



# A BITE OF RECOVERY

\*Behaviour

\*Information

\*Thoughts

\*Emotions

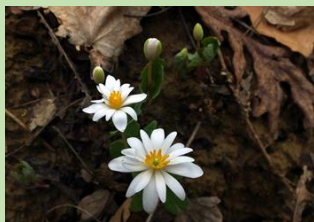
## Happy Spring!



### Nurturing is Our Nature

One of my self-care activities is to spend time with the beautiful wildflowers that we are blessed to have in Tennessee. One of the first wildflowers to announce the coming of spring around here is the bloodroot, and I took pictures just as some were beginning to blossom.

As I looked at the small cluster of flowers, I thought of the OA meetings I attend. My meetings tend to be small, and some members are in the full blossom of recovery while others have not yet begun to bloom. As I photographed, I noticed two little buds, and when I zoomed in, here is what I found.



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## Welcome!

Thank you for picking up the Spring issue of **A Bite of Recovery Newsletter!** Issues will be released quarterly, each focusing on a small “B.I.T.E.” 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](mailto:abiteofrecoverynewsletter@gmail.com).

This issue, we are focusing on renewal and recommitment to our program. After a long, long winter adding to the isolation of COVID, we look forward to sharing hope and actions others in program are taking to continue to heal and recover in this program. We are not meant to work this program alone. Keep reaching out. It works if you work it!

♦ **The Newsletter Committee**



It looked like the bigger bud was nurturing the smaller one. (Right) Again, I thought of my OA meetings. It is often newcomers who nurture more recent newcomers. That was certainly my experience when I first came to an OA meeting years ago—I was desperate, scared, and confused, and grateful I wasn't the only one.

I went back into the woods to the same group of flowers the next day. Here they are, the same two bloodroots (below right).

This is my favorite picture of the spring, and I am deeply moved by the tender nurturing I see in the two flowers. Both flowers are growing. The picture reminds me of sponsorship: the tender, gentle, and wise nurturing in the relationship of sponsor and sponsee. This kind of nurturing has helped my own recovery to grow spiritually, emotionally, and physically.

Certainly, it is wonderful when a sponsor is a seasoned veteran. But it is also wonderful when a relative newcomer reaches out to sponsor a newer newcomer. Wonderful growth can occur in both types of sponsoring relationships.

That is how sponsorship works, and I'm grateful I was reminded of it by my Higher Power as I observed the wildflowers and how they grow.

—Story and images by Larry W., Knoxville, Tennessee USA

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### ***For Seasons on Life***

*For seasons on life, when fall turns to winter  
and winter to spring,  
let me embrace the seasons of life.*

*From highs and lows,  
From joy to sorrow and back again,  
from birth to breath and life to death.*

*God, make yourself known.*

- Author Unknown



## Tools of the Program – Sponsorship

We use the nine tools of recovery – plan of eating, meetings, 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, to guide us past rocky bits whenever life throws us for a curve, and especially when “the miracle” hasn’t happened yet – before we reach Step 9.

A tool that has been invaluable to me, especially when I first began working the Steps, is sponsorship. We ask a sponsor to guide us through our program of recovery in all three levels: physical, emotional, and spiritual. A week or two after my first OA meeting, another member asked me if I had a sponsor yet. When I replied that I didn’t, she brought over another woman, introduced us, and mentioned that this second woman was looking to sponsor. Not the usual method of asking someone who has what you want and asking them how they have achieved it, but I will always be grateful to that first woman for introducing us!

My brand-new sponsor gave me “homework” immediately: I was to write out what I was going to eat the next day and call her later and tell her before I went to bed that night. I didn’t know why it was important, but I did it that night. And the next night, too. And the next. Shortly after this sponsor/sponsee relationship began, she gave me readings from the “*Big Book*” (*Alcoholics Anonymous*) and the *OA 12&12 (Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous)* and questions on which to reflect.

Again, I didn’t know why it was important, but I did it anyway. I didn’t realize until later what I had learnt. A big key – some would argue **the** key – to this program and to recovery is surrender. And that’s just what I was doing. First, I surrendered to my sponsor, and then to my Higher Power, whom I call God. With little tasks like meal planning, phoning, and reading and writing done daily, my sponsor

taught me how to surrender my will, first in small things, then in increasingly bigger matters.

I will be forever grateful to my very first sponsor for teaching me this fundamental of recovery. Being sponsored has been a tremendous asset for me in my OA program. **Being** a sponsor has been just as beneficial. Each time I announce at a meeting that I am available to sponsor, I am surrendering to God. I am sometimes nervous or fearful that I am taking on too much, agreeing to work with too many sponsees, and that I could become overwhelmed.

However, I have learnt that my HP is awesome! If I simply show up and offer, He takes care of the rest. Too many times to count, I have been anxious when a newcomer asks me to sponsor him or her and I already have 3 (or 4, or 5) other sponsees. I submit my will, pray, and say yes. My HP inevitably arranges things in miraculous ways – one sponsee moves away, another leaves program or finds another sponsor, another commitment of mine ends and suddenly my time is more available. If it is truly the will of my HP for me to take on a new sponsee, the circumstances seem to arrange themselves.

When I first came into program, other members would sometimes say that sponsoring does as much or more for the sponsor than the sponsee. I didn’t believe them until I became a sponsor myself. This has always proved true for me. Each time I hear a new sponsee tell of their experience living with the disease, I remember my own past and my own stories. I hear my experience coming out of someone else’s mouth and it reminds me of who I am and of the nature of my disease. When I guide a sponsee through the 12 Steps of recovery, I acknowledge once again my own powerlessness and insanity where food is concerned, and I get to experience the Steps anew.

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Thank You, God, for OA members willing to sponsor and for the opportunity to sponsor others!

**\*\*\*Note\*\*\*** If you do not have a sponsor, find someone who has what you want and ask how he or she is achieving it. If you are abstinent and *not* sponsoring, ask yourself why not. It may be just the shot in the arm your own program needs! I know I cannot keep what I do not give away to someone else.

~ a grateful OA member

Happy moments,  
PRAISE GOD

Difficult moments,  
SEEK GOD

Quiet moments,  
WORSHIP GOD

Painful moments,  
TRUST GOD

Every moment,  
THANK GOD

Quote by Rick Warren

Here are some **OA meeting websites** that may be helpful to you to find new and interesting meetings:

**Los Angeles:** <https://www.oalaig.org/our-intergroup/meeting-list/>

**NYC:** <https://oanyc.org/>

**Miami/Keys:** <https://meetings.oamiami.org/>

**Seattle:**  
<https://www.seattleoa.org/meetings/>

**San Francisco:**  
<https://www.oasf.org/meetings>

**Atlanta, GA:** <https://atlantaoa.org/meetings/>

**Washington, DC:** <https://oa-dcmetro.org/local/>

**Connecticut:**  
<https://www.connecticutoa.org/>

**OR:**

Find any Virtual, In-Person or Telephone Meeting on the **OA World Service Website:** <https://oa.org/find-a-meeting/?type=01>



## ***Jewish Morning and Evening Prayers***

***On awakening let us think about the 24 hours ahead...we ask God to direct our thinking...we ask God for inspiration, an intuitive thought or a decision.***

*(Alcoholics Anonymous. p.86)*

I thank You, Eternal One, for returning my soul to me with compassion.

Your faithfulness is great.

I surrender all of myself to You, God.

I ask God to give back to me what I need to do God's will today.

*Modeh/Modah ani lifanecha melech chai v'kayam.  
Shehechezarta bi nishmahti b'chemlah, rabah emunatecha.*

***...when we retire at night, we constructively review our day...after making our review we ask God's forgiveness and inquire what corrective measures should be taken.***

*(Alcoholics Anonymous. p.86)*

***Forgiving Others Each Night:***

I forgive anyone who made me angry or upset or who hurt me, my body, my things, my feelings, or anything that is mine; by accident or on purpose; by words, actions, or thoughts. I forgive each one. May nobody be punished because of me. May it be your will God—God of my ancestors—that I not hurt anyone anymore.

Blessed are you God, the Guide of my life, who makes my eyes heavy and my eyelids sleepy. May it be your will God— God of my ancestors—that I lie down to sleep in peace and awake in peace. May I not be upset by any bad dreams or thoughts. May You help me see in the dark, for it is You who illuminates the pupil of the eye. Blessed are you God, whose Radiance lights up the world.

- Excerpts from "Jewish Prayers & Practices for your 12-Step Journey"  
(<https://thebluedovefoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/jfcs-chicago-12-step-journey.pdf>)  
Copyright jfcs Chicago, 2019

**Please note:**

*We [JFCS] have chosen in this pamphlet to refer to the Deity of Israel as God. Many people use other and varied names to refer to their Higher Power, including Lord, Hashem, Adonai, Elohim/Elokim, Source of All Being, Source of Life, and more. Some prefer to write "G-d" in printed English. In these readings and meditations we invite you to use a Name for the God of your understanding that is most comfortable for you. As this pamphlet contains God's name in both Hebrew and English, please treat it with appropriate respect.*

## **CONVERSATIONS WITH TWO MEMBERS**

(Please enjoy our conversation with two of our members, Lawrie and Stewart!)

### **1. As a newcomer, how did you feel when you first entered the rooms of OA?**

#### **Lawrie:**

I was encouraged to come many years ago by an AAer who had told me of his gutter-drunk experiences, and who exhibited serenity and recovery. I wanted what he had, but alcohol has never been a big deal to me. He told me that I had to treat my food as seriously as he treated his alcohol. He told me that at a time that I was quite obese but not yet morbidly obese, and when my life was in pretty good shape in all respects except the food. So when he gave me permission to treat my addiction as a life-or-death matter, he opened the door to my recovery.

I knew in my heart that it was life-or-death, but the lack of drama in compulsive eating, as compared to alcoholism or drug addiction was obvious. I could eat a gallon of ice cream and not be so oblivious to my surroundings that I would walk into traffic and get killed. My death would be a death by a thousand cuts, gradual deterioration and loss of mobility and greater dependence on others. So his giving me permission to be serious about my addiction gave me great hope.

So I went to my first meeting with great hope and joy, and found the fellowship that I sought, as well as the programme of the Twelve Steps that has given me recovery from my addiction. Sure, I was kind of scared, but I was much more excited. This was especially true when I found that the main speaker had such a different life experience from mine, but that we had the same addiction, and that other people ate secretly, ate in huge quantities, couldn't stop once they started. I no longer felt isolated by my addiction. I realized I was part of a larger community.

I also felt a renewed sense of urgency, and resolved to do whatever it took to get abstinent and work the Steps. I got a sponsor right away and worked the Steps to the best of my ability.

So my first meeting started me on the path that I have followed for many years.

#### **Stewart:**

Having spent many years in another 12-step program I found joining OA both easier and harder. Easier in the sense of familiarity with the 12 steps, meetings, and recovery fellowship and culture. Harder in the sense of getting into a newcomer mindset and needing to take step one in a different way, specifically how it relates to my relationship with and powerlessness over food. Having and following a solid food plan has helped with this. It's an ongoing journey.

I have also found the members and fellowship of OA very open and supportive.

### **2. How supportive are your family and friends of your recovery?**

#### **Lawrie:**

They are relatively supportive, but none of them, even my spouse, thinks of my addiction as being as serious as I think it is. Our daughters think I have an eating disorder because of my concerns about what and how much I eat. So it's not the easiest go. As well, the time I spend helping others does get in the way of some family obligations, and that does not always go well.

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But I keep reminding myself that if I did not take care of what I eat with honesty and care, and if I do not carry the message to those who still suffer, I will return to what I used to be -- and even though my family doesn't remember how bad that was, I do. So for their sake, I continue to do what I have to do.

**Stewart:**

My friends and family have been supportive of me joining OA and supporting better food choices. They have shown support through accommodating meals that don't include trigger foods or an openness to me preparing alternate meals.

**3. How do you keep connected with your chosen Higher Power?**

**Lawrie:**

This is simple. I do Steps Ten, Eleven and Twelve, to the best of my ability. Step Ten continues me on the path I started with Steps Four through Nine, by helping me to deal with the ongoing challenges of life; for me, Step Ten is actually doing Steps Four through Nine, but in the context of already having recovered. Step Eleven allows me to handle each day at a time. And Step Twelve reminds me of what I used to be like, and gives me a sense of purpose and fulfillment, because I am in daily contact with people I can help by carrying the message of recovery through the Twelve Steps to other compulsive eaters who still suffer, as I used to.

**Stewart:**

Having a quiet mind is a pretty big priority for me in my life. When I am operating from a settled mind, life seems to flow a lot more smoothly. Reading OA , other 12 step and spiritual material helps keep my thoughts more in line with my higher power and God-consciousness.

Regular fellowship, sponsorship and community help me to support an internal accountability to the principles I want to live by. I have also found it really important to prioritize quiet time and silence to commune with my thoughts and higher power and evaluate how I am doing on a day by day or moment to moment basis.

I have found technology has helped, as I like to schedule regular prayer and mediation time and have a couple of apps that help to provide some discipline in these practices.



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](mailto:abiteofrecoverynewsletter@gmail.com).

Any service is appreciated!

*Our Summer issue will be released in June, 2022.*

## *A Safe Space* *Tradition 10*

Overeaters Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues;  
hence the OA name ought never be drawn into public controversy.

### SPIRITUAL PRINCIPLE – NEUTRALITY

Our Traditions in OA may at times seem unnecessary .... until we bump up against them. Have you ever been in a meeting where opinions about a certain food plan or non-OA approved publication, religious text, or political topics rocked the meeting? If you haven't, then you can thank OA's Traditions and Tradition 10 specifically. Although we look to our trusted servants to guide members away from outside issues in meetings, each of us in OA are indeed responsible for ensuring a safe space for our recovery from compulsive eating.

In the world of video meetings, we now have an added element that we need to consider with our profile photos that are used when our video camera is off. I was in a meeting and a member used a profile photo that could be construed as an outside political issue. As a trusted servant, a member contacted me and asked me to address the issue. Whether or not it was the best method, I chose to discuss the photo offline with the member and indicated I would do so to the member who brought it to my attention. As trusted servants, we look to the traditions to guide us and not to our personal opinions and beliefs. Sharing about how current political or world situations are affecting our serenity can be a sensitive area.

OA has no desire to influence, condone or endorse outside beliefs, opinions or causes that individual members may be very passionate or even disturbed about. Tradition 10 asks that we leave it at the door. You have every right to your personal beliefs, opinions or causes and may exercise them to your heart's content in venues other than an OA meeting or event.

Many of our members are involved in other 12 Step fellowships or recovery groups. OA has no opinion or recommendations for any fellowships or groups. Comparing OA meetings or OA practices to other fellowships or recovery groups can quickly sidetrack a meeting.

Some of our members enjoy a good debate about outside issues and causes while others may feel confronted or intimidated by a member professing their strongly-held beliefs or promoting a product or service or outside professionals. In any case, such discussions are necessarily left out of our meetings. Soliciting OA members for outside campaigns is also an example of activities that Tradition 10 recommends against.

OA doesn't endorse specific food plans or bans on specific foods such as sugar, diet programs or medical interventions. As members, we are all best served to share in a non-specific way about the impact of these topics on our personal recovery.

Tradition 10 reminds us that our very survival depends on OA! This Tradition directs us to guard against even the slightest connection with outside issues. Tradition 10 invites us to consider that each one of us has a shared responsibility to carefully guard against bringing up or allowing outside issues to impact our most sacred safe space in meetings.

- Paul G., Huntington Beach, CA



# ACRONYMS

**F.R.O.G.** Fully Rely On God

**P.A.C.E.** Positive Attitudes Change Everything

**H.O.P.E.** Happy Our Program Exists



## *Lifeline: Stories of Recovery*

### **Relaunching in 2022: A new *Lifeline* Blog**

OA is taking *Lifeline* in a new direction! Coming soon—*Lifeline: Stories of Recovery*, a blog for all of us to share our experience, strength, and hope with each other *and* to attract those who are still suffering from compulsive eating and compulsive food behaviours and searching for a solution online. Together we can!

### **Send Us Your Story!**

Want to help OA carry the message online? Send us your story or artwork or audio recording or video! Use the temporary form at: <https://form.jotform.com/220035565825050> to send in your submission.

We also have a new Contributor Guidelines for *Lifeline: Stories of Recovery* Blog on OA.org available to give you ideas for recovery topics and suggestions to put your share in shape for publication. Check it out at: <https://oa.org/guidelines-meetings/contributor-guidelines-for-lifeline-stories-of-recovery-blog>.

## [Quick List of Meetings in our Intergroup](#)

This list can also be found at the OA Heart of Canada webpage:

<https://www.oaheartofcanada.ca>

**All meetings are currently zoom format only  
EXCEPT Thursday group which changes on April 7<sup>th</sup> to a hybrid meeting again.**

### [SUNDAY 11 AM F2F Meeting on Zoom](#)

<https://zoom.us/j/8637723075?pwd=QXZ4KzRrcEOrWEEybFVmV0Z6azE4dz09>

Meeting ID: 863 772 3075

Password: WpgF2F

### [MONDAY 7:00 PM F2F Meeting on Zoom](#)

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

Meeting ID: 826 2992 6338

Password: recover

### [TUESDAY, 7:30 – 8:30 pm](#)

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

Meeting ID: 865 8696 7187

Password: Freedom

### [WEDNESDAY 7:30 AM F2F Meeting on Zoom](#)

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86213444550?pwd=UWWhRmZsVHF0d0dadkM0bXdaUGg2dz09>

Meeting ID: 862 1344 4550

Password: 279813

### [THURSDAY 7:00 PM F2F Meeting on Zoom](#)

Topic: Thursday, 7:00 pm - Heart of Canada Zoom Meeting's Zoom Meeting

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

Meeting ID: 826 2992 6338

Password: recover

**(PLEASE NOTE THAT STARTING APRIL 7<sup>th</sup>, THIS MEETING WILL RESUME AS A HYBRID MEETING,  
INCLUDING BOTH ZOOM AND IN-PERSON FORMAT**

**ADDRESS: GOOD NEWS FELLOWSHIP CHURCH, 891 ST. MARY'S RD., NEAR FERMOR**

### [SATURDAY 10:30 AM F2F Meeting on Zoom](#)

<https://zoom.us/j/8637723075?pwd=QXZ4KzRrcEOrWEEybFVmV0Z6azE4dz09>

Meeting ID: 863 772 3075

Password: WpgF2F

### **[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