



A BITE OF RECOVERY

*Behaviour

*Information

*Thoughts

*Emotions

COURAGE TO CHANGE - TURNING OVER A NEW LEAF



*Welcome to the Fall 2022 issue of
A Bite of Recovery!*

To us, Fall signals a change - the temperature gets cooler, families return to routine and the leaves begin to change their beautiful colours.

We hope the articles and prayers included in this issue inspire you to have courage during this season of change and help you turn over a new leaf!

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 Silent Engine

We gather in our meetings to share our experience, strength, and hope—I hear that expression frequently. We talk about our experiences, and we share the strength we have found in program, in one another, in our literature, and primarily in working the Steps. All of this is so true and so valid. Yet, I have never—in all my thirty years of working and living this Overeaters Anonymous program—heard anyone talk about the vitality, the power, and the beauty of hope, which is so very fundamental in our program of recovery. Though I have come across the word “hope” in passing in our literature, I will frankly admit that it is from outside sources that I have come to recognize how hope has powered my recovery.

I came into OA beaten by decades of food addiction. When I sat in my home meeting and heard members peacefully sharing their struggles with food addiction, when I experienced their warm and loving welcome and support, and when they encouraged me to keep coming back and said I could find recovery here, I experienced true hope for the very first time. Here was hope to find a way out of this mire of a

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Fourth Step Prayer

Dear God,

It is I who has made my life a mess.

I have done it, but I cannot undo it.

My mistakes are mine and I will begin a searching and fearless moral inventory.

I will write down my wrongs but I will also include that which is good.

I pray for the strength to complete the task.

food addiction that filled and controlled my life. Here, people openly talked about it. Here, they admitted it. Here, they claimed they were finding a way to recovery and a new life. I wanted it!

Hope is spiritual, subtle, and powerful. We humans cannot live happily or prosper without hope. Now, after these many years of working the Steps with a sponsor, I have found new beauty and new strength. With the help of my chosen Higher Power, whom I call God, I now live in the firm promises of our program, promises which lead to a happy, peaceful life. I share with many new friends the joys in life that food addiction had once deprived me of.

I have learned that I must do my part daily, to the best of my ability, with the help of my Higher Power. I know recovery is one day at a time (sometimes it has seemed even shorter!), and I have learned to start over immediately when I slip. I cling to faith in my OA program, which gives me hope for today. Hope is the silent engine that powers my recovery so long as I do my part and strive to live in the “sunlight of the Spirit” (*Alcoholics Anonymous*, 4th ed., p. 66).

Hope is a close sister to love (it was in the love of the group that I found hope) and a vital companion for life. We will face challenges, heartaches, all kinds of misfortunes—that is life—but we are supported by a God who loves us and fills us with hope. We can do better. We can be better. We can help others, and we can help our world, so lacking in hope, by our own experience and conviction that life is a gift to be treasured, valued, and shared. Service is a gift of our belief. We help each other, and we all grow.

The result, as Rozanne said, is that I am living a life beyond my wildest dreams. Today, I am totally different from the person I was when I was controlled by my addiction. I am peaceful, happy, and gradually working on my character defects with God’s help. Relieved of food chatter in my head, I am working to be useful and doing what I can for others. I choose to be grateful every day for the hope I have received, and I willingly share it by working the Steps and helping others in this journey. Thank you, OA, for the beautiful gift of hope.

- Anne M., Henrico, Virginia USA

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Would you like to contribute service to the newsletter?

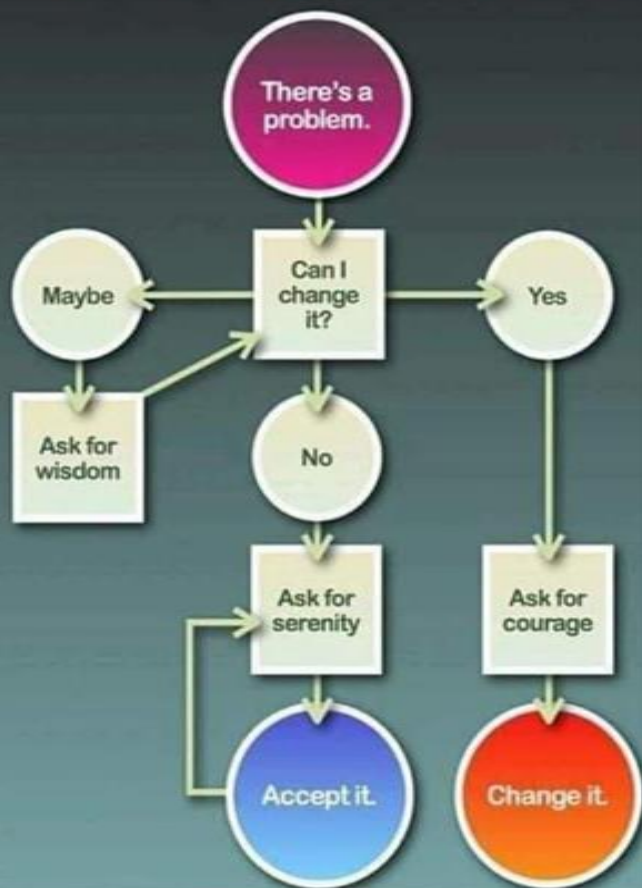
If you would like to include an article, photograph or image; assist in creating; or give service in another way to our newsletter, please reach out to [**abiteofrecoverynewsletter@gmail.com**](mailto:abiteofrecoverynewsletter@gmail.com).

Any service is appreciated!

Our Winter issue will be released in December 2022.

COURAGE =
Changing Our
Unrealistic Reasoning
And Gratification
Expectations

The Serenity Flowchart



Tools of the Program – Meetings

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.

One tool I don’t usually think much about is meetings. Meetings, according to the OA.org article *Tools of Recovery*: “give us an opportunity to identify our common problems, confirm our common solution ... share the gifts we receive through this Twelve Step program ... [they] are useful in breaking through the deadly isolation caused by distance, illness, or physical challenges.”

I have always attended meetings – it is, after all, how I first became a part of OA, how I learnt about my disease, and how I met my first sponsor. However, apart from attending at least one meeting a week, I never gave it much thought. In fact, if I am being completely honest, I sometimes wonder if I am getting much out of the meetings. I see the same people and we hear the same things week after week. I was beginning to think that they weren’t very important to my program. Until this summer.

My husband and I work in education and so are blessed with several weeks of vacation in July and August. Since he became principal, however, those months “off” are often now taken up with early July and late August meetings and other obligations for him. We therefore take full advantage of the “middle weeks” when we are both off. This year, instead of our usual one week of camping here, a few days there, we decided to go on a three-week travel camping trip almost to the Ontario/Quebec border. I did not adequately plan ahead for my program needs, and realized a few days into our trip to remote areas of northwestern and northeastern Ontario, that not only did we not have any phone service for me to contact other OAs or take part in phone or Zoom meetings, but I had forgotten my program literature such as my *Big Book*, AA and OA 12 & 12s, etc. I, of course, had my Higher Power, and my daily readers, but I felt cut off from my usual program rhythm of weekly meetings, daily contact with other OAs and frequent reading of literature.

I did my best, with my usual prayers and reading from *For Today* and *Voices of Recovery* (my OA readers) and *Daily Reflections* (an AA book of reflections), but three days after my first missed weekly meeting, I noticed I was snapping at my husband about little things, catastrophizing minor mishaps and feeling very out-of-sorts. Realizing what was going on, I asked my husband for a favour: would he

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consider listening to me while I read some OA literature aloud and shared, to simulate a mini-OA meeting of one? My ever-supportive spouse agreed and while travelling that day, I read the usual intro to our Monday night meeting including the Serenity Prayer and OA preamble. I then read randomly from one of my readers and shared. To my delight, my husband also shared on the topic, and I then closed the “meeting.” I cannot believe the instant change in my mood and attitude! The following week, the same thing happened, and again, we held a tiny meeting for two. The third week we were away, we were in a location that had adequate cell service and I was able to phone in to my regular Monday night OA meeting on Zoom. Two things occurred to me after this trip. One, my husband is a wonderful human being and I am so grateful for him and his support of me and my program. Two, meetings are an integral part of my program, and I will never again take them for granted!

I have heard it said that you don’t realize what you have until it’s gone. When it comes to OA meetings, I can now definitely attest to that! I am grateful for the tool of Meetings and will certainly cherish much more those I attend in future!

If you don’t attend meetings regularly, consider asking yourself why not. Perhaps you, like me, could do with some structured contact with fellow OAs.

~ a grateful OA member

One day it just clicks. You realize what's important and what isn't.

You learn to care less about what other people think of you and more about what you think of yourself.

You realize how far you've come and you remember when you thought things were such a mess that they'd never recover.

And then you smile.

You smile because you are truly proud of yourself and the person you've fought to become.

- Steve Maraboli

Heard and Answered

A month ago, I had a visit from my friend. We had been saying for a long time that we should pick a time for her to come visit my studio and see my artwork. Like so many wishful plans, it hadn’t happened sooner because we were both very busy. So when we saw each other at a party a few months earlier, she said, “Let’s really do it.” So we set a time, and she really came. It was wonderful to have her see my art and meet my artist friends and receive her generous praise and feedback.

When we went to lunch, we began to talk heart to heart. I shared with her that I’d been having trouble with depression and was no longer abstinent from sugar. I’d been struggling with weight gain and other physical problems as a result, and I was absolutely unable to control the self-destruction. I had been praying for help, but felt pretty disingenuous asking for it because, while I wanted to stop, I didn’t want to go back to being without the sweets that I loved so much and was enjoying daily. That is the hell of addiction: loving it and being miserable at the same time because you know you are slowly but surely engaging in self-destruction.

My friend understood my pain. We are both in OA, and she has been there. She spoke lovingly to me and gave me some gentle suggestions before we parted.

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I felt like I wanted to rest, so I drove to Balboa Park and spread a blanket on the grass. As I lay there looking at the trees and blue sky and enjoying the afterglow of my friend's visit, I thought, "It feels like I was visited by an angel."

The next thought that came was, "That is exactly what happened. You were visited by an angel." Then I thought, "I feel like I want to be abstinent."

The thoughts came: "Yes, you can choose to be abstinent, and this is a good time to do it. Or you can choose not to be, but who knows how long it will be before you feel this way again. You can avail yourself of this help now if you want to make the choice."

I lay there thinking, "These thoughts are right. I see this is an opportune time, and I really know now, without question, that I have an addiction and it is a progressive disease because I have seen how it is growing and progressing and gaining in strength. I am eating and doing things with sugar in ways I never have before. I have

become scared of it, but I'm still unable to quit. I feel as if I am on my back and my addiction has its foot on my chest. I feel that I have an iron collar locked around my neck and my addiction is holding the chain."

I realized more and more that this was my chance—that my prayers had been heard and answered, and if I wanted to avail myself of the help, then I should let go and accept the grace that had been extended to me.

I made the choice and committed to abstinence then and there. I felt that the grip of the sugar addiction was broken—it was a physical sensation. Released, I felt freer, but I also knew it would be one day at a time.

I am humbly grateful for my friend, who was an instrument in God's hands and brought me unconditional love, compassion, and an opening out of the torment of self-destruction. As of this writing, I remain gratefully abstinent.

- Ann K., San Diego, California USA
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Lifeline Article, Originally posted online, July 1, 2020



Conversations with two members

(Please enjoy our conversation with two of our members, Judy S and Morgan K!)

1. Tell us a little about yourself and your OA story.

Judy S

A little bit about myself... I grew up in a small town. I was overweight as a child and teenager but had some weight loss and I can remember my Mom wondering about me when I added so much water to my soup. At 16, I ventured to the city to take hairdressing, married at 18 and had four daughters. I remember the doctor, his hands up in the air not knowing how that happened...I had gained a lot of weight with my babies!

Morgan K

I always knew that food soothed me and I also knew I had an issue with compulsive eating. I explained the compulsion to eat as the sensation of being dragged by the hair to the fridge and forced to eat. The only way I could stop the constant, intrusive and obsessive thoughts was to take the first bite. I walked into my first meeting at the age of 20 at 300 pounds. I felt very welcomed and was given literature. I listened to people share, but all that I can remember was one woman talking about not eating ice cream for 8 years

I left that meeting, rejecting whatever it was that those people had. I didn't want to give up ice cream, or anything for that matter. Life went on and over the next 14 years, I battled addiction and alcoholism. I was given my first gift of desperation and I joined AA 9 years ago. I learned about the 12 steps and saw the transformation in my life. However, I knew with each passing year that I celebrated sobriety that I was blocked due to the food. Twenty years after walking into my first OA meeting and 30 years of compulsive eating, I was given another gift of desperation and knew where to go. I walked into an OA meeting at 360 pounds, got a sponsor right away and began my journey. However, I was still not willing to surrender and wanted to control the

foods I gave up, and not weigh or measure. I wanted to eat intuitively. I rejected diet culture and everything that came along with it, like controlling volume. I had some success and then before you knew it, I was right back where I started. In March 2021, after being out of the rooms for a couple of years, my first OA sponsor called me out of the blue (is it odd or is it God?) and asked me how I was. I was honest and told her I was miserable. She told me that while eating intuitively, not weighing and measuring, works for others, it doesn't work for me because I was an addict. That day I heard her, and I fully surrendered.

I was honest about my alcoholic foods that I had to give up, got a plan from a dietician who is familiar with abstinent eating, joined a fellowship with individuals who had long term abstinence, and started to weigh and measure. My former sponsor connected me to a new sponsor, and we began working the steps immediately and quickly, like my hair was on fire. Since March 2021, I have - for the first time in my life - known freedom from the obsession of food. I have discovered a life I only wished upon a star for. I have known peace, serenity and have been unblocked from the sunlight of the spirit. I live in a completely different body after letting go of 130 pounds. However, it has not been easy. I have relapsed three times. My first relapse put me in the hospital. It wasn't until then that I realized that I was totally powerless over this progressive and fatal disease that could kill me.

I am an addict. I am no different than any other addict. Regardless of how much my life has transformed, I only have a daily reprieve if I keep in fit spiritual condition, and that for me, has become the work.

2. What gave you the courage to come through the doors for the first time?

Judy S

When a friend told me about OA, we decided to go together. I must have found what I needed, as I have not stopped coming!

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Morgan K

If I hadn't discovered the life-transforming 12 steps through AA, I don't know if I would have ever found them in OA. Food was my first addiction and the last one I wanted to give up. My self-will kept me sick in this disease for 35 years. I had courage to walk through the doors at 3 different points in my life. However, it wasn't until I fully surrendered to the fact that I am an addict and powerless over this disease, that I was able to stay.

3. What do you feel were pivotal moments in your OA journey?

Judy S

I found listening ears and love and acceptance in that room, where I could share what was going on with me and my children as my husband and I had separated. I think getting my first sponsor.. who lived close by and drove me and my two younger children to meetings at the Helmsdale Church.

My second sponsor was working the HOW program and had released 30 lbs and had what I wanted! Previously, she and I had struggled for abstinence together, making it 8 years for me in the program with not more than 2 weeks abstinence at a time. All my life, I tried to eat like my Mom who stopped after one piece! "This time, I would eat like her", I would tell myself.

Because of the HOW program and the discipline I learned, I was able to get off sugar and finally get abstinent! At this time, I was pregnant with our second child from my second marriage and she became our "sugar free" baby. We were blessed with four more "sugar free" babies.

These are days to remember! Miracles have come to our family with my fellowship in OA. I am grateful for this program and the freedom I experience today, one day at a time.

Morgan K

I would say the second time I was called to walk through the doors. After I was able to see how the 12 steps could transform my life through AA, I knew exactly what to do: find a meeting, get the literature and find a sponsor. It didn't stick because I wasn't willing to do whatever it took, but I certainly felt called or pushed in the direction of OA after being partially unblocked by the sunlight of the spirit through AA.

March 2021 and my relapse 10 months later were the next most pivotal moments. My willingness to fully surrender, to do whatever it took, including giving up all my alcoholic foods and committing to weighing and measuring. It wasn't until I was fully abstinent that I was truly able to work the program.

Then after being on a pink cloud, letting go of 80 pounds, getting cocky and adding a sprinkle of buildup of human emotions {because life, that never stops}, I relapsed and was brought to my knees with the humility that I was a tried-and-true addict.

I was powerless and no different from anyone else. I was not unique. I was just another bozo on the bus. That is where I found true freedom for the first time. This is also where my relationship changed with my HP.

If I was indeed powerless, then where do I turn? Trust in my HP has been the best and hardest part of this whole journey. I am still learning and evolving, but I am free in the knowledge that there is a solution.



Quick List of Meetings in our Intergroup

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

<https://www.oaheartofcanada.ca>

SUNDAY 11 AM F2F Meeting on Zoom

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

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

**ADDRESS: GOOD NEWS FELLOWSHIP CHURCH, 891 ST. MARY'S RD., NEAR FERMOR
(PLEASE NOTE THAT STARTING AUGUST 1ST, THIS MEETING WILL RESUME AS A HYBRID MEETING,
INCLUDING BOTH ZOOM AND IN-PERSON FORMAT**

TUESDAY, 7:30 – 8:30 pm

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

Meeting ID: 865 8696 7187 / Password: Freedom

**ADDRESS: PRAIRIE UNITED CHURCH – 207 THOMPSON DRIVE IN ST. JAMES JUST OFF PORTAGE AVENUE
BEHIND UNDERDOGS RESTAURANT**

HYBRID MEETING, INCLUDING BOTH ZOOM AND IN-PERSON FORMAT

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

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

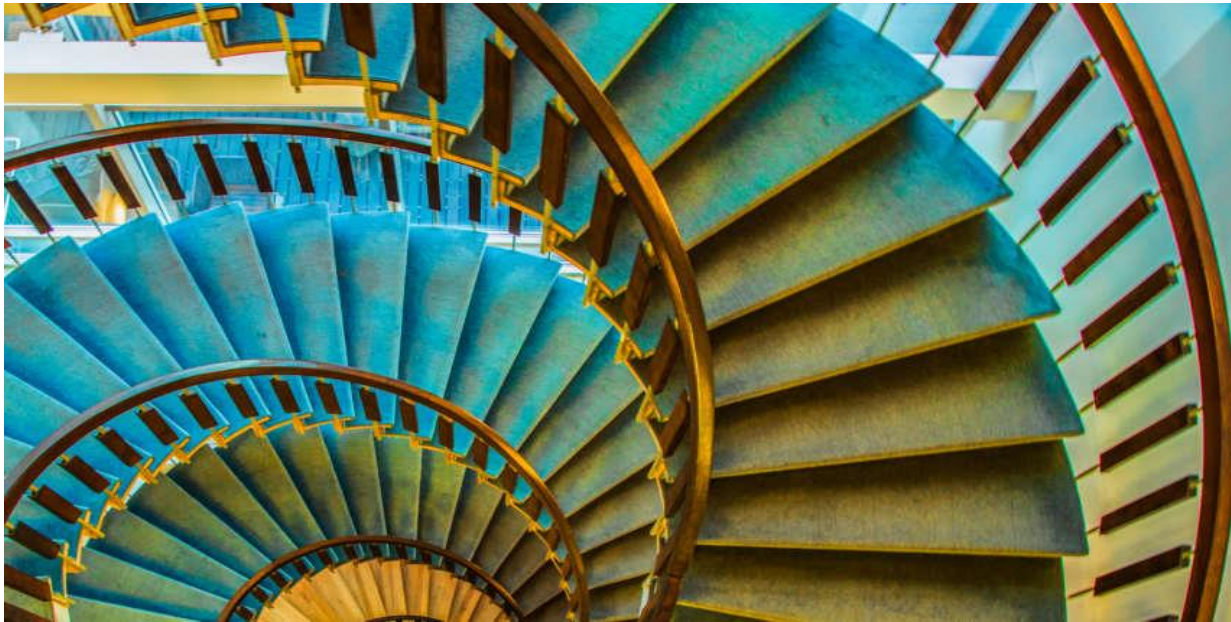
HYBRID MEETING, INCLUDING BOTH ZOOM AND IN-PERSON FORMAT

SATURDAY 10:30 AM F2F Meeting on Zoom

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

Meeting ID: 863 772 3075 / Password: WpgF2F





The Handrails Out of Hell

As an abstinent compulsive eater since May 1993 with a 100-pound (45 kg) weight loss, I love to read things that remind me of where I came from: “If willingness is the key to unlock the gates of hell, it is action that opens those doors so that we may walk freely among the living” (*Alcoholics Anonymous*, 4th ed., p. 317).

The funny thing about hell on earth is that since I had abused food to deal with life for so long, I didn’t even feel the heat anymore! My life was unacceptable, but food made it survivable. Today, I don’t want to simply survive. I want to thrive and walk freely among the living.

Working the Steps of OA made me willing to approach that gate. The order they follow is magnificent, each one clearing the way for the next. I can’t work just the first three and then jump to the last three; it just doesn’t work that way. Sure, Steps Four through Nine may seem hard, but as I look back, my living hell before program was far more difficult. I also found as I worked the Steps that there were handrails all along the way for me to grasp on my journey. Those handrails were the Tools of Recovery.

In *For Today*, it says, “Repetition is the only form of permanence that nature can achieve” (p. 204). Well, I tend to repeat myself. I repeated compulsive eating behaviors over and over, hoping for relief but achieving only depression and morbid obesity. Now, repeated use of the Tools keeps my hand on that handrail and me out of hell. The Tools allow me to work the Steps with assurance that I’m not going to fall flat on my face as I did with so many diets in the past. The key, however, is working the Steps.

And what a life I have today! We just heard from our kids that our little grandson could arrive at any time. Wow! I feel such awe and gratitude for life now. The passageway that got me here looked difficult when I first started, but I’ve been on the other side for a long time now. When I consider the pros, I know that the path was so worthwhile. I’m grateful I was willing to embark on this journey to freedom and fearlessly take the actions it required. For those just starting out in the program, I’m living proof that it’s totally worth it!

- Edited and reprinted from *New Beginnings newsletter, Central Florida Intergroup, April 2018, Posted in Lifeline, Oct. 1, 2019*