



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 8
August 2023**

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

Table of Contents

Step 8, Tradition 8, Concept 8.....	1
How I Stay Abstinent.....	2
The Steps Are My Medicine.....	2
A Candle of Hope.....	3
A Wave of Forgiveness.....	3
Step 8: Making a Beginning.....	3
The Only Requirement.....	4
One Day At A Time.....	4
Head in the Sand.....	5
Tenacity.....	5
Welcome to Flight OA 2023.....	5
Why Do I Have to Go to Meetings?.....	6
Keep Coming Back.....	6
Events, Meetings & Intergroup Info.....	7

STEP 8: SPIRITUAL PRINCIPLE: Self-Discipline
Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.

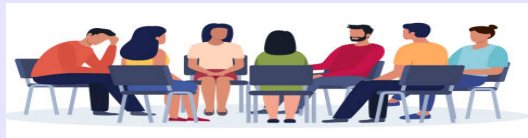
TRADITION 8: SPIRITUAL PRINCIPLE: Fellowship
Overeaters Anonymous should remain forever non-professional, but our service centers may employ special workers.

CONCEPT 8: SPIRITUAL PRINCIPLE: Delegation
The Board of Trustees has delegated to its Executive Committee the responsibility to administer the OA World



Hope Is Here

there is a solution



Overheard at Meetings

Abstinence doesn't cure compulsive overeating. It arrests it.

Self-discipline: the ability to make yourself do what you should do whether you feel like it or not.

Thinking is not a tool.

It works if you work it, and it won't if you don't.

If you keep doing what you're doing, You'll keep getting what you're getting.

Compulsive overeating is a disease that tells me I don't have a disease.

The first bite has the last say.

I worked the Steps and I got better. I took others through them and I got well.

Take the message to your meeting. Take the mess to your sponsor.

**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

How I Stay Abstinent



I've been in OA for over 34 years and have had my share of relapses during that time. I now have 18 years of back-to-back abstinence, and I'd like to share how I am maintaining that. Each relapse reinforced that I had to be willing "to go to any length" to recover.

First, I need to say that "God does for me what I cannot do for myself." This clearly means that I need to maintain contact with my HP through daily "quiet times." Prayers that I can say throughout the day, which come to mind quickly (i.e. the Third Step Prayer and the Seventh Step Prayer) and practicing conscious contact with God. These help me to regain perspective and provide comfort if I'm "disturbed" during the day.

I have worked the Steps through many different processes...and personally, have found that the Big Book Step Study Process has been the most thorough and "life transforming" for me. I also work the program like my life depends on it...because I really feel it does. I have a "cunning, baffling and powerful" disease and left to my own devices, my addiction always wins.

In the past, when I worked the program with "half measures", I always ate again. Today, I commit my food daily to my sponsor and also have sponsees who do the same with me. Although I have a flexible food plan, I also find it very important to commit my specific food plan daily.

I try to go to three meetings a week but sometimes only make two. I will supplement with more phone calls if I'm unable to go to three meetings. Phone calls keep me connected with others who are walking this path. And it gets me out of myself and my own problems.

I also find that service is an essential part of my recovery. As the Big Book states: "*Nothing will so much insure immunity from drinking as intensive work with other alcoholics.*" I try to say "yes" when asked to do service in OA. And I find that OA members who give the most service generally stay abstinent.

Another important part of my program is to practice gratitude! This for me means specifically identifying at least three things a day that I'm grateful for. This really helps me keep a positive perspective and decreases negativity and depression.

The Steps Are My Medicine ²



I could not believe my good fortune when I finally found OA after decades of binging, starving, fasting, crying, blaming and berating myself. To finally understand that all my efforts to control my eating were doomed to failure because I was trying to control a disease was both a relief and a huge responsibility.

The responsibility was, as with any disease, that there is medicine and I am responsible for taking it. So I did in the form of working the Steps, attending meetings, talking to other members, putting an eating plan together that I could and would actually follow and having a sponsor.

I have been taking this medicine for almost 40 years, I will be 80 in October and am in good health thanks to the OA program. I don't have many of the ailments that plague many of my peers. And I am so grateful that I can get on the floor to play with my grandchildren and do my exercises. And.... I can get up! I have seen the fire engines outside my housing complex. They are here to lift people off the floor.

I owe OA a debt of gratitude for making this last stage of my life a pleasant one. Doing the Steps over and over has freed me from the guilt and shame that plagued me for years.

I have to say also, that I look great and I'm happy. And it shows!

-anonymous

ABSTINENCE

FROM COMPULSIVE EATING

is my gift to

myself

today



A Candle of Hope



I came to OA about eight years ago a scared, bitter, angry, hurt woman, carrying the scars of food addiction. I felt pretty hopeless. Depression had often been my companion during my eating days. And just not picking up my binge foods did not change that much. But I came to meetings, I sat and I listened.

I heard of a God in which I did not believe. I heard from some that I needed their God or I would pick up the food again. I did not pick up the food. And I did not believe in their God. Even though I still knew the sense of despair of a food addict hitting bottom, I still did not believe.

I read OA literature, talked with my sponsor and found that my own personal interpretation of a Higher Power was all that was needed. About a year after I came to OA, I went to a treatment center and was helped to continue on the road to spiritual and emotional recovery.

I learned to reach out to others, have more patience, and put value on old friends. And there came a time when I began to wish I believed as most of my OA friends did. I was such a people pleaser. And I was afraid of rejection.

Then I talked with a woman who had relapsed after twelve years of abstinence. She felt her relapse was related to pretending to believe in the higher power of other OA's. This time she vowed to be honest and make her own search. We had many wonderful talks. And I began to believe in a higher power who is the spirit of the universe. A tremendous and dependable source of strength.

This spirit is always with me. Unless I allow resentments to separate me from the sunlight of the spirit. My higher power has been born for me through sharing and hope.

I'm glad I struggled to begin a concept of higher power that works for me. I am grateful for a program of recovery that is large enough to include all food addicts with all sorts of beliefs or lack of belief. I am grateful for those who shared with me and believed when I could not. Because I have had a higher power through all this.

I have learned to be more "a part of" than "apart from." I am tremendously grateful for the gifts of sharing and hope. This evening I went to an OA meeting. Someone told me the name of an OA who was going through an experience similar to mine. I got this person's number because I've been there. Perhaps I can share my experience, strength, and hope.

Perhaps I can help light another candle of hope in someone else. After all, that is what Overeaters Anonymous is all about, isn't it?

-anonymous

STEP
8

BROTHERLY LOVE

3

Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.

A Wave of Forgiveness

The first half of Step Eight was an opportunity to name those I had harmed and why. It didn't matter if someone had harmed me; I only needed to identify the people I had harmed.

I recently considered several people I used to sponsor. It wasn't easy to admit I had been controlling and arrogant towards them. When I did admit I had harmed these people, relief filled my heart.

I also needed to put my own name on the list—"we have also damaged ourselves with our self-destructive thinking, eating, and living habits" (OA 12x12) I damaged my body by compulsively overeating, starving, over-exercising, and denying my excess weight. I lived in isolation, fear, self-pity, and resentment. I wrote my name on the list, although I had no idea how I would make amends to myself. That was part of Step Nine, and I wasn't there yet.

The second half of Step Eight involved becoming willing to make amends to those I had harmed. *"It might help us to remember that our purpose in doing step eight is not to judge others, but to learn attitudes of mercy and forgiveness"* (OA 12x12).

My sponsor suggested I pray for anyone I was unwilling to forgive. I prayed for each person to have health, prosperity, and joy, although I still felt angry. After praying for one particular person every day for a month, I felt a wave of forgiveness flow over me. The God of my understanding helped me see this person as a lovable child of God, who, just like me, was doing their best with what had been given.

I prayed for each person on my Step Eight list and asked God to forgive me too.

-anonymous

Step 8: Making a Beginning

I'm a guy who used to make "god" out of what others thought of me. Step 8 helped free me from a slavish dependence on other people's opinions. It helped teach me the value of placing principles before personalities in my life.

It is not a Step that I feel I have taken. What I have made is a beginning. As it says in Chapter Five of the Big Book, *"We are not saints."* I still have character defects, and I still hurt other people (though not as often or as seriously as before OA).

Each time I become aware of an amend I owe, there is another chance to become willing, with God's help, to put the principles of the program before my fear of personalities (mine or anyone else's).

The wonderful thing about growth in the program is that each time I make a right decision in the area of becoming willing to make an amend, it makes the next one a little easier to make. And strangely, I find that the more willing I become to admit when I am wrong, the less often I need to make amends.

-anonymous



When the twelfth stepper who took me to my first meeting arrived, I told her of my atheism and of my fear that maybe OA wasn't the answer for me. She said that OA's teachings are suggested. And the only requirement was a desire to stop compulsively overeating.

She told me I could believe or disbelieve. I could accept or reject. I could find my own philosophy and make my own decisions. But above all, I could stay abstinent if I didn't pick up and worked toward changing my behavior and the attitudes that kept me in the food.

I did not overeat again and I have gradually changed. And the reward has been almost nineteen years of abstinence in OA. I am still an atheist. And I don't have a conflict with other OA's who believe in God. I was welcomed by someone who told me that OA could work for me. No one told me that I would fail unless I found God.

I learned to see my lack of belief in God as an advantage rather than a hindrance to recovery. The first advantage I saw was in rephrasing some aspects of the program. I looked for the principle of each Step, reworded it in nonreligious terms if necessary, and used that as a guide for living. Each translated meaning ended up ideally suited to my individual needs.

When tough times came, I turned to friends and experiences of the past. Based on previous events, the odds were that I would get through whatever came in my life. I accepted that adversity was simply a part of normal living, and I tried to make the best of it.

When I stopped using excess food, which distorts my thoughts and emotions, a health process began. When I went to meetings, associated with abstinent, sane people, and incorporated their way of living into my own actions, the result was an improved life through abstinence.

There are at least five points that have enabled me to stay in OA as an atheist. 1) I don't defend or explain my atheism. 2) I don't attack the beliefs of others 3) I haven't abandoned OA because of some of the language that offends me 4) I translate ideas so they are compatible with my thinking and 5) I try to work within OA to show by example that recovery and atheism are not mutually exclusive.

I keep working on doing what makes sense. After all, recovery is the real goal of OA principles and Steps. And it is gained by acting as rationally as possible in all situations, whether or not God is in the picture.

- anonymous

ONE DAY AT A TIME

4

No matter how long I've been abstinent, life continues to happen. And I continue to have only a daily reprieve from food addiction. There are no graduation ceremonies in OA.

Over the years I've continued to learn more about myself and about how to stay abstinent no matter what. Sometimes the journey is exhilarating, sometimes rough, sometimes joyous and sometimes full of trudging. But it is always full of discoveries.

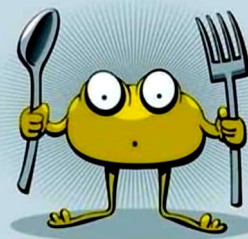
In recent years, my journey has expanded to include some difficult lessons about my limitations and my need for continued vigilance against the next bite. I have gone through several "dark nights of the soul." And these difficult times brought me new degrees of acceptance and humility. And I learned on a deeper level how close I really am to my next compulsive bite.

During my time in OA, several long timers have relapsed. People with a few months or years of abstinence expressed astonishment about such relapses. They could not understand how someone with 10, 15, 20 years of abstinence could pick up again. But I understand why a long timer might pick up. And I was afraid of what I knew I was capable of. I could not guarantee that I would never pick up the food again.

But I do know that my recovery now feels more precious than it did when I was a few years abstinent and much less informed about myself and about my disease. And so I keep hanging on. And I am learning how the grace of the fellowship and the principles of the program carry me through the tough spots as well as the times of joy.

Whether I'm abstinent 33 days or 33 years, I receive my daily reprieve from active food addiction by working this program to the best of my ability, one day at a time.

-anonymous



Whatever
your problem is,
the answer
is not in
the fridge.



Head in the Sand

There is an old legend that whenever an ostrich sees a bushfire, the only precaution it takes is to bury its head in the ground. He pretends that if he can't see the fire, the fire won't harm him. In the first full year I've been able to stay abstinent in OA I've come to regard all of us food addicts as being like the ostrich.

During the first 24 years of my eating career, I refused to face the reality of my life. I was afraid it would ruin me if I faced it. Instead, it ruined me because I didn't have the courage to face it. The more I overate, the more I needed the food.

Not until I was in the darkest of food fogs did I hear a faraway call telling me I had to do something about my overeating, or else... The call came from some OA literature a friend gave me. Although I found the literature very convincing, I just couldn't stomach the idea that OA was for me. I still prided myself in my willpower which had saved me in a lot of other situations.

But everything came to a standstill after the sudden death of my mother. Left with nowhere to run for protection, I was forced to face life squarely. With all its ups and downs. In desperation I resolved to look for that discarded OA literature where I had found the words "were powerless over food, and our lives had become unmanageable."

I am now in my second year of abstinence. Although not all of the problems I created during my eating days have straightened out, I now have enough courage to face them squarely. I have learned to do one day at a time, without having to escape from the truth.

-anonymous

The greatest gift you can give to people you love



is your recovery



I take no personal credit for my abstinence. And I don't feel like "I've made it." Being in recovery is an ongoing, day-at-a-time process. If I deserve any credit at all, it should probably be for my TENACITY. For staying with the OA program in spite of all the troubles, frustrations and boredom I might face.

Even though I have found a measure of happiness and some peace of mind, I also have to deal with everyday problems.

It often surprises "normies" that OA members continue to attend meetings after years in recovery. I personally find three good reasons for this. (1) It helps me maintain and enhance my personal recovery; (2) I can contribute to and benefit from OA's caring community; and (3) I can stay close to the spiritual ideas, which are the basis of the Twelve Steps.

I have a lifelong problem that can be arrested but never cured. I am like someone "who has lost their legs; they can never grow new ones." OA longtimers who have picked up the food after years of abstinence have proven that to me.

So for today, I am choosing not to take that first bite... and to stay close to OA's caring community.

-anonymous

Welcome to Flight OA 2023



Good Day, and welcome to Flight OA 2023. We are preparing to take off. Please make sure your Positive Attitude and Gratitude are secured and locked in the upright position.

All self-destruct devices; pity, anger, selfishness and resentment should be turned off at this time. All negativity, hurt and discouragement should be put away.

Should you lose your positive Attitude under pressure during this flight, reach up and pull down a prayer. Prayers will automatically be activated by Faith. Once your Faith is activated, you can assist other passengers.

There will BE NO BAGGAGE allowed on this flight. God, our Captain, has cleared us for take-off. Destination – new HOPE, new JOY and NEW BEGINNINGS!

-anonymous

Why do I have to go to meetings?



Early in my OA life, when I still saw myself as the complete intellectual, I figured out through logical reasoning why I did not have to attend meetings. My logic began with the simple argument that nowhere in the Big Book did it say I had to go to a meeting every single day. Therefore, why not go once a month or once every three months? Why go at all?

The main trouble with it, however, is that my food addiction is not logical. Like a dumb animal, it plods ahead doing what it has to do by its very unthinking nature. It took a while to figure that out. But once I did, I quit trying to apply laws of logic to my lawless, illogical disease of compulsive eating.

But some OA's relapse whether or not they go to meetings. What about them? Those who live to return to the program, almost without exception, tell the same story: They had either stopped paying attention at meetings or stopped going altogether. Since I discovered how easy it is to rationalize that I don't need them, my conclusion today is that whether or not I always understand why I keep going, I had better keep going.

It was at a meeting where I first heard it said that people who don't go to meetings are not around to find out what happens to people who don't go to meetings.

Step meetings increase my awareness that the OA way is not restricted to four walls but can be carried into every area of my day-to-day life. They help me to achieve a better understanding of our program - a program that clarifies my number one problem and shows me that if I don't pick up the first bite, one day at a time, I won't relapse.

Meetings certainly do a lot for me. And yet, how easily I forget.
-anonymous



"Keep coming back" is one of the most important slogans for my recovery. I am finally abstinent. And I am happier and healthier than I have ever been. I've had a 70-pound weight loss and 17 months of abstinence because I kept coming back to OA.

It's important to keep coming back because real change is a slow process. After a year in program, I told my sponsor I felt frustrated because I hadn't changed at all. She told me I had changed but was too close to my own situation to see it. I trusted my sponsor and the program, so I kept coming back to OA.

Sometimes it's hard to be patient, but I'm glad I was. After two years in program, I felt saner, happier and more useful. And all the small changes were slowly adding up and I was becoming a different person--the person God had designed me to be.

But I continued to struggle with the food. And sometimes it got awfully hard watching others get abstinent soon after arriving in the rooms while I continued to struggle for three years and couldn't seem to put the food down.

I was sometimes filled with despair, but I kept coming back to OA and working the program. I knew instinctively that OA was the only place I could find recovery and peace.

Finally, after three years, I became abstinent. I just kept coming back.

Some people get abstinent right away, but a lot of people don't. I've seen many people get discouraged and leave after a year or two because they were struggling to become abstinent. I'm grateful I never left OA.

Nothing else is out there that can help me. And I'm sure if I had left, I would never have found what I have now.

I'm grateful for the slogan "Keep coming back until the miracle happens for you."
-anonymous

WELCOME
NEWCOMER

Are You New to OA?
Do you have questions?

Join us for an "Intro to OA"
Every Saturday on Zoom
6:00 pm PT

Meeting ID: 934 6772 5942
Passcode: 172301

MEETING LIST

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

EVENTS

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

NEXT INTERGROUP MEETING 7

Tues Aug 8
7:00 — 8:00 p.m.

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

Meeting ID: **984 7782 1659**

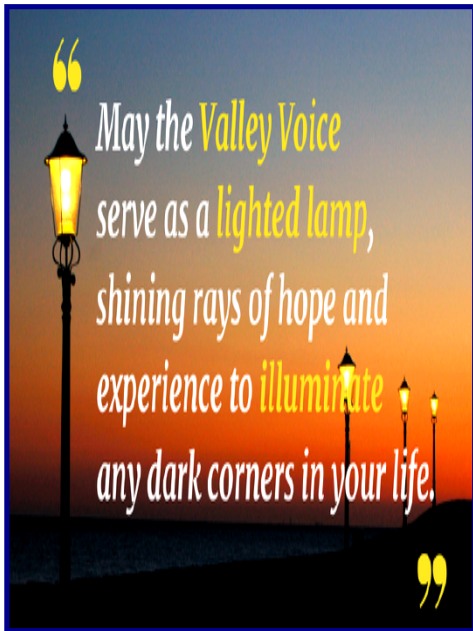
Passcode: **860953**

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
Treasurer	oatreasurer@sacvalleyoa.org	Barbara E	(916) 799-9557
Region 2	oa2rep@sacvalleyoa.org	VACANT	
Region 2	curteousb@gmail.com	Curt B	(510) 435-3246
Region 2	caryhh2002@yahoo.com	Cary H	(530) 908-1230
WSBC	judylynch@surewest.net	Judy L	(916) 799-5804
WSBC	sdallama@mac.com	Les F	(775) 813-4076
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



Hosting Basics

Wed, Aug 16

3:00 pm PDT

This 1-hour training is for new hosts and co-hosts or those who want to review their hosting skills. Topics covered include starting and ending meetings, claiming host, making co-hosts, Zoom settings for your room, sharing your screen, and managing participants. It is strongly recommended you take the Zoom Security class next.

Zoom Security

Thurs Aug 17

3:00 pm PDT

This 1-hour class will cover best practices and Zoom settings to minimize disruption, how to remove individual disrupters, and what to do if your meeting is targeted for a coordinated attack (aka Zoom bombers).

<https://oasandiego.org/zoom/>

Vision For You
OA Fellows reading The Big Book together while sharing experience, strength and hope

Every Thursday
6:30 pm PT

Meeting ID: 825 944 5125
Passcode: 2020