



A BITE OF RECOVERY

*Behaviour

*Information

*Thoughts

*Emotions

SUMMER SERENITY



Serenity, Courage and Wisdom

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.

Serenity - I cannot change other people, world events, COVID protocols and lockdowns, how much snow falls, or if my tap water comes out brown sometimes.

Courage - I can change my reactions and responses to people, world events, COVID, weather and brown water. Courage can be action, speaking up or trying something new. I have even found courage can mean surrender or bowing out of a useless fight.

Wisdom - I seek wisdom to know who I am in this world, what I value, and whether I'm following my higher power's will or my own. Knowing and understanding that there are some things that I simply do not have power to change, but that I am powerful enough to affect a change in my own response has made a huge difference in my life. It means that I can give myself time to pick my battles.

- Christina H., Winnipeg

Welcome!

Thank you for picking up the Summer 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.

- The Newsletter Committee

Additional Sources - OA meeting websites

[Please see Issue 3 (Spring), page 4 for initial list.]

♦ **Sacramento Valley, CA:**

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

♦ **Nassau County, Long Island, NY:**

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

♦ **Pittsburgh, PA:**

<https://gpiioa.org/docs/COVIDmtgs.pdf>

♦ **OA Men (info for men in OA mtgs, etc.):**

<https://www.oamen.org/>

♦ **Anorexic/Bulimic Meetings**

<https://aba12steps.org/aba-meetings/meetings/>

OR

Find any Virtual, In-person or Telephone Meeting on the OA WSO Website: <https://oa.org/find-a-meeting/?type=1>

Tools of the Program –

Service – From Self-seeking to Sanity

Service – helping others, was something I did, even as a small child, to please others. I found I could get the 4 “A’s” – attention, approval, appreciation and affection – if I made other people happy and then I could be happy for a short while. I wasn’t doing service because I felt inside that it was the right thing or a good thing to do, or because I loved anyone but myself; I was doing it for my own gain – to get what I thought I needed – the 4 “A’s” plus the power, prestige and success that came from being in the centre of everything and being in the know.

I became known as a helper, someone who could be relied upon to follow through on promises, someone who could be counted on in tough times in my family, my business and professional life and my community. I thought I could do anything.

Not much changed throughout my life until I came to Al-Anon and OA. In the beginning, I joined both these programs because I was powerless over the people in my life and over my addiction – but I could not see my own powerlessness for many years in program. I thought that if I did enough service in meetings, offices and conferences; if I sponsored enough people; became involved enough and knowledgeable enough, my addiction and co-dependency would disappear magically and I would live happily ever after.

After eight years as a 12 stepper, I am slowly beginning to understand what service is all about. Showing up and sharing at meetings is sharing my experience with others. Contributing my time and money to our organizations and meetings means that I am helping to make sure that they will continue to be available to everyone who needs them.

Sponsoring and reaching out to others in program keep me grounded in this way of living that brings me closer to sanity every day. Living in the steps and applying these principles in all of my life, especially with my family, friends, fellow

workers and every human being I encounter, ensures that I am doing my small part to make the world a better place.

I am learning that service is really about love – love and respect for myself, all living beings and the life and the earth that we share.

Instead of a bucket list that I must strive to fill, I realize how full my bucket really is and that emptying it out to share with others in service of every kind fills me with peace and joy and love beyond my wildest dreams.

So, open yourself up to the love we all receive constantly from our higher power and share yourself with strangers, your families, your friends, your meetings, your communities and the world that we live in. You will find sanity and love beyond your wildest dreams.

- Davilyn E.

*The butterfly does not look back
at the caterpillar in shame, just
as you should not look back at
your past in shame.*

*Your past was part of your
transformation.*

- Anthony Gucciardi



When a flashlight grows dim or quits working, do you just throw it away? Of course not.

- *You change the batteries.*

When a person messes up or finds themselves in a dark place, do you cast them aside? Of course not!

- *You help them change their batteries.*

Some need AA... attention and affection;

Some need AAA... attention, affection and acceptance;

Some need C... compassion;

Some need D... direction.

And if they still don't seem to shine... simply sit with them quietly and share your light.

- Rachel Dansby Freeman



CONVERSATIONS WITH TWO MEMBERS

(Please enjoy our conversation with two of our members, Christina and Kim!)

1. How did you find OA?

Christina:

I don't remember how I originally found out about OA. I know that I knew about it when I was about 18 years old and still living at home. I called the number in the phone book and the only meeting in the city was somewhere in St Vital. I could only get around the city on a bus and I felt it was not realistic for me to make it on a weekly basis.

In 1998, I was in counselling and my therapist suggested Al-Anon would be helpful. OA popped into my head, so I looked up the number, found out there was a Sunday morning meeting at Victoria Hospital, and went to my first meeting on December 27.

Kim:

I am a food addict, compulsive overeater, restrictor and binger. You name it and I've probably got it or have tried it at some point. You may ask where it all began. I was born in 1980 Just kidding! I won't go that far back! But in all seriousness, I do believe that I was born with an addiction to food. My first memory of this being a problem was when I was around 5 years old and I ate an entire bottle of baby Advil and my parents had to rush me to the hospital to have my stomach pumped. I simply thought it tasted delicious. When I was 11, I ate an entire bottle of Flintstone vitamins and got very sick. The addiction just took off from there.

I'm 5'10" so I was always the biggest girl. My weight really got out of control in university where I reached my highest weight of 275 lbs. I hated myself. Back then, there were no nice clothes for plus-sized women, in my opinion, and especially not for young women. I remember having to walk into the plus-size stores and being terrified that someone would see me.

Continued on page 4....

I used to go shopping with my friends and couldn't even think about fitting into the clothes from the shops we were in. But yet, I continued to eat from the moment I woke up until the moment I went to sleep. I hated myself and was humiliated; yet my disease won each and every day.

So began the never-ending saga of diets, pay-and-weigh programs and many other forms of insanity for the next 20 years. Some of them worked for a period of time, but the addiction always won. I tried it all - such as Weight Watchers, LA Weight Loss, fasting for days at a time, Keto, the grapefruit diet, every shake out there, etc.

I had never felt so happy as when I was a "normal" size, yet I couldn't keep the weight off. Why could I not put the food down? Every day was the same thing and my life was like a groundhog day.

How did I make the life-changing decision to come to OA? My addiction had a strong hold on me like never before. I wasn't the mother or wife I wanted to be as I was completely consumed with eating. One particular Saturday, my friend invited me to come to an AA speaker meeting. She was new to the program and it was an open meeting, so I went for support.

I cannot tell you what happened to me in that meeting and the best way to explain it is to say that I just felt like I was home. My brain automatically changed liquor to food, drinking to eating, and I was immersed into the meeting. I knew I felt exactly like everyone in the room, just with a different substance that was ruining my life.

When we left, I said to my friend, "Dear God, I wish there was something like this for food addiction." The next morning, Tuesday, 15 March 2022, she called me and said, "There is something for you and it's called OA!" I started my journey that very minute.

2. What tool do you like to use to gain or maintain serenity?

Christina:

I use the spiritual kit of tools as laid out in the "Big Book" Alcoholics Anonymous. I meditate most days, often multiple times a day. I do regular inventories (I suck at doing a nighttime step 11), and I sponsor so that I remember all the stuff I have learned through the program and am giving back.

I make sure that I do a couple of things everyday related to OA so that I remember the nature of my illness and what solutions I have when I practise the principles of the 12 Steps in everything I do.

Kim:

I joined a meeting that night and have barely missed a single day since then. That Sunday, I was blessed to find my angel.....I mean my sponsor!!!!!! Wow was I in for a ride! Here was this beautiful human that had exactly what I knew I wanted. I loved reading the Big Book and doing the steps. I immediately chose a food plan from the Dignity of Choice pamphlet and began committing my food to my sponsor daily.

These steps have changed every aspect of my life. I am a better mother, wife, sister, daughter, friend and employee. I have reached a spiritual connection with my God that I didn't know existed. I was never religious in the traditional sense and for some years, didn't know if I believed there was a God. I always felt spiritual and believed in something, but I had no idea what.

3. How do you offer service to your Group/OA?

Christina:

I am the key holder for our in-person meeting. I am often the "host" on Zoom because I think people are intimidated by technology. I pay the rent because I am physically in the building and can slide the envelope under the door.

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At the Intergroup I update the website.

I am supposed to be the Region Rep. I haven't been so great at that so far, but I am working on it.

Kim:

I do service by opening the room each week for my home meeting. I am a partial sponsor with a woman and each day, we do steps ten and eleven together on the phone. I am the Intergroup Rep for my home meeting and I speak and tell my story at newcomer meetings. I do outreach to fellows each day.

Yes, this seems like a lot, but honestly, it has just filled the God-shaped hole in my heart. I love every bit of it. It can be difficult at points and it can be time consuming and sometimes, I just don't want to do it, but I realize the freedom this has given me. It has gifted me with lifelong friendships I have made in the rooms, the different person I am now, and my beautiful connection with God.

4. How do you incorporate program prayers – such as the Serenity Prayer – into your recovery?

Christina:

My favourite thing to do is break down the meaning behind the words. This slows down the prayer for me, which helps me slow down my

brain. My favourite prayers are the Serenity Prayer, Fear Prayer (page 68) and the two resentment prayers (pages 67 and 552).

I usually change the words and/or add whatever is bothering me in that moment, so I can connect with the prayer more fully. For example, with the Fear Prayer, I might say, "Please remove my fear and direct my attention to what you would have me be." I then pause and acknowledge that my HP would want me to be happy that (insert a gratitude), joyful that (insert a blessing) and free from fear."

Kim:

Now I believe in a higher power whom I choose to call God. I pray to Him every morning by means of the third and seventh step prayers, along with whatever comes to my heart, asking Him to walk with me through the day and to help me to be the best person I can be and remain abstinent. Next, I read two daily readers. At night, I do a ten step inventory that I send off to my sponsor and I thank God for my day, my life and my abstinence. I also send a gratitude list to a fellow each night and this is an amazing way to end my day.



Would you like to contribute service to the newsletter?

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

Any service is appreciated!

Our Fall issue will be released in September 2022.

SERENITY

S – Service

E – Emotional sobriety

R – Rely on God for the answer

E – Engage in prayer when you are in need

N – Never give up on God because God never gives up on you

I – Illustrate character by example

T – Try forgiveness

Y – Learn from yesterday, live in today, lean towards tomorrow



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



Beginning at Dusk

Many ancient societies begin their day at dusk (i.e., the evening before). After I had been in Overeaters Anonymous for a while, I began to feel this system might work for me and bring a level of serenity to my life that I hadn't achieved before. Here's how it has worked:

After I've finished my evening meal and taken a walk, I text a recovery buddy with my Tenth Step in a shortened form. This gives me an opportunity to examine the past twenty-four hours to see if I've left anything important undone.

Then I look at tomorrow's schedule to see what obligations and appointments I have, including scheduled meetings and calls with sponsees. Tomorrow's schedule should dictate tonight's bedtime. That way, I ensure I have enough rest to face the next day's challenges. (Recently, however, I have realized that if I program myself to get up at the same time every morning and go to bed the same time every night, the quality of my sleep is better.) I plan each morning to include sufficient time to work on the Steps, read OA literature and write a thought for the day in my journal.

Knowing tomorrow's schedule helps me plan my food better. By bedtime, I have made an abstinent food plan for the next day, making adjustments if appointments or meetings mean I can't eat at my usual mealtimes. I've also checked to see if I have the food in my pantry and made notations on my shopping lists of what items I need to replenish.

Then I deal out the next day's supplements and medications. I remember all too well the mornings when I had to hustle to count out pills, package them, and gulp down my breakfast in order to get to work on time. Now that I'm taking care of packaging my medicine the evening prior, I can relax in the morning and enjoy my quiet time and breakfast.

Emotional peace and serenity is a gift of Overeaters Anonymous. With the help of God, this program and this practice, I am closer to achieving it on a daily basis.

- Rosanne K., Beaverton, Oregon USA

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Twelve Steps Towards SERENITY

	S	E	R	E	N	I	T	Y
1	Saw our	Eating problem	Ravaged and	Eroded	Normal	Instinct	Today and	Yesterday
2	Sanity will	Ensnare;	Relying	Exclusively on our HP	Negates	Illness and	Trend towards	Yo-yoing
3	Sight	Eventual	Reason;	Entreat	New	Insights	Through	Your HP
4	Scour your	Emotions,	Resistance,	Erroneous	Notions.	It's	Time to	Yield!
5	Share	Each	Rumination;	Enjoy	Novel	Intuition	Through	Your HP
6	Sighting	Evolution?	Rejecting	Elements of	Negativity?	Inch	Towards	"Yes!"
7	Seek	Every	Removal of	Errant	Notions,	Insidious	Tendencies and	Yens
8	State	Evidence of	Responsibility,	Enter	Numerous	Individuals	Towards whom	You owe an apology
9	Seeking to	Effect	Reparations	Enables	Neutralization of	Ill-begotten	Transgressions of	Yore
10	Swift	Eradications of	Resentments	Endows	Natural	Intelligence	To	You
11	Seeking	Enlightenment	Requesting	Elucidation	Night and Day	Institutes	Truth through the	Years
12	Someone	Eating compulsively	Requires	Evidence it's	Not	Impossible:	That's	You!

- Cristabel N.





Regular Reminders of Recovery

I am a very grateful compulsive overeater with thirty-six years of abstinence. That is amazing to me, but not to my Higher Power, who asks me only to be abstinent one day at a time. The adding up of days and weeks and years is in the hands of my Higher Power. My job is to be abstinent today, and today only.

I have just returned from an idyllic holiday, one that was abstinent, relaxed, easy, pressure-free and in a beautiful area. Now I am transitioning back into my life of responsibility, pressure, deadlines and performance. These times of moving back into “the real world” can be difficult because my head starts identifying my work life as a problem and my holiday experience as the solution. I begin to think I am supposed to be on a never-ending holiday up on that mountaintop experience. My mind, influenced by my disease, invites me into a place of self-pity, dreaming and resentment. I begin to think I should quit my job, move away, become a writer and live in a log cabin. Anything and everything begins to look better than my current job, home and life.

Thankfully, I have this program to help me reconnect with a Higher Power that can restore me to sanity today (not tomorrow); a Power bigger than my crazy head’s dreams, visions and delusions; a Power that offers serenity through acceptance and gratitude. As I work my Steps Ten, Eleven and Twelve, which I work on a daily basis, and use the Tools by writing, talking to my sponsor and getting to my home meeting, my defects of character (dishonest, self-centered fear in this particular case) are revealed. I am reminded of my love for my job, my home and my daily life, including the contentment I usually experience day to day. I am reminded that happiness comes not from escaping life but by engaging with it. Yes, I enjoy my holidays, but I also enjoy my mundane, contented, serene daily life, thanks to the Twelve Steps of recovery.

So this morning, I went for my regular swim, ate my regular breakfast, and took my regular sponsee calls. It’s a cold, blustery day, so I’ve stayed home rather than trying to squeeze in one more “amazing” excursion on my last day of vacation. I checked off a couple of items on my household to-do list, showered and found time to write this article for *Lifeline*. The evening still lies before me, and I’m not feeling anxious about returning to work tomorrow, and I’m not wishing I were somewhere else. Thanks to my Higher Power, I’m sane, abstinent and serene. This is indeed an amazing way to live! I do not take it for granted.

I cannot do this on my own. I need to see recovery in you to believe that it’s possible for me. Thanks to OA, my sponsor, and my sponsees. Thanks to every abstinent member of OA who is showing me how to live in recovery for one more day.

- Anonymous

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