

The Serenity Times

A Westchester United Intergroup Publication

2nd Quarter 2022

TRANSFORMATION



Spread the OA message! Printable flyer on page 33.

Who we were and who we have become

Through the Overeaters Anonymous 12 Step Program

Letter from the editor:

Together we share our intimate stories of who we were and how we were transformed by our Higher Power and the OA 12 Step Program and fellowship. Chronicled here are the experiences and stories many of us have shared in the rooms, privately, or, until now, only in the recesses of our minds. This anthology of personal treasures unites us in where we have been, the road we have taken, and the transformations for which we are grateful.

Special thanks to Carol G. and Mary T. for your invaluable feedback and editing.

Diane T

OA Zoom Meetings:

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

https://docs.google.com/document/d/18bXW0gCJEVsxVY0-WGe_ZqSTsOjOtx83I94zBV0wuY0/edit

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



TRANSFORMATION



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Anger Management

The hardest character defect for me to accept was anger. After years of depression and stuffing down my feelings, I actually believed that anger was an asset because it energized me. But when a valued friend told me my anger made me unbearable to be around, I cried (crying is the first step in surrender for me), and I realized I had to change even more.

I have done a lot of Step work around anger and its sidekicks: sarcasm and irritability. Writing is the beginning of the process. I write in gory detail what these defects do for me, to me, and to those around me. Then I share what I uncover. I do a lot of daily Sixth and Seventh Step work and prayer to help me release these ugly behaviors. Only then can I replace them with healthy behaviors, like speaking up for what I really want and need. I have learned I must address my anger when it is small, because I still have the capacity to be explosive.

I need my daily medicine if I hope to be my higher self.

- *Anonymous*
- <http://www.oalifeline.org/working-the-program/anger-management/>



7th Step Prayer

My Creator, I am now willing that You should have all of Me, good and bad. I pray that you now remove from me every single defect of character

which stands in the way of my usefulness to You and my fellows.

Grant me strength, as I go out from here, to do Your bidding.

When I entered OA, some three and a half years ago, I mistakenly thought my only problem was putting down the food, believing I was weak and a loser. I had managed quite well in other aspects of my life, but when it came to food, I had absolutely no control. I had always thought God expected me to get it together and control my food, because He had more important things to be concerned about. The least I could do was manage what I was eating. It seemed like it was an elemental facet of living that I was somehow not getting right. I thought it should have been as easy as tying my shoe laces or sneezing. I believed it was an innate part of the human experience that 99.99% of the world had right. When I heard fellows say that God did indeed care about their fat thighs, their challenges with food, and how they had beat themselves up over it, I was struck with the understanding that, 'Of course He cared!' I am made from Him and of Him. I am an extension of Him, and my job is to shine with His light, love, hope, strength, and grace. Hence, Steps 1, 2, and 3: I can't, God can, so I think I'll let Him. Eureka!

I had some trying times financially, growing up, so becoming destitute, hungry, and homeless were amongst my biggest fears when I came into program. As an adult, even when having plenty of money, I would do miserly, irrational things, like go out of my way to return something that cost less than a dollar, or go to another store, because the produce I wanted was ten cents less per pound. I lived with a roommate I couldn't stand, for decades, because I was afraid I wouldn't be able to handle the cost of housing by living solo. I prayed fervently to God to relieve me of this fear of financial insecurity. He did. Sixteen months into program, I moved out, bought an apartment, designed and decorated a beautiful living space. My financial resources hadn't changed, as that hadn't been the problem. Like my beloved sponsor has a penchant for saying, "What's changed is the space between your ears."

As a fitness enthusiast, one of the activities I do daily is ride my bike to feed neighborhood feral cats and to go to church, regardless of the weather. The only times I haven't taken the bike out was when there was ice on the ground or the rain was so thick I couldn't see.

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I identified this rigid behavior as discipline and something I was proud of. For months I had been praying to God to help me be kinder, gentler, more loving, compassionate, and accepting of others. It dawned on me that I needed, first and foremost, to be those very things with myself, or else how I treated myself would only have a ripple effect in the way I treated others, especially those closest to me. And so, my prayers were amended to include asking God to help me be better to myself. In January, there was a morning it was below zero, and I was just getting over Covid. Last year I would have ridden the bike. On this particular day I didn't. Like philosopher Lao-tzu said, "The journey of a thousand miles begins with one step."

When I would see obese people on the street, in program, or within my family, I would secretly, and, at times, not so secretly, judge them. I knew I struggled with an eating disorder, but, I reasoned, at least I tried to deal with it, and obviously, they didn't. I was self-righteous and arrogant. This morning, I cycled past an incredibly, obese woman, who was putting items into the back of an SUV. Stunned and saddened for her, I thought, 'What painful stories is her body holding onto?'

Three and a half years ago, when I first came into OA, I wore self-pity as a badge of honor. I had been sexually abused by a brother, physically and emotionally abused by a violent father, and raised by a paranoid schizophrenic mother. Oh, the horrors of my childhood! How could I not have developed some type of addiction? Poor me. Today I realize I have a malady of the mind, and also a disease of the body. I have a so-called allergy to specific foods and would have developed an eating disorder regardless of whether I was raised in a dungeon or in an ideal family.

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I had deep resentments towards one of my brothers since childhood. As much as I loved him, I also hated him. I would be disparaging of his accomplishments, find fault with most everything he did, and often avoided him. Thanks to God and working the Steps, today he is one of my best friends. I feel love, respect, and camaraderie with him. I celebrate his joys and accomplishments, comfort him when he is hurting, laugh at his dry, intelligent humor, and my heart is filled when I witness him exulting in the beauty of life.

I had a couple of resentments during the last few weeks, which I allowed myself to feel, instead of turning to the food to shut off the volume of emotions. One instance included participating in a meeting where a motion I had worked hard on was voted down. I was incensed! Food, food, and more food would have been my knee-jerk go-to behavior in the past, and I would not have even realized why I was glomming food like a Hoover Concept 1. Instead, after the feeding frenzy, I would have been mired in depression, guilt, and self-loathing. Instead, I let myself have a hissy-fit, then sat my butt down and worked the Steps. I was brutally honest with myself, especially in Step 4. Even though my disease attempted to manipulate me into eating compulsively, I worked the Steps, looking at what transpired, versus what I wanted to have happen, and how I was affected. Then I came clean with how I was selfish, dishonest, self-seeking, and afraid. Akin to being in a church confessional, I shared it with someone else and humbly asked God to remove my defects of character. I made amends as necessary and gave service in gratitude to God for helping me heal. It's a new way of being that I intend to hone and enlist regularly in efforts to deepen my recovery.

Can we spend a moment on the lifetime of vanity I am more than a little embarrassed to discuss? Whether it was concern over the fullness of my hair, the size of my breasts, the width and shape of my butt, or the amount of body-fat I was carrying, these mundane trivialities had consumed me. Now, as long as I am doing my best to be healthy, so I can be capable of carrying out God's tasks, the rest isn't nearly so important. It's my job to take care of the body God has gifted me with, but it's a temporal thing, a transient vehicle. I am but a grain of sand on God's beach, and the body I currently inhabit is much less than that. The lines on my face tell stories of where I've been over the years. The scars crisscrossing my abdomen tell the tale of coming back from the gates of hell. Arthritic joints and strained tendons tell of the miles of adventures this body has been through. Senses dimming, memories fogging, skin stretching, and bones shrinking, all serve to remind me I'm just passing through.

Waking up abstinent, day after day, helps keep my conscious contact with God open and my communion with Him all the more divine. Instead of the bygone era, when I would wake up filled with self-loathing, depression, and resentment, a prisoner to my disease, I am now truly living heaven on earth, eager to be God's channel, serving my fellows in any way He commands for how ever much longer He sees fit. Life is good, because God is good!

Diane T, NY



Why do I draw....



When I was a kid, I wanted a BIZZY BUZZ BUZZ two Christmas' in a row... that's all I wanted, nothing else. My mom was happy about that, because I was easy. I always wanted stuff where I could create something. This "before it's time" little gadget allowed me, as a 4 and 5 year old, to create art. It had different color pens and a motor with batteries. The beak would go in circles and vibrate. It would go clockwise or counter clockwise. You could draw and move the beak around to create your own designs. It was fun, but it wasn't sturdy enough for me. I broke it after the first two weeks each time.

Then I was introduced to the Apple Computer. Yep, I had this computer, the first Macintosh computer. Claris Works was the word processing software, and I loved that I could fill shapes with colors. I got really creative with this one. I made a lot of art back then. I even put my art on canvas. My first home, in my marriage, had plenty of my art on the walls. When we separated, I gave my art to my nephew and he still has it in his first home.



While in college, I was focused on graduating. I didn't do any art during that time. I got a job and started my career immediately following graduation.

I loved my career. I used Macs all the time. I created software programs and really enjoyed every part of my job. I moved up in my career and really enjoyed that as well. Then I became an administrator. I held that position for nine years. I would make flyers, programs and different stuff like that but nothing like my art now,



After a bout with alcoholism, drug addiction, and compulsively overeating, I re-evaluated my life, my purpose, and my soul. Then Covid happened. I started working from home and had a lot more time on my hands. I always worked with photoshop, so I started playing with that. Then I discovered Adobe Illustrator, and my life changed. I started drawing again. I started posting my work as my profile picture and fellows really liked it. So I decided I would post a new drawing each day.

My 12 Step family helped me have confidence in my art. I've improved a lot since January 2020. Now I do private shows, sell my art in different forms and just enjoy the hobby.

There is no way I would have been able to do my art at the level I do it now, if it were not for my 12 step family. You gave me purpose and confidence, and I truly thank you.



THERESA CHICAGO

Deep Within Me



January 26, 2022 was forty years since my first OA meeting January 26, 1982, I have never left. I am abstinent for 37.5 years, maintaining a triple-digit weight loss. OA saved my life, and gave me the courage and opportunity to make a new life.

I came in as an atheist, hating anything that had to do with "religion." I gradually opened my mind a little to the power of the steps and tools and surrendered to them, focusing on spiritual awakening as defined in Appendix Two – a personality change. I argued with the "God" idea forever.

Forty years later I'm still arguing – not with others anymore – just with myself. I need to reaffirm and renew my faith every day in my morning daily disciplines. Faith in what? That's what this posting is about. I'll give you some quotes from the OA 12&12, the AA 12&12, and the Big Book and then the Don writings taped on the inside cover of my journal. If I knew how, I would tape them on the inside of my brain. The journal is the best I can do. When I fill up the journal and begin a new one, the stuff gets untaped and moved to the new one.

OA 12&12

Not a religious program: *OA doesn't tell us we have to believe in God – only that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity. We are invited to define that Power however we wish and relate to it in whatever way works for us...Ours is a spiritual program, not a religious one. (p.12)*

AA 12&12

Relax: *Take it easy. The hoop you have to jump through is a lot wider than you think." p.26)*

Trust the 12-step process: *...Alcoholics Anonymous does not demand that you believe anything... all you really need is a truly open mind. Just resign from the debating society...(p.26)*

Take the actions: *I had only to stop fighting and practice the rest of AA's program as enthusiastically as I could. (p.27)*

Big Book

My HP, not your HP: *We have no desire to convince anyone that there is only one way by which faith can be acquired. (p.28)*

Personal relationship with God: *Each individual, in the personal stories, describes in his own language and from his own point of view the way he established his relationship with God. (p.29)*

My HP, not your HP: *Much to our relief, we discovered we did not need to consider another's conception of God. Our own conception, however inadequate, was sufficient to make the approach and to affect a contact with Him. (p.46)*

Idea of God is innate: *...deep down in every man, woman, and child, is the fundamental idea of God...faith in a Power greater than ourselves... (p.55)*

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Deep within: *We found the Great Reality deep down within us. In the last analysis it is only there that He may be found. (p.55)*

Unsuspected inner resource: *With few exceptions our members find that they have tapped an unsuspected inner resource which they presently identify with their own conception of a Power greater than themselves. (p.567)*

Don's thoughts:

Higher Power: Do I feel driven to be all I can be? That's something in me bigger than me.

Force for Good: God is a Force for Good within. A Higher Self within that is bigger than me. A force that can calm, inspire, strengthen, and guide. The qualities of that Force seem to be the principles and designs for living laid out in our 12-Step program which are, in fact, simply a compilation of the wisdom of the ages.

God: God, the spirit of the universe, has many manifestations. One is the quiet inner voice of truth, goodness, love, and courage deep within that can help me rise to my best and be who and what I seem intended to be. I can call that presence quiet inner voice, soul, conscience, intuition, Higher Self, or simply God. My job is to stay connected to it for power and guidance. It is a spiritual compass that will show me the way, if I ask and listen.

Spiritual Awakening: Spiritual awakening was discovering the divine presence within which was always there but which I blocked with self-centeredness, close-mindedness, and self-destructive ideas.

Prayer and meditation: Prayer and meditation/reflection is connecting to my power source for insight, courage, calming, and direction. It's connecting to my essence, to my spiritual self which is where life goes on. My real life is in my head, not what I'm physically doing. What I do is not my life. My life is how I look at what I do. Prayer and meditation connects me with my spiritual center that determines how I look at life and feel about life.

Connection: Prayer and meditation is my outer physical-self talking to my inner spiritual-self. I seek to understand God's will for me in all areas of my life.

Partnership: God, the force for good in the universe, manifests within me as a power greater than myself. Working together can keep me calm, focused, productive, and useful as well as physically, emotionally, and spiritually abstinent.

Why Pray: Morning prayer can help me start the day focused and calm. During the day, prayer can calm and refocus. At night, prayer can help bring peaceful sleep. Prayer can heal, calm, focus, energize, answer, connect me to and summon the power of the universe.

Basic belief on Prayer: I believe that prayers don't change things or others. They change me.

Third Step prayer rewritten: Here is my life, God – all of me. Help me take off my blinders and open myself to a new set of ideas, a new way of looking at and dealing with the world, what you want for me rather than what I want for me. Help me deal with the challenges in my life so that others can see that reliance on you and the 12-Step way of life works and be inspired to use it to improve their life.

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Pain/Disability/Change

Disability: The dominant factor in my life today is the chronic pain and disability -driven sadness about what I can no longer do, and anxiety about becoming a burden in the future. Let go and let God. Get back in today, stop thinking about the future, do as much and be as useful as I can with what I have. Focus on what I can do, not what I can no longer do. I can't wait for it to stop raining. It won't. I must learn to dance in the rain.

Disability affirmation: I believe that God will give me the strength to accept and deal with whatever life brings, especially the chronic pain and disability that I will have for the rest of my life. He's always with me, in me, beside me, around me, ready to help me on my journey, even carry me if need be.

Disability affirmation: Envision myself not being sad about my chronic pain and disability and not being fearful about becoming a burden in the future. Now be that person.

Personality change: God didn't give me my personality defects. I did. I developed them over time. It's up to me, with God and OA's help, to change me.

Personality change: God gives me the power to take the actions that restore me to sanity with food. The actions include identifying the thinking and behaviors that lead me to compulsive eating and then changing them. Power comes not only from God, but also the fellowship.

Inner peace: Inner peace seems to come from living in faith, abstinence, acceptance, surrender, trust, gratitude, tolerance, love, usefulness, hope and alignment. Alignment means thoughts, words, and actions in accordance with what I feel is God's will for me. This is the example I need to pass on.

Don C., CT <https://doncoa.wordpress.com/2022/01/20/deep-within-me/>

11th Step Prayer

Lord, make me a channel of thy peace

that where there is hatred, I may bring love
 that where there is wrong, I may bring the spirit of forgiveness
 that where there is discord, I may bring harmony
 that where there is error, I may bring truth
 that where there is doubt, I may bring faith
 that where there is despair, I may bring hope
 that where there are shadows, I may bring light
 that where there is sadness, I may bring joy.

Lord, grant that I may seek rather to comfort than to be comforted
 to understand, than to be understood
 to love, than to be loved.

For it is by self-forgetting that one finds.
 It is by forgiving that one is forgiven.
 It is by dying that one awakens to Eternal Life. Amen.



AA 12 & 12, p99

Nothing and Everything



When I joined OA, I was told there was only one thing that I would have to change if I wanted recovery: *everything*. And with God's help it seems that I did have the "psychic change" (also known as a spiritual experience) referred to in Step 12 and that did indeed change everything about me.

Prior to recovery, I lived in the bedevilmments described in the Big Book (p. 52): I had "...trouble with personal relationships, [I] couldn't control [my] emotional nature, [I was] a prey to misery and depression, [I] couldn't make a living, [I] had a feeling of uselessness, [I was] full of fear, [I was] unhappy, [I] couldn't seem to be of real help to other people..."

On the outside, I looked successful: I had a loving and faithful husband, two wonderful children, a good job, a beautiful home, two cars in the garage, and usually enough money at the end of the month to pay the bills. And yet, "something was wrong"; I was always sad. My anger was on a hair-trigger; it took the slightest disruption of routine or pressure to set off my rage...at the kids, on the road, while I was cooking, whatever. I broke multiple custom, kitchen cabinet doors, slammed the garage door so many times the frame actually started to come off of the wall. I was thin-skinned, hypersensitive to criticism (never saw it as constructive), and worried constantly. I was overly responsible and controlling...I felt like Atlas holding the world on my shoulders. My mantra was "Stop the world, I want to get off." Thinking you're in charge of everything and everyone is exhausting.

Although those reactions and feelings are my built-in defaults, as a born compulsive overeater, everything changed as I began to live on the basis of trusting and relying on God to run my life for me (Steps 1-3). Today, if I continue to work and live the 12 Steps of recovery, I no longer have to be the same person who walked into OA in 1999. I do what I can do to prepare for tomorrow and leave the outcome to God. I let others live their own lives; I no longer triangulate between loved ones. I am perfectly okay with someone being angry with me; it is their right to have their own feelings...not everyone has to like me. I don't have to do things perfectly; I just have to do them. Instead of looking for self-esteem to be given to me through compliments and praise, I realize that it is an inside job between me and God (that's why the word starts with "self!"), and it grows when I do estimable things. What other people think of me is none of my business! And, although nothing changed in my outside world (same husband, same kids), everything has changed. Atlas put down the world; God is in charge, and everything is as it is supposed to be at this moment in time. I am right-sized and at peace with the world.

Mary T, New York



TRANSFORMATION

One of the definitions of **Transformation** as a verb is: “to change in form, appearance, or structure; metamorphose. to change in condition, nature, or character; convert. to change into another substance; transmute” and Yes, I have changed....

What I have learned throughout the journey is that recovery is an evolution. Recovery and wellness – emotionally, spiritually, physically, does not happen overnight. Being in Recovery is an infinite road. There is always more that needs changing.

Below is a description of my own ‘transformation’ through the Eyes of our Promises:

“We are going to know a new freedom” - I used to obsess over food, my weight, calorie counting, dieting, body image self-hatred. Today, these kinds of thoughts seldom plague me.

“...and a new happiness” – I used to be very depressed over my eating behavior and my constant struggle to be thin. That was all I ever had wanted, so I had thought. Today, I have the capacity to genuinely feel happiness. I am thankful for my imperfect life and get the most joy out of sponsoring others, attending meetings, and relationships with family, friends, co-workers, etc. My cup runneth over...with Love!

“We will not regret the past, nor wish to shut the door on it.” – Today, I am able to speak about my past without feeling ashamed and humiliated. I can use my past pain to help and identify with my fellows. Identifying with others and understanding where people are coming from gives me an incredible sense of purpose.

“We will comprehend the word serenity and we will know peace” – Serenity does happen for me, not constantly, but I am trending in the right direction. One of my challenges is to stay in the ‘Now.’ I am evolving in the practice of mindfulness.

“No matter how far down the scale we have gone, we will see how our experience can benefit others.” - Even though this refers to ‘scale’ in life, I am living at a normal healthy body weight! Sharing my experience does appear to benefit others who are interested in recovery information.

“That feeling of uselessness and self-pity will disappear.” – I have a Great sense of purpose most of the time. When self-pity comes up, my blessings do eventually shine through.

“We will lose interest in selfish things and gain interest in our fellows.” —This has happened to me, miraculously, and I have a desire to help others on a heartfelt level.

“Self-seeking will slip away.” – I rarely feel depressed trying to find out who I am.

“Our whole attitude and outlook upon life will change.” — My view of life has changed, because I have discovered a real solution to my problem.

“Fear of people and of economic insecurity will leave us.” — This is also an area that has evolved over time. My fear of asserting my needs with others is trending towards stating my needs with kindness versus resentment.

“We will intuitively know how to handle situations which used to baffle us.” — I am better at handling problems and life’s unpredictability. My decision making and choices are healthier and sounder than they used to be.

“We will suddenly realize that God is doing for us what we could not do for ourselves.” -- I never was able to not eat compulsively and felt confused and aimless without sense of purpose. Today, I have a great sense of purpose and pray to keep evolving through eternity

Barb M., NY

RELAPSE STEPPING-STONES

“A list came across my desk, describing what I would call stepping-stones to relapse. Since my abstinence has been good for almost four years, I didn’t give the list much thought. I have been so busy being busy, I considered myself safe from the harm of slipping and eventual relapse. Among the stepping-stones were some character defects to which I could relate: exhaustion, dishonesty, impatience, argumentativeness, depression, frustration, self-pity, cockiness, complacency, too high expectations of others, lax discipline, use of mood altering chemicals, too many wants, loss of gratitude, unrealistic “it can’t happen to me” thinking, and omnipotence....

Wow! What a list. I’m a lifelong compulsive overeater who has used every one of these excuses for not working my program. If I were to address these stepping-stones, I would say, “Oh, I’m exhausted from the service I do. I deserve a treat.” But am I exhausted or just feeling sorry for myself, i.e. self-pity and unappreciated? Is this what’s really going on, or am I being dishonest or impatient, not taking the time to pray and meditate? I would rather be argumentative. Having been in program for a long time, I realize this thinking frustrates me. Frustration often leads to depression because I want things to go my way and don’t want to feel like I’m not okay. Inevitably, my alter ego steps in thinking she will save the day. I get cocky and think I know better than others. I can slip into being judgmental. I become complacent and begin letting up on disciplines that remind me to take care of the weeds in my own garden and not worry about others’ gardens. Prayer and meditation go out the window. Before I know it, I am looking for mental and physical diversions to keep the focus off myself.

When I’m not keeping the focus on myself, I am at risk of becoming judgmental and expecting too much from others. My priorities become askew, and I think how nice some junk food would taste. Luckily my Higher Power steps in and reminds me how these mood-altering treats have sent me on a path of no return, where a slip would become a relapse. I’ve been there and done that, when I want too much but am unwilling to put the effort into working for the peace and serenity abstinence has always given me.

So as I ruminate on my life’s landscape, I remember the “sunlight of the spirit” and my gratitude for the gifts OA has given me. Most important, I must remember that slips and relapse are more likely when I sport the attitude that it can’t happen to me. I am not omnipotent. Only God is. I have a Higher Power, but I am not my Higher Power. So as long as I practice the OA Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions and do service to the best of my ability, I will have the strength and courage to walk the path and avoid the stepping-stones to relapse.”

<https://oa.org/working-the-program/relapse-prevention/>

Taste of Lifeline pp. 134-136



Gina E, Ohio, USA



The Antidote

“Well?! Are you?” asked a raspy, aggressive voice. Even though the woman stood about two feet shorter than me, I took a step back. I’d been walking the aisles of the grocery store and it took a few seconds to register what she wanted to know. My shirt had the word “fearless” in block letters across the chest. I hadn’t really thought about the word when I bought the shirt—I was more delighted that it fit.

This tiny, unpredictable woman was staring me down. I gently smiled at her and said a quiet but firm “Yes.”

She narrowed her eyes and assessed the truthfulness of my answer. I waited calmly for her response, never breaking eye contact. In one fluid movement, she threw up her hand, turned away from me, and yelled, “Good! Women should be afraid of nothing! NOTHING!”

Then she erratically bustled down the aisle, chattering to herself. Stunned, I watched her go and tried to process what had just happened. Was I really fearless?

As an addict, I “have had long rendezvous with hurt pride, frustration, self-pity, misunderstanding and fear” (*Alcoholics Anonymous*, p. 104). I had to condition myself away from this routine and learn to ask for protection and care from my Higher Power. If I expected this program of action to work, the first thing I had to do was release my fear. It was obvious to me that fear had not been working for me, yet I carried it as if it might serve me somehow in the future. My self-will had brought me to the table with fear. Sitting with it were anger and self-pity. This was not company I should keep.

With time, as I made my way through the Steps, I discovered “freedom from fear was more important than freedom from want” (*Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous*, p. 122), and when I trust my Higher Power with complete abandon, I replace fear with faith. Once I gave up listening to fear and gave my complete trust to my Higher Power, I began the journey to freedom.

Now, my focus has shifted. I realize I no longer live in that panic of fear and anxiety. I no longer live with the burdensome weight of my addiction. Working to live in faith rather than fear is a true blessing but must be part of my daily footwork. I have to be conscious every day for it to remain strong, in focus, and effective. Otherwise, I would fall back into the clutches of fear and all that comes with it, and my life as an active addict would become reality once again. Today, I can say “Yes, by the grace of my Higher Power, I am fearless.”

Mary D., Halifax, Nova Scotia, [Canadahttp://www.oalifeline.org/how-aa-changed-my-life/the-antidote/](http://www.oalifeline.org/how-aa-changed-my-life/the-antidote/)

TRUE FREEDOM



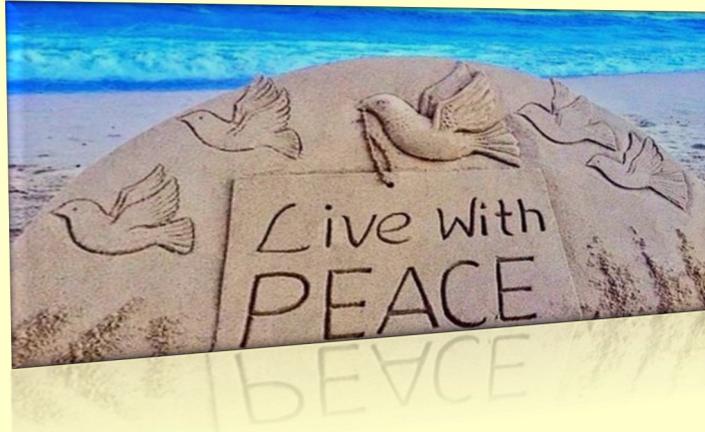
When a fellow OA member suggested I reflect on what true freedom looks like for me, I discovered I could probably write a book. Before OA, I truly felt I already had it in the form of a solid career, a warm and loving home, the freedom of living where I lived, and more. Even today, I cannot dispute anything on my long list. After nearly a decade of learning through the Twelve Steps of OA, however, I now recognize what I had was freedom, but it was not necessarily true freedom.

Today, true freedom, for me, can be summed up in three words: peace of mind. You see, I never had peace of mind while I was enjoying my career, home, and family; I was deeply tormented. Physically, I was overweight and progressing toward type 2 diabetes. Emotionally, I was losing my self-esteem and self-respect. I was spending far too much time obsessing about food, while trying in vain to convince myself of everything from “I got this” to “who cares,” depending on the day. And I was under the illusion that I should try to control everything and everyone around me. (It’s hard for me to write that without smiling at my naiveté.) Spiritually, I was somewhere between numb and confused at best. That freedom was a far cry from my true freedom.

Today, I have peace of mind that represents my true freedom. Aside from my original list (minus the career since I’m now happily retired), the picture has changed beyond my wildest dreams! Physically, I have shed pounds and am at a weight that I’m comfortable with. The mirror is now a convenience and not a spotlight for my flaws. I’ve kept only one clothing size in my closet for the past several years. My health has never been better, and two years ago, my doctor said my blood test results were as healthy as an adolescent’s. Emotionally, I have a healthy self-esteem. (I’m no better or worse than the next person—who knew!) I have a ton of self-respect because I accept who I am, warts and all. I’ve gone from the roller coaster of denial and defiance to knowing I’m a compulsive overeater who has found sweet recovery one day at a time. I accept that I will never again have the luxury of thinking, “I got this,” but that’s okay because I have the Twelve Steps to guide me. Spiritually, I have a Higher Power of my own understanding that I lean on daily in all things. Where there was confusion, I now have faith, so I don’t need more clarity to proceed. I have come to a place where I can ask for and receive guidance, and if I allow it, faith will trump fear every single time!

True freedom has come in more ways than I ever thought possible: going to sleep without thinking of food; enjoying a TV show or road trip without obsessing about snacks; enjoying a holiday without the pre-holiday fears or post-holiday remorse about eating; being able to live and let live, especially with family and friends; being able to set healthy boundaries; being able to recognize when I need to apologize and say I’m sorry; accepting that I will always be a work in progress and that life is about good days and bad days—it’s not an all or nothing journey. True freedom is a beautiful thing!

- Joyce R., Canada <http://www.oalifeline.org/recovery/true-freedom/>



OA has transformed me into the best version of myself I could ever have imagined.

In my 48 years in program, I have evolved to living "The Serenity Prayer," not just saying it. That is, IMHO, the very best way to live. There are many things that I may not be happy with or like, but I have to accept them to keep my serenity.

The Basics:

Accepting in every fiber of my being that I am a Compulsive Overeater and that I must do "what it takes," not "what I wish it would take," to stay in recovery.

I plan my food and turn it over daily. I have been maintaining a 50+ lb. weight loss for over 15 years.

As an agnostic, it was a challenge for me to figure out a Higher Power that I could utilize, rely on, turn everything over to, and believe in. Program says I must, so, after many years in program, I finally did! It works, so I keep utilizing it.

It is also a challenge to accept my aging body, but I do my part: Zumba every day, and free weights 3x a week. It is incumbent upon me to do my part.

I work with others as much as I can. With the luxury of retirement, I sponsor many fellows day and night, by phone, email and/or text. I share my experience, strength & hope (ESH) whenever the opportunity arises.

My self-will never did me any good, as it's negative. I know my Higher Power got me through many scrapes and brought my wonderful second husband into my life, eighteen long years after my divorce and shortly after the demise of a disastrous, inappropriate relationship. We recently celebrated twenty-five glorious years together. If I hadn't been transformed by working program, there is no way he would be mine.

I can have serenity through any crisis or tragedy. I have learned that there is no perfection in humans and have eliminated the "p" word (perfect) from my vocabulary. If I slip, or slide, I get right back on track asap. I am human and I love and appreciate my imperfect life-on-life's terms life, all thanks to OA.

I want to be abstinent and in recovery until my last breath/meal!

Rhona L., NY

OA Changed My Life: Holy Moments



“That feeling of uselessness and self-pity will disappear” ([Alcoholics Anonymous](#), 4th ed., p. 84).

A couple of months ago, I woke up on a Saturday morning feeling different: lighter and more open-minded. I pondered on the feeling and realized that I had been waking up like this for many months, but the change had been so gradual I hadn't noticed the lessening of my mental burden.

It wasn't that way three years ago. Then I woke up every day knowing I was already a failure and would probably fail again. I knew the day would hold no wonder for me. I did that to myself. All day I worried about food.

I compared the two feelings that morning a couple of months ago and realized for the first time how far I have come in this program. I have had physical recovery and have maintained my body size for more than two years. I am wearing the same clothes this year that I wore last year and the year before. Is it a miracle? Yes, because I have never been able to do that. Is it the most miraculous thing that has happened to me? No.

The most miraculous thing is the burden my mind has lost: the burden of judging myself and others. The desire to judge still pops up and probably always will, but my Higher Power's will does not allow me to follow through on it. What a lesson learned and a load removed.

I have lost the capacity to inhibit myself from experiencing the moment. I used to be caught up in tomorrow or yesterday, focusing on future possibilities or past pitfalls. Now I attend to reality, which is what I have right here, right now. Even if all I notice are the bubbles in my mop bucket, that is how I make every minute holy.

The feelings of uselessness and self-pity have not disappeared forever. They are lurking in my recovering psyche, ready to pounce if I give them a chance. Sometimes that happens, and when it does, it's time to do more work on myself and for myself.

I have to be as rigorously honest about my emotional health as I have been about my physical health. Sometimes I get sloppy, and a loosening tape measure tells me so. Instead of getting caught up in denial, I honestly evaluate my food plan. When I trust my Higher Power and am honest with myself, the tape measure tightens.

The same is true of my emotions. This is the area where my most honest work is done because if it's not done, then I lose my physical recovery as well.

Anger is my underlying theme whenever I get depressed and start a downward spiral. I am basically a proud person, and it's a false pride based on an overloaded sense of entitlement. I have been good, so I deserve no less than whatever it is I desire. I have come to expect my Higher Power to deliver, and when he doesn't, I feel angry, hurt, rejected, depressed and unholy. By analyzing my anger through an anger workbook, I have learned to be assertive with my Higher Power instead of whining and waiting for him to do all the work.

By working with my sponsor, I have learned to experience my deepest, darkest, saddest sense of self. Those emotions that I tried to stuff with food now have their days or even weeks to work themselves out and become fully experienced. It helps me to draw word pictures about these feelings and describe them to God assertively.

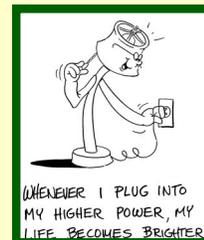
My sponsor also helped me develop a series of affirmations that I use to pick myself up when I am healing from the emotional colds I get.

- I radiate beauty.
- I am strong and courageous, and God is in control.
- I am patient and persistent, and life is good to me.
- I play an important role in the universe, and so do you!
- I am learning to forgive.
- I am a humble servant of the Lord.

That last one, along with others, has helped me with my inflated ego and false pride. It has dissolved the anger that flares up when I think I've been slighted. When I say it to myself, I immediately feel a sense of relief, clarity and complete submission to the will of my Higher Power. It puts my life in perspective and my mind at ease, and it diverts the feelings of uselessness and self-pity that can destroy my sanity . . . if I allow it.

— Reprinted from *Lifeline* magazine

Overeaters Anonymous Memphis



Howard S.



OA.org Quarterly newsletter:

A Publication of:
Overeaters Anonymous, Inc.
PO Box 44727
Rio Rancho, NM 87174-4727
USA

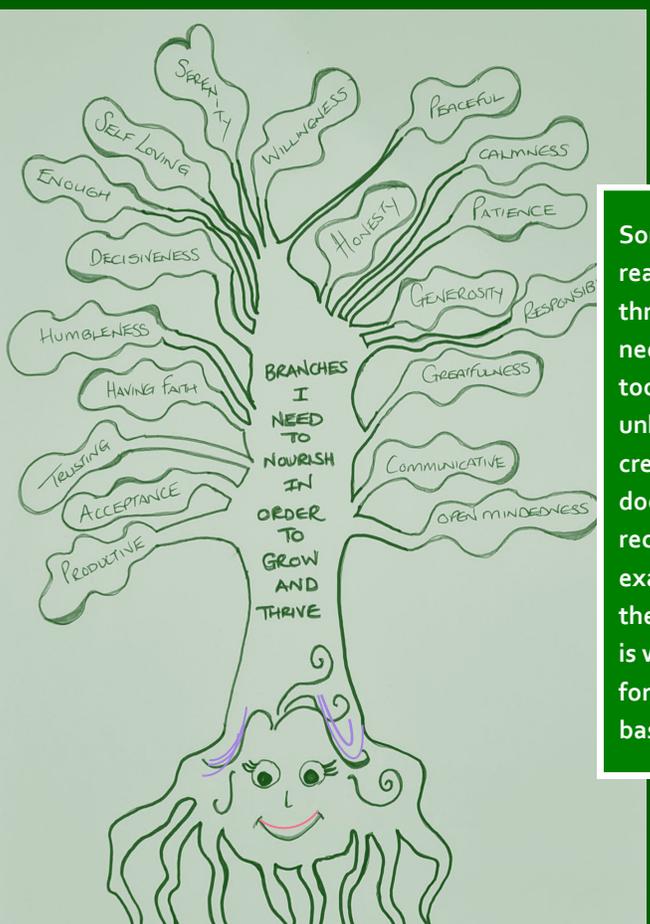
A Step Ahead

<https://oa.org/app/uploads/2021/10/a-step-ahead-fourth-quarter-2021.pdf>

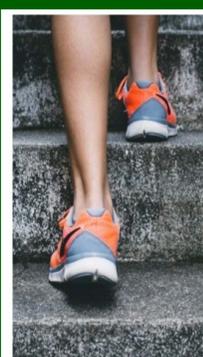


Read Recovery Stories for Free at OAlifeline.org

<https://oa.org/blog/news/read-recovery-stories-for-free-at-oalifeline-org/?news-category=0>



Sometimes as well as reading and writing through the Steps I need a visual aid. I took my list of unhealthy traits and created this quick doodle of my tree of recovery with the exact opposites on the branches as that is what I'm aiming for on a day by day basis.



Great for Newcomers or LongTimers!



OA Central Ontario Intergroup
Presents a:

Quick Step Study

- SUNDAYS (Four sessions)
May 15, (skip May 22), May 29, Jun 5, and Jun 12
10:30am – 12pm Noon ET.
- By Zoom or phone
- Free - 7th Tradition
- Session Format: Write on the step, share on the step. (Read the step ahead of time.)
- Registration is limited:
 - Please do so early to receive the handouts and zoom details.
 - Registration required 24 hours ahead of the start time.
 - Register by emailing: coquicksteps@oaontario.org and include in your email the start date of the study you would like to attend. You don't have to attend all the sessions.

"This workshop has been all and more than I could have hoped for."
-former workshop participant





Anger/Resentment/hate/grudges

Fear

Blaming

False pride

Self-centeredness

Controlling

Selfishness

Greed/excess

Self-righteousness

Self-pity

Phoniness

Dishonesty

Perfectionism

Procrastination

Jealousy

Envy

Arrogance

Guilt & shame

Negative thinking

Laziness/sloth

Unfocused/scattered

Intolerance

Impatience

Touchiness

Self-condemning

Judging/criticizing

Negativity/pessimism

Gloominess

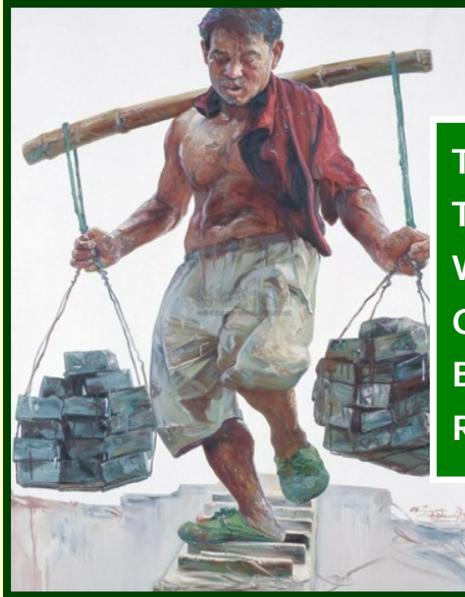
Indifference

Impulsiveness

Rigidity

Close minded

Ungrateful



The Things We Carried Before Recovery

Step 6: Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.



The Gifts of Transformation

Step 7: Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.

Acceptance, Forgiveness

Faith

Accountable

Humility

God centered

Live and let live

Unselfish, Self-forgetting

Generous

Open minded, Humility

Accountable

Authentic

Honesty

Good enough

Action

Trust

Goodwill, Kindness

Humility, modesty

Self-forgiving, remorseless

Positive thinking

Action

Self discipline

Tolerance

Patience

Thick skinned

Self-acceptance

Acceptance, love & tolerance

Positive, hopeful

Cheerful

Involved

Balanced

Flexible

Open minded

Gratitude





OA RISE | Recovery Inspires Shared Experiences

By OA RISE | Recovery Inspires Shared Exp...

OA RISE (#88993) is a registered meeting of Overeaters Anonymous. Our mission is to provide inspiring speaker meetings of depth and authenticity while supporting World Service through financial contributions. We aim to bring the voices and stories of non-circuit speakers into focus, encouraging our own growth as we spread hope through our stories of experience with other compulsive eaters.

<https://open.spotify.com/show/1InOuxbXTIBNGqwypdXLTL>

oarise.org

WHERE TO LISTEN



Soul's Journey

There is a journey,
A sad tale
Not many dare know,
Of heartache,
The suicide of a soul.

Forgotten, toss aside,
Abandoned,
Frightened and alone,
Felt only to roam,
No place to be,
No place to call Home.

Reluctantly stepping
Through a digital place
It is there Soul finds
That resting place.
Hope, honesty,
These we share,
We know Soul,
We See you,
We care.



Hands reach out.
Hearts that know
Sadness, longing,
Soul no longer alone.
Keep coming back!
Soul, you can do this!
There is Hope!
Twenty-four is the answer,
One day at a time.
Shine Bright
Young Soul!
You are Safe!
You're heard!
Together we find
How much
A Soul is Worth!

By admin

<https://esh.oafootsteps.com/2021/09/14/souls-journey/>



PLANT THREE ROWS OF PEAS!

Peace of mind

Peace of heart

Peace of soul

PLANT FOUR ROWS OF SQUASH:

Squash gossip
Squash indifference
Squash grumbling
Squash selfishness

PLANT FOUR ROWS OF LETTUCE:

Lettuce be faithful
Lettuce be kind
Lettuce be patient
Lettuce really love one another



NO GARDEN IS WITHOUT TURNIPS

Turnip for meetings
Turnip for service
Turnip to help one another
TO CONCLUDE OUR GARDEN WE
MUST HAVE THYME:
Thyme for each other
Thyme for family
Thyme for friends

Water freely with patience and cultivate with love.

There is much fruit in your garden because you reap what you sow.

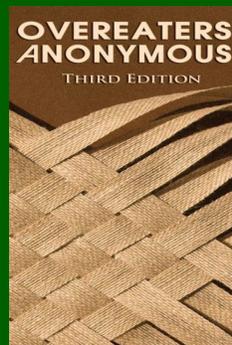
~Unknown

Overeaters Anonymous, Third Edition Now Available as an Audiobook!

OA's beloved Brown Book is now an audiobook! Using readings by OA members for the book's CD set, our first audiobook includes the entire text of *Overeaters Anonymous, Third Edition*—from the forewords to the appendices. During daily activities or when you need a recovery boost, listen to more than forty stories by OA members sharing their experience, strength, and hope, including our founder's share: "Keep Coming Back: Rozanne's Story."

OA receives a royalty share for audiobook purchases made through these third-party vendors (links open to external websites):

- Audible: <https://adbl.co/34hlF25>
- Amazon: <https://amzn.to/3oolR1e>
- Apple Books: <https://apple.co/33k5SPi>





On Awakening

On awakening let us think about the twenty-four hours ahead. We consider our plans for the day. Before we begin, we ask God to direct our thinking, especially asking that it be divorced from self-pity, dishonest or self-seeking motives. Under these conditions we can employ our mental faculties with assurance, for after all God gave us brains to use. Our thought-life will be placed on a much higher plane when our thinking is cleared of wrong motives. In thinking about our day we may face Indecision. We may not be able to determine which course to take. Here we ask God for inspiration, an intuitive thought or a decision. We relax and take it easy. We don't struggle. We are often surprised how the right answers come after we have tried this for a while. What used to be the hunch or the occasional inspiration gradually becomes a working part of the mind. Being still inexperienced and having just made conscious contact with God, it is not probable that we are going to be inspired at all times. We might pay for this presumption in all sorts of absurd actions and ideas. Nevertheless, we find that our thinking will, as time passes, be more and more on the plane of inspiration. We come to rely upon it. We usually conclude the period of meditation with a prayer that we be shown all through the day what are next steps to be, that we be given whatever we need to take care of such problems. We ask especially for freedom from self-will, and are careful to make no requests for ourselves only. We may ask for ourselves, however, if others will be helped.

Alcoholics Anonymous
86-87

Retiring at night

When we retire at night, we constructively review our day. Were we resentful, selfish, dishonest or afraid? Do we owe an apology? Have we kept something to ourselves which should be discussed with another person at once? Were we kind and loving toward all? What could we have done better? Were we thinking of ourselves most of the time? Or were we thinking of what we could do for others, of what we could pack into the stream of life? But we must be careful not to drift into worry, remorse or morbid reflection, for that would diminish our usefulness to others. After making our review we ask God's forgiveness and inquire what corrective measures should be taken.

Alcoholics Anonymous
86

3rd Step Prayer

God, I offer myself to Thee-to build with me and to do with me as Thou wilt. Relieve me of the bondage of self, that I may better do Thy will. Take away my difficulties, that victory over them may bear witness to those I would help of Thy power, Thy love, and Thy Way of life. May I do Thy will always!

Alcoholics Anonymous
Pg 63

7th Step Prayer

My Creator,
I am now willing
that you should
have all of me,
.good and bad.
I pray that you now
remove from me
every single defect
of character which
stands in the way of
my usefulness to
you and my fellows.
Grant me strength,
as I go out from
here, to do your
bidding.
Amen

Alcoholics Anonymous, Pg 76

The Promises

If we are painstaking about this phase of our development, we will be amazed before we are half way through. We are going to know a new freedom and a new happiness. We will not regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it. We will comprehend the word serenity and we will know peace. No matter how far down the scale we have gone, we will see how our experience can benefit others. That feeling of uselessness and self-pity will disappear. We will lose interest in selfish things and gain interest in our fellows. Self-seeking will slip away. Our whole attitude and outlook upon life will change. Fear of people and of economic insecurity will leave us. We will intuitively know how to handle situations which used to baffle us. We will suddenly realize that God is doing for us what we could not do for ourselves. Are these extravagant promises? We think not. They are being fulfilled among us—sometimes quickly, sometimes slowly. They will Always materialize if we work for them.

Alcoholics Anonymous
Pg 83-84



2022

2nd Sunday of the Month Workshop Topics

Overeaters Anonymous Virtual Region is hosting
The WORKSHOP series: 2nd Sunday of the Month

8:00 - 9:30 PM London (UTC)

3:00 - 4:30 PM New York (UTC -5)

- January 9th - Surrender: Deciding to Cooperate
- February 13th - Spiritual Connection
- March 13th - The Next Right Thought or Action
- April 10th - Service Keeps Us in Program
- May 8th - Dealing with Guilt & Shame
- June 12th - Gratitude as an Action Word
- July 10th - Steps 10 - 12: Continue, Improve & Practice
- August 14th - Practicing these Principles in all our Affairs
- September 11th - Being Entirely Ready for HP to Change Us
- October 9th - How to Twelve Step a Problem
- November 13th - Step 11: Prayer & Meditation
- December 11th - Sponsorship

Come Join Us!

For Virtual Region Workshop Room Join Zoom Meeting

Meeting ID: 891 6554 0024

Password: 120912

<https://oavirtualregion.org/2nd-sunday-of-the-month/>

For United States or International numbers <https://zoom.us/join>

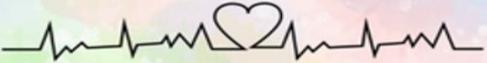
Suggested workshop contribution \$5

<http://oavirtualregion.org/region/seventh-tradition/>



The Los Angeles Intergroup Proudly Presents

Body Image Workshop



SUNDAY, MARCH 27TH 2022 FROM 10AM - 1PM PST

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/oalaig-body-image-workshop-tickets-263806531437>



Rockland County
OA Intergroup
presents a workshop

Spring into **RECOVERY**

Three Dynamic Speakers!
Share their Hope and Recovery from
Compulsive Eating, Anorexia and Bulimia.

Sunday, March 27, 2022
1pm-3pm EDT

Join Zoom Meeting
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83562039691?pwd=K1pBMGNkeXpGWWIPQ0VPMGZWbEx0QT09>
Meeting ID: **835 6203 9691** Passcode: **845845**
One tap mobile **+16465588656, 83562039691#, *845845# US (New York)**

A suggested donation of \$5 is appreciated
We accept contributions via check, money order and Zelle at rcoaig@gmail.com.
For questions, please contact Jen0 at (516) 318-5072 or jnabrndesign@yahoo.com.
Contact us at rcoaig@gmail.com
rocklandcountyoa.org | oa.org | oaregion6.org | (845) 639-2620

SWCTOA

a registered service body of

OVEREATERS ANONYMOUS®

Join the Southwestern Connecticut Intergroup of Overeaters Anonymous' Tranquility Retreat on June 24, 25, and 26!

[Click HERE for Registration Info.](#)

World Service Business Conference

During the 2021 WSBC, 255 delegates attended virtually from around the world. Committees shared their year's work in helping to carry the message of Overeaters Anonymous worldwide.



Delegates represented OA from the U.S., Canada, Spain, Mexico, Colombia, Brazil, Australia, France, the United Kingdom, Germany, Greece, Israel, Latvia, New Zealand, Poland, Russia, and S Africa.

Theme: "We Can Do Together What We Could Never Do Alone."

Dates: April 22-30, 2022



CONCEPTS & TRADITIONS

SECOND SUNDAY OF EACH MONTH 2022
(out of Melbourne, Australia)

7:30-9:00AM MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA
NOTE: THIS IS SATURDAY IN USA, 3:30PM EST*

 ZOOM ID: 200 540 624 (no password)

 ad4l.info

We'd love to WELCOME YOU!

Hosted by A Design for Living (Big Book OA)
*You can find your time zone on www.timeanddate.com

OA Western MA Intergroup 44th Annual Retreat June 3rd-June 5th, 2022

Cost -\$245 per person all single rooms

Whether you are a newcomer to Overeaters Anonymous or an experienced member, retreats are a fantastic way to experience recovery. Not only can you take a guided walk through the 12 Steps but along the way... you can stroll through the arboretum, smell the flowers inside the Center and in the gardens, take a nap in a rocking chair under a shade tree, watch the fireflies dance in the evening, stretch with yoga, spend some time with a Higher Power, and of course, make new friends along the journey. Come join us!

GENESIS Safety Protocols for COVID

Before arriving at Genesis, all guests will need to show proof of COVID vaccination and booster. Please email or fax a photo or scanned copy of your VACCINE CARD before your arrival. Email genesis@genesisspiritualcenter.org or fax to 413-572-1060. You may also send this information via U.S. mail: Genesis Spiritual Center, 53 Mill St, Westfield, MA 01085. Information about vaccinations must be sent to and received by Genesis before your arrival.

- Maximum 25 participants/Minimum-8
- Masks required except in own room
- Temperature check and screening questions upon arrival
- Thorough sanitizing throughout the day
- No buffet- food served by staff
- Participants assigned to toilets and showers
- All meetings may be outdoors under covered walkway with picnic tables. Bring your own chair if you want.
- Meals can be eaten outside or socially distanced in the dining rooms.

PROPOSED AGENDA

Friday, June 3
5:30-7 pm Check in
6-7pm Dinner
7:15-9:30 Meeting and Welcome
Meetings/Fellowship/Activity

Saturday, June 4
7-8 am Morning Activity
8-9 am Breakfast
9:15-12 Speaker and Workshop
Noon-1 Lunch
1-4 pm Speaker and Workshop
6-7 Dinner
7-8:30 pm Speaker and Workshop
Meetings/Fellowship/Activity

Sunday, June 5
7-8 am Morning Activity
8-9 am Breakfast
9:15-11:30 Speaker and Workshop
11:30-noon Closing Circle
Noon-12:30 check out
lunch on your own

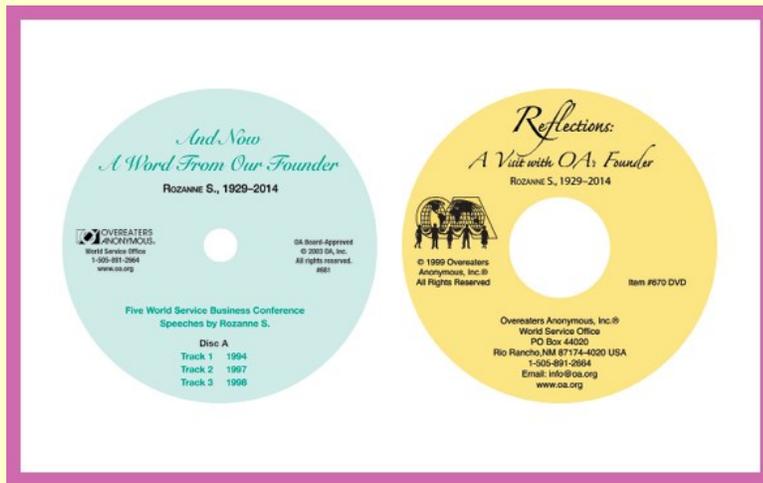
Location:
Genesis Spiritual Life Center,
Westfield, Ma 01085
<http://genesisspiritualcenter.org>

Call or text Karen S 413-636-8237
for more information

Please do not contact Genesis for
information

For Directions:
genesisspiritualcenter.org/directions

Western Mass Intergroup Website:
www.oawmass.org



As we celebrate OA's birthday in January, or on any occasion, take some time—38 minutes or so—to listen to “Reflections: A Visit with OA's Founder,” the 1999 interview with OA founder Rozanne S., found via the [Podcasts page](#) and more directly at oa.org/founder-recordings. As she is interviewed, Rozanne opens up about her life and lengthy journey toward becoming the founder of the Fellowship of Overeaters Anonymous, chronicling how she's overseen the spread of the OA message around the world.

Also newly available, “And Now a Word from Our Founder” was published in 2003 as a compilation of five of Rozanne's keynote speeches at World Service Business Conferences in 1994, 1997, 1998, 2000, and 2001. In them, Rozanne speaks with her characteristic humor and candid humility on such subjects as the origins of OA's Traditions, the importance of principles before personalities, and complicated issues of empathy and sacrifice. Let yourself be inspired as she ends her addresses with an audibly passionate call for the delegates—and the Fellowship at large—to engage in greater acts of service on behalf of OA.

A revised **Abstinence and Recovery Policy** was adopted at World Service Business Conference 2021. OA's revised policy states:

“WSBC 2021 accepts the following:

Abstinence is the action of refraining from compulsive eating and compulsive food behaviors while working towards or maintaining a healthy body weight. Spiritual, emotional, and physical recovery is the result of living and working the Overeaters Anonymous Twelve Step program on a daily basis.”

ANSWER THE SECOND CALL FOR DIVERSE VOICES

OA is updating the existing publication *A Common Solution* and expanding the representation of OA's diverse membership. All are welcome to submit stories that express your experience, strength, and hope. *We are hoping to specifically hear from those who identify as a member of one or more of these under-represented groups within OA:*

Asian/Pacific Islander • Latinx • Indigenous • Members who have had or considered a surgical solution • Transgender • Non-binary • Muslim • Buddhist

You can help under-represented members identify with other OA members by sharing what brought you to OA, what you found here, and what keeps you coming back. Please include which diverse group(s) you identify with and how our common solution (i.e., the Twelve Steps of OA, the nine Tools of Recovery, and reliance on a Higher Power) has led to your abstinence and recovery.

We need your unique story!

1. *How do you celebrate your diversity as a recovering member of OA? How have you used your diversity to support your physical, emotional, and spiritual recovery?*
2. *Did you ever feel misunderstood or unwelcomed by other OA members because of your diversity? What kept you coming back?*
3. *What would you like other OA members to better understand about your diversity as it relates to your disease and recovery?*
4. *How has racism, prejudice, bigotry, or marginalization affected your disease of compulsive eating?*
5. *As a bulimic, anorexic, or bariatric surgery patient, have you felt welcomed?*
6. *As an atheist or agnostic, how were you able to come to believe that a power greater than yourself could restore you to sanity without becoming religious?*
7. *As a trans person, how has your recovery and membership in OA challenged or supported your transition?*
8. *Do you have a physical or mental disability that requires accommodations in order to participate in OA? Do you have a health condition that you would like other OA members to understand?*
9. *Has living in a country outside of North America challenged or supported your recovery from compulsive eating?*
10. *How have you welcomed, reached out to, or sponsored newcomers who belong to a race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age group, or nationality different from your own? What have you learned from them?*

Important Rules

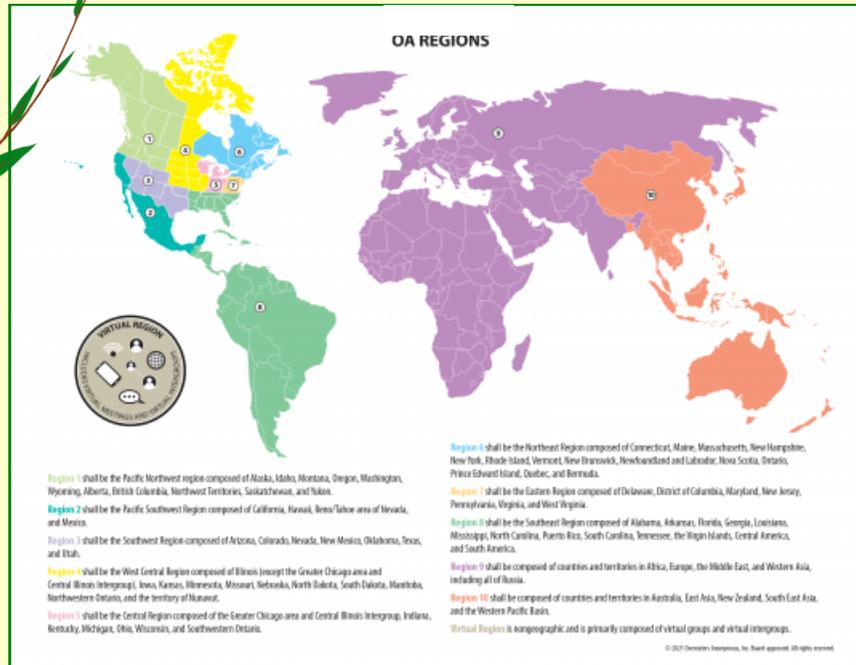
1. Submissions are assumed intended for publication, are subject to editing, and become the property of OA, Inc.
2. Submissions are not returned.
3. All submissions must contain the author's full name and address. You may request anonymity with publication. Your state, province, or country may remain anonymous if you so indicate.
4. Submissions must be submitted with a signed release form.
5. Submissions of approximately 500-800 words are preferred.

Due by April 29, 2022



**Email your story to
info@oa.org with subject
line "Common Solution."**

OA WORLD REGIONS



Regions are composed of groups, intergroups, and service boards within specified geographic boundaries and the virtual community. OA is divided into eleven regions.

- OA Region One:** Pacific North West: Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Washington, Wyoming, Alberta, British Columbia, Northwest Territories, Saskatchewan, and Yukon.
- OA Region Two:** Pacific Southwest: California, Hawaii, Reno/Tahoe area of Nevada, and Mexico.
- OA Region Three:** Southwest: Arizona, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas, and Utah.
- OA Region Four:** West Central: Illinois (except the Greater Chicago area and Central Illinois Intergroup), Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Manitoba, Northwestern Ontario, and the territory of Nunavut.
- OA Region Five:** Central: Greater Chicago area and Central Illinois Intergroup, Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan, Ohio, Wisconsin, and Southwestern Ontario.
- OA Region Six:** Northeast: Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, Rhode Island, Vermont, New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, Ontario, Prince Edward Island, Quebec, and Bermuda.
- OA Region Seven:** Eastern: Delaware, District of Columbia, Maryland, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and West Virginia.
- OA Region Eight:** Southeast: Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Puerto Rico, South Carolina, Tennessee, the Virgin Islands, Central America, and South America.
- OA Region Nine:** Countries and territories in Africa, Europe, the Middle East, and Western Asia, including all of Russia.
- OA Region Ten:** Countries and territories in Australia, East Asia, New Zealand, South East Asia, and the Western Pacific Basin.
- OA Virtual Region:** Nongeographic: Virtual meetings and virtual intergroups.

<https://oa.org/service-bodies/regions/>

**In Your Language,
What is the Best Translation
for “Abstinence,” “Recovery,”
and “Higher Power”?**



**If You Know the Answers, We Need Your Service.
Become a Glossary Volunteer!**

<https://oa.org/guidelines-oa-translation/>

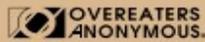
Compulsive eaters worldwide are struggling to access our Overeaters Anonymous program because of language barriers. Can you help them?

- Are you an active member of Overeaters Anonymous?
- Is English a second (or third) language for you?
- Are you willing to give service beyond the group level?

The **OA Glossary** is a compilation of hundreds of the most common English words and phrases used in our OA meetings and literature. These words, such as *abstinence*, *recovery*, *sponsor*, *plan of eating*, *food plan*, *Higher Power*, and *World Service Business Conference*, often have a special meaning in OA. As an OA Glossary Volunteer, you can consider the special meaning of each English word and phrase and suggest the best translation for your language.

Being a Glossary Volunteer is a great opportunity for service and recovery! Your service can accelerate the translation of all OA literature into your language and help carry the message of Overeaters Anonymous worldwide!

To become a Glossary Volunteer, contact your local or national language translation committee or your region chair or trustee and ask to join a translation or validation team. It is also helpful to read *Guidelines for Translation of OA Literature and Materials* found at oa.org/document-library under category “Translation.”



WHERE IS GOD?



**... ANYPLACE YOU
ALLOW HIM TO ENTER !!!**

Howard S.

**FEAR AND FAITH
CANNOT LIVE IN THE
SAME HOUSE...**



**LET GO AND
LET GOD!**

Howard S.

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*OA receives a royalty share for this printed literature only when you choose the “Paperback \$9.99” option.

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Thanking My Lucky Stars

In the past, whenever I got into a rut, had problems, felt angry, or couldn't cope with stress, I would eat and eat and eat. Eating used to help, especially that first bite. But after that first bite, I would just automatically shove food into my mouth, and I wouldn't stop until my jaws were tired. I was always hoping that I would soon feel better. Unfortunately, whatever relief I got was only temporary. In the long run, this binge eating never helped because as soon as I finished stuffing my face, I would feel awful! And my original dilemma would still be there, so then I had two problems. Next, I would fall into a depressed state, figuring I was doomed to fail and would remain a fat slob for the rest of my life.

Recently, I went to a potluck party, and after hearing very disturbing news, I felt like I couldn't breathe. I simply plummeted down to a bottom level where I hadn't been for a long time. I felt as if I had fallen under the floor and underground. In an effort to survive, my mind automatically, frantically tried to get help. I closed my eyes, calmed my breathing, opened my mind, and slowly said the Serenity Prayer three times. My Higher Power was there, and for that, I thank my lucky stars.

I prayed that I would be able to get through the potluck party without screaming and rummaging through the food table, grabbing everything in sight. I was able to calm myself enough to get through the rest of the evening and eat a reasonable amount of food.

I could never have lasted and not gorged myself if it hadn't been for the Overeaters Anonymous program. What I've learned has not only helped me with food but has also helped me get my life together with relationships, finances, emotional upheavals—you name it. This program has literally saved me, and I thank my lucky stars.

Since I've been in Overeaters Anonymous for over a year, I've learned to go to my Higher Power to get help. I also attend meetings, read literature, see my sponsor, meditate, and try to follow an attainable food plan. I was able to achieve abstinence readily and have only broken it once in over a year. Breaking my abstinence caused major thoughts of sugar for over two weeks, but with the help of the many Tools, I was able to go back to my abstinence. For that alone, I thank my lucky stars.

I start out the day with a certain routine: I pray to my Higher Power, meditate, and plan my day. Next, I walk my dogs, eat breakfast, and read literature. Then, it's off to the rest of the day, and it's only 8 a.m.! I feel good and in control, and my dogs feel good too. When I follow this routine, thoughts about what I've read seem to be with me the whole day. Even things said at a meeting come to mind, as I can remember and almost hear what people said that related to me.

Without this program, I would not be the person I am today, and I thank my lucky stars I walked into an Overeaters Anonymous meeting almost two years ago.

Waking Up



I walked into OA because all I could see before me was cycles and cycles of weight gain and loss, misery and short-lived false joy. I had to admit I did not want to live. I could not see the point of anything, and my only desire was to sleep or not be conscious because even excess sugar could not numb me.

In OA, I found fellows sharing feelings just like this and describing my life but referring to their own. It wasn't a mirror image, but pretty darn close. No share has ever made me think, "No I don't get that. No, I can't relate to that." But I notice no judging in the rooms, only acceptance and a knowing look. There is love and understanding—I can literally feel it. We are all equal. Though we may be on different distances along our journeys, length of time abstinent is no protector. It's always just for today. The effect of a longer journey may be more visible, but the method is the same for everyone.

In OA, I have found a place to be me, to be honest. There would be no point in going if I could not be this way. I have started to feel good about myself at times. I have lost a little weight and look forward to meetings. At them, I can feel my Higher Power and the love in the room.

Today, I *want* to learn to help others and be like my abstinent fellows. I *want* to get up in the morning and call my sponsor, and I want to do my Step work. This is still something alien to me. I would normally treat such things as a bind and try to rush through, but I can feel these things helping me. I'm learning something new every day about myself, my HP, and OA. I'm waking up, and I want to be awake. Again, it's alien to me.

A Higher Power to me is the creator of all things: breathing me, healing me, engineering every cell in my body to behave as it should. It is kindness, support, healing, strength, forgiveness and knowledge of all. It's the director. It's love.

Could what I have found in OA have emanated from me? Absolutely not. I was lost, down, and struggling. I have tried for five decades to do in various ways what OA is allowing me to learn and feel, and it's not coming from me for sure. It's from our collective, the force amongst us, the love, the knowledge, the understanding which I believe comes through us from our HP as we each understand him. It didn't happen before, because I got in the way.

— M.S., United Kingdom <http://www.oalifeline.org/diversity/waking-up/>

Transformation

Transformation (spiritual awakening) is a change that makes the impossible possible. We come to OA admitting that we are powerless over food and our lives are unmanageable. The journey begins at Step 1 (powerless) and at Step 12 it clearly states that we have had a spiritual awakening (power) as the result of these Steps. The Step 9 and Step 10 promises are a confirmation/manifestation of the spiritual awakening. Simply put, we move from human power (hp) to higher power (HP) through a 12 Step process of transformation. It's a mystery of grace that cannot be explained, but it can be lived.

However, the only way we can keep this gift of transformation is to give it away. If we do not carry this message to other compulsive overeaters, and practice these principles (12 Steps) in all our affairs, we will forget that we have been transformed, and we will lose this precious gift. Let us continue to freely give what we have been freely given.

The journey from hp to HP is a trip worth taking. Gratitude is an intangible gift that comes through transformation. A joyful heart is another gift. There are many more intangible gifts. It works, it really does. It is the easier, softer way. Let us continue to accompany one another on this journey of transformation from the depths of despair to a life beyond our wildest dreams.

Jeanette R. New York



No More Hiding

I have a vivid recollection of a moment early in recovery: I'd just arrived at an OA meeting, a regular meeting I considered "home." On the way to this meeting, I'd binged. Before exiting my car, I was fearfully and intently stuffing my wrappers and trash into the armrest storage space. And though I was alone in my car, I clearly heard: "Who are you hiding that from?"

Oh, snap. That's right; there's no more hiding in HP's world. There never was, then or now, any hiding that is truly real. I credit OA for my spiritual awakening, which gave way to my ears hearing and my eyes seeing HP in my life, binge by binge, moment by moment. In that instant, HP nudged me to ask, "Who are you hiding that from?"

Sorrow, elation, relief, and frustration, but no more hiding. This proved to be my gateway to living honestly, hopefully, faithfully, with courage and integrity, willingly and humbly, with discipline, with love and forgiveness, perseverance, awareness of HP, and service.

OA ruined my hiding. I've been working the solution since October 2000, free from bulimia since November 2006, free from anorexia since February 2007. Thank you, OA. Thank you, HP.

— Maggie M. <https://www.oalifeline.org/higher-power/no-more-hiding/>



Coming Full Circle

Today, I went to work out in the employee gym. The last time I went was two years ago, a few months before joining Overeaters Anonymous. At the time, I was at a healthy weight for my size, 150 pounds (68 kg), and had just completed two triathlons. People always complimented me on my health and fitness. Little did they know, I was mentally, spiritually, and physically sick.

When I joined OA, I identified first as an overeater and then promptly began to restrict, bringing my weight down to 128 pounds (58 kg). While the charts said this weight was normal for my height, I was depriving myself of particular food groups. I was constantly shaky and cold, my skin was pale, and my hair was thinning. This period in my life has had lasting repercussions on my health.

So earlier today, when I walked back into my employee gym with my weight back up to 150 pounds (68 kg), no one likely knew that anything in my life had changed (although some might have noticed that I had regained weight and wondered if I let myself go). In many ways, my return to this body size and to the gym feels like coming full circle, so I would like to acknowledge how today's visit was different from two years ago.

Today, I stuck to my exercise plan: thirty minutes at a normal intensity. Two years ago, I would work out past the point of exhaustion. Today, I followed my food plan and ate pre- and post-workout snacks, as recommended by a nutritionist. Two years ago, I would have either restricted my intake following a workout or binged as a reward. Since I'm appropriately fueled, I do not feel sluggish, light-headed, or guilty.

Today, I smiled at other people in the gym and engaged in small talk. Two years ago, I constantly surveyed the room, comparing the physiques and abilities of others to my own with criticism and envy.

Today, I noticed in the mirror that my skin is brighter, my hair is shinier, and my eyes are alive. I felt grateful for my health. Two years ago, I only saw my body's size and shape and felt either pride or disgust.

Today, I felt present in the current day—no visions of grandeur that just walking into the gym would transform my body and life. Two years ago, I stopped going because I got busy and felt too ashamed to return. I was certain that the gym staff would cast judgment on me for letting my attendance slip. This thinking was a direct reflection of my self-centeredness and perfectionism.

Today, I felt God's presence throughout my workout. Two years ago, I felt alone. OA has been a gift from my HP, a gift beyond the number on the scale, the size of my jeans, or the color of my chip. Thank you, God, for helping me find new ways to see the progress of my recovery.



Blessings

It's all in the approach.

I have traveled through most of my life expecting things to go a certain way. My way. And there was nothing more infuriating than when someone, or something, didn't do what I wanted them to! I set myself up for a great deal of disappointment and misery, in my holier than thou, self-righteous indignation!

As I continue to work through the Steps, I realize that I am learning a new way of being in this world. In fact, I just awoke from a dream where a bloke walked into my home, and was purposely goading me into an argument. Sadly, in my dream, I reacted! I stood up to him, and made sure he knew how wrong he was... As you can imagine the dream did not end well. I was very unsettled when I awoke.

As I lay there, trying to unwind my tangled feelings, and my disappointment in myself for not applying the principles of this program, it suddenly dawned on me... What a wonderful opportunity this was to PRACTICE my program! In my dream, I harm none, except myself! I realized that even in my dream, when the people arrived in my home, I had 'expected' them to behave in a certain way. When things started to go sideways, I allowed myself to become indignant and retaliatory! I even sprayed him with a watering hose? {Go figure, it was a dream!}

Suddenly I realized that this man in my dreams was acting out his own pain and his own fears! It made me stop, and think... And suddenly I found myself praying for this fictional man with all my heart, offering him the same tolerance, pity and patience I would cheerfully grant a sick friend. Then my thoughts took me a step further, and I considered that maybe this belligerent bloke was a reflection of some part of myself that wants to continue to cause harm and feed this dis-ease. I found that this was an opportunity to pray for that part of myself that is still wounded and fear-full, belligerent and angry.

Whoever he was, my heart was instantly full of love and gratitude for him, for the gift of this situation, and the learning I had received from it. I realized, maybe for the first time, in a very real and tangible way that *'it truly IS all in the approach!'*... In any situation, in life, or even in my dreams... If I enter into the experience with my own expectations, operating from a self-centered point of view, it will not serve my newly found recovery and the work that has transpired through working the Steps. These are qualities of my own defects of character that no longer serve me and are in the process of being lifted from me, even while I sleep!

Today, acceptance is the answer to all my problems. What a great approach to everything that I might encounter today! It is so nice to be able to write those words and begin to truly understand what that means, and how it applies directly to my life!

Anonymous <https://esh.oafootsteps.com/2021/08/14/blessings/>



A revised “Unity with Diversity” Policy was adopted at World Service Business Conference 2021. OA’s revised policy states:

“Unity with Diversity” Policy

THE FELLOWSHIP of Overeaters Anonymous encourages and promotes acceptance and inclusivity. All are welcome to join OA and are not excluded because of race, creed, nationality, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, or any other attribute. We welcome all who share our compulsion. Everyone with the desire to stop eating compulsively is welcome in Overeaters Anonymous.

THE FELLOWSHIP recognizes the existence of individual approaches and different structured concepts to working our Twelve Step program of recovery; that the Fellowship is united by our disease and our common purpose; and that individual differences in approach(es) to recovery within our Fellowship need not divide us.

THE FELLOWSHIP respects the rights of members, groups, and service bodies to follow a particular concept of recovery within Overeaters Anonymous and encourages each member, group, and service body to respect those rights as they extend the hand of fellowship to those who still suffer.

THE FELLOWSHIP encourages each duly registered group and service body to affirm and maintain the Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous by allowing any member to share his or her experience, strength, and hope in meetings regardless of the individual approach or specific concept that member may follow. Duly registered is defined as being in full compliance with Bylaws, Subpart B, Article V.

You can view or download this updated policy statement on the [Unity with Diversity Policy Statements web page](#).

<https://oa.org/blog/news/unity-with-diversity-policy-revised-at-wsbc-2021/?news-category=0>

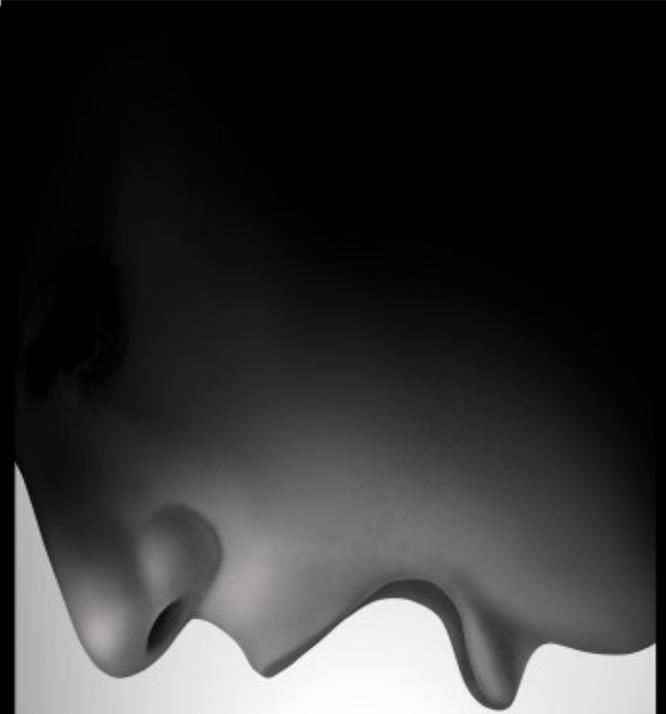


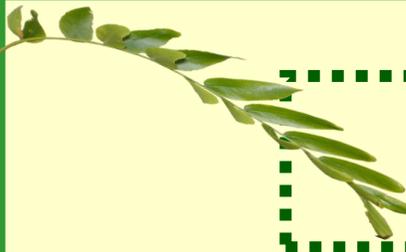
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Lifeline: Stories of Recovery

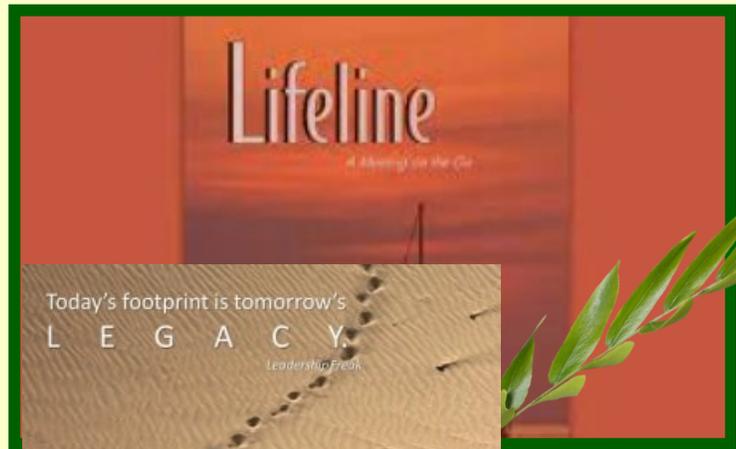
Relaunching in 2022: a New *Lifeline* Blog

OA is taking *Lifeline* in a new direction! Coming soon—*Lifeline: Stories of Recovery*, a blog for all of us to share our experience, strength, and hope with each other *and* to attract those who are still suffering from compulsive eating and compulsive food behaviors and searching for a solution online. Together we can!

Send Us Your Story!

Want to help OA carry the message online? Send us your story or artwork or audio recording or video! Use this [temporary form](#) to send in your submission.

We also have new [Contributor Guidelines for Lifeline: Stories of Recovery Blog on OA.org](#) available to give you ideas for recovery topics and suggestions to put your share in shape for publication. Check it out!



The Serenity Times 3rd Quarter Theme:

FOOTPRINTS

What Will Yours Be?

How are love and service
a part of your life?

How are you working on creating that legacy now?

Email your article submissions to the editor at

wuignewsletter@gmail.com



Stay connected between meetings.



WhatsApp

Share your Experience, Strength, and Hope. Reach out and give service to fellows in need of support. Share your day count and food issues on the Food Forum.



Book Club Fellowship



Mondays 6:30pm-7:15pm
(first Monday eve of each month)

Sundays 10:30am-11:15am
(third Sunday of each month)

*Each meeting, whether on a Monday or a Sunday, will be a continuation of reading and discussion from the previous session.

Join our Book Club Fellowship WhatsApp Group
For all related info, including registration, books, and Zoom login info:
<https://chat.whatsapp.com/HAWo0jphI2uKKOwhYLckm>

You may also contact Diane T. at (914) 659-0192



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TEXT DIANE T WITH YOUR FIRST NAME AND LAST INITIAL:

(914) 659-0192





The Serenity Times

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WHAT WILL MY FOOTPRINTS BE? SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCES BY WORKING THE TOOL OF WRITING AND HELPING FELLOW OA'S. YOUR DREAMS, PRAYERS, ANECDOTES, POEMS, FAVORITE QUOTES AND OA LITERATURE ARE AMONGST SOME OF THE ITEMS YOU CAN SUBMIT. SHARE WHAT INSPIRES YOU TO DIANE T: WUIGNEWSLETTER@GMAIL.COM

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Follow OA on Instagram



Overeaters Anonymous has expanded its social media presence. Get a bit of OA inspiration or program wisdom—follow us at https://www.instagram.com/overeatersanonymous_official/.

WUIG TEXT MESSAGES:

IF YOU'D LIKE TO RECEIVE TEXT UPDATES ABOUT EVENTS, MEETING CLOSURES, ETC., TEXT @OAWUIG TO 81010. TO STOP RECEIVING WUIG TEXTS, REPLY @LEAVE TO THE NUMBER YOU ARE RECEIVING MESSAGES FROM.



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10% OA REGION 6. P.O. BOX 644. PEABODY, MA 01960

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