



# 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 1**  
**January 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 1, Tradition 1, Concept 1.....	1
Powerless But Not Helpless.....	2
Taking the First Step.....	2
Good Days and Bad.....	3
The Gift of Desperation.....	3
OA Changed My Life.....	4
Honesty-Truthful in Words and Actions.....	4
Pebbles Can Trip You Up.....	5
Plug Into The Power of Prayer.....	5
Lies My Disease Tells Me.....	6
Peace of Mind.....	6
Emotional Sobriety.....	6
Meetings / Events / Intergroup.....	7



**STEP 1: SPIRITUAL PRINCIPLE:** Honesty  
We admitted we were powerless over food--that our lives had become unmanageable.

**TRADITION 1: SPIRITUAL PRINCIPLE:** Unity  
Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon OA unity

**CONCEPT 1: SPIRITUAL PRINCIPLE:** Unity  
The ultimate responsibility and authority for OA world services reside in the collective conscience of our whole Fellowship.

## Overheard at Meetings

Food wasn't my problem, I'm the problem.

Today I am a woman I am proud of.  
I never thought I would ever say that.

Fear is a reaction. Courage is a decision.

Today's abstinence cannot be chugalugged ...  
It has to be sipped, one taste at a time, so  
that each drop of serenity can be fully savored.

The quicker I get to acceptance,  
the less pain I am in.

Start off your blessings list with  
all the things you don't do anymore.

Discomfort is a wise teacher.

The secret to my success in OA...  
*I didn't do what I wanted to do.*

**OVEREATERS ANONYMOUS**  
SACRAMENTO VALLEY INTERGROUP  
HOSTED BY THE SAT. 9 A.M. SACRAMENTO MEETING

**IT'S Overeaters Anonymous' BIRTHDAY PARTY**

**TURNING 63**

**SATURDAY, JAN. 28, 2023**

- \* GUEST SPEAKER WILL SHARE EXPERIENCE, STRENGTH AND HOPE
- \* ABSTINENT BIRTHDAY COUNTDOWN
- \* OPEN SHARING & WARM FELLOWSHIP

Faith United Methodist Church  
3600 J Street  
Sacramento, CA 95816  
Doors open at 6:00 p.m.  
Program begins at 6:30 p.m.  
Suggested \$5 contribution  
<https://www.sacvalleyoa.org/donate.html>

Jan H.  
(916) 616-1466  
for info

## Powerless But Not Helpless

I walked into my first OA meeting in the summer of 2010. I certainly wasn't surrendering. I had a food problem, not an addiction. I hated the label "compulsive overeater." I didn't like the members. I didn't really want to be there. At the end of the summer I left the program.

Three years later I came crawling back to OA, ready to take the First Step. After I managed to attain eight months of abstinence, I moved. Within three weeks I was back in the midst of my addiction, but this time without the support of OA meetings and fellowship. I went nuts with the food. It had never been that bad before. And I hit an emotional bottom.

I was constantly "teasing" my addiction because I thought I had some control over the food. I wasn't as bad as you addicts. I used to get a payoff: ease and comfort. But no more. It was a devastating addiction. Over which I had no control

When I finally admitted complete defeat, I started to get better. I could not longer go to fast food places. I could no longer cruise through 7-11. I couldn't risk eating snacks in the car. The war was over. I stopped negotiating with my disease. I learned that once I start arguing with my disease, I've lost. It is much more powerful than me.

But "we" – my higher power, the program, the fellowship and finally me – were stronger than the addiction. As for the second part of the Step 1, my life *HAD* become completely unmanageable. I couldn't stop eating. I had to be humbled in order to see my powerlessness. I needed to finally be willing to do whatever it took to stay abstinent.

Today, 12 years later, I still need to use Step 1 in my recovery. My surrender opened up the rest of the program to me: the fellowship, the Steps, service. I certainly became willing to listen to suggestions.

I am powerless over many areas of my life, but I'm not helpless. Because of Step One, I am able to ask for and accept help quicker. (When all else fails, I follow directions). I don't play around with my addiction. I reach out to a power greater than myself more readily.

Because of Step One, I know I cannot put anything before my recovery. The First Step was the start of my freedom.

anonymous

*The age of miracles is still with us. Our own recovery proves that!*

BB p.153

## Step 1

2

We admitted that we were powerless over our addictions and compulsive behaviors. That our lives had become unmanageable.

**The Principle is Honesty**

## Taking the First Step

Step 1: We admitted we were powerless over alcohol – that our lives had become unmanageable

Principle: Honesty & surrender

Problem: Dishonesty & denial



Process: Admission & surrender: am I powerless over my addiction?  
Is there any hope for me?

Practice: ego deflation - "abandon yourself to God."

Promise: There is a solution!

Proposal: Have I learned and have I fully conceded to my innermost self that I am an addict?

I am going to know a new freedom and a new happiness.

Without taking the First Step, there was no chance I could recover. I might become abstinent temporarily when I do it for myself alone, for the sake of another person or from fear. But unless I am sincerely determined to get abstinent for myself, I'm bound to relapse.

It's not easy to admit defeat. For years I have told myself I could stop overeating any time I want to. For years I believed that abstinence was "just around the corner." Tragically, I never rounded that corner. And I suddenly discovered, to my dismay, that I could not quit overeating.

So I finally came to the fork in the road. I either had to honestly admit I had a problem or continue to sink deeper and deeper into my food addiction. Until I made that admission to myself, that my eating was out of control, I had no ability to stop overeating. But once I admitted my powerlessness over food, it was at that point that I was able to get help from OA and work the rest of the Steps.

anonymous

## Food Never Made Me Happy



**But it made me think I was going to *BE* happy in about 15 minutes.**

## Good Days and Bad

I have the tendency of falling into the trap of judging my days. Some I would classify as "good days," and some as "bad days."

But recently, while I was reading the account of Bill W's trip to Akron, Ohio on pages 153 and 154 in the Big Book, I had a new insight. Here was the perfect example of a "bad day." He was broke, in a strange town, in the middle of a lawsuit, discouraged, lonely, and thinking about having a drink.

This is as bad a day as I have had in my abstinence. But because Bill W. had this *particular* "bad day," I am now abstinent !!!

Sometimes when I think I am having a bad day, I am really learning a hard lesson, cheap. And sometimes, when I think I am having a good day, I am really in trouble and just haven't recognized it yet.

anonymous

Every time you are tempted to react in the same old way, ask if you want to be a prisoner of the past or a pioneer of the future.



## The Gift of Desperation

I'd hear people talk about the "gift" of desperation in recovery meetings. And I wonder what the hell they were talking about. All I knew was that I couldn't stop eating, no matter what I tried. It didn't matter what I did, inevitably, I would pick up the food.

I've said this before, but no one decides to walk into the rooms of OA because it looks like a fun way to spend the afternoon. Circumstances take us there. Some of us are there because our doctors warned us about the dangers of diabetes or refused to perform gastric bypass surgery until we took off some weight.

Some of us are there because our partners gave us an ultimatum. That was my story. For awhile, I was there because other people wanted me to lose weight. But I found that while that reason worked in the short term, it never lasted longer than a few months.

When I finally wanted abstinence for myself, I realized I was screwed. That was when I became willing to do anything to stop overeating. Sure, I had sat in OA meetings before, cynically watching these 'fakes' pretend to be happy. But I had never gotten off my opinionated ass and asked for help. I just assumed no one could help me because *my* overeating was different, and *they* couldn't possibly understand where I was coming from.

Something has changed though. I was finally completely beaten. And somehow that spurred me into action. I asked for help. I got a sponsor. I worked the 12 Steps. I did what was suggested – even if I thought it was crap (*and I often did*).

When I was early in the program, I didn't see this desperation as a "gift." It was more like a curse. But today, I realize that had I not felt as hopeless as I did, I might never have gotten off my ass... and on the road to recovery.

anonymous



***I never thought that a day like today would be a high point of my life. Tonight as I lay my head on my pillow I can't think of one single thing that I did today that I have to go back and redo and make amends for.***

anonymous

## OA Changed My Life

### I received these payoffs from compulsive overeating:

*morbid obesity  
joint pain  
poor health  
erratic emotions  
loneliness  
demoralized character  
depression*

### I receive these payoffs from abstaining from compulsive overeating:

*good health  
normal-size body  
physical activity  
a new way of life  
a light in my eyes  
a design for living*

I choose abstinence. And I am grateful for this shift in me — physically, emotionally, and most of all spiritually. God bless OA for changing my life.

anonymous

4



## ZOOM SPEAKER MEETING

**Sat Jan 21**  
10:00 – 11:30 a.m. PST



**TWO SPEAKERS WILL SHARE THEIR  
EXPERIENCE, STRENGTH, and HOPE  
FOLLOWED BY Q & A**

Meeting ID 824 9353 8492  
Password 411236

## What is Abstinence in Overeaters Anonymous?

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



In OA, we need to get honest about our food and our lives as quickly as possible. The moment that we cross the line into addiction, we became liars. Our diseased minds may tell us that we are honest people, but we're not.

We have lied to ourselves daily about food. *“This time I’ll get control.” “I can eat this without repercussions.” “Screw it. I’m going to eat because I’m not worth saving anyway, and food is my only proven source of comfort.”*

Meanwhile, we’ve told half-truths and lied to ourselves and others about our food, our feelings, and our life. Maybe we even lose a few pounds. Then we pick up that disastrous first bite again.

Perhaps the very worst lie is the one that says *“I am not good enough.”* That little sentence is food addiction pulling the trigger on the eating gun that’s destroying us. We are all worth saving from the oblivion of food addiction. But try to tell anyone who’s in its grips.

Thanks to our Higher Power’s willingness to help us recover, we come face to face with our dishonest past, and we sweep it away by being utterly honest about it. And we learn the big truth: that we are OK on the inside. We move from hope for a better life toward a certainty we will find it with God’s help.

In fact, as we discover that honesty really is the best and simplest policy, we find that we feel closer to others because finally, we can be real with them.

anonymous



recovery inspires shared experiences

Our mission is to provide inspiring speaker meetings of depth and authenticity while supporting World Service through financial contributions.

## Upcoming Speaker Meetings

**Sun — Jan 1**

**Sun — Jan 15**

**1-3:30 p.m. PDT**

**Overeaters Anonymous**  
Registered Meeting #88993

Meetings held regularly on the first & third Sundays of each month  
Zoom ID: 947 2125 9974 Password: 810562

## Pebbles Can Trip You Up



During my early years in OA I struggled with my racing mind which was full of emotional insecurity. It seemed to me that no matter what was happening in my life, it felt like an insurmountable mountain.

Thank God for Julie... an OA long timer. Because she told me quite clearly, "No one ever tripped over a mountain... but they sure could slip and fall on a pebble."

There it was. Right in front of me. Could this be me... arrogant, proud me? Who thought that every time I had a problem, it was a damn big one?

After that I decided, hey, wait a minute. I had better start looking at Julie's "little pebbles" and clear them up, one day at a time. I did just that. Slowly but surely. And finally, one day my mountain was gone.

Over the years, tiny pebbles started coming back again. But I swept them away a little at a time.

anonymous



I call myself a relief-seeking missile. I don't like feelings: happy, mad, sad, glad, hungry, angry, lonely, tired. I'm always either disappointed in what I didn't get, or afraid the other shoe will drop and take away what I've gotten. So I'm constantly searching for something that will provide relief from ongoing misery.

The Doctor's Opinion tells me that I use food to gain a sense of "ease and comfort that comes at once" when I eat my binge foods. Because when I am not "using," I'm restless, irritable and discontent. In other words, I'm uncomfortable.

I'm human. And so I'm subject to pain, uncertainty and fear. Where normal eaters may have coping skills for life's ups and downs, my strong feelings trigger my mental obsession. And soon I feel an overwhelming desire to eat that is beyond my control.

When I joined OA, I learned that I had made food my God. I believed food would bring me the serenity that only a spiritual experience will give me. But it never does. It numbs me for about eight seconds, and then those feelings return. That's why that first bite is a sucker's game. It's as though I'm playing poker against someone who has me beat.

All I've ever wanted was to feel better. But until OA, all I had ever done was use food as a drug. And what I learned is that I can pray for ease and comfort. And then I can follow that prayer with useful actions. Because there's far more ease and comfort in abstinence than there ever was in anything that came out of a box, bag, jar, or wrapper.

I've come to learn that the only way to win is not to play. I must abstain from my "alcoholic foods" to prevent those physical cravings. But even when the craving gone, I have to learn to deal with my feelings. And I take solace and strength in the fact that others like myself have faced down the most painful situations without resorting to food.

But I have to keep it simple. I have to accept that I will feel discomfort. And I must work the 12 Steps of OA to bring me into meaningful contact with something more powerful than I am. But most important, when discomfort threatens my sense of emotional well-being, I plug into the power of prayer.

anonymous



## Lies My Disease Tells Me



*It's not fair, they can eat it and I can't.  
I'm not eating sugar or flour, I am still abstinent.  
It's sugar-free and gluten free.  
There is only a little left.  
One bite won't hurt me.  
It's not flour or sugar.  
I messed up, I might as well eat it all.  
No one will see me.  
I need the food to stay awake.  
This little change in my food plan is no big deal.  
I already bought it, and I don't want to waste it.  
I'm tired.  
It was on sale.  
It's free food.  
This time will be different.  
This will make me feel better.  
Everyone else is eating it.*

## Peace of Mind

6



*AA(OA) has taught me that I will have peace of mind  
in exact proportion to the peace of mind  
I bring into the lives of other people,*

*And it has taught me the true meaning  
of the admonition "happy are ye  
who know these things and do them."*

*For the only problems I have now are those I create  
when I break out in a rash of self-will.*

BB p.550

## Emotional Sobriety: Keeping Your Emotions Stable in Sobriety

I'm coming to believe that genuine gratitude goes beyond a sense of thankfulness for my life and all the good stuff that has happened and continues to happen to me. I'm learning I can extend gratitude to every area of my life -- all the way to the emotional turmoil and upset I experience from time to time.

When I was new, a long timer told me that I will become grateful for the pain. It didn't make sense to me then, but I'm beginning to see the truth in what she said.

In abstinence I've experienced job loss, relationship problems, financial setbacks and serious health issues. I've lived much of the time in uncertainty and insecurity. I wish these painful things hadn't happened. But they did. They seem to be part of life's terms.

The emotional pain I experience is a message. It is telling me that I've lost my way. I'm holding on too tightly. I'm resisting. It tells me there is a lesson I have not yet learned.

Once I realized the pain was a message and not a punishment, I was able to begin the process of letting go and letting God. Bill W called this process **emotional sobriety**. He said our basic flaw is that we demand that people and life give us what we want. And that we can't fully heal from our addiction until we give up our "paralyzing dependencies" on others.

Life doesn't always follow my script. And it's my job to get out of myself and be of service.

anonymous

## OA Foot Steps Presents...

### New Year

### Fresh Start

2 Speakers with Q&A

Sun Jan 8  
12:00 – 1:30 pm PT

Meeting ID: 914 9995 6265  
Password: 1212

### STEPS...

WORKSHOP



## MEETING LIST

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

## EVENTS

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

## Next Intergroup Meeting

Tues JAN 10

7:00 — 8:00 p.m.

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

Meeting ID: **984 7782 1659**

Passcode: **860953**

7

**Abstinence is measured**

**in time....**

**While recovery is measured**

**in Grace**

## Intergroup Board

Chair	<a href="mailto:oachair@sacvalleyoa.org">oachair@sacvalleyoa.org</a>	Scarlet H	(916) 505-0360
Vice Chair	<a href="mailto:oavicechair@sacvalleyoa.org">oavicechair@sacvalleyoa.org</a>	Cary H	(530) 908-1230
Secretary	<a href="mailto:oasecretary@sacvalleyoa.org">oasecretary@sacvalleyoa.org</a>	Raven Y	(530) 917-4979
Treasurer	<a href="mailto:oa treasurer@sacvalleyoa.org">oa treasurer@sacvalleyoa.org</a>	Barbara E	(916) 799-9557
Region 2	<a href="mailto:oa2rep@sacvalleyoa.org">oa2rep@sacvalleyoa.org</a>	VACANT	
Region 2	<a href="mailto:curteousb@gmail.com">curteousb@gmail.com</a>	Curt B	(510) 435-3246
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Webmaster	<a href="mailto:webmaster@sacvalleyoa.org">webmaster@sacvalleyoa.org</a>	Phil K	(916) 768-4549

# Listening

*is often the only  
thing needed to  
help someone.*

## Intergroup Committees

Committee Title	Specific Tasks	Chair	Chair Email
Bylaws	Bylaws/Policy & Procedures Review/Update	Cary H	<a href="mailto:oa vicechair@sacvalleyoa.org">oa vicechair@sacvalleyoa.org</a>
Events	Events Support	---	
Group Support	Meetings/Zoom Support	Dee	<a href="mailto:deetio@charter.net">deetio@charter.net</a>
Answer Phone	Speaker List Maintenance	---	
Newsletter	Answer Phone Maintenance	Gerri S	<a href="mailto:alohagerri@aol.com">alohagerri@aol.com</a>
Meeting List	Newsletter Editor	---	
Public Outreach	Meeting List Coordinator	Nancy Mc	<a href="mailto:nancynandalion@gmail.com">nancynandalion@gmail.com</a>
Retreat	Public Outreach Support	Jan H	<a href="mailto:ron-janholm@sbcglobal.net">ron-janholm@sbcglobal.net</a>
Special Population Focus	Retreat Coordination	---	
Sponsorship	Special Population Support	---	
	Sponsorship Resources Maintenance	---	



## 12 STEPS TO RECOVERY

The 12 Steps are a group of principles, spiritual in their nature, which, if practiced as a way of life, can expel the obsession to (overeat) and enable the sufferer to become happily and usefully whole.

AA Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions,  
"Foreword," page 15



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