

Together We Can

a publication of the Metro D.C. Overeaters Anonymous – December 2015



STEP 3 THOUGHTS

From Step 3 in the OA 12 & 12: "We no longer simply do what we feel like doing or what we think we can get away with."

I am by nature a person who is motivated to do what I can get away with. There's something inside me that urges me to seize whatever advantages come my way, out of a feeling that life is cheating me and I have a right to get a little bit of my own back again. This is not to say that I am serene when I see other people doing what they can get away with. I am always outraged that they aren't playing by the rules.

My attitude has changed somewhat over time and, aided by some recovery, I consciously try to do what is right much of the time. This means I actually have to think about what is the right thing to do. The other half of the equation for me is letting go of judging other people for, in my opinion, doing wrong or taking advantage. I have two thoughts about this that I try to apply:

1. It's not my job to judge other people
2. I cannot control anyone's behavior but my own

It's easier for me to behave well when I no longer see myself as fighting for supremacy, throwing elbows and trying to secure my position. The more I feel safe and contented within myself, the less I'm bothered by other people's behavior, and the easier it is to behave well myself.

Ellen H.

I USED TO BE

I used to be so baffled by Step 2 - attempting to have a Higher Power (HP) concept that was clearly defined in a black and white way. And during so much of my time in program I struggled, so it was tough to even believe that there was a HP.

Now, for today at least, I allow the concept of a HP to wash over me like a mountain stream flows over pebbles and rocks, or like a gentle rain that falls on me softly. At the same time, I can't really grab hold of HP, if that makes sense. My HP is more like a magician or the wind or even a shadow from a flash of light out of the corner of my eye. My HP is often very quiet and seems to operate in the background of my life, like a stage hand who arranges the furniture for a play without ever being seen by the audience.

I know my HP is with me when something seems to happen coincidentally that could not have happened if it had been planned, like running into a neighbor at the pool, both of us having extra time and both of us being in the mood for a visit, or like receiving an e mail from the same person I had just sent an e mail, or like having some fear or depression lifted off of me, or like being in a room where I can feel the strong faith of the people present, or like sharing something and being told it was exactly what the other person needed to hear, or like having words come out of my mouth that I couldn't have thought of if I had worked at it for days.

I am so grateful for the tools of our program, as I believe using them allows me to be open to the presence of a HP. I am also so grateful for figuring out that no one else is my HP and realizing that I, too, am not my own HP. I might be used by my HP, and I pray to be of service to my HP, however, (thank God,) I can let go of all that responsibility and power I used to think was mine. I do need to keep coming back, one day at a time, to keep this channel open and to stay connected with my HP.

If my sharing gets you to think about your own Step Two experience, I hope that you will consider the service of sharing your writing in future newsletters. Together we get better.

Katrina B.

COMPASSIONATE, AWAKE, WHOLE:

INCURABLE AND PROUD!

Not all darkness is bad. Not all shadowy places are scary. Not all secrets are shameful. Not all pain is evil. ~ Rob Brezsney

A while back I wrote this on Facebook: an excerpt from a conversation I had about recovery and shame and the stark separation we make erroneously between those in recovery and those who seemingly don't need to be in recovery from anything. It was an attempt to soften the harshness and ignite some compassion within those of us who draw a distinct 'better than/worse than' line between (in our case) Foodies and Normies and then pick up that line and use it to whip ourselves within AND whip ourselves into shape with.

"On Addiction:

Everyone 'uses' something. In the same way a tree 'uses' the stuff it grows in to discover its growth pattern to the sky.

Some destroy their lives for a while until they learn how not to and instead acquire more of a taste for vulnerability, change and movement.

Then 'using' becomes true intimacy with choosing, assimilating, empirical living and gracious dying. Eyes wide open.

'Using' becomes life sustaining and ends up being a quest for answers and an intimate relationship with Life.

Unhealed Addiction is very expensive.

Healed Addiction could be called Desire, or Motivation, or Joy, or even Love."

What I didn't understand when I came into recovery was that I could never be cured. I heard it many times over but I never got it. Then one day I realized that I could never be cured from Life and living in it and this was what the program was really offering me: the knowledge that there is no end point where I put down my books and my community and get on with something else less spiritual. This path to serenity and freedom in this particular form - a 12 step program - like all paths to serenity and freedom in every other form, is a forever one.

According to religious text, Saint Paul was hit by a blinding light on the road to Damascus and from then on began to follow his path of simultaneous darkness and illumination into all the answers he had been searching for in all the wrong places. I awoke to my skewed relationship with food and nourishment of every sort and got a 12 step program. Same-same.

After enough years to gain perspective and clarity and a base from which it is hard to dislodge me permanently even during the most turbulent holiday season, I practice recovery with awake-ness and wholeness as my guides. I am never fully awake for very long; I have shining moments that I love when eating is easy and then, because I am human and always on the lookout for shortcuts to enlightenment. Instead of tracking wholeness, I make this 'easy' as my new goal, set a course for consistent perfection and then sail out as far as these new winds will take me - which is not very far. What I have forgotten again is that eating was easy because life and my relationship with it at that time was easy; I was at

ease with it and in it. There is no place where this is so all of the time. Some call it Grace.

What keeps me on my base and helps me track wholeness once more is that I know what I have done and I know that I will do it again and I am under no illusion that I will 'get with the program' for good and be able to leave all the unsavory mistake-making parts of myself behind.

(Except, of course, when I am under the illusion that I can and will!)

What this softness, compassion and inclusion offers is a place for all of me and all of the many aspects of me that will show up looking for the fast track to liberation, so none of me gets left out in the cold - and if there is one thing that is sure to trigger a food frenzy, it's feeling like I have been exiled and left out in the cold. It also brings me back into the realm of humanity where the drive for a fulfilled spiritual existence is paramount, no matter what it appears as on the surface. It makes me no different than anyone else and it shifts the focus from food as shameful escape-chute to food, and my relationship with it, as a mirror into my Self and my relationship with Life. This I can live with, one day at a time.

Sarah R.

DELEGATE REPORT REGION 7 BUSINESS ASSEMBLY - FALL 2015

"Many hands make light work", was the prevailing theme of the Convention Committee. The work was divided into what had to be done for the 2015 Convention in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, followed by an update and job assignments for what has to be done for the 2016 Convention that will be held at Rehoboth Beach, Maryland.

I enjoyed working with this diverse group of people who are all willing to step forward and do the work required to make the Region 7 Conventions motivating, fun, educational and memorable.

The Convention Committee Chair asked about the registration table, a report was given, a request for volunteer staffing was issued and volunteers were signed up at the assembly. The Chair asked about the Craft Room and a report was given, along with an Expense Report and a signup sheet for the requisite number of volunteers. Every item on the agenda went like that; there was someone in the room with an answer, until the signup sheet for Workshop Presenters.

Closer examination of the issue revealed that the number of workshops exceeded the number of anticipated registrations. If all of the slots were filled, the attendance in the individual workshops would be very low. With a bit of recalculating, and we achieved the right number of rooms and workshops for the anticipated attendance.

My term as Secretary of the Convention Committee ended and I look forward to my next assignment as Vice-Chair for the Convention Committee at the Spring Assembly (September 25, 26, and 27th, Reading Pennsylvania).

Karen N.

REGION 7 BUSINESS ASSEMBLY – REPORT

This Fall's Region 7 (R7) Business Assembly was my first as the Chair of our DC Metro Area Intergroup. As I reflect on the preparation I did before Assembly, my focus and work during the Assembly, and in retrospect now, a couple of weeks later, contemplating on my experience, this Assembly felt different. I am continuing to learn through my practice of the OA tool of Service that: the more I give of myself to others without thinking what I will get in return; how others will view my help; that we are all just doing the best we can; the more gratitude

and peace I find in my day. Someone shared at the Assembly: "Service makes a difference in my recovery. I am here doing all of the extra service I do to stay abstinent."

I am very grateful for having had the opportunity to be of service to our Fellowship and to be a part of carrying the message to the compulsive eater who still suffers in and out of our rooms. Here, I offer Selected Highlights from this Assembly.

Our Region 7 Board of Trustee (BOT) member (Barb G) - Reported that she recently attended a Board of Trustee and Region Chair joint meeting and that some members believe OA is going bankrupt, which is untrue. What is true, she noted is that subscription income does not cover Lifeline expenses. She also noted that there are OA outreach activities going on in Central and South America, Korea and China. A new pocket card entitled "Twelve Stepping a Problem" is available from the oa.org bookstore and as a free download under "Documents."

Friday September 25th, 2015

On Friday evening, the "Intergroup Renewal" Committee facilitated a workshop identifying intergroup "issues" and "resources." The major issue was how to encourage more people to participate at the Intergroup level. Attendees suggested: One IG (Intergroup) has a 2-hour meeting – their business meeting for the first hour and a workshop the second hour. Someone mentioned that in organizing our workshops, they have attendees leave with something tangible? (e.g., a list of their red, yellow, green light foods?). Intergroups can reach out to non-represented face-to-face meetings, ask them to identify a point-of-contact for flyers, information, email blasts, and encourage the group to have the "Designated Downloader" be a service position. Members of this IG Renewal Committee are also planning to re-initiate regular calls with IG chairs. A novel "outreach" idea was reaching out to Resident Assistants at colleges and universities; another suggestion was to provide increased opportunities for sponsor/sponsee interactions (such as the Baltimore IG's "Sponsor Speed Dating" event). A summary of the ideas/suggestions will be posted to the R7 website.

Saturday September 26th, 2015

Get ready for Committee Work! Saturday morning's schedule started with "Jump Start" meetings - one for new representatives (affectionately referred to as 'green dots'), one to Committee Chairs and the third, open to all.

Our Region 7 of OA is made up of 6 states and the District of Columbia. 24 Intergroups, connected to 478 individual OA meetings were represented at this assembly. The total number of voting members for this Assembly was 42 on Saturday and 41 on Sunday. Region 7 has committees (see below for list) and 5 board members (Chair, Vice Chair, Corresponding Secretary, Recording Secretary, Treasurer).

Committee work is done during a 2 1/2 hour block on Saturday morning. I was assigned to the Unity Committee and the main issue before the committee was whether or not it should be disbanded. After much discussion, it was determined that the Committee had met its' objectives and a motion was made to disband the committee, seconded, and then supported unanimously. It was noted that if there was a need to reinstate the committee for a particular issue, the R7 Bylaws provide that option and the Board could do so.

With the disbanding of the Unity Committee, the members were reassigned "on the spot." I was reassigned to the Finance Committee for the remainder of the morning. This Committee was a whirlwind of

activity. At pre-assigned times, Committee Chairs would enter and present their requested 2016 budgets to the Finance Committee. These Chairs would explain how they spent their 2015 budget and what they planned to do in 2016 and how much their activities would cost. After a question and answer period, and after the Chair left the room, the Committee would discuss the proposed budget, make a decision on the funding (within minutes) and then put the Committee's budget into their own to create a comprehensive Region 7 draft budget! Service in action!

A lunchtime speaker shared her experience, strength and hope about how she found OA and worked her program. She reminded all of us that "When we are asked to serve, you say yes - unless you have a really good reason not to."

Saturday afternoon - is the start of the first of 2 formal Business Meetings.

Board members briefly summarized their reports. Key dates of interest include:

Region 7 Convention – November 13-15, 2015 in Gettysburg, PA;

Region 7 Spring Assembly – April 8-10, 2016 in Gettysburg, PA.

(Business Meeting) Funding applications, registrations and motions are due by February 8, 2016 .

World Service Business Conference – May 2-7, 2016 in Albuquerque, NM

World Service Convention will be held September 1-4, 2016 in Boston, MA at the Boston Marriott Copley Place Hotel. The hotel is now accepting reservations.

Region 7 Fall Assembly October 14-16, 2016 at Turf Valley in Ellicott City

MOTIONS:

Several motions to change text in our Policy Manual were presented, discussed and voted upon. Several are noted here:

Motion A: Amendment to our R7 Policy Manual was approved to permit an individual attending a R7 Assembly as a visitor from an Intergroup to replace a Representative from the same Intergroup if that Representative is not able to stay for both Business meetings. The "back up representative" policy changes states that the R7 Chair must be made aware of this planned switch in representatives in advance of the Assembly.

Motion B and C: Adopted to address redundancy and inconsistency in our Bylaws.

Motion D: adopted to place the Statement of Purpose for each R7 Committee on the Region's website (in addition to the R7 policy manual).

Motion E: adopted to replace "donations" with "contributions" in reference to funds sent to our OA's World Service Organization (7th Tradition Contributions).

Motion F: adopted to make the Intergroup Renewal Committee a standing Region 7 committee and to include its Statement of Purpose in the R7 Policy Manual and website.

An "Emergency New Business" motion was put forward to remove the Statement of Purpose of the now disbanded Unity Committee.

Following this "motion-filled" time, representatives broke out into small groups as part of a "meet/greet" to answer the questions:

1. What do you expect to get out of Assembly -- personally and for your Intergroup?
2. What do you plan to take back to your Intergroup?

My answers were "inspiration," and to "learn from others here about what makes a strong Intergroup and personal recovery."

The Finance committee also conducted an informal poll of Representatives' comfort level with new technologies (e.g. online banking, online bill pay, Pay Pal, computers, etc.). The purpose of the Q&A was to encourage participants to share their experience and to try new technologies and ask for help!

A "How to Write a Motion Workshop", given by Karen B., F7 Parliamentarian, had the take-home - Writing a motion can be tricky. You want to make sure that what you - want to change is, in fact, changeable. If your Intergroup is interested in writing a motion for the Region or the World Service Business Conference to consider, contact Karen in advance for advice.

Key points to consider: What do you want to change and why? Which key service bodies are affected? Look at that service body's Policy Manual and Bylaws as they work in tandem. Does the service body's policy manual allow for this change? If yes.... Make sure you use the right form, address key aspects (e.g. what is the current and new/proposed wording? What is the intent? How much will it cost if the change is implemented (if anything)? What is your rationale for this change? What are you trying to do? And, as always, submit it by the deadline.

Finally, Karen reminded everyone - that once you submit your motion... "Let it go." You may think it's a great idea, but not everyone is going to agree with you. They may say yes, they may say no, or they may significantly change it so that you don't recognize it anymore. Practice the Serenity Prayer after you submit your motion!

Two of the final actions at R7 are thanking formally, the reps who are rotating out of service and the graduation of the the "green dots" !!! The meeting thus ends with the OA promise and lots of love and support, promise and hope!

R7 RESOURCES.....Did you know? To assist Intergroups: Financial support opportunities include:

- Intergroups can apply for R7 financial assistance to send Representatives to the Region 7 Assemblies and to send Delegates to the Annual World Service Business Conference.
 - The R7 Outreach Committee offers financial assistance to increase Public Awareness and Professional Outreach efforts. This includes financial assistance for a group to participate in a health fair or trade show.
 - The R7 Convention Committee offers scholarships (for the convention only).
 - 12th Step Within Speaker (travel) support to come to speak at a local meeting
 - The Finance Committee will assist Intergroups with developing an IG budget
 - Public Outreach boards are available for health fairs and trade shows
 - Downloadable flyers are found on the website
- Other resources include:
- Speaker Podcast Archives – including a "Weekend Walk Through the Steps" with handouts and Region Chair speakers
 - Printable business card templates
 - Unity workshop outlines
 - Big Book Study and materials
 - 12th Step Within Speaker Lists

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- See R7 website for upcoming events (retreats, workshops) hosted by R7 Intergroups and others
- BAIG Recovery Series - last 3 sessions - see website for details
- R7 Outreach Committee is making \$100 available to Intergroups for Outreach Activities in 2016
- OA.org has Public Service Announcements available

Homework! Region 7 is challenging all Intergroups - between now and the Spring 2016 Assembly - to hold a workshop on Sponsorship (Part of the strategic focus).

Region 7 is also encouraging Intergroups to participate in the Ice breaker Challenge.

At the outset of the Business Assembly meeting, representatives are reminded to focus on their recovery. The per-Assembly package reminds all to:

- Relax
- Keep things simple
- Keep up on your self-care, abstinence and recovery activities. Get as much rest as you can.
- Be of service on a committee.
- Join a workshop.
- Take back information, ideas, perspective and the gifts of service to your intergroup and your face to face meetings.
- Involve your sponsees and local members in your service works.
- Write articles about your R7 experience.

It was a great privilege to be able to represent our local DC/Maryland Fellowship at this Assembly and to be reminded throughout the weekend that Service saves us.

Hugs and love and gratitude,

Linda L.

You don't need any special skills to come and be of service to our local intergroup. About one-third of our Metro DC Overeaters Anonymous meetings have reps at the Intergroup. Are the meetings you attend being represented? The following DRAFT notes are being presented in an effort to de-mystify the proceedings. (SW)

NOVEMBER 8, 2015 DC METRO AREA IG MEETING MINUTES (DRAFT)

Attending : Jim L; Kathy A; Karen N; Linda L; Linda S; Monica H; Paul B; Peggy R; Dale B; Stephanie; Sealani; Sarah F; Molley K.;

STRUCTURAL BUSINESS

Agenda approved as modified. Minutes were approved as modified.

Chair's Report: Linda L. noted that our IG is working well on its' basic function including getting our budget in order, looking for ways to save on expenses, and supporting core services for our fellowship. She noted that she and Stephanie had identified an individual with accounting expertise to help review our budget in early 2016. She also noted that we will hear an update from the Ways and Means committee on their work on the Policy Manual and that it is a collective group conscience that will guide us in our discussions and decisions on how we can function best to serve our Fellowship. She also reminded participants to be recognized by the Chair before speaking and that we need motions to discuss an issue. She then asked Linda S. to read the preamble to 12 Concepts of OA's service.

Vice-Chair's Report: No report (not present). Linda L. announced that Anna has stepped down as the Vice Chair and the position is now open.

Recording Secretary's Report: No report

Corresponding Secretary's Report: No report (not present)

Treasurer's Report: Stephanie is working on the 2016 IG budget. She will send out an email with her questions before the next intergroup meeting.

COMMITTEE CHAIR REVIEW

Events: Linda S (temporary chair)

- IDEA DAY is November 22. Linda S. asked everyone to make a copy of the IDEA Day flyers and distribute them at your meetings
- Unity Day is February 15, 2016 and Northern Virginia will host an event. Other local Intergroups will assist.
- Linda and her committee hope to host one more event before June 2016.

InReach: Jen R. No Report (not present)

Outreach: Karen N.

- The Montgomery county library project is ongoing. Karen is waiting for a call back from Montgomery County Contact.
- Regional 7's calendar is available. It is available at <http://oaregion7.org>

Ways and Means: Sealani W.

- Review process in place with four people
 - Current reviewing Intergroup's Policy Manual
 - Bylaws already reviewed
 - Presentation of changes placed in Unfinished Business
- Treasurer:* Stephanie
- Challenges utilizing prior budget information (different methodologies used) for 2016
 - Detailed what kind of information she needs from IG members
 - Will send an email out with questions
 - Detailed report under Unfinished business

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

IG Voicemail Account For many months our intergroup has explored alternatives to our existing paid Verizon voicemail account
MOTION # 1: The current Verizon Voice mailbox will be replaced with Google Voice. (Seconded)

The motion was discussed, a vote was taken and *the MOTION PASSED.*
Intergroup Bylaws and Policy Manuals Committee chair presented history of Bylaws and Policy Revisions, and how the current effort to review and update our Bylaws and Policy Manual came about. Of concern to several long-term members of the IG were the inconsistencies between what had been written in the Bylaws and Policies, and what was actually being done. A committee was formed several years ago. They reviewed and identified proposed edits to our ByLaws. The committee is now reviewing the Policy manual. The Ways and Means Chair who is coordinating these reviews had discussed a variety of ways to communicate the information clearly and concisely to the members of both the Intergroup and everyone within the Metro DC OA group. The Reviewers themselves prefer to report the proposed edits and changes to the Bylaws and Policies Manual as it is done at Region 7 and the World Service Business Conference, i.e., a version of the current language will be presented along with a version of the proposed language.

MOTION #2: Is intergroup interested in choosing an end date to the revision of the Bylaws and the Policy Manuals? (Seconded.)

The motion was discussed, a vote was taken and *the MOTION DID NOT PASS*.

Region 7 Business Assembly Report

Karen presented her Region 7 Business Assembly report.

Election of WSBC Delegates

The Chair noted that our Intergroup may not have sufficient resources to send the Delegates to the 2016 World Service Business Conference and that the determination would be made as we reconcile our 2015 budget and develop our 2016 budget. The Chair noted which members had expressed interest in being Delegates at the October IG meeting, reviewed the requirements to serve as a delegate and called for any other representatives who would like to be considered. One member withdrew her request, Peggy R asked to be considered. Sealani and Linda S offered to serve as backups. The representatives voted and elected Peggy R as our 2016 WSBC delegate should funding be sufficient to support her. Peggy R was elected.

IG Basket: Karen

At a previous IG meeting, a motion was passed that our IG provide a gift basket for the Region 7 2015 Convention annual fundraiser. Karen noted that only few donated items had been collected and the convention was less than a week away.

MOTION #3: Intergroup will not continue to support a Region 7 Basket for the 2015 Region Convention. (Seconded.) The motion was discussed, a vote was taken and *the MOTION PASSED*.

Intergroup discussed cost saving strategies

Several strategies to save costs were identified at the October intergroup meeting.

- Eliminating our Verizon voice mail account and move to Google Voice.
- Eliminating IG Post Office Box
- Publishing our "Together we Can" Newsletter only electronically
- Closing our Savings account to save the monthly fee and moving the money in that account to our checking account.

MOTION #4: Cut the number of printed paper copies of Together We Can (newsletter) and the Where and When in 1/2 and monitor that for a year. AMENDED TO: To cut the number of printed copies of the Newsletter in 1/2 and monitor hat for a year. (Seconded.) The motion was discussed. A vote was taken, and *the MOTION PASSED*.

MOTION #5 Move our savings account into our checking account to avoid higher service charges. (Seconded.) The motion was discussed. A vote was taken, and *the MOTION PASSED*.

NEW BUSINESS

MOTION#6 : Intergroup stops collecting donations at the IG meeting?(Seconded.) The motion was discussed. A vote was taken, and *the MOTION DID NOT PASS*.

MEETING WRAP UP AND CLOSE

- IDEA DAY ANNOUNCEMENTS: Print out flyers and take them to your meetings; spread the word.
- Announce open IG positions and seek nominations: VICE CHAIR, EVENTS CHAIR, OUTREACH CHAIR (January 1, 2016)
WHERE AND WHEN PICK-UP FROM PRINTER,
NEWSLETTER EDITOR (January 1, 2016)

- Misspelling of "Treasurer" as email on DC Metro OA resulted in documents addressed to "Treasurer" not being received, and reimbursements being delayed.
- The Chair reminded the participants that at our December meeting we will review the IG 2016 budget.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- November 22 is IDEA DAY in Columbia MD. Please make copies of the flyer and take to your meetings. Copies can be found on the home page under "Events" www.aa-dcmetro.org
- There are 2 new meetings:
-Waldorf, Tuesdays 7pm Peace Lutheran Church, 401 Smallwood Dr.; contact Annmarie: 910 650-6257
-Gaithersburg, Wednesdays 7pm Church of the Ascension, 205 South Summit Ave, contact: Amy G. 301 300-9325
- Meetings that need support:
-Friday night College Park
-Saturday morning Kensington
- Newsletter deadline November 15

DECEMBER CALENDAR

December 13 Sun
Telephone Workshop: 3-4 p.m. EST; provided by the Board of Trustees Strategic Planning Committee and featuring Region Chair speakers, "Working All Twelve Steps to Recover: Step Twelve"; dial 1-641-715-3818 and enter access code 925619#; Stephanie D. 1-727-641-3437; email vst4oa@hotmail.com

December 20 Sun
BAIG Monthly Recovery Series: "Sponsorship Guide - Soup to Nuts" Step-by-step guide to sponsoring via the Big Book 1:00 - 3:00pm Good Samaritan Hospital, Baltimore, MD Info: bekahtronic@gmail.com; 617-966-2790

December 20 Sun
2015 Recovery Speaker Series - Hosted by W. Jersey OA
Florham Park Library (Meeting Rooms A&B) 107 Ridgdale Ave., Florham Park, NJ 07932 Info: Christine T. 973-960-1564/oabigbook@optimum.net

WORDS OF WISDOM

I have three sponsors that listen, reflect and help me deal with three addictive areas in my life.

Each time I bring a problem to my first sponsor, she asks, "Did you pray about it? Did you put it in your God Box?"

When I ask my second sponsor for help or feedback with an issue, she always says, "Did you write about it?"

And when I consult my third sponsor about a person, behavior, or situation on which I need perspective, she asks me one or all of the following. "Which step are you on? Which slogan applies to you? Are you reading your literature? Can you apply a tradition or a concept?"

So there you have it: the program in a nutshell.

Hannah G.

FROM OA.ORG

NEW WORKSHOP AVAILABLE

Importance of Working the Steps: Use this informative and fun workshop to focus on the importance of working all Twelve Steps. A blend of

readings, discussions, writing exercise, survey results, and more, the [Importance of Working the Steps Workshop](#) can be used by groups and services bodies as well as members and sponsors to encourage Step work and awareness. Find it under [Service Body Support](#) and [Documents](#).

LIFELINE

Changed by Physical Recovery?

Lifeline deadline is December 15, 2015, for publication in the April 2016 issue, and Lifeline needs your story on “New Body, New Life.”

Or, send in your share about the Fourth Tradition, “Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or OA as a whole.” one-page flyer of all Lifeline topics and deadlines for 2016, click here.

CONTRIBUTE TO A NEW PUBLICATION

BODY IMAGE SEXUALITY RELATIONSHIPS & RECOVERY

OA is developing a new publication and wants to hear your experience, strength, and hope on the topics of body image, sexuality, and relationships. Help others by sharing how maintaining abstinence, using the Twelve Steps, and relying on a Higher Power has meant a life free from shame and isolation and one full of beauty, love, and self-acceptance. How have you adjusted to life at a healthy body weight? How has physical recovery changed you? How has your body image changed in recovery? How has your experience of intimate relationships changed? What have you done to “shape a sane and sound ideal” (Alcoholics Anonymous, 4th ed., p. 69) for your future sex life? » How has your physical, emotional, and spiritual recovery affected your body image? » What is your experience of feeling connected to your body before OA? In OA? » How has your physical recovery affected your emotional and spiritual recovery? » Are the decisions you make for yourself at a healthy body weight different than those made when you were over- or underweight? » How has your sexuality been affected by your physical, emotional, and spiritual recovery? » What aspects of sexuality have been the most difficult to face in the light of recovery, and how did you deal with these issues? » How do you celebrate your sexuality as a recovering member of OA? » How are your intimate relationships different as a result of your physical, emotional, and spiritual recovery? » How do you stay abstinent when dating, in a relationship, or during a breakup? » How do you relate your recovering body image and sexuality to your relationships?

Stories of approximately 500 words have a greater chance of publication, and submissions are assumed intended for publication, are subject to editing, and become the property of OA, Inc. Submissions are not returned. 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.

Due by January 31, 2016. Email your story to info@oa.org with subject line “Body Image.”

WHAT’S NEW

- A FREE Step Eleven Podcast to Download or Stream
- New Online Video: Breaking Out of Relapse

AUTOMATIC RECURRING CONTRIBUTIONS

Thank you, Fellowship! At the start of 2015, we asked for 30 new Automatic Recurring Contributors, but by October, 118 of you had signed up! Seventh Tradition contributions through ARC are convenient for members and help OA carry out our primary purpose: to carry the message to the still-suffering compulsive overeater. It’s easy to give

through ARC. Just visit oa.org, select Contribute, and choose “Recurring contribution” on the Contribution page. Sign up to give monthly or quarterly. <https://www.oa.org/pdfs/contributionform.pdf>

CROSS TALK—GIVING FEEDBACK WHEN REQUESTED

From the Ask-It Basket: During a group discussion about cross talk and feedback, I heard that years ago you could give feedback if someone requested it in a meeting. I had never heard of giving feedback in a meeting. What is OA protocol?

Response: Years ago we did give people feedback and do some cross talk, especially if people asked for it. We did not understand the importance of keeping the meeting a safe place for people to share without anything coming back at them. People even had discussions in a couple of meetings. After attending OA meetings without cross talk for more than 15 years, I attended a Twelve Step meeting that did not observe the tradition of no cross talk. I remember feeling fear about sharing my emotional pain. I feared someone would try to tell me what to do or feel or it was not okay to have my own ideas. Like many of us have experienced, I have had people tell me in the past what to feel or think. Since my experience at that meeting, I have been a strong proponent of no cross talk in meetings. Having a place where it is my turn to say whatever works for me without other people telling me what they think is wonderful. Then I need to shut up and listen to what other members say, without judgment or comment. Sometimes people go overboard criticizing those who roll their eyes or nod their heads, which some members interpret as cross talk. I am grateful today that we discourage cross talk within the meetings. I love having this safe place to share. An excellent statement on cross talk is in the Suggested Meeting Format. “Feedback, cross talk and advice-giving are discouraged here. Cross talk during an OA meeting is giving advice to others who have already shared, speaking directly to another person rather than to the group and questioning or interrupting the person speaking/sharing at the time.”

THANK YOU

Along time ago, someone suggested that as Editor/Coordinator of [Together We Can](#) that I write a thank-you email to every person who submitted an item to the newsletter. This would be a great way to acknowledge the contribution, as well as to encourage folks to submit again. However, my ability to do so was hampered by both my inability to organize the information easily and my lack of technological skills. As I leave this service position, I thank each person who contributed to the newsletter in their own unique way.

ANNA	CHERYL	DALE	ELANA
ELLEN	EMILY	FRANK	HANNAH
KATRINA	LINDA	LINDA	MELISSA
MOLLEY	MONICA	<i>NANCY</i>	NANCY
PEGGY	RON	SABINA	SARA
SARAH	<i>SARAH</i>	SARAH	STEPHANIE

I have endeavored here to do what I haven’t been able to do before, that is, to express profound gratitude to anyone who contributed to the newsletter during the time I have been involved in “getting it out.” If I missed anyone, please know that there would be no newsletter without your contribution.

Thank you for allowing me to be of service.

Sealani