



Valley Voice

The Sacramento Valley Intergroup of Overeaters Anonymous (SVIOA) serves the greater Sacramento Valley, Sierra Foothills, and Northern Nevada Sierra, including Amador, Butte, Calaveras, Carson (NV), Colusa, Douglas (NV), El Dorado, Inyo (NV), Nevada, Placer, Sacramento, San Joaquin, Solano, Sutter, Stanislaus, Washoe (NV), Yolo, and Yuba counties.

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“Always to extend the hand and heart of OA to all who share my compulsion: for this, I am responsible.”

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STEP 6: SPIRITUAL PRINCIPLE: Willingness
Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.

TRADITION 6: SPIRITUAL PRINCIPLE: Solidarity
An OA group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the OA name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.

CONCEPT 6: SPIRITUAL PRINCIPLE: Responsibility
The World Service Business Conference has entrusted the Board of Trustees with the primary responsibility for the administration of Overeaters Anonymous.



Overheard at Meetings

My sponsor offered to loan me her Higher Power if mine didn't work.

If you can't remember your last binge you haven't had it yet.

When I ran everything things didn't go well and I was miserable

I don't have to believe. I just have to be *willing* to believe.

I can't ask God to remove my shortcomings if I don't know what they are.

If you can't practice these principles in all your affairs, you have too many affairs.

Step 6: not doing things I want to do
Step 7: doing the things I don't want to do.

The symptom is physical, the problem is emotional, the solution is spiritual.



2023 OA Region 2 Convention

July 7-9, 2023

**in-person or
online zoom**

**Recovery:
Putting the Pieces Together**



OA Region 2 Convention
Orange County, CA July 7-9, 2023

**find healing
find recovery
find solutions**

**Overeaters
Anonymous**
oar2.org

**in-person or
online
workshops**

**Anorexics/
Bulimics
welcome!**

"...No longer is there a sense of hopelessness, no longer must we each depend on our own unsteady willpower....." - Rozanne G.

<https://www.oar2.org/upcoming-convention.html>

STEP 6: BEING ENTIRELY READY

Don't Skip Over Step Six !

My sponsor has been abstinent for eleven years. And I respect her experience. So when she talks, I listen. Not too long ago I was feeling discouraged, so I met with my sponsor so she could listen to my whining. And I blurted out "You promised me a new and better life if I did the Steps, and so far my life hasn't improved all that much."

She gave me a look of slight annoyance and said "You're misquoting me. I never said a word about 'doing' the Steps. I particularly stressed the need to *WORK* the Steps. That doesn't mean tap dancing around the tough things. It means making serious changes in the way you act. And the way you think. And you missed one Step completely: Step 6."

"Of course I'm willing to change. What makes you think I'm not?"

My sponsor said, "How about your constant procrastination? You told me you'd return a book I lent you five months ago, and you still have the book. What about your tendency to project? To envision the worst? Remember how you sweated out a dental appointment to get a root canal? You lived in misery for two weeks before you had done it. Afterwards, remember, you boasted that it was a 'piece of cake.'" And she still wasn't through with me.

"What about the so-called 'harmless white lies'? You still telling those? Do you want a specific example? I heard you saying 'The last time I was in Paris.' You and I know you've only been there once, but you exaggerated for your audience so they'd be impressed with you. So cut the bull. And level with yourself. "

"You haven't worked the Sixth Step. You know why? It looks so simple. It's so easy to skip over it. But the Fourth and Fifth Steps – your personal inventory – are meaningless unless and until you get the guts and the honesty to do something about these defects. Lecture over."

The no-holds-barred tone of my sponsor's critique hit me hard. I was stunned. But it was just what I needed.

If you think the Sixth Step is a snap and that there's nothing to it, I suggest you imagine yourself in my place with my sponsor. Imagine if she spoke directly about YOUR character defects.

If the shoe fits.....

-anonymous

STEP
6
WILLINGNESS

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

Step 6 – Character Defects

Entirely ready to have God remove all these defects.



Trust God
Clean House
Help Others



*My problem isn't overeating,
it's living without overeating.*

We walk together on this
path of recovery.
We follow the footprints
in the sand of those who
have walked before
us and we leave
footprints
for those yet to come.



Step Six and the Dishwasher

I recently had to change out my dishwasher. That doesn't seem like a big thing, but I put it off as long as I could. I used duct tape for months to keep the front panel on. Even after I needed extra rinses to get the dishes clean, I still took a couple of weeks before I ordered a new dishwasher. Then I had anxiety about the new one that was coming. It would be different. Would it work as well? Would I have trouble loading it? Maybe it wouldn't be as good as the old one.

I decided to plug all this anxiety into my Step 6. By working my program I have learned to identify my feelings and figure out what to do. And I realized I was afraid of change. I wanted to hold on to what was familiar. To what was comfortable. Once I realized this, it helped me to take the next right action.

My old dishwasher wasn't working. And it didn't even look good because of the duct tape. Why would I want to keep it? Just because it was known to me? In Step 6 *...being entirely ready to have God remove my defects of character...* I learned that I sometimes want to keep my old way, even if it doesn't work, simply because I am comfortable with the old and I'm afraid of the unknown.

As I continue to work the Steps in OA, I am slowly learning how to live in ways that help me move forward and live in a healthier way.

-anonymous



The Last House on the Block

For me personally, I know without a doubt that I am powerless over that first bite. I've done enough "research" to prove that to myself. And I personally am unable, without God, the Steps, the fellowship, service and sponsorship, to access the power I need to get abstinent... and to stay abstinent.

Before I joined OA, my best solution to my food problem was to use my willpower to not take that first bite. I could not admit I was truly powerless over food. And I didn't want to work the Steps. So I kept dropping in and out of OA, convinced that it didn't work. But I just couldn't stop hurting.

So I dragged my butt back to OA about a year ago. But I couldn't stop relapsing until I was willing to treat every instruction I was given as a "must." Because when I followed only those parts of the program I found convenient or appealing, I kept relapsing.

Some people can stay abstinent without fully giving themselves to recovery, fellowship and service. After all, the only requirement for membership in OA is the desire to stop eating compulsively. So I can't say to anyone else that they "must" do anything in. I don't know if you are a "real" compulsive overeater of "the hopeless variety," like I am.

You might have the power to not eat no matter what based on self-knowledge alone. I can only make "suggestions" as to what has worked for me. I've done the research. And for me, OA is the last house on the block.

-anonymous

Change



**Change is disruptive,
painful and difficult**

Not changing is worse.



Relapse Dangers to Watch For

1. **Exhaustion** - Allowing yourself to become overly tired.
2. **Dishonesty** - A pattern of little lies or lying by omission.
3. **Self-delusion** – Making excuses for not doing the work.
4. **Impatience** - I want what I want *NOW*.
5. **Argumentative** - No point is too small not to be debated.
6. **Frustration** - Controlled anger when things don't go your way.
7. **Self-pity** - Feeling like a victim; unappreciated.
8. **Cockiness** – I've got this down. I've got it made.
9. **Complacency** – No longer see value in working the program.
10. **Expecting too much of others** - Why can't they read my mind?
11. **Letting up on disciplines** – Slipping out of recovery routines.
12. **Wanting too much** – Setting unrealistic goals.
13. **Forgetting gratitude** – Too focused on getting vs giving.
14. **"It can't happen to me."** - Feeling immune to relapse.
15. **Omnipotence** – Ignoring danger signs and advice from fellows.



Slow to Judge... Quick to Forgive

Dear God,

Help me remember that jerk who cut me off in traffic is a single mom who worked nine hours that day and is rushing home to cook dinner, help with homework, do the laundry and spend a few precious moments with her kids.

Help me remember that the pierced, tattooed, disinterested guy who can't make change correctly is a worried college student worried about his final exams and scared of not getting his student loans for next semester.

Remind me that scary looking bum begging for money (who really ought to get a job), is a hopeless crack addict who I can only imagine in my worst nightmare.

Help me remember that the old couple walking annoyingly slowly through the store aisle and blocking my shopping cart are savoring this moment together since she just got bad news about her biopsy.

Dear God, remind me each day that of all the gifts you gave me, the greatest gift is love, so that I open my heart to your children. Let me be slow to judge and quick to forgive. Amen.

-anonymous

Exploring Body Acceptance

The
OA Body
Shop

PRESENTED BY: The Philadelphia Area Intergroup of Overeaters Anonymous

Sunday, June 11

11:00 am —12:30 pm PT

ZOOM:

Meeting ID: 874 0529 3802

Passcode: 024272

- Body Image Discussion*
- Open Sharing
- Guided Meditation

A 7th Tradition donation is requested but not required.
Information will be posted in the Zoom chat during the workshop.

2nd
Sunday
WORKSHOPS

For information or to submit future workshop
ideas, please contact Trish M at 215-355-8807.



June Zoom Classes

Hosting Basics

Thurs June 1 - 2:00 pm PDT

Zoom Security

Fri June 2 - 2:00 pm PDT

Zoom Tips & Tricks

Sun June 4 - 12:00 pm PDT

Screen Sharing Basics

Wed June 7 - 7:00 pm PDT

Advanced Screen Sharing

Sun June 11am - 3:00pm PDT

Zoom Settings for Zoom Administrators

Thurs June 15 - 3:00 pm PDT

Tech Support Drop-In

Sat June 17 - 12:00-3:00 pm PDT

Meeting ID: 832 9331 7706

Passcode: 898727

Breakout Rooms

Mon June 19 - 4:00 pm PDT

Go to <https://oasandiego.org>
for the room link.



When I first joined OA, my character defects of perfectionism, people-pleasing, and fear of rejection were in full force. My all-or-nothing approach found me throwing myself into the program in an unhealthy manner. I wanted to know the rules so I could follow them perfectly. I was on a quest to be crowned Miss OA. As I began to lose weight, I became an example that this program works if you work it, and I believed other OA members would

love and accept me only if I was working the program perfectly. I also believed if I lost enough weight, my life would be perfect. As I look back, I can now see clearly that I had not turned my will and my life over to the care of God as the 3rd Step suggests. I was still trying to control everything. I was the poster child for self-will run riot!

Needless to say, my life was unmanageable. And my reign as Miss OA did not last very long. I soon found myself struggling with my abstinence, which led to a predictable relapse. I was so demoralized that I finally dropped out of OA.

Since I had tried and failed at a number of weight-loss programs in the past, I felt this was just one more failure to add to the list. But after six months away from the program, I felt my Higher Power encouraging me to give it another go. So I humbly came back with my tail between my legs. But this time I chose recovery — not as a way to lose weight to feel “good enough”— but as a way to gain the spiritual life I wanted. A life free from the burden of perfectionism and the pain of trying to use food to soothe my feelings of inadequacy.

I'm grateful to be an abstinent member of OA today, with the serenity and joy that comes with it. I have learned I don't have to be perfect for you to love and accept me, because *“it is weakness, not strength, that binds us to each other.”* I've also learned to be more honest in my sharing. And I now acknowledge I can't do it on my own. I am learning to humbly accept your help and the help of my Higher Power.

Today I can live comfortably in the knowledge that none of us is perfect. But we are making progress as we continue to surrender to God and follow the loving suggestions of this wonderful program. Keep coming back!

-anonymous



I have found that my whole day goes better if I have a PLAN OF ACTION. Of course, I have calendars and electronic reminders, but if I go over with my sponsor what I plan to do for that day, it's a thousand times more likely that it will happen. This is true not only for my food, but also for my primary relationship, for my job and for my other relationships. In other words, my program, which guides my whole life, works more smoothly and effectively when I use this recovery tool.

At first, I assumed that the ACTION PLAN only meant a plan to physically "move" my body and to exercise. Now my version of action plan includes whatever I do to support my OA recovery-- three meetings a week, talking with my sponsor/sponsees daily, in addition to making connections with three other OA members. Maintaining my relationship with God on a daily basis, asking for HP's help when I need it. Not a "give me " request, but asking to be shown the direction He wants me to take. Time to breathe and think about my day - what I did well, and what I need to change, what amends I may need to make, and what things I am grateful for. Whew! My day is full, but I know and accept that doing these disciplines will not only keep me abstinent, but will also change me, one day at a time, into the person I've always wanted to be. Thank you, God. And thank you, OA.

The ACTION PLAN is very helpful to me. It provides a focus and a structure for my recovery work in the short-term (daily or even hourly) and long-term basis (service commitments). As a food addict, I am at times scattered in my thoughts, plans and actions. I also use the plan to make a commitment to myself, my Higher Power, my sponsor and/or sponsees of what I am willing and committed to do to put my program into action.

I write down what I need to accomplish for the day. (And of course my list is always longer than the day! LOL). At the top I put... “First Things First.” That way, when I get off track, and, of course, I almost always do, I am able to get back on track. I practice my action plan by journaling. I plan my food: my meals planned and written down. My 10th Step: what I need to change. My service for today. Read Voices of Recovery and write on a topic Read For Today and write on what I read Abstinence: more honesty about my food This has helped me be more diligent in following my daily food plan and doing service. And it only takes about ten minutes each morning.

OA Bingo

Read 2 pages in OA approved Literature	Make one phone call to another OA member	Ask a question in the group ✓	Write an action plan for today.	Think about what service can you do for OA — sharing is service
Meditate for an extra 5 minutes.	Review your plan of eating - Haven't got one? write down a simple one.	Share your own experience on one of the topics in the group.	Call your sponsor ✓	Think of topics you would like to see more shares on in the group and tell an admin.
Attend one extra/different meeting this week	Write 5 things on your gratitude list ✓	Go to oa.org and check out what recovery gems the website has for you.	Download an OA podcast or speaker meeting and listen to at least 5 minutes of it.	Share in your meeting about a recovery action you do.
Read one share and find the hidden gem in it.	Think about what you can and can't change. See Serenity Prayer	Write a prayer personal to you.	Send an encouraging message to someone who needs it.	Do a spot check 10 th step inventory. ✓
Ask your sponsor or another OA friend about their favourite tool/Step/etc.	How can you do one more recovery action per day? — share about it.	Read a page of OA literature and write for 3 minutes about it ✓	Think of 3 ways you like to connect with your HP — use one.	Read something about our 12 Traditions and think about it.

The Willow Tree of Willingness



Last month I was asked to speak on the topic of willingness at a local meeting. So a few days before, I took some quiet time to gather my thoughts and put them on paper. Actually, on the computer screen. As I stared at the blank screen and let my mind wander, after a few seconds my mind turned to willow trees. I don't know why. So I looked it up and the result was uncanny. Not a coincidence, but a "God-incidence."

Willows are symbolic of healing, inner vision, dreams and magic. Willingness – like the willow tree – brings about healing and the spiritual growth that brings an inner vision and an inner peace that I never dreamt could be mine before I stopped compulsively overeating. Once I became willing to surrender and admit defeat, my journey of healing and recovery began.

The willow tree is one of the most deeply rooted trees, and one of the few that can bend in the stormiest weather without snapping. This is a powerful metaphor for those of us on a spiritual path. If I am willing to practice this program and work all of the 12 Steps to the best of my ability, the burden of guilt and remorse will be lifted and I will flow more freely with life.

If I continue take personal inventory, promptly admit my mistakes and make my amends, I will be more like the willow: flexible, open-minded, willing and able to live through some of the most challenging conditions. I will adapt to life rather than fight it as I once did.

In some cultures, the willow tree is a symbol of the springtime and new life. As I become more and more willing to practice the principles of the 12 Steps in all my affairs, my spiritual awakenings continue. I will undergo a psychic change. I will let go of the restraints of pride and ego. I will have a clearer understanding of who I am and my purpose in life. I will have a new life.

I want to live like a willow – grounded in faith, rooted in love and open and adaptable to life no matter what it brings. It's a challenge, but I am willing.

-anonymous



Tucked away in Chapter 6 of the Big Book are some "extravagant promises." The first says, "*We are going to know a new freedom and a new happiness.*"

Of course the immediate goal is abstinence – freedom from compulsive overeating and its horrendous consequences. Without this freedom, I have nothing at all.

When I found OA, it was such a relief to find out others had also struggled to escape the prison of food addiction. And they, too, had been powerless to fight their way out. But now they were free.

Since I joined the fellowship, I have experienced countless freedoms. OA freed me so I could become myself. It freed me from the fear of growing up. OA freed me from the obsession with food.

And my new happiness turned out to have very little to do with worldiness. It turned out to be a by-product of simply doing what I was supposed to be doing as a sober member of society.

Without my realizing it, my strong sense of gratitude to OA was automatically generating a sense of happiness that people could sense when they were around me.

And finally, I was gifted with the freedom from denial of myself. By staying away from that first bite one day at a time, I made it possible to accept myself as a worthy and deserving person.

As I approach my twentieth year of abstinence, I look back and appreciate my journey toward freedom.

-anonymous

I Just Wanted to Eat Whatever I Wanted and Not Gain Weight

When I first showed up in OA, I wasn't looking to get abstinent. I just wanted to eat whatever I wanted and not gain weight. So when I saw the words "restored to sanity" in Step 2, I balked at it because I couldn't accept the fact of me being insane!!!! Then, I looked over to Step 3 and saw the word "God". And I realized that I must be in the wrong place.... because I had already tried "God" and that just wasn't going to work for me. I had even met some friends in OA who told me that they were compulsive overeaters and that they didn't need God... they just needed to go to OA meetings and not take the first bite. So, why couldn't I just do as they did? But doing that pretty much blew up in my face. Finally, I became "willing to go to any lengths to stay abstinent," even if it meant taking the 12 Steps, calling my sponsor, going to meetings and finding a Higher Power.

I have come to realize that I do not have to believe the 12 Steps will work for me. But I must at least take the actions of the 12 Steps to find out if they will work for me. My mind says "it won't work." So that means I have to take actions that I don't believe in. When I became willing to take those actions and apply them, something happened. I started to feel different. And I started to think in a different way. In my early days in OA, my "Higher Power" became the group. I was hoping that if I did what they did, I might recover also. Admitting that I was a compulsive overeater was probably the first sound thinking that I was able to achieve. Realizing I was screwed trying to deal with my food addiction on my own was also sound thinking. As I continued to take more action, my life began to change. My thoughts began to change. And I began to see the truth about my condition of "powerlessness." And to see the truth about the "insanity of the first bite." Something was happening to me that I had previously been unable to make happen: I was staying abstinent... and I was discovering that I was able to be happy with my abstinence.

-anonymous

MEETING LIST

<https://www.sacvalleyoa.org/meetings.html>

EVENTS

<https://www.sacvalleyoa.org/events.html>

Next Intergroup Meeting

Tues June 13

7:00 — 8:00 p.m.

<https://zoom.us/j/98477821659>

Meeting ID: **984 7782 1659**

Passcode: **860953**

**Willingness
opens
the
door
to
Grace**



Intergroup Board

Chair	oa2rep@sacvalleyoa.org	Scarlet H	(916) 505-0360
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Intergroup Committees

Committee Title	Specific Tasks	Chair	Chair Email
Bylaws	Bylaws/Policy & Procedures Review/Update	---	oa2rep@sacvalleyoa.org
Events	Events Support	Janet Mc	shortred55@hotmail.com
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Special Population Focus	Special Population Support	---	
Sponsorship	Sponsorship Resources Maintenance	Katherine G	KATEJOE@msn.com



*May the Valley Voice
serve as a lighted lamp,
skining rays of hope
and experience to
illuminate any dark corners
in your life.*

Entirely Ready

It seems to me that this "entirely ready" thing pretty much applies across the board to the whole 12 Step program. That is, unless I am entirely ready to admit I am powerless over food and that my life has become unmanageable, there is no way I could come to believe in a power greater than myself... because there would be no need for me to do that.

Unless I become entirely ready to believe that something bigger than me can deal with my addiction, I'm stuck with me... and that never worked. Unless I become entirely ready to make a decision to let go and let God, I can't move forward to make any progress, because I will keep reverting to the same old same old I've always done. Unless I make a searching and fearless inventory I will never realize I even had a part in all my problems. Unless I share what I find out about my part with God and another human being, it just becomes my secret... and you know what they say about being as sick as our secrets.

So here I am... FINALLY wanting God to remove my character defects... but I am apparently holding them all tightly in my grip... so he can't take them. And that is where becoming entirely ready for God to step in and do his thing comes in... which he can't do until I let go.

And the key to each of these steps is totally WILLINGNESS. Willingness to admit... willingness to believe... willingness to make a decision... willingness to take my inventory... and willingness to share it with God and another human being. Without that WILLINGNESS all along the way, I am just stuck sitting in my own shit, doing what I've always done... hoping for different results. And that's called INSANITY.

-anonymous