



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.

**Vol 23 Issue 9
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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 9: SPIRITUAL PRINCIPLE: Love For Others
Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.

TRADITION 9: SPIRITUAL PRINCIPLE: Structure
OA, as such, ought never be organized: but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.

CONCEPT 9: SPIRITUAL PRINCIPLE: Ability
Able, trusted servants, together with sound and appropriate methods of choosing them, are indispensable for effective functioning at all service levels.
Service Office.

Overheard at Meetings



**I abstain from BLT's:
Bites....Licks.... & Tastes.**

Steps 7-9; take it away. Steps 10-12; keep it away.

**I discovered in the 5th Step
that I was the author of my own misery.**

**Giving up things does not cause me pain;
resisting giving up things causes me pain.**

**Just sitting in a meeting room will not get you
recovery anymore than just sitting in a car will
get you to California.**

If you're not abstinent, you can't relapse.

**I will go to bed abstinent tonight
but when I wake up I will be a food addict.**

**Isolation is the darkroom
where I develop my negatives.**

**Jealousy = the art of counting someone
else's blessings instead of your own.**

Hope Is Here

there is a solution

**Day in OA hybrid event on
Saturday, Sept. 9
1-3 pm PDT**

**Speakers and open sharing
Creekside Church
290 Technology Way, Rocklin
Zoom Meeting ID: 816 9921 1550
Passcode: 869318**

Hosted by the Sat. 9am Rocklin/Roseville Fellowship
Suggested 7th Tradition \$5

<https://www.sacvalleyoa.org/donations-for-events.html>

no one is turned away for lack of funds

Compliance vs Surrender



Compliance is not the same as surrender. Before I came to OA I would comply with a diet, lose the weight, and then gain it all back... with "interest." Why? Because I was just obeying. I didn't surrender.

Surrender to what? Even before I walked in the door of OA, "Step Zero" was my surrendering to the idea that I was in so much pain, I had to do something about it. So I went to a meeting. That's as far as I got. Because I was not yet ready to surrender the idea that I couldn't control my eating. Or my life. That's the surrender of Step 1.

As I heard others talk about their recovery in spiritual terms, I came upon another place to surrender. For me, Step 2 felt like game over. I wouldn't go down the spiritual path because I had negative experiences with religion. And I didn't want to admit I was insane. I might be able to surrender to the idea that God exists. And had the power to help me. But I was not convinced that God cared about my food.

I might be able to surrender to the idea that I am insane around food, but at least that insanity is of my own making. Admitting to all of Step 2 was a lot to swallow. And I needed time. A lot of time to fully surrender myself to it. I needed to do some more "research" into the pain of compulsive eating before I reached a place of surrender.

But then came Step 3, which felt like a monumental surrender. *"We turned our will and our lives over to the care of God..."* Even if I could surrender to Step 1 and 2, I was in a tough spot. Could I really trust a Higher Power with my life? Here was the catch. I had trusted myself and it brought me misery. I turned my will over to food and let it drag me over to the fridge, to mini-marts, to restaurants, to garbage cans, to other people's plates, and worse.

That was the best I could do with what I had. But now it was time to try something else. So I decided to surrender my will and my life because it was my last best chance to live a life worth living. I didn't come to OA on a winning streak. I didn't sit through meetings to stay sick with this disease while others got better.

I surrendered in Step 3 because the alternative was to continue the pain. It wasn't until later, after I tried it for awhile, that I learned how joyful and how much easier life could be when I wasn't trying to run the show.

Merely complying with the Steps because my sponsor said I needed a Higher Power just prolonged the issue. And pretending to turn my will and my life over to God didn't allow the solution to fully take hold. Even if I had to "fake it till I made it" and "acted as if," I found at some point that I had stopped struggling.

And even more surprising, I had started accepting, if not downright believing, that this solution would work for me.

-anonymous

OA Ruined My Eating

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Once I learned the truth about compulsive eating, I couldn't unlearn it. Every time I take a compulsive bite, I now know exactly what I am doing. I know that I am activating the physical craving as well as dooming myself to food hell. And that's just the tip of the iceberg for me.

Because in Step 4 I came face to face with the rest of my compulsive self. That was where I discovered that my coping skills consisted of eating plus a motley assortment of behaviors that I didn't realize I used to medicate myself.

Gossiping is a prime example. I used gossip to reduce my anxiety about a situation. I thought if I controlled certain information, then I controlled a situation. And I couldn't be blindsided. So I would gather up every scrap of intelligence I could from my carefully developed network so I couldn't be ambushed.

I also used gossip to feel better about myself. If my allies saw the predicament the way I did, I was validated in my righteous anger and victimhood. And I could run my enemies down so I felt superior. I prescribed myself a cocktail of food and gossip when I felt insecure in a situation. And I might add some other off-label meds as well such as self-pity, complaining, binge-watching TV, people-pleasing or isolation. And bring them all to my potluck pity party.

I had thought food was the big, hairy monster when in reality the monster was inside my mind. Food is but a symptom. And so are all my other behaviors that I lean on. My addiction-addled brain will do anything to take the edge off. All I can think about is how I will relieve my pain and anxiety. And so I use food and any other behaviors I have at my disposal to feel a little better. A little more in control. Or a little more numbed.

Until I understood that the hurt I caused myself and others by practicing those behaviors, I didn't feel much impetus to ask my Higher Power to remove them. So I inventoried them in Step 4 and in my daily 10th Step Spot Check I asked for their removal. And then I practiced living without them.

And they may well come back. My disease is cunning. It will try to loosen my grip on God's hand by whatever means it can. And that may mean a slow, imperceptible slide back into some secondary behaviors like gossip.

But once I know... I can't not know. And so I remain vigilant. I ask others for feedback. I listen to the voice in my gut that tells me to avoid doing what I used to do. And most important, if I find myself falling back into those old behaviors, I must stop them... or ask for help in stopping them. They are a pathway to that first bite.

-anonymous

Amends: Bricks in my Spiritual Foundation



So here's the big question to ask myself about my 9th Step. Do I sincerely wish to right the wrongs I've done others, or am I simply doing what I'm told? In some sense the answer doesn't matter.

I need to do this work in order to recover. If I don't make my amends, I'm probably going to relapse. So it matters quite a lot.

If I look closely at the question, it helps me gauge my spiritual condition. The Big Book tells me I must "enlarge my spiritual life... or else." It tells me that "What I really have is a daily reprieve, contingent on the maintenance of my spiritual condition."

In other words, becoming spiritual means deflating my ego through thinking of others and taking actions on their behalf. I'm striving to be rid of selfishness and self-centeredness.

If I'm making amends because I am told to, I may be doing the right thing out of selfish motives. Am I attempting to recover just to escape sorrow and calamity? Or do I see how my recovery offers hope to others like me.

Making amends can give me deep insight into my disease, the solution and my spiritual path. I get to see how my disease affected others. And I have a chance to see it from their point of view. I gain perspective on how the Steps have changed me. And develop greater motivation to continue living in the solution so that I don't bring more pain and suffering to those around me.

Amends are sometimes easy. And sometimes they are very difficult and require courage. But in every case they require me to rely on my Higher Power to see me through with grace, dignity and openness. If I approach them with an honest desire to set right the wrongs of the past and with the idea that I'm doing spiritual work, I don't have to worry about the outcome.

My goal is to view my amends as bricks in my spiritual foundation.

-anonymous

STEP

9

BROTHERLY LOVE

Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.

3

Step 9: Everyday Amends



I'm often inspired when I hear stories of difficult amends. Families reunited. Large sums of money repaid. Hatchets buried. Friendships resumed. Feuds resolved. I heard these from my fellow OA members. And I hope to do as well by those I have harmed as they have.

But like so any things in recovery, size doesn't always matter. Quality matters as much as quantity. And consistency matters as much as that one big moment. I can't undo the past. But in making amends, I commit to taking responsibility for the messes I've made. Maybe I haven't done something as glamorous as getting arrested. Maybe, instead, I've slowly eroded relationships with others through a thousand tiny paper cuts I've given them in my addiction.

So instead of comparing my recovery to others' experiences with amends, I can compare my own before to my own after. What was my home life like before I began making amends to my loved ones? What is it like now? What was my work like before I began making amends? What is it like now? Same goes for any relationship I'm in.

But when I say "before I began making amends," in many respects I am never done making amends. To amend something is to change it. When I make amends I don't just say I'm sorry. I tell the other person I'm changing my behavior. And then I rely on my HP to help me live in a changed manner. And I become the changed person I committed to.

That means that each day I am making amends simply in how I conduct myself. If I used to passively watch my spouse do everything around the house, I pick up a sponge and start doing the dishes. If I gossiped about people at work, I stop self-serving conversations and ask how I can help a co-worker. If I used to ignore my long-distance family members, I pick up the phone. These are my everyday amends. The little things I do.

The weight loss has been great. But I know that if I don't change as a person, my compulsive eating will return, just as it always have. People in my life have been on the receiving end of a lot of my depression, anxiety and resentment. Skinny or fat, they know the score with me. They know I've never been able to change.

I can't prove them wrong. Only my Higher Power can. And just because I ask my HP to work through me doesn't mean I just sit around waiting for inspiration to strike. I do things for others. I help where I didn't used to. I fake it until I make it... with HP's help. Because while the big things make great stories, it's the little everyday amends that moment to moment, help me stay on the broad highway of recovery.

-anonymous



An Amazing Journey

When I first came to OA, I wanted abstinence more than anything. It was only natural that I saw abstinence as the number one most important feature of my recovery. But I came to find out that abstinence is hard to get and easy to lose. As soon as I took that first compulsive bite, I placed myself in life-threatening, mind-threatening and spirit-threatening jeopardy.

But abstinence does not equate to recovery. Abstinence is not my solution to compulsive overeating. If that were true, I'd only need a diet and some will power. But I don't have the necessary will power. I can diet all I want, but what makes me different from other people who may be obese is my mental obsession with food.

In the Doctor's Opinion, the Big Book tells me my addiction always starts in my mind. A thought that activates my obsession with food. Which means my food addiction is a mental issue that affects me physically. Not a physical issue that affects me mentally. And that's why abstinence is not my solution.

The solution OA provides me is the 12 Steps. The 12 Steps are there to change me from the inside out. As a compulsive overeater, I constantly feel restless, irritable and discontent. I eat to make those feelings go away. But they always come back. And then I need more food to make them disappear again.

I must find a way to gain peace, serenity, ease and comfort from something inside myself. And that's what the 12 Steps do. They help me locate a power that will change me so I don't need to use food. So even if I am abstinent for a long time, it's easy to fool myself into thinking "I got this." That's a sure path to relapse for me.

If I haven't experienced a psychic change that the Big Book describes, then I'm not experiencing recovery. I'm dieting. If I continue to behave the way I always have, if I continue to be paralyzed by fear of other people's opinions, if I continue to people-please, then I'm just the same old person I was.

But the good news is that abstinence for me was a great beginning. From there I embarked on the most amazing journey. A trip to the center of my heart where I discovered I was a good, imperfect and wonderful person who deserved love and respect just like everyone else around me.

And this change enabled me to remain abstinent through thick and thin. And to achieve peace within myself and freedom from compulsive eating.

-anonymous

Recovery Talks How To Work With Others



Sun Sept 10
11:00am – 12:00pm PT

Meeting ID: 825 9072 7351
Passcode: 030322

Hosted by Central Ontario Intergroup



Sun – Sept 3

1:00 pm to 3:30 pm PST

As Sick As Our Secrets
Speaker Meeting

JOIN US VIA ZOOM

ZOOM ID: 947 2125 9974
PASSWORD: 810562

JOIN US VIA PHONE

Find a dial in number at:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/zoomconference>
For meeting ID, enter "947 2125 9974 #"
For participant ID, enter "#"
For password, enter "810562 #"

"A Really Good Idea"

It's true that the only requirement for membership in OA is a desire to stop overeating. But if you absolutely want a better life, well, *hmmm ...* how's this?

Working the Steps with a sponsor is a really good idea.



Last summer, everything was great. I had a terrific job, I was working with close friends in the program. And I was staying in good physical shape. Then this winter I injured my back, I lost my job, and I've been having a hard time connecting with people.

I've been turning my troubles over to God on a daily basis. I've been working the Steps. I've been attending lots of meetings. I've been working with my sponsor and sponsoring two great fellows. And yet I'm still living in fear and having physical, spiritual, and emotional blues.

The idea comes easily to me that I'm not good enough or that I'm not lovable or that I deserve misery.

My life is so uncomfortable now. And there seems no sign of change. And yet I know from those around me that things take time. My growth has always been slow and painful. I sometimes have to laugh when they read that phrase from the Promises that say: "sometimes quickly, sometimes slowly." But it helps me to remember that the phrase that follows is, "they will always materialize if we work for them."

What I notice most is that I am not bingeing. A miracle when I consider that people have relapsed under similar circumstances. And that I am talking about my feelings. And I am well aware that alone I cannot solve my problems. But with God and the fellowship, I can keep growing and living.

So these days I go to lots of meetings. I work with newcomers and I get to remember what it was like when I got here. I go to Big Book meetings because I need to hear how people are staying abstinent. And I need to hear the solution. I need to celebrate my abstinence and give myself a break.

There are winners and there are whiners. And sometimes I seem to be go back and forth between both. But I am, as my friends remind me, a human being. After three years in program, I'm experiencing the second half of the 1st Step. My life is unmanageable. But I'm always reminded that it hasn't been that long. It just seems long. And the Steps and the fellowship of OA have never failed me.

-anonymous



The Disease of More

I've shed 92 pounds this time in program. It seems impossible that I was once 280 pounds. That I was once bulging out of size 3X clothing but now wear clothing in single-digit sizes. I know I don't want to relapse again. But I didn't want to relapse in 2000 either.

I've long known that my four trouble foods are sugar, starch, salt, and fat...preferably in combination! I would announce this at meetings, laughing at myself, and people who could identify chuckled with me. But I knew it wasn't funny because even after bypass surgery those foods called my name.

With OA's help, though, I don't have to eat them anymore. Someone who knows me and at least part of my history might read this and say "But she had weight loss surgery. Didn't that change her relationship with food?"

My surgery was in 2013, and I lost a great deal of weight. Yet by 2016 I had regained all but a few pounds. For me, food addiction and compulsive eating are about more... and next. My surgery removed the MORE component of any particular meal...and yet I found I could eat compulsively in smaller quantities.

The NEXT aspect of my lifelong relationship with food was still alive and thriving inside my mind. If I waited 20 minutes or so after eating my small meal, I was hungry again. And hungry or not, I would find myself grazing again. And, sadly, gaining weight AGAIN.

I hated being 280 pounds. Nonetheless I found myself having weight loss surgery, going from 280 pounds to 139 then back up to 246. I suffered with daily pain in my knees, hips, and feet. I had shattered my right ankle in a fall and still have screws and a plate in it.

As I gained and gained, the pain in that ankle grew and grew. All this after bariatric surgery! Was I hopeless? I was hopeless without OA. But I returned and found the hope I'd lost.

So as I reflected after my abstinent breakfast, it seemed like a good idea to look for the common denominator. The thing that seems to block me from understanding is the concept that my choices have consequences.

It turns out that I have been the personification of the Jaywalker in the Big Book. I have repeatedly tried the same, desperate, fatal action of compulsive eating, hoping that *this time* it would work and solve all my problems. Now, after relapse, surgery, and a lifetime of experience with compulsive eating, I know that I must replace compulsive eating with a relationship with a Higher Power if I'm going to be happy, joyous, and free.

-anonymous

The Magic of the Fellowship



The OA fellowship supports my commitment to abstinence. But an even more important benefit of the fellowship is its ability to expose my chronic insane thinking.

My crazy ideas never present by saying, "Good morning. I'm an insane idea. And while I don't care either way, I may kill you." Instead they are more likely to smilingly announce "Hi there. I'm common sense." Sadly, my food addiction includes a disorder of my perception which causes me to believe and act on that lethal lie.

The magic of the fellowship is that my insane ideas never sound like common sense to you. And yours never sound like common sense to me. My mind is like a bad neighborhood. It's dangerous for me to go in there alone. I love (and need) you all.

-anonymous



RECOVERY FROM RELAPSE WORKSHOP

Sun Sept 24
11:00 am — 12:30 pm PT

Meeting ID: 844 072 9077
Passcode: 432621



Please come to the
**We are not a
GLUM LOT**

OA 12-Step Marathon

Saturday, 9/30/23 - 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

St. Paul Lutheran Church
1658 Excelsior Ave., Oakland

Speakers! Sponsors! Birthday Chips! Dancing!
Fellowship! Games! 50-50 Raffle!

Pre-register at
EastBayOA.org/events-and-news

\$10 suggested donation

YOUR EGO IS NOT YOUR AMIGO

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After twenty years of trying to become entirely ready for God to do His work, I can honestly say it has definitely been worth the effort. So many times in my life I have felt insecure, inadequate and uncertain. And I've never been that enthusiastic about the present. I used to resort to food. Because it seemed to be just what I needed at the time.

Step 6 tells me that I had to be "entirely ready to have God remove all my defects of character." But how exactly do I do that? I have to keep in mind that it doesn't say "I tinkered with my personality until I became perfect." And I'm not really sure what "perfect" is, anyway. Also, when it comes to ironing out the wrinkles in my ego, I am as clever as a gorilla trying to repair a watch.

So I have to keep in mind that God is the one who does the removing. As well as the deciding on what is to be removed. So many of my difficulties were caused by me misapplying my God-given virtues.

For me, today, the process of becoming ready to have God remove my defects of character starts with me asking for God's guidance. And then going about my business as though I'm actually going to get it. And since I've been heading down the wrong road for several decades, it's not realistic for me to expect solutions overnight. I have to tell myself: "Stay abstinent.... and wait."

It's very difficult to steer a parked car and make much progress toward any destination. So I try to get moving by using what I have. When I first came to OA, I was so far gone, I couldn't hold down a good job. So I took a mediocre job. In fact, I had five jobs that didn't work out. You might say I had a very promising future behind me. But the sixth job finally paid off. I used what I had to keep it. In short, I had to be going somewhere before I could be guided.

These are some of the things I have learned along the way from people in OA. I have also seen people who have grasped the program and hung on in spite of tremendous odds, such as a cancer diagnosis or sudden loss of a loved one. Whatever their character defects, picking up the food was not an option for them. They stuck to the program.

God, as I understand Him, does not cheat anyone. I don't pretend to know when or where the score is evened up. But I am certain that it always is.

-anonymous

**I chose abstinence
because I wanted a better life**



**I stay abstinent
because I got one!**

MEETING LIST

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

EVENTS

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

NEXT INTERGROUP MEETING

Tues Sept 12
7:00 — 8:00 p.m.

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

Meeting ID: **984 7782 1659**

Passcode: **860953**



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

Intergroup Board

Chair	oachair@sacvalleyoa.org	Scarlet H	(916) 505-0360
Vice Chair	oavicechair@sacvalleyoa.org	VACANT	
Secretary	oasecretary@sacvalleyoa.org	Raven Y	(530) 917-4979
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WSBC	oawsbc@sacvalleyoa.org	VACANT	
Webmaster	webmaster@sacvalleyoa.org	Phil K	(916) 768-4549

Intergroup Committees

Committee Title	Specific Tasks	Chair	Chair Email
Bylaws	Bylaws/Policy & Procedures Review/Update	---	oavicechair@sacvalleyoa.org
Events	Events Support	Janet Mc	shortred55@hotmail.com
Group Support	Meetings/Zoom Support	Andrea A	athorup@pacbell.net
	Speaker List Maintenance	Dee	deetio@charter.net
Answer Phone	Answer Phone	Kathy K	kappybook@yahoo.com
Newsletter	Newsletter Editor	Gerri S	alohagerri@aol.com
Meeting List	Meeting List Coordinator	Dawn S	dawn.strickler@gmail.com
Public Outreach	Public Outreach Support	Nancy Mc	nancynandalion@gmail.com
Retreat	Retreat Coordination	Jan H	ron-janholm@sbcglobal.net
Special Population Focus	Special Population Support	---	
Sponsorship	Sponsorship Resources Maintenance	Katherine G	KATEJOE@msn.com

Giving Service



Service is what keeps me in the program. There is no "as if" in it. My life truly does depend on it! Giving service at the group, intergroup, and region levels gets me out of my own head. Doing service for others enables me to be useful. And that is a positive feeling.

When I do service, I feel like I am part of the group rather than an observer looking in from the outside. When I first came into program in 2008, doing service was a way for me to connect to people.

Mine is a disease of isolation. I am usually very shy. But people who hear me now don't believe it. I also used to weigh almost 250 pounds. And I am now half that.

Helping to set up chairs, talking to a newcomer, setting up literature — all of these are opportunities to connect with other people, share my program, and leave the meeting knowing I am among friends.

If I weren't giving service, I wouldn't still be here.

-anonymous

Zoom Classes

Hosting Basics

Wed Sept 6
7:00-8:00 pm PDT

Zoom Security

Thurs Sept 7
7:00-8:00 pm PDT

Screen Sharing

Sat Sept 9
3:00-4:30 pm PDT

Advanced Zoom Hosting

Mon Sept 11
4:00-5:30 pm PDT

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



Seeking A Numbers Person



Do you like being part of a fun team?

(We are not a glum lot)
Do you enjoy crunching numbers?
Do you like that balanced feeling?
Do you excel in worksheets?

Please contact
Sharon E 916 813 4101
Sacramento 2024 OA Convention Treasurer

Work starts JAN/FEB 2024