



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

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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Overheard at Meetings



Courage is leaving the familiar behind.

We carry the message to stay abstinent. If another person stays abstinent, that's an extra bonus.

It's not people, places and things... It's my reaction to them.

Forget the mistake..... Remember the lesson.

Action, not knowledge, produces the Spiritual Awakening that results in recovery

Abstinence is the leading cause of relapse.

I often obsessively pursue feeling good no matter how bad it makes me feel.

It's a beautiful day to stop dwelling on things you can't control.

The truth will set you free.... But not before it pisses you off.

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.



My disease is a thief!

It steals my capacity to show up in life, for myself or others.





I remember having a huge resentment over a fellow telling me she thought I had a First Step problem because I was complaining about working the program. But she was right! I did have a First Step problem. I couldn't imagine my life with or without the food. I was at the jumping off point. But I had no idea where I was going. I needed help.

And that's why I need reminders, fellowship, literature, tools, and a spiritual program of action. My addiction keeps telling me I won't amount to anything. That I am going to fail. So it was easy to feel that my life was unmanageable. It took grace, compassion and patience from sponsors, friends and professionals to hold my hand to help guiet my addiction.

By working the Steps, getting help from a Higher Power of my understanding and by not picking up my "alcoholic" foods one day at a time, I was slowly able to gain some perspective and moments of clarity.

My sponsor promised me that more and more peace would come. And I believed her just enough to think that maybe this OA thing might work for someone like me.

It has been ten years now. And I still occasionally refer to my invaluable First Step list where I wrote down every time I had been powerless over food or that my life had become unmanageable. I do it whenever I think I can control my eating. I look at it because I still have thoughts of overeating. I'm still a food addict. I don't "have" this program. I practice this program 24 hours at a time.

What I need is people I hear in OA. Some of them with over 25 years and still coming to meetings, and sharing that sometimes they have a desire to eat. These people are my heroes. They give me the courage to be rigorously honest. If they could do it, then I thought I had a chance.

What I I needed, and found in OA was limitless hope, boundless grace, growing faith, love and levity.

-anonymous



We admitted we were powerless over alcoholthat our lives had become unmanageable.

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 Step 1. 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. And went nuts with the food. It had never been that bad before. I hit an emotional bottom.

When I finally admitted complete defeat, I started to get better. I could no 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 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, the 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 1, I am able to ask for and accept help sooner. (When all else fails, follow directions). I don't play around with my addiction. I reach out to a power greater than myself more readily.

Because of Step 1, I know I cannot put anything before my recovery. The First Step was the start of my freedom.
-anonymous



Never let a stumble on the road be the end of the journey.



Sunday Workshop Jan 7, 2024 11:00 am — 1:15 pm PT Speakers on all 12 Steps Open Sharing Q&A

We will discuss concepts from the Big Book, the AA 12+12 and the OA 12+12.

PRESENTED BY NJIOA

Zoom Meeting ID 883 1125 1736

Passcode: 2024

Dial in by phone +1-301-715-8592

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"I Put My Hand in Yours"



I made it into this program because someone else worked their 12th Step on me. Someone passed it on to me. Someone was out there after they got abstinent and cared for others.

I need to never forget that. Had they simply gone on with their lives and forgotten about people like me who were still out there bingeing and suffering, I wouldn't be here today.

My gratitude begins with that fact. It is with that gratitude in mind that I reach out to others, especially to newcomers. I need to have them in my life. That's where my spirituality begins.

For me, spirituality comes from caring about others. I have found that the more I focus on improving the quality of the lives of others, the less I'm into myself and my will. I feel a freedom and peace from within.

The gifts I am beginning to receive in my life are greater than I could have ever imagined.

-anonymous

A Journey That Gets Better



I knew of the existence of OA, but I never really understood the 12 Steps. I had tried most everything else, but I always regained all the weight and more. One day I saw a number for a local OA meeting at my library and I wrote it down. But it took me several months before I actually walked into a meeting. And that was ten years ago. And I haven't left since.

In OA I learned many things about myself and my relationship with food. I had never considered the possibility that I was hooked on certain foods the way an alcoholic is hooked on alcohol. And that once I started to eat my "alcoholic" foods, my body and my mind reacted in such a way that I craved more. This usually happened right after I took the first bite.

And this led to me wanting another bite and another until I was in a full blown binge. If it didn't happen immediately, it happened later when I was compelled to eat these foods again when I got upset or tense for any reason. And the whole cycle would repeat, leading to more weight gain. The only solution was to abstain completely from these trigger foods.

And I came to realize and accept that I needed something more than my own will power, which always failed me. I used the strength of the OA group and my faith in God to help me let go of the foods I craved. And I started working the Steps with a sponsor.

Slowly I became willing to surrender my way of doing things. Something I had never really fully done before. I learned how to approach past issues and deal with them better than before. I began to soften towards people I disliked or resented. And I got better at letting go of negative judgments and started to take a genuine interest in other people. This is all a work in progress. And I don't feel I've arrived. But I'm on a journey that gets better as I invest in it.

I'm no longer preoccupied with how much I weigh or my body size and shape. I don't worry about people and situations I can't control. So there is less of a build up of anxiety or tension due to my own making. These are just some of the promises of OA that I've experienced.

And I can honestly say that I wouldn't want to trade the best of my pre-OA days for the toughest days today. My overall health is greatly improved. My cholesterol level is within the normal range. I've reduced my medications by 75%. My energy levels have increased. And I sleep much better.

If anyone reading my story feels they have a problem with food, then maybe OA can help. You will be welcomed with open arms. Welcome home.

My 5 Morning Shower Steps



For me, a recovering food addict, action had to come before understanding and faith. I hadn't learned that I had to act my way into right thinking. In the last days of my bingeing, I had no faith – no faith in the existence of a benevolent Higher Power.

So when my sponsor told me to thank God every morning for starting my day and ask for help for the day ahead, I told her I didn't believe in God. Her answer: "Do it anyway."

So I finally decided to put the 24-hour plan on a habitual basis. I would tie it to something I did every day, like taking a shower. Every morning in the shower, I set the structure for the 24-hour plan of that day.

Gradually, this has evolved into quite a program. It probably wastes a lot of water, though. The program goes something like this:

- 1. I thank God for my abstinence during the preceding day.
- I search in my mind for something from yesterday that
 I did better than before. Some little victory over a
 character defect. And I thank God for it. This makes
 me aware of something I did right and fertilizes the
 roots of my ailing self-respect.
- I say to myself that I'm a compulsive overeater, so I
 don't think I can ever overeat safely again. I picture my
 binge food in my mind, then consciously recall some
 horrendous consequences in case those thoughts ever
 enter my mind.
- 4. I decide not to pick up during the coming day, and ask God's help in carrying out that decision. If I was anticipating situations in the coming day involving food, I visualized the event in detail and say to myself "I am deciding now (in the shower) that I will not pick up my binge foods when the situation occurs."
- 5. I decide on "Today's Special." I came into OA with so many character defaults and defenses, that I couldn't even count them. I still have a good portion of them. Even though I intellectually want to be rid of them, emotionally I still find some of them kind of fun. So each morning I pick one default/character defect that I am going to concentrate on for that day. And I ask God's help in making progress.

So this daily program did not arrive as a done deal. It evolved through *DOING*. And within a few months, it proved to me the existence of a benevolent Higher Power.

-anonymous

There's A Place for Me



We all have ideas of what happens in the rooms of OA. The reality is that week after week the bravest people in the world turn up and share their experience, strength and hope for a life that they could never have even imagined. I've lost count of how many times I've been astounded by people sharing their stories. It's as if they have read my mind.

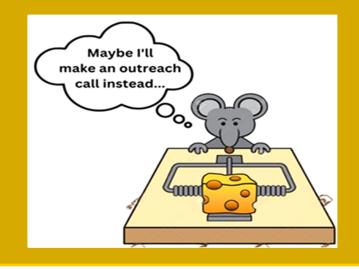
The OA program has given me a physical recovery beyond my wildest dreams. But more than that, it has somehow dissolved the invisible barrier that blocked me off from those around me. I deal with life completely differently. I simply don't want or even see the foods that used to rule my every living moment. It's quite simply a miracle.

By following some simple Steps, it has transformed my life into one that I enjoy living. I am free at last. I'm happy to be me. The peace of mind I have now is obvious to me and those closest to me. But even those who are more on the edges of my life have noticed the changes.

Yes, I have lost weight, but I've also lost the haunted look of someone always at war with herself and the world around her. I'm more productive in my work. I'm more present with people I meet. It really is a whole new world.

I came to OA to lose weight and to control my food. Yet what I have found is infinitely more valuable than any of that. I got permission to take my food, my health and my mental wellbeing as seriously as a person receiving treatment for a physical illness. I'm never alone. I have made friends who know me better than some who have known me my whole life.

But most of all, I have a freedom and a purpose and a sense that there is a place for me in this world.





Not Every Addict Uses a Needle



"120 lbs!" The dreaded voice of the school nurse rang out through the halls of P.S. 253. They had lined us all up for the yearly ritual weigh-in. For me, it was ritual torture. Not wanting to hear the sound of those dreaded numbers, I closed my eyes and plugged my ears. I was ten years old. I wanted to die.

I sat on a park bench watching the young couple stroll by. He was very attractive — tall, slender, jet black hair, ice blue eyes... definitely my type. She, on the other hand, was slovenly with stringy hair, dingy gray eyes, stooped over and very overweight. I listened to her taunting him about being late for their date. As he shuffled along, looking at his shoes, she nagged and nagged. "Watch your step, lady. Don't push your luck. You've got this gorgeous guy, who is willing to be seen with you. If you're not careful, he'll leave you for some thin young thing."

Of course it was ME I was talking to... not to that woman. I was speaking to my 5 foot 2 inch 170 pound body.

"Keep silent. Don't make waves. Be a good girl. You have no rights."

My body answered back: "I am your body. I am your prison. I chain you in shackles. I choke off your breath. I keep you silent."

"Hey, it's so nice to see you. Glad you could come. We've got a terrific buffet. Pasta salad, sourdough bread, lasagna and my very own homemade cheesecake. My mother's recipe. You'll love it. Here... try a piece."

"Gee thanks Joan, but I don't eat sugar."

"Well, just take a small piece. It's really good."

"It looks wonderful— but you see, I can't handle sugar. It throws my whole body off."

"But surely a tiny sliver can't hurt. I baked it myself."

"Joan. Give me your arm. I have a hypodermic needle in my hand. It is filled with heroin. Now I'm just going to stick it in your arm and depress the plunger. Just a tiny bit. It's just a tiny bit of heroin. You'll love it. It can't hurt. Such a little bit..."

People don't get it. They think you're a joke. Just eat less. Get your mouth wired shut. Have your stomach stapled.

I was late for my sailing class. I didn't have time for breakfast. I reached the docks a bit early, so I ran into the only place that was open at that hour. A tiny shop that served coffee, teas and baked goods. Oh God... I was in trouble. What could I choose that would be the least devastating. Ahh... I know. A bran muffin. That should do it. But I was terrified. I had been off sugar for a long time. My system was clean. Virgin territory. Ripe for the enemy invader. I braced myself for the shock. I drank my coffee and ate the muffin, then dashed off to catch the boat. So far so good.

Five hours later, driving across the Richmond Bridge, it hit me. The pangs. The gnawing. The old visions. The whispering voices. Visions of fig bars, chocolate cake, ice cream. Voices I hadn't heard for years. Soothing, seductive voices. I started to shake. By the time I got home I was frantic. I tried to still the voices. I grabbed some cantaloupe, leftover salad, anything to shut them up. The whispers became shouts. The shouts became screams. I ran out of the house and slammed the door. I refused to go back to prison.

I remember the day I began my journey. I was sitting by a waterfall listening to the rush of water crashing into the pool below. No more recriminations. No more beating myself up for being a failure. Just quiet knowingness. A private knowing. I knew where I was headed but I couldn't explain it to anyone. I didn't tell anyone I was going.

"Hey babe! You look terrific! What did you use? Weight Watchers? Jenny Craig? Nutri-Systems?"

"You don't want to know."

"No, really... tell me. You look great! What did you do?"

"You don't want to hear about it."

"Yes I do. Tell me."

"Well... it wasn't a diet. It was like a meditation. It was a change of lifestyle. And it was slow. It took a lot of work."

"Yeah? How long did it take you?"

"Six years."

"Oh....."

I knew he didn't want to hear it. He didn't want to hear that it still takes a lot of work. That every day I make choices. That I will be making choices every day for the rest of my life. It is not something that will go away one day. People want a quick fix. Give me a pill. Tell me the secret.

The 120 pound chubby kid and the 170 pound overweight adult are still locked up inside me. They are still who I think I am. I have yet to let them out of prison. I clutch them to me because they are familiar. We grew up together. They were with me through all the hard times. They are my family.

But what's the secret, you ask me?

The secret is there is no secret.

It does not matter what the journey is about.

It only matters that I stay on the road.

MINAT IS



IT'S RAINING

i don't like rain.
I wish it wasn't raining.
my day would be better
if it wasn't raining. my day is
ruined. every day is like this.
it's aiways like this. why does
it always rain when all I want is
for it to be sunny?



IT'S RAINING

vun

That Little Key of Willingness



For most of my first six years in OA I did not carry the message. I let the message carry me. Then, for some reason, I drifted away from OA.

When the hard stuff hit—when my ten-year relationship ended, when my sponsor died, when my brother died in a car accident — I was not prepared. I blamed all those things for why I turned my back on OA.

I had faced the pain of those consequences before and did not want them. So I went to a meeting. Once there I physically almost backed out of the door. But when I turned around to leave I was surrounded by women who flooded me with phone numbers. And one of them became my sponsor.

Opening that door with the tiny key of willingness saved my life. My new sponsor loved to carry the message. Her hand was always out for the newcomer as well as for the still suffering compulsive overeater. Just watching her example changed the way I saw OA.

Eventually, through working the Steps again, and doing what she did, that piece I had always been missing fell into place. That missing piece was "carrying the message." I realized that the hardships I had experienced had nothing to do with why I walked away from OA. I walked away because I was not fully working the program. I was not giving back.

Today, I have a home group I attend regularly, I share at meetings, I hold a service position, and most of all, I sponsor other women. The really funny thing is that I truly enjoy and want to do all those things.

That little key of willingness to venture to one meeting led me to doing all the things for others

-anonymous



The night I broke down and made my first call to OA was me taking the first part of Step 1. It wasn't hard for me to admit my life was unmanageable. And I was finding it increasingly difficult to live with that fact.

I had almost wrecked my car several times in two months by trying to grab candy bars that had fallen down next to the passenger seat. I was suffering from increasing guilt and remorse because I was unable to deal with the responsibility of parenting my young son.

I was trapped in one of the many unsatisfying jobs I had taken because they didn't require a lot of effort on my part. And I was no closer to making any kind of career decision than when I had been fresh out of high school eight years before.

Depression, frustration and anxiety started to take their toll, manifested physically in the form of chest pains and shortness of breath. I paid a lot of money for a complete physical and the diagnosis was "you need to lose 80 pounds".

The final indignity came after I made the decision to give up sugar and lose the weight. Turns out my willpower and superior intellect were not enough to pull it off. Because I believed that unmanageability had something to do with outer circumstances and conditions. And at that point, my life felt truly unmanageable.

"Manageable" means capable of being handled or controlled. Today, this part of the First Step has taken on a broader meaning for me. I now realize that most of my problems were a direct result of my attempts to handle my own life and to be in control.

I am abstinent today, and I'm grateful that I can *still* say my life has "become unmanageable." Step 3 tells me I no longer have to try to manage my own life. I can turn that job over to my Higher Power.

Today, I am able to leave the managing to a proven Manager. As long as I remember that my life is unmanageable – not capable of being managed by me – I know I will remain on solid OA ground.









This is a picture of the big book of Alcoholics Anonymous....On the left it has all of the pages ripped out that refer to God and or higher power and on the right it's in its entirety.....Any questions about what the program is really about???



"Healing" Equals God

8 Months Ago

I couldn't tell you What activities filled my days And what mind movies Filled my nights From February to April, Because I was under the influence!!

Sure a little alcohol And maybe a bit of weed And DEFINITELY some acid Was involved. But none of these contributed To my crash From the wobbly rocking chair Onto the floor Which was covered In bubble gum And Elmer's glue So sticky That it prevented me From completing The simple task Of standing back up.

Is it silly to admit
That the culprit
Of a two month spiral
Was
A latte?
Um, yeah, I KNOW so,
But we all have our demons
And mine is food.

Which sucks, Because we ALL gotta eat. Not once, Not twice, But at least Three times a day! Or you're unhealthy!

But if you eat more than that. . . Then you're unhealthy! And if you eat the right amount But the wrong things. . . Guess what? You're unhealthy!

In my opinion, Food Is incomprehensible. I've been dealing With diets and dysmorphia Since third grade. No joke!

Knock knock? Who's there? Orange you glad I didn't say banana? Well. . . As a matter of fact. . . I'm pretty pissed You didn't say Ice cream or Cheetos And I'm pretty pissed That I can't eat either Anymore. Because when I do, I lose my mind And bang On grocery store doors For more. True story.

Or binge so much That I throw up Then proceed To make A pot Of macaroni. That's a true story too.

I have to keep saying
"True story"
Because nobody believes
That "You've Got Food Issues"
When you're so small.
People have laughed
To my face
Once I've come clean
About
My addiction.

So I've moved towards A default phrase Of, "Sorry, I'm vegan" When they offer me cookies, Suggest froyo dates, Or bake me a cake For my birthday. I know that "Healing" Doesn't require Any other person's Point of view, But clearly MY perspective Is torn to shreds And distorted.

A Recovery Report Card Proves that, too. At first I thought "Healing" meant "Lose all the weight!" And watched 23 years Disappear When I followed **THAT** Particular philosophy. **FAIL** Then I thought "Healing" Meant clinical care. Yet. \$1000 dollars Didn't make me smaller And my 6 days Spent there Turned out To be worse Than anything. **FAIL**

But don't worry kids! There's a happy ending! I finally ACED math When I put 2 and 2 together And found that "Healing" Equals God.

And with God's help, I'm happy to announce— That at lunch yesterday I had a latte And on this next day I'm not struggling. True story.

MEETING LIST

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

EVENTS

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

NEXT INTERGROUP MEETING

Tues Jan 9 7:00 — 8:00 p.m.

https://zoom.us/j/98477821659

Meeting ID: 984 7782 1659

Passcode: 860953

JANUARY

Zoom Classes

Hosting and Security **SUN JAN 7** 12:00 — 2:00 pm PDT

Advanced Hosting & Screen Sharing **SUN JAN 21** 12:00 — 2:00 pm PDT

https://oasandiego.org/zoom/

Intergroup Board

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Intergroup Committees				
Committee Title	Specific Tasks	Chair	Chair Email	
Bylaws	Bylaws/Policy & Procedures Review/Update			
Events	Events Support			
Group Support	Meetings/Zoom Support			
	Speaker List Maintenance			
Answer Phone	Answer Phone			
Newsletter	Newsletter Editor	Gerri S	alohagerri@aol.com	
Meeting List	Meeting List Coordinator			
Public Outreach	Public Outreach Support	Nancy Mc	nancynandalion@gmail.com	
Retreat	Retreat Coordination	Rick Z	rick@directdigitalcontrols.com	
Special Population Focus	Special Population Support			
Sponsorship	Sponsorship Resource Management	Katherine G	KATEJOE@msn.com	







Step 4 Workshop

Inventories with Compassion and Love

Jan 6, 2024 1:00 pm PST **Everyone welcome**

> Meeting ID: 854 1241 2873 Passcode: 178432

Contact for more info: Amy 951-237-6820 or Renee 714-227-5799