region 6 (Region 6 is comprised of the seven north-east US states, six of the eastern provinces of Canada, and Bermuda.), and the WSO (World Service Organization).

Some of the expenses incurred at the meeting level are rent for in-person meetings, purchasing Newcomer packets, literature, information for new Intergroup Representatives, Anniversary Coins, and postage.

Westchester United Intergroup needs our contributions to help pay for our Zoom accounts, website fees, PIPO endeavors (Public Information and Professional Outreach), workshops, software for the *Serenity Times*, fees associated with MailChimp, expenses incurred for sending Region 6 representatives to two assemblies per year, and expenses incurred for sending delegates to the annual WSBC (World Service Business Conference).

Region 6 needs our contributions for the Region's biannual Assembly expenses and scholarships, to help fuel the biannual PIPO Blitz Fund, Welcome Back Workshop scholarships to host such events, Region 6 Facebook ads, Google AdWords, Region 6 website upkeep, and Region 6 Convention expenses.

At the World Service level, our contributions help pay the salaries for the full-time staff at the World Service Office in Rio Rancho, New Mexico, the building and upkeep expenses at the World Service Office, the development, production, and distribution of OA literature, funding delegates to come to the annual World Service Business Conference, World Service Conventions, professionals hired to assist with our PIPO outreach (ex: making commercials and ads), legal teams, including lawyers and auditors, GDPR fees (General Data Protection Regulation), and other expenses related to carrying the message.

In OA, we are the message, and we dutifully help carry the message through self-supporting our fellowship from the bottom up.

The suggested contribution is five dollars per meeting, but we need you more than your money.

Give what you can to support our growing fellowship. Contributions may be made daily, weekly, monthly, or quarterly:

<https://www.oawestchesterny.org/7th-step-tradition.html>



There's a nagging, internal critic, in the background of my mind, silently yammering away in judgement of my fellows.

He's in program how many decades and can't get abstinent more than a week?! Are you kidding me? He can't be seriously working his program.

She's at least fifty pounds overweight. How can she say she has four years of abstinence? Just exactly what is she abstinent from? Jelly beans? Everything else goes?

How can she possibly be in program all these years, work the Steps, and still persist in going against a group conscience?

He's always sharing how awful his life is, sitting on a pity pot, and never sharing strength and hope. No wonder he's a mess.

Right. 'Cause I've got it all together. Not. I work my program diligently and do oodles of service, but, hey, I'm not a bastion of recovery with this food thing under control. Each and every day I am only one bite away from being the day-counter who chokes on the words, "Day one." Still, when fellows are not getting the abstinence and recovery they long for, I judge them for allegedly not working their program hard enough. Like my sponsor once shared in a meme she sent me, "Quit expecting you from other people."

I had a bite of a salty, crunchy yellow-light food last night and it was enough to awaken the sleeping dragon. I ate 300 calories of the snack, instead of 100, and then went home and, in efforts to satisfy the beast, I ate more and more food. Green-light stuff, but still way too much and most definitely a slip. I woke up feeling horrible about myself, depressed, defeated, and a hypocrite. If I have this abstinence and recovery thing down, why did I slip? Am I not working my program hard enough? I am up to my eyeballs in program and service, so, no, that's not the case. I am a compulsive overeater, and that is the case. The usual stuff of life had been going on, but nothing that had me spinning and looking for food to squash my feelings. I knowingly decided to have a yellow-light snack, and it backfired on me. I am powerless over food, and I am human.

(Continued on p31)

My fellows are human. I have no clue as to what their lives are like, what challenges they are facing, what traumatic experiences, PTSD, or medical issues they may be grappling with. The mental and emotional tools, they may or may not possess, are not mine to decide. I came into this program after fifty years of chasing my tail in circles, trying to have my self-will overcome self-will and sucking pretty damn miserably at it until I had a tragic, life-altering experience. I hit the bottom of bottoms and came into OA on my hands and knees, desperate for salvation from the nightmare of this disease. Not everyone enters the rooms after having had such a profound experience. When I came into the rooms for a few meetings, some twelve years prior, I still thought I could do it on my own, and I left the rooms after hearing Step work that would involve my fessing up for all my misdeeds and then making amends to those I'd hurt. I saw myself naked in a blizzard with a firing squad pointing their rifles at my pathetic, shivering, worthless self. Nope, not for me. It took the horrors of hell for me to buck up and courageously resolve to do whatever it took, because where I had been was far worse than any amends and repercussions I would suffer in OA.

I have to stop expecting me from other people. Other people did not go through what I went through, that lit my butt on fire with zealous passion for recovery. Other people did not have my childhood, nor the same set of tools I have honed, nor the same relationship with God as I do.

Other people are not me. Other people deserve the respectful silence of my witnessing their innermost selves and loving them as God would have me do. Before I seek to take a splinter out of my fellow's eye, I had darn well be busy getting the beam out of my own eye.

The gift I can offer my fellows is deepening my humility, so that I may love each and every one of them as God does and how He asks me to. It is a journey of becoming right-sized enough that I would consider washing the feet of my fellows and see it as an honor.



Giving Back



Through Freedom

OA saved my life and gave me a second chance at making a life. Now I'm giving back through living a spiritually based life based on patience, tolerance, kindness, love, and service.

Several years ago on July 4, 2015, I spoke in this blog about freedom. Certainly, there was the freedom from the food, but there were many other freedoms that came to me as a result of rebuilding my life through the 12 Steps. Don't be misled when you read this list. I do not walk on water, control the weather, or advise the Pope. I am simply an aging, partially-disabled, human being and all the stuff that goes with that. You can add the word "usually" or "more often than not" at the end of most of the statements. Perfectionism – one of the stepchildren of fear – was a major part of my personality pre-OA. No longer. By the way, if you read between the lines, you'll get a good idea of many of the character defects that were at the root of my compulsive eating. Food was the symptom, not the problem.

Free from the prison of obsession and compulsion.

Free from the need to use food as a mood-altering drug.

Free to change, free to change my mind, flexible rather than rigid (usually).

Free to not need to figure everything out, to let go of endless analysis, to accept the mystery of life (usually).

Free to be who I am, to align my actions with my values, to say what I want to say, rather than what I think you want me to say, or to impress others, or to hide the parts of me I don't want you to see.

Free to love and to accept love. The wall is down. I can be vulnerable (usually).

Free from paralyzing resentment. Free to deal with the world as it is.

Free from paralyzing fear. Fear is a conditioned response, meaning that it's learned. What is learned can be unlearned. Unlearning, plus faith, freed me.

Free to live life fully rather than just endure. Go for it. Proactive rather than reactive.

Free to leave things undone at the end of the day. Free from perfectionism. Free from everything needing to be neat & tidy & finished at the end of the day (usually).

Free from self-consciousness (bondage of self), false pride (excessive concern about what others think of me). Staying out of my own way. (usually)

(continued on p33)

Free from paralyzing doubt. Find God, listen to what he has to say, then do it.

Free from selfishness (usually).

Free from dishonesty.

Free to let others be who they want to be. Live and let live.

Free to try all I want to try.

Free to deal, rather than run and hide.

Free to accept the insecurity of life, the order of things. Life is order and chaos; birth and death; love and hate; pleasure and pain; light and dark; beginnings and endings. We can't have one without the other. I accept each as it comes, remembering nothing is permanent, including security.

Free to accept the future as it is – an endless unfolding of todays (usually).

Free to begin again always, until I'm six feet under. I don't drown by falling into the water, only by staying there.

Free to make choices. I have choices I didn't know I had. No longer a victim, a prisoner.

Free to fail sometimes.

Free from the need to pretend – phoniness.

Free from the need to play big shot. Humility. No better than, no worse than.

Free to be tolerant (usually).

Free from the need to place blame. Accept what is. Focus on solution alternatives.

Free from shame.

Free from procrastination.

Free from needing others' approval to feel okay about myself.

Free from the illusion of self-sufficiency and self-reliance. I need others. We need each other.

Free from the past – not a prison.

Free from looking down my nose at faith. Skepticism – anger – hatred.

Free to accept responsibility for myself.

Free to give up being in charge.

Free from unrealistic expectations.

Free from lack of purpose. Love and service is the purpose of my life.

Free to try to help others who have my same problem. Knowing ultimately, I am not responsible for their success or failure. My job is to carry the message, not the person.

Don C, Connecticut, USA

STEP TEN



In addition to a design for living, do you know how many Promises there are as we work Step Ten alone? There are SIXTEEN in the big book of *Alcoholics Anonymous*, pages 84-85. "We have "entered the world of the Spirit." We only need to be willing to follow the pioneers' experience as prescribed. They masterfully crafted this "design for living" in just four paragraphs. No preaching. Just what happened after Steps 1-9. May it happen for us, too.

(1) And we have ceased fighting anything or anyone—even alcohol. (2) For by this time sanity will have returned. (3) We will seldom be interested in liquor. (4) If tempted, we will recoil from it as from a hot flame. (5) We react sanely and normally, and (6) we will find that this has happened automatically. (7) We will see that our new attitude toward liquor has been given to us without any effort of our part. (8) It just comes! This the miracle of it. (9) We are not fighting it, neither are we avoiding temptation. (10) We feel as though we had been placed in a position of neutrality—safe and protected. (11) We have not even sworn off. Instead, the problem has been removed. (12) It does not exist for us. (13) We are neither cocky nor are we afraid. That is our experience. (14) That is how we react so long as we keep in fit spiritual condition.

(15) If we have carefully followed directions, we have begun to sense the flow of His Spirit into us. To some extent we have become God-conscious. (16) We have begun to develop this vital sixth sense. It's easy to let up on the spiritual program of action and rest on our laurels. We are headed for trouble if we do, for alcohol is a subtle foe. We are not cured of our addiction. Every day is a day when we must carry the vision of God's will into all our activities. "How can I best serve Thee – Thy Will (not mine) be done." These are thoughts which must go with us constantly. We can exercise our will power along this line all we wish. It is the proper use of the will.

Jimmy D, New York



Higher Power's Gift of Awakening



I've been in OA for over thirty years, but a good portion of the time had been spent in relapse. I would achieve abstinence for short amounts of time and then lose it. Although I had lost nearly 100 pounds, when I first came into the rooms, I gained the weight back in relapse, and my weight kept yo-yoing up and down. At one point, I weighed over 300 pounds, which was more than I weighed when I first came in. I saw other people come in and maintain long-term abstinence. Why couldn't I? I began to wonder if I were one of those people mentioned in, *How It Works*, who are "constitutionally incapable of being honest with themselves." I was getting to only one meeting a week, and my connection to the program was weak.

About five years ago, I was talking to an OA friend on the phone and telling him how discouraged I was feeling, and he asked me if I had thought of doing 90 in 90, meaning attending 90 meetings in 90 days. I had thought about it, but, as with a lot of good ideas, I had never put it into action. However, the day of that phone call was the day of my one weekly meeting. That evening at the meeting, when they were asking for day counts, without thinking much about it, I raised my hand and said, "Today is day one of 90 in 90." Those five seconds of willingness changed my life.

I didn't get abstinent right away, but I found I was willing to get to new meetings day after day, including many meetings where I didn't know anybody. Even though I was uncomfortable, a funny thing happened; I started to wake up. I didn't realize it, but I had been sleepwalking through life, and now I was awakening.

I heard some things I needed to hear. A fellow at one meeting talked about thinking through a slip and realizing that he had a compulsion to be eating all the time, and I realized that I had the same thing. I had a compulsion to eat all the time. When I was eating, I wasn't trying to become full; in fact, I was full all the time, and I hated being full, because it made it uncomfortable to eat (though it didn't stop me from eating). I realized I didn't get high off particular foods the way many of my fellows did. Instead, I was hooked on having a lot of food, eating all day long (especially at night), day after day. My "happy place" in the disease was on the couch, in front of the television, with a box or bag of something and my hand going back and forth to stuff food in my mouth for hours. I came into OA thinking I had a weight problem, but I had a weight problem only because I had a food problem. And the problem was not in the food. It was in me. Something inside of me needed to change.

Somebody in another meeting shared about how his spouse was dieting, and it was driving the OA member crazy, because the OA member's recovery included refraining from dieting. Recovery could include abstaining from dieting? I heard that and immediately realized that I had been trying to treat abstinence like a diet, and for me a diet is just the other half of a binge. How I had sat in meetings for decades and not realized that is still a mystery to me, but I was not very good at being honest with myself. Clearly, my plan of eating needed to not be a diet. No undereating, no overeating. I wanted to weigh 180 pounds, which was 100 pounds less than I weighed at the time, so I realized I needed to eat like a 180-pound person.

(continued on p36)

Finally, I was reading *Beyond Our Wildest Dreams*, a great piece of OA literature that tells the history of OA's early years, and Rozanne explained where the term abstinence came from. In the early 1960's, many OA members came from a tradition of following commercial weight-loss programs that encouraged members to indulge in "free foods" that were so low in calories that members could eat as much of them as they wanted without gaining weight. Rozanne realized she and her fellows were eating all the time. She was nibbling carrots and celery sticks all day. There ought to be parts of the day, she reasoned, when she abstained from food completely—and the concept of "abstinence" was born. When I read that, I realized that, just like Rozanne's, my plan of eating needed to include abstaining from food for parts of the day. There could be no "free food" for me. The mindless grazing that I was indulging in needed to stop.

But the program isn't about a plan of eating. I knew by then that just working a plan of eating wasn't enough. If it were, I would have been able to do it myself, and I knew I couldn't. I needed to work a program, and, above all, I needed to be honest with myself. I started working with a food sponsor and telling him everything I ate, no matter what. One night, I wrote an email to my Higher Power, asking for help. The next day I planned out breakfast, lunch, and dinner for the day and realized I could do that, just for that one day. I had binge food in the house, but I didn't throw it out, because I knew I was going to pick up again, just not today.

I got through that first day. The day after that, I did it again. And then again. And then again. At each meal, the last bite was planned before the first bite was taken, and I was neither overeating nor undereating, although I was eating quite a bit less than I had been eating every day in relapse. I thought about the binge food in the freezer. Part of me said that I should just finish it all up and then start back on my food plan tomorrow, but I didn't want to do that. I realized I'd been lying to myself for years about starting tomorrow. There's no such thing as tomorrow. There's just today. Maybe this was what they were talking about in the Big Book when they referred to people being honest with themselves. I also knew by then that overeating made me want to eat more. I thought it would satisfy me and make the craving go away, but it didn't. It only made it worse. So, the craving I was feeling was not going to go away if I ate, but it might if I didn't overeat.

I began to pay attention while eating, and found I was willing to stop when I'd had enough. I even began to notice that my body was sometimes sending me very, subtle signals that I was satiated. They weren't the strong signals that civilians seem to get, and I had never noticed them before, but I was starting to feel them. If there was enough food left over for another meal, it went into the refrigerator. Otherwise, it went in the trash. I have no compunction about throwing away food that I don't need. If I were to eat it, it would still be going to waste, so out it goes. I'm not a garbage can.

I didn't know how long this respite from relapse was going to last, but I wanted to get through today. After about a week, the constant stomach acid that had been churning, in my first days of abstinence, quieted down. I started to get hungry at meal times and not feel hungry at other times of the day. It was good to feel actual hunger at meal times. It made normal, healthy food taste delicious. After a month or so, much to my amazement, I was still abstinent, and I became willing to throw away the binge food.

That was over four years ago, and I'm still abstinent. I am sponsored, and I, in turn, sponsor several other fellows. I still go to a lot of meetings. I do service. I read the literature. I listen to people, especially newcomers. I'm formally working through the Steps for the third time. I have Good Orderly Direction in my life, and when I realize there's something that I need to do to move in a Good Orderly Direction, I do it, or, if I'm not willing to do it, I pray for the willingness.

(continued on p37)

God has to take care of my weight, because I'm powerless over it. I've let go of about 100 pounds in this abstinence and over 120 pounds from my highest weight. The weight loss was not fast, but people who didn't know me before have been surprised when I tell them I used to be very heavy, because I look pretty average now. I exercise regularly. I can walk up a couple of flights of stairs and not be winded. My doctor is thrilled, and I've been able to significantly reduce my blood pressure medication. I weigh myself every day, but I don't focus much on the number. I keep track of my calories, just to make sure I'm not kidding myself, but I don't have some magic number of calories that I have to stay under. I don't overeat, and I don't undereat, and the food craving stays quiet. I'm living in the gray. I was never able to do so before, and I'm still amazed every time I think about it. I think I'm probably going to pick up again someday, but I'm not going to do it today, and that's all I need to know. I just keep it going a day at a time. It works if I work it.

Jack D, NYC



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Contact Diane T to join our group: (914) 659-0192



Westchester Fellowship

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We share our experience, strength, and hope with other OA Westchester fellows. The opinions expressed here do not reflect OA as a whole, nor is this an WSO sanctioned site. OA members are admitted upon invitation request.



Food Forum Fellowship

Text Diane T to join: (914) 659-0192

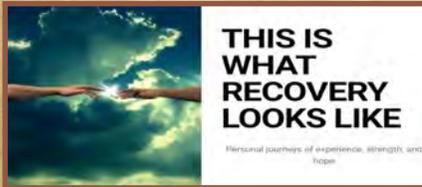
A place to commit a daily plan of eating, find a food buddy to share daily plans with, share recipes, issues, and, most importantly, a place to share experience, strength, and hope. No food pictures please. Please do not share this link, and instead, refer fellows to me, Diane T, to be added to the group. Let's keep our group safe.

Please note that the WhatsApp groups are not OA approved.

The Serenity Times

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