



A BITE OF RECOVERY

*Behaviour

*Information

*Thoughts

*Emotions

A Message from our Intergroup Chair

On behalf of our Intergroup, I would like to extend our gratitude to our newsletter editors. As part of our Intergroup Renewal, we quickly identified communication among our members as a major priority, and this newsletter is an important part of that communication. We hope it will provide both individual stories and how-to experiences of working the Twelve Steps of Overeaters Anonymous, thus giving both identification with our addiction and suggestions for the solution to our addiction.

When we hear reports of intergroup meetings at our individual meetings, we sometimes hear things like "They are looking for a person to serve on a particular committee." In reality, however, it should always be "We are looking . . ." Intergroup is all of us -- a group of OA members whose primary purpose, as expressed in Tradition Five, is to carry the message of recovery from our addiction through the Twelve Steps.

Those of us who have experienced the miracle of recovery through the Steps know that the only way we can keep our recovery is to help others who still suffer. That is the clear experience of Twelve Step fellowships, and the clear instructions behind Step Twelve. How do we best carry our message? We do that through our meetings, and Intergroup exists to help our meetings carry that message by providing resources that individual groups do not have.

This newsletter is one example. Our telephone answering service and our bulk purchase and distribution of OA literature are others. As well, Intergroup can organize, and will be organizing, special workshops and events available to all of us in our area.

Our intergroup, the Heart of Canada Intergroup, encompasses not just Winnipeg, where at the moment all our groups are situated, but also all of Manitoba, Western Ontario, and even Nunavut. At times, we have had meetings in Brandon, Portage La Prairie, Thompson, Dauphin, Ste Rose du Lac, Winkler, and Thunder Bay. Although those meetings no longer exist, I am certain that in those cities there are many compulsive eaters who still suffer and who should be hearing our message and recovering from their addiction. Each group is entitled to one voting delegate to attend the four meetings during the year, but everyone is invited to attend the meetings and to participate in the discussions.

We are also part of Region 4 of the international fellowship. Region 4 encompasses a number of intergroups in Central US states in addition to our Canadian intergroup. We have a delegate who attends Region 4 meetings, and we publicize Region 4 events. We donate part of our budget to Region 4 to keep its activities going.

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Welcome!

Thank you for picking up the premier issue of **A Bite of Recovery Newsletter!** Issues will be released quarterly focusing on small **B.I.T.E.s** of recovery: **Behaviour, Information, Thoughts, Emotions.**

We hope to highlight upcoming events, supports for newcomers, member stories and program tools.

If you have any suggestions for upcoming topics, articles, or would like to join the newsletter working group, please email us at: abiteofrecoverynewsletter@gmail.com.



We are also, of course, part of the international fellowship of Overeaters Anonymous, and at times have sent delegates to attend our World Service Business Conference which normally meets annually in Albuquerque, New Mexico. We donate another part of our budget to the World Service Office to help it develop and publish our literature, keep our website and directory of all meetings up-to-date, and to coordinate the group conscience of OA as a whole.

Our first goal as an Intergroup must always be to have good recovery in our meetings. If prospective members come to strong meetings, they will quickly know whether they too suffer from our problem and seek our solution. Our next goal is to become known to prospective members. We will be concentrating on the first goal in this coming year.

Every one of our groups has been asked to come forward to sponsor and put on an event during the year. I look forward to hearing from those groups. I will also be visiting each group and ask that they set aside time for me to talk a little about Intergroup and answer any questions people may have.

Our intergroup meetings are interesting, and always have a time set aside to discuss recovery-related topics. We reach consensus through free-wheeling discussion, in which everyone is encouraged to participate.

We try our best to concentrate on our responsibility to carry the message. Meetings of the Intergroup are scheduled at least one month in advance, and will usually follow a regular OA meeting. We have been meeting by Zoom and will probably continue doing that for a while, so attendance by any OA member is relatively simple.

We are always looking for ideas and volunteers. You don't have to be a member of Intergroup to help carry the message of recovery. We welcome any and all!

- Lawrie, Chair of the OA Heart of Canada Intergroup

Surrender Happens 24/7

by Elena M.

When I came into OA, I was on the edge of a mental breakdown. I'd tried everything to stop my food obsession and my destructive food behaviors. I'd done a lot of work on myself and learned lots of self-help tricks, but nothing was working. I was numbing my feelings 24/7 and could not see a way out. That was my life, and I had to accept it . . . or so I thought.

Two years in recovery and a bit more than a year of abstinence has shown me a new facet of life. The first time I experienced a strong feeling, I went into a panic attack. I wasn't used to have any sort of feeling, let alone a strong one.

At first, I had to surrender to the program. I had to learn what a plan of eating was and what healthy portions looked like. I did not want to make outreach calls or go to meetings, but I did because I wanted out of the prison I had created for myself.

The most challenging part of my recovery presented itself when I was a year abstinent. I came in touch with a new layer of delusion that scared me at first, but my recovery was already shaking years of ingrained misconceptions and old beliefs. God was asking me to surrender more.

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Acronym Study

BIG BOOK

Believing

In

God

Beats

Our

Old

Knowledge

At the beginning, I was asked to surrender the externals I was clinging to, the ones that made me feel safe. But then came the surrender of other, more sophisticated safety mechanisms, ones that were showing up in the way I had developed love and connection with others.

Things like busyness started showing up as problematic and obstructive of my connection with God. Letting go of doing too much led to pockets of time where I was faced with a new feeling: boredom. Who am I if I am not doing something? Am I of true value if I'm not helping someone? When I came to the realization that God loves me whether I do something or don't, I had to surrender the fear of not having validation from others that I was good enough. A new journey started.

"Let go," I could hear the voice saying. "You're safe, just because you are—no need to prove or to push." I felt an emptiness and feared crashing into despair and going back to destructive patterns. "Can I do this?" This question was my only prayer. And then came the miracle, a new sense of power and connection. The synchronicities I've experienced after that moment are beyond description, but what has felt even more liberating is a new level of awareness and faith: faith that I'm taken care of in any situation, faith that God will always be there.

In the past year, I've had to surrender worship of my career and let go of a very important position in a company because it wasn't serving me anymore. I've had to surrender the idea that family comes first. I've learned that God comes first, and there is no negotiation in this. I've learned to surrender putting other people on a pedestal and making them my higher power, including my sponsor. I've had to let go of prejudices and pride. But I never found these more difficult than going through the experience of letting go of busyness and being faced with boredom.

Accepting that God is pure joy, light, and happiness—feelings that are experienced independently of what happens in the outside world—is a very difficult concept for an addict of my degree. But the moment I go within and connect to peace, to "the Presence of Infinite Power and Love" (*Alcoholics Anonymous*, 4th ed., p. 56), is the moment I give God an opportunity to show up in my life. For me today, "God either is, or He isn't" (p. 53); he is everything or he is nothing.

I'm infinitely grateful to be able to realize that surrender can happen 24/7. There is not one thing that cannot be surrendered to the infinite Power. As I am in my first two years of abstinence, I often find myself in some sort of withdrawal, and I am learning to be okay with it because today I want to know God more than anything. I want to be in church 24/7, never abandoning this Power that is showing me what needs to go and what needs to stay. For today, God is showing me that I am enough and that he loves me just because I am. I am a gift to the world and have been gifted with the ability to connect to the Power. Thank you, God, the Fellowship, and this OA Twelve Step program for sharing the discovery of what unconditional love is.

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Lifeline article, Originally posted online on July 1, 2020



Serenity Prayer

God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and wisdom to know the difference.

An Atheist's Prayer

by Alan P., Minnesota USA

Higher Power, build with me and do with me as this program requires.

Relieve me of the bondage of self.

Let victory over my difficulties bear witness to the love and power of this program.

Let me follow its way of life always.

Direct my thinking.

Eliminate my self-pity and dishonesty with myself.

Confine my self-seeking to positive directions.

Keep my mind open and my mouth shut.

Through the day, help me know what to do.

When I don't know, give me the patience to wait for inspiration.

Give me whatever I need to do the next right thing.

Keep me free from self-will.

*Grant me the serenity to accept what I cannot change,
the courage to change what I can,
and the wisdom to know the difference.*

When it hits the fan,

let me stop to think instead of reacting.

Let me work my way to a sensible conclusion.

Let me not act on any decision until I have peace of mind about it.

Remind me I'm no longer running the show.

Let me do my part and let go of the result.

Let me remember to ask myself what Step I'm on.

Keep me abstinent, sober, and out of other people's business.

Let me keep changing,

keep growing,

keep working toward being a better

person, and keep improving my life.

Let me always be grateful for all that life has given me.

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Lifeline article, Originally posted online on October 1, 2020

Region 4 Webpage

<https://oaregion4.org>

Heart of Canada Intergroup is part of Region 4.

Check out our webpage at <https://oaheartofcanada.ca>

Did you know we also have a Facebook page?
Search for OA Heart of Canada

May today there be peace within. May you trust God that you are exactly where you are meant to be. May you not forget the infinite possibilities that are born of faith. May you use those gifts that you have received and pass on the love that has been given to you. May you be content knowing you are a child of God. Let this presence settle into your bones, and allow your soul the freedom to sing, dance, praise and love. It is there for each and every one of us.

– St. Therese

CONVERSATIONS WITH ... A NEWER MEMBER AND A LONGTIME MEMBER

(Please enjoy our conversation with two of our members, Leanne and ARLYNE!)

What step are you on in the program?

Leanne: Currently, I'm going through the steps and traditions with my Saturday morning meeting. We went over Step four most recently and I absolutely loved Step four. OA is so much more than JUST trying to stop eating compulsively. OA is about trying to improve your entire self (mind, body, and soul). It is about being self-aware, being gentle with yourself, and living your life to its fullest potential.

ARLYNE: I am on several steps each day, depending on what's going on in my life. Daily, I tap into my "Higher Power" whom I choose to call GOD, in order to turn my will over to Him. H.P. is in ALL the Steps!!!!

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How many meetings do you try to attend each week/month?

Leanne: I am committed to one meeting a week (Saturday mornings). Eventually, I would LOVE to be able to attend two a week, but it is hard for me at the moment.

ARLYNE: While they're available on Zoom, I attend 10 a week, and prior to Covid, I attended 2 - 3 weekly in person. In the very beginning, I attended 5 a week or more, in order to learn the steps and language of the recovery program, get to know the other members, read and share. It helped to make me feel part of the fellowship, not just to receive but to give back. I'm so grateful to all those who have come before me, and have given me a place to find acceptance, courage and wisdom to change myself.

Do you have a favourite tool to use? Or one you find that you use the most while working your program?

Leanne: A couple weeks ago, I saved the Serenity Prayer to my phone. When I'm feeling anxious about things that I have zero control over, I like to look it up and recite it. It is such an amazing reminder that we can't control everything and that is OKAY! It allows me to restore my inner peace and give everything to God.

"God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and wisdom to know the difference."

ARLYNE: For obvious reasons Meetings are my favourite tool. When working my program, I use my Higher Power, My Sponsor and Telephone to reach fellowship people! The sharing and keeping Anonymity is also essential to me! Others do not necessarily know who my Sponsor is, or whom I sponsor. I feel it's completely anonymous that way, so when I'm sharing, others don't see or hear that person in their mind while I speak. It's an individual choice.

We think it would be wonderful if you would like to write a bit about yourself including your OA history.

Leanne: I am a wife to my fantastically supportive husband. We have been married for 8 years and we have a three-year old son as well as a 5-month-old baby girl.

I have struggled with my weight since I was in grade 5 in Elementary School. I have gained and lost significant weight four or five times in my life. I have tried a couple different fitness coaches and I've tried fad diets.

The fitness coaches worked the best because I had someone I was accountable to. But they expected me to try to sustain extremely limited diets and lots of exercising. I was able to white knuckle my way into losing 70 lbs. in six months with one of my coaches, but that was eating the same thing every day and also working out an hour and a half six days a week. Not to mention that fitness coaches were very expensive and so once I stopped paying them, I lost my accountability and fell back into my food addiction.

I always knew I was addicted to food, but it wasn't until recent years that I truly admitted it to myself. I knew there were certain foods that if I started, I never wanted to stop. It was like fireworks going off in my brain and it was such a dopamine rush! But those highs were met with such horrible guilty lows. Because of the support of my Saturday morning OA crew, I have successfully lost over 30 lbs. in the past four months. Just being amongst like-minded individuals makes you feel like you belong.

You feel safe, you feel like you matter, and you know everyone is wanting you to succeed. The group is such a Godsend I have only begun my journey with OA and have only scratched the surface of what OA truly is and yet, I'm seeing immediate results! This is the most at peace I have ever been while losing weight. This is also the first time I have lost this much weight without exercising. A person's overeating is very emotional, and I love that OA focuses so much on a person's mind and how to cope without food - this is a game changer in my life!

ARLYNE: August 11th is my entry date in O.A. I came into my first meeting in Toronto in 1986 and have never left. This year, 2021, I've celebrated 35 years of imperfect abstinence from the compulsion and obsession of overeating. I have had some health issues that have been challenging, but have recently ended a 13-year bout of Labyrinth Vertigo that fluctuated my equilibrium and weight. I am happily back on track, continuing my hiking, biking, and dancing that brings me such joy and fulfillment in my life.

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The one tip I have, would be to NEVER leave. When I first learnt that "I'm not that Good at being that Bad", I knew that the 12-step program would be able to see me through anything that Life throws at me. Life Happens; but I have a proper, manageable way of way of dealing with Life on Life's terms.

From coming into program with Step 1, admitting who I am with food and the unmanageability, to Step 12 where I've experienced a spiritual awakening, I can then help others. There is such potential through spirituality. I don't get by with alibis anymore. By working the steps my perspective and perception shifts and allows for miracles in my life. I wish that for every one of you too!

The food doesn't scare me, nor do my emotions. I know now it's not about, "Stuffing your face, but Facing your stuff", and I have a H.P., the 12 & 12 and the fellowship to turn to whenever I need help, clarity, and actions to take to see my way through any difficulties. Thank you all and God Bless you for trudging along this road with me over all the years.. we're all Together in this, Holding Hands, and finding the strength and help we individually need. Blessings and Love to each and every one of you.

XOXOX ARLYNE (in Toronto/Winnipeg)

Tools of the Program: Writing

We use the nine tools of recovery – plan of eating, sponsorship, the telephone, writing, literature, action plan, anonymity, and service – to help us achieve and maintain abstinence and recover from our disease of compulsive overeating. We use some or all of these tools to help us work the Steps, especially when “the miracle” hasn’t happened yet – before we reach Step 9 – and whenever life happens, and our recovery is rocky.

When contemplating which tool to discuss for this first issue of A B.I.T.E. of Recovery, writing seemed the logical place to start for me. You see, I’m a writer. It’s in my blood, my very being. I love writing. Well, honestly, the process can sometimes be tedious. Dorothy Parker summed it up for me when she said, “I hate writing; I love having written!”

So, what does writing do for me in my program? I have discovered two main benefits when I have used writing as a tool: it helps me clarify my feelings and provides boundaries for what is bothering me.

As an addict, feelings are troublesome for me. Numbing them was the reason I binged back when I was in the food. I am still learning how to deal with emotions in a healthy way and writing has helped with that. I am sometimes so angry or so resentful that I can’t think straight and don’t even know why half the time. I take out my journal and start writing. Sometimes, at first, I can do nothing but write “I’m angry! I’m soooo angry!!” over and over, using giant capital letters and more exclamation marks than necessary, my fury often gouging marks as I press so hard on the paper that it rips. But I keep going. I’ve learned that anger is a secondary emotion, and it is usually covering something else like disappointment, sadness, hurt, fear. I keep writing, even when it is painful, and uncover the real emotion I am tempted to stuff down.

I remember one day I was angry at something that happened at work, but I wasn’t sure what exactly had set me off. After writing for about 20 minutes, I realized I was jealous about a situation that had taken place. As soon as I realized, the emotion dissipated, and I was able to see why my anger was a little ludicrous. That was probably the first time I realized that discovering my feelings, acknowledging them through writing, could help them ebb away. I didn’t have to eat over it!

In addition to helping me to clarify feelings, writing also puts boundaries around my hurts and fears. Whenever my emotions are overwhelming and I think there is no way past the feelings, I write them out. And whether it takes two pages or 22 pages, I do eventually stop. There is always an end. No matter how much I have been

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hurt or how angry I am, I do eventually sputter out and stop writing. This is very healthy for me to see that there really is an end. My hurt doesn't go on forever. As it says in The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous, 2nd edition, "There is a limit to how much we have been hurt. Our grievances are only so big and no bigger. The hurt had a beginning, and can have an end as well." (Overeaters Anonymous Inc., 61).

The OA 12 & 12 goes on to say that we might want to give the writing away to someone, perhaps a sponsor or another OA member not involved in the situation. Then, we can symbolically release the hurt. I have done this by burning what I have written. I know others who have buried the paper or torn it up or shredded it and then thrown it away.

However you use this tool, I encourage you to try it. Perhaps it will help you in your recovery as it has helped me. I will add, though, that it is not always easy. My disease, my inner toddler as I like to call it, often balks at using a tool. I am learning, though, that the times I really don't want to do something, is usually the time when I need to do it the most!

Happy writing!

A grateful OA member

~ for more information on writing, or any of the tools of OA, please follow this link:
<https://oa.org/working-the-program/tools-of-recovery/>

Check out the following Zoom events to connect with others in the Program:

OA Region 1, Event Calendar, Multiple Zoom events every month:

<https://www.oaregion1.org/events.html>

October 2021

Get to Know Your Internal and External Triggers

Saturday, **October 2**, 9 am – 4:30 Pacific (11 am – 6:30 pm Central)

\$5.00 US suggested donation/ Register at:

[HTTPS://US02WEB.ZOOM.US/MEETING/REGISTER/TZWKC-UORZWPNGNS83WKSCZO2OMWE97_DJXDR](https://us02web.zoom.us/join/REGISTRATION/TZWKC-UORZWPNGNS83WKSCZO2OMWE97_DJXDR)

Quick-Step Studies & Workshops

4-part workshop beginning **October 12**, 8 pm ET (7 pm CT), **Continued on Oct 19, 26 and Nov 2.**

To register, email: coquicksteps@oaontario.org

Check Events link at <https://www.oaontario.org> for full details

November 2021

2021 Virtual Fall Retreat: A Time of Reflection

Begins Friday, **November 5**: 7:00 pm – 8:30 pm

Continues Saturday, November 6: 9:00 am – 11:00 am, 1:00 – 3:00 pm

Three keynote speakers

Suggested donation: \$20; "We Care" scholarships available

<https://stlouisoa.org/?event=2021-virtual-fall-retreat-a-time-of-reflection>

2022

Save the Date! January 14-16, Registration opens October 15th, 2021, at OABDP.org

62nd Annual Overeaters Anonymous Birthday Party

Hosted by the Los Angeles Intergroup: <https://www.oalaig.org>

Would you like to contribute service to the newsletter?

If you would like to include an article, assist in creating, or give service in another way to our newsletter, please reach out to abiteofrecoverynewsletter@gmail.com.

Any service is appreciated!

Our next issue will focus on staying sane, abstinent, and connected through the holidays! Please feel free to send us any tips you use.



Quick List of Meetings in our Intergroup
This list can also be found at the OA Heart of Canada webpage
including full information on each meeting's format:

<https://www.oaheartofcanada.ca>

SUNDAY 11 AM (Zoom)

<https://zoom.us/j/8637723075?pwd=QXZ4KzRrcE0rWEEybFVmV0Z6azE4dz09>

Meeting ID: 863 772 3075

Password: WpgF2F

MONDAY 7:00 PM (Hybrid)

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82629926338?pwd=LzcrSzk0U05jT0o2MW1CL3pKVIJ3UT09>

Meeting ID: 826 2992 6338

Password: recover

(PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS MEETING IS NOW HYBRID, INCLUDING BOTH ZOOM AND IN-PERSON FORMAT,
ADDRESS: GOOD NEWS FELLOWSHIP CHURCH, 891 ST. MARY'S RD., NEAR FERMOR.)

TUESDAY 7:30 PM (Hybrid)

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86586967187?pwd=Q0pkRjZobzFGay9PQnhGbytsbXNDQT09>

Meeting ID: 865 8696 7187

Passcode: Freedom

(PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS MEETING IS NOW HYBRID, INCLUDING BOTH ZOOM AND IN-PERSON FORMAT,
ADDRESS: PRAIRIE UNITED CHURCH, 207 THOMPSON DRIVE, OFF PORTAGE AVE.)

WEDNESDAY 7:30 AM (Zoom)

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86213444550?pwd=UWhsRmZsVHF0d0dadkM0bXdaUGg2dz09>

Meeting ID: 862 1344 4550

Password: 279813

THURSDAY 7:00 PM (Hybrid)

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82629926338?pwd=LzcrSzk0U05jT0o2MW1CL3pKVIJ3UT09>

Meeting ID: 826 2992 6338

Password: recover

(PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS MEETING IS NOW HYBRID, INCLUDING BOTH ZOOM AND IN-PERSON FORMAT,
ADDRESS: GOOD NEWS FELLOWSHIP CHURCH, 891 ST. MARY'S RD., NEAR FERMOR)

SATURDAY 10:30 AM (Zoom)

<https://zoom.us/j/8637723075?pwd=QXZ4KzRrcE0rWEEybFVmV0Z6azE4dz09>

Meeting ID: 863 772 3075

Password: WpgF2F