



A BITE OF RECOVERY

*Behaviour

*Information

*Thoughts

*Emotions

ONE DAY AT A TIME

One Day At A Time/Just For Today

Whichever phrase you prefer, I've found that my program works best when I keep forefront in my mind that I need to work this program living in today. I've been in the OA program since 1995 and I've learned so many things that changed my life for the better. I've learned to like and accept myself as I try to be the best version of me every day. To do that, I need to let go of the past and quit worrying so much about what the future holds for me.

For anybody who has known me over the years, I always had charts and notes using every colour of highlighter that existed to map out how my future would unfold. I also spent a lot of energy going over past events and wishing I could have changed them.

These days, I've learned to accept that there is so much I cannot control and to live life with joy one day at a time. Each morning when I wake up, I take a moment to thank my Higher Power for another day and ask for help remembering that I am enough and to try and do the best I can.

Then, I do my best to have an abstinent day where I stay in my own lane and try to do no harm and appreciate how lucky I am to be alive. At night, I thank my HP for the day, review how it went and do my grateful list for the gifts I've been given.

I am finding that I can live my best life by taking it one day at a time. Just for today, I can accomplish anything with the help of my Higher Power and my fellow members in recovery in the OA program. I wish the same for all of you.

- Pauline K, Winnipeg

Welcome!

Thank you for picking up the Fall 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

My Lord God, I have no idea where I am going. I do not see the road ahead of me. I cannot know for certain where it will end. Nor do I really know myself and the fact that I think I'm following your will does not mean that I'm actually doing so. But I believe that the desire to please you does in fact please you. And I hope I have that desire in all that I am doing. I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire. And I know that if I do this you will lead me by the right road though I may know nothing about it. Therefore will I trust you always. Though I may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death, I will not fear, for you are ever with me and you will never leave me to face my perils alone.

- Thomas Merton, *Thoughts in Solitude* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1958) pg. 79

Tools of Recovery: A Plan of Eating

One day at a time, we use the nine tools of recovery – plan of eating, sponsorship, meetings, 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.

According to the information on OA.org (<https://oa.org/working-the-program/tools-of-recovery>), a plan of eating helps us abstain from compulsive eating, guides us in our dietary decisions and defines what, when, how, where and why we eat. This tool helps us deal with the physical aspects of our disease to achieve physical recovery.

In my experience, a plan of eating has been invaluable, not only to achieve and maintain abstinence, but also to assist me in times of heightened emotional periods in my life. What I ate and when I ate it was the first tool I implemented that directly affected my ability to work the Steps, and therefore the tool I credit for having the most influence on my recovery.

I began my journey of recovery by first attending meetings. I heard my story coming out of other people’s mouths and saw myself in the literature we read together. After a couple of weeks, I got a sponsor and began working with her. All of this was necessary, but it didn’t bring about recovery! Only after choosing and following a plan of eating that avoided my trigger foods and trigger ingredients did I find abstinence to be able to work the Steps. This didn’t happen immediately. It was a gradual process, but a steady one.

For some OAs, their plan of eating and food decisions are separate from their work on the Steps with a sponsor. They may have a “food sponsor” or guide in that area, and then someone else who works with them on their Step work. For me, though, my first sponsor taught me about

abstinence and the importance of maintaining that abstinence to have the clarity of mind to even begin working the Steps. For this reason, the two have always been intertwined for me and I work with my sponsees the same way: I explain abstinence to newcomers, and if they ask, help them discover what foods to avoid, what works for them and how to find a plan of eating tailored for their needs (with their doctor or dietitian as necessary).

The first instruction related to food that my sponsor gave me was, “Go home, write down what you’ll eat tomorrow, and call me to tell me.” I had no idea why she was asking me to do that, but I wanted what she had, so I agreed. I did it again the next day and the next. She then asked me to read a pamphlet called *Dignity of Choice* to see if there was a plan of eating that I would like to follow. She let me know the plan she used but stressed that mine may look completely different from hers. She also explained how to know what foods or eating behaviours would trigger me to overeat and emphasized that avoiding these foods would prevent the allergy of the body from being activated and would allow me to remain abstinent. I followed her suggestions and I put together several days of abstinence in a row. We then began working the Steps, with my mind clear and the allergy of the body at bay.

I learnt that I needed to avoid added sugars in the food I ate and especially sugars mixed with fat (chocolate, cookies, cakes, doughnuts, cheesecakes, etc.). I’d always thought that bread was a problem for me but discovered that as long as it had no sugary substances on it (jam, honey, etc.), the allergy of the body wasn’t triggered.

My plan of eating currently is to have three abstinent meals a day, one snack a day, one day at a time. At times, I have had two snacks a day or no snack at all. Also, the amounts I eat have fluctuated over the years depending on my activity level and my weight.

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Not everyone in OA measures or weighs their food amounts, but it's been very helpful for me. People often ask me why – it's so I know I am eating an abstinent amount for me (guesswork and estimation makes me anxious which can trigger food thoughts). Some assume it's so I don't eat **too much**. This is true, but it's also so I eat **enough**. As someone who has restricted in the past, this is crucial for my recovery.

At the beginning of my recovery, my food plan was very specific and included places and times I would eat. Over the years, this has tempered as I am recovered and able to maintain abstinence in all situations including unknown restaurants, widely different times than usual, and even in foreign countries! Also, while I still often submit my menu for the day to another OA (sometimes to a newcomer or someone who is struggling), it's not necessary for my recovery anymore as my plan is second nature to me.

However, just as it held me accountable in the past, it does today when I choose to do so. The framework I use as my plan (how much protein I have, how many starch or vegetables servings a day) has been a godsend in the last few months.

Although it's been over 10 years since I took that last compulsive bite, when I'm extremely stressed or have great emotional upheaval, my plan of eating helps anchor me. I was just sharing that with a friend today. I lost both my father and my mother-in-law in the last six months. In the first days of extreme grief when I felt like I could barely function, my plan kept me sane and abstinent. When I wanted to restrict, I reminded myself I **needed** to eat and I knew **what** to eat: 2 starches, 2 vegetable servings, 1 fruit, 4 oz protein, etc. It grounded me and helped me focus on one thing at a time.

My approach to this tool may look very different from yours. You may not weigh and measure your food and may not need to. You may have a looser plan or a more stringent one, need more or less food than I do. However, a plan of eating can be a useful tool for most OAs, providing a framework to obtain and maintain abstinence as you work the Steps to recover from the disease of compulsive overeating.

For more information on this tool, please visit the OA.org website. See the pamphlet *A New Plan of Eating* or *Where Do I Start?* for more information.

~ a grateful OA member

CONVERSATIONS WITH TWO MEMBERS

(Please enjoy our conversation with two of our members, Eve and Luella as they share their journey in this program and life, one day at a time.)

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

Eve: I'm retired after more than 45 years in the paid workforce and another whole simultaneous lifetime of volunteer service, which I continue as part of OA. I have been married for nearly 40 years and have two adult children.

I had two brief stints in OA since 2010 but had too much on my plate, figuratively and literally, to stay with in-person meetings and never knew how to follow the 12 steps and so I dropped out. In December 2022, I decided to drop back in and with zoom meetings and my retirement, it

worked for me. I decided to abstain from all sugar desserts and thank God have remained abstinent ever since, which is over 9 months as of this writing. I worked with a sponsor to develop a plan of eating and for the first month or two of being back in OA, I zoomed into daily meetings all over the world just to immerse myself in the OA culture. It worked and now I zoom into two meetings a week and went through the twelve steps with a sponsor, which I found very helpful. Since I have finished the 12 steps, I now fulfill my obligation as per step 12 to carry the message of OA to others by sponsoring and doing other types of OA service. Steps four and five have been transformational in terms of releasing resentments.

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Luella: I wasn't overweight as a child, but there was a lot of dysfunction in my home and there were definitely overeaters. I did have other issues. One example, I started smoking at age 11 and never quit until I was 41. I never started gaining weight until I was in my 20s and added more after I quit smoking. I was, and still am, a physically active person, so it took a bit longer for the weight to show up.

I had a very busy and stressful career. For a number of years, on my way home from work, I would worry about whether or not there was enough food (junk type food, of course) at home. There was a fear that I wouldn't be able to handle it if there wasn't enough. So, I would usually stop at the store. It was out of control and I was eating to stuff feelings, etc. I wasn't happy.

When I retired I wanted to change my life. I knew about OA, but I was concerned about the Higher Power aspects, worried about people trying to convert me to religion. But, in 2014, I gave it a try and soon realized that I could choose my own Higher Power, which to me is the beauty of nature and art, as well as the good in people. Right away I gave up a number of foods that were a problem for me. I started the steps at the same time, and went through them fairly quickly, knowing I could come back and do more once new things were revealed. I lost 45 pounds, which I have never regained.

2) What daily practices help you to remain focused on your program and living life one day at a time?

Eve: I meditate daily, which helps to keep me focused on OA. I look at my plan of eating daily. I do daily readings of OA literature and I pray to my higher power. I also follow social media positive-thinking websites which contain helpful sayings about the importance of living life one day at a time. My late mom was a big believer in positive thinking and living one day at a time so that has always been part of my belief system since childhood.

Luella: I try to keep things simple, because I'm busy, knowing that I'll likely start to miss days, quit, or do a lousy job if things are too time-consuming.

Morning (less than 10 minutes): Every morning I do a short reading, something like the daily reading in For Today and quickly jot down my thoughts. Then I meditate for the length of the piece of my meditation music (2-4 minutes). When meditating I try to keep my mind clear, but if a thought comes up, I don't let it stick. I acknowledge it and send it on its way, like a cloud in the wind.

Evening (less than 10 minutes): I don't do this right before bed or I might use the excuse that I'm too tired. So, at some point after supper and before bedtime, I jot down quick thoughts about things that went well during the day. I'll also jot things that happened that I may need to work on, but I don't get all caught up in it; I just take note to work on it in the near future. Then I do some stretches and breathing exercises.

Daily: I make a point of doing something physical every day, whether it's walking, cycling, tai chi, or physio exercises for my old knee injuries.

3) If you find yourself ruminating on the past or anticipating/obsessing on the future, what tools do you use to deal with your thoughts and stay in the present?

Eve: I automatically work on keeping myself focused on this moment rather than thinking about the past or about the future. The serenity prayer does that for me also because acceptance of reality helps to keep me in the present. If ever I think I should have done something differently in the past, I remind myself that I can only change the present, never the past. I grew up with a great poster on my wall and I was reminded of it recently. I find it helpful on my healthy weight pursuit journey.

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Here it is:

“Nothing in the world can take the place of persistence. Talent will not; nothing is more common than unsuccessful people with talent. Genius will not; unrewarded genius is almost a proverb. Education alone will not; the world is full of educated derelicts. Persistence and determination alone are omnipotent.”

Luella: I try to stay aware, so I catch things before they lead me to the food. If I catch myself feeling irritable/grumpy or worrying/stuck in some thought, I know I need to think about it, do some reading from the Big Book or OA literature, and write about it, maybe do a Step 4. I can call someone and chat about it. I go to a meeting pretty much every week, so this helps me keep on top of things and stay in the present. Also, I redo the steps at least once a year, whether I think I need it or not, and I always learn something.

*Life doesn't allow
for us to go back
and fix what we
have done wrong
in the past, but it does
allow for us to live
each day better*

- Author unknown (searchquotes.com)

ANNOUNCEMENTS!

A reminder to register for the convention. Please see full details on page 9.

Cost of registration is now \$40.00

See you on the 20th and 21st!

INTERGROUP

is looking for a volunteer to become Vice-Chair of the Executive Committee. Please contact your Intergroup meeting representative for more information.

OA Literature

Brenlee is our current literature rep for our Intergroup. Please contact her at brenlee@trepel.ca.

In late fall (end of October to middle of November), our new literature rep will be Asmaa. Her contact email is a87823.h@gmail.com.

An inventory of items available from intergroup can be found on the OA Heart of Canada web page at <https://oaheartofcanada.ca/current-stock/>

We still need a volunteer to man the OA Hotline for the month of November. Three months abstinence requirement. Please contact Gail at gcantor47@gmail.com to volunteer or if you need further information.



ONLY TODAY

Today is it. I don't have to do more than that.

I'm grateful to my first sponsor for drumming into me the concept of "one day at a time." When I worried about the future, she'd remind me to look down at my feet and say aloud 1) where I am standing, 2) what day it is, and 3) "That's all there is. That's all I get." Just today. Just now. What a relief.

When my mind was whirling, she would ask me, "What Step aren't you working today?" reminding me that I need to work the Step I'm on *today*, not tomorrow or Saturday, when I'll have more time. Even if it means writing a single word, if I'm working my program today, then I'm working my Step today. I'm following my meal plan today. There are no days off in OA.

I'm on Step Ten today, so this means I continue to take personal inventory today and clean up any messes I've made today. It means I strive to improve my conscious contact with my Higher Power today because I'm also working Step Eleven, and it means I try to carry this amazing message of recovery through the Twelve Steps to the person who is still suffering, since I'm also working Step Twelve today.

I need to work my program today, and luckily, OA is always there for me, available for use through all the Tools. I'm so grateful to know there are no excuses. I am a compulsive overeater today, and I plan to work this program of recovery today. As a result, today I will enjoy abstinence, a relationship with my Higher Power, and be "of maximum service to God and the people about us" (*Alcoholics Anonymous*, 4th ed., p. 77).

Recovery requires a lot of work today and each day, but it's so worth it. Thank you to my first sponsor, who never let a day slip by.

- Anonymous

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One Day at a Time

(How OA Changed My Life)

After some years in another recovery program, I discovered I had substituted food for the alcohol I was no longer drinking.

From childhood I had been using food for comfort and as a cushion against the discomforts of the world. I was a heavy child and lost weight just before entering high school. In my teen years I was distracted from the food by boys, drugs, and alcohol. I starved myself to get the boys' attention, but when I got it, I had no idea how to handle it.

When I was on my own and my parents weren't there to oversee my conduct, I went overboard with everything. I quickly gained weight and struggled with it for at least sixteen years before the program found me. During those years I rebelled against formal diets and withdrew from life. I avoided social activities where others might comment on my food or weight.

My favorite place to binge was on the couch, in front of the TV, into the early morning hours, with bowl after bowl of whatever I wanted. I thought it was healthy eating, but I lost control over my weight.

Through my other recovery program, I learned about the Twelve Steps. The day came when I realized I was doing the same thing with food as I had done with alcohol. I prayed for help, and people who had modified-grey-sheet abstinence began showing up in my life. They were happy and healthy living life in normal sized bodies.

I made plans to attend a meeting and proceeded to eat everything in my house that was not on the modified grey sheet my friends had described.

Years earlier I had visited OA with a friend and knew I didn't need it. When I attended my first grey-sheet meeting in 1992, I was ready. I got a sponsor and set about a new project of getting an "A" in OA. That momentum served me well. I reached goal weight in four months and have been at a normal size since then.

I remember challenging my first sponsor about why I had to continue to weigh and measure my food. She asked me whether I was going to do this program or not. I was angry because she "had me." I knew I could no longer control the food or weight on my own. My thinking about food was not normal or healthy.

I have celebrated many years in this program. I am grateful my abstinence has not been perfect since my first day. When it has been sloppy, I've reported it to my sponsor and followed her instructions on recommitment. The Steps have given me freedom. Using this approach to clean abstinence has kept me free. I am learning as I go, and I'm grateful my life experiences have become gentler through the years.

Today I am living my dreams: performing as a singer, dancing weekly with a wonderful new husband who has many years of recovery in my other program, overseeing my successful business, and serving as a teacher for my church. I didn't know my life could be this good, and it keeps getting better all the time. It is not problem-free, but the quality of my problems is much better than in the past.

With the exception of a few grey hairs, I feel and look much younger than before my OA recovery. Life keeps getting better as I go, and I think I'll keep coming back, one day at a time.

- M.B., Modesto, California USA
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Originally posted online, January 7, 2016

Just for tonight, I will be grateful. As I prepare for sleep, I will give thanks for the passing day—its failures as well as its successes, its sadness as well as its joys, and its pain as well as its pleasures. I will take comfort in the knowledge that no event occurred, or circumstance arose today, that God could not use for my good and the good of others.

Just for tonight, I will accept that I have done the best I could, remembering that my goal is “Progress Not Perfection.” I will let go of any disappointment, shame, or guilt I feel for not having achieved perfection today, or any day in the past. I will offer up my shortcomings to God, in the belief that God can bring about changes in me I could not bring about in myself.

Just for tonight, I will try not to solve tomorrow’s problems or rectify today’s mistakes. I will remind myself that I am better able to receive guidance about right actions and right amends when my mind and body are rested and refreshed.

Just for tonight, I will set aside my fears, frustrations, and aspirations. I will take a few minutes to review the abundance that exists in my life today and place my future in the care of a loving God, trusting my needs will be met at a time, and in a way, which is best for me.

Just for tonight, I will turn my loved ones over to God’s care. I will free myself from trying to do the impossible—changing the actions, attitudes, or future of anyone other than myself.

Just for tonight, I will set aside all anger, resentment, envy, and hurt feelings. I will ask God to bless those whose actions I feel troubled by, and to change my attitude toward them, myself, and all other human beings to one of love, acceptance, and compassion.

Just for tonight, I will try to find a safe, comfortable place to lie down and close my eyes. I will remind myself I am a precious child of God, and that I am both deserving and in need of rest.

By Robin T., Florida

<https://www.todays-hope.com/recovery-prayers.html>
for full article of recovery prayers

JUST FOR TODAY, I will try to live through this day only and not tackle my whole life problem at once. I can do something for twelve hours that would appall me if I felt that I had to keep it up for a lifetime.

JUST FOR TODAY, I will adjust myself to what is, and not try to adjust everything to my own desires. I will take my “luck” as it comes and fit myself to it.

JUST FOR TODAY, I will try to strengthen my mind. I will study. I will not be a mental loafer. I will read something that requires mental effort and concentration.

JUST FOR TODAY, I will exercise my soul in three ways. I will do somebody a good turn and not get found out. If anybody knows of it, it will not count. I will do at least two things I do not want to do – just for exercise. I will not show anyone that my feelings are hurt; they may be hurt, but today I will not show it.

JUST FOR TODAY, I will be agreeable, will look as well as I can, dress becomingly, talk low, act courteously, criticize not one bit, not find fault with anything and not try to improve or regulate anybody except myself.

JUST FOR TODAY, I will have a programme – I may not be able to follow it exactly, but I will have it. I will save myself from two pests: hurry and indecision.

JUST FOR TODAY, I will have a quiet half hour all to myself and relax. During this half hour, sometime, I will try to get a better perspective of my life.

JUST FOR TODAY, I will be unafraid, especially I will not be afraid to enjoy what is beautiful, and to believe that as I give to the world, so the world gives to me.

Excerpt from Overeaters Anonymous Sydney Group:
<https://oasydney.org/working-the-aa-program/just-for-today/>

STEPPING TOWARDS RECOVERY

**HEART OF
CANADA
OVEREATERS
ANONYMOUS
2023
CONVENTION**



**FRIDAY, OCTOBER 20: REGISTRATION STARTING AT 6:30 PM,
GUEST SPEAKERS: 7 - 9 PM**

**SATURDAY, OCTOBER 21: REGISTRATION STARTING AT 8:30 AM
GUEST SPEAKERS: 9 - 4:45,
FOLLOWED BY OPEN MEETING FROM
5 - 6:00 PM**

LOCATION:

**JOHN BLACK MEMORIAL UNITED CHURCH
898 HENDERSON HIGHWAY AT ROBERTA AVENUE.
WINNIPEG, MANITOBA**

COFFEE/TEA PROVIDED, PLEASE BRING YOUR OWN MUG/TRAVEL CUP

**PLEASE JOIN US TO HEAR OUR TWO GUEST SPEAKERS FROM ALBERTA AS
THEY SHARE THEIR EXPERIENCE, STRENGTH AND HOPE IN THE PROGRAM.**

EARLY REGISTRATION CLOSES OCTOBER 1, 2023.

COST: \$30.00

AFTER OCTOBER 1: Cost: \$40.00

**CONTACT: HEARTOFCANADACONVENTION@GMAIL.COM FOR
INFORMATION AND/OR E-TRANSFER PAYMENTS**

**OR THE OA HOTLINE NUMBER FOR WINNIPEG (204-334-9008) AND
LEAVE YOUR CONTACT INFO.**

CHEQUES SHOULD BE MADE PAYABLE TO "OA INTERGROUP".

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 MORNING, 11 AM F2F Meeting on Zoom

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

Meeting ID: 863 772 3075 / Password: WpgF2F

MONDAY NIGHT, 7:00-8:00 PM F2F Meeting on Zoom AND in-person

<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

TUESDAY NIGHT, 7:30-8:30 PM on Zoom AND in-person upon request

<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

***** TO ATTEND IN PERSON, PLEASE CONTACT DEBBIE B (204-720-4053 OR DAVILYN (204-791-6419) TUESDAY MORNING OF THE DAY YOU ARE WANTING TO ATTEND TO ENSURE IN-PERSON MEETING IS OCCURING THAT DAY.*****

WEDNESDAY MORNING 7:30-8:30 AM F2F Meeting on Zoom

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

Meeting ID: 862 1344 4550 / Password: 279813

THURSDAY NIGHT, 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 THIS MEETING HAS NOW RETURNED TO ONLY ZOOM FORMAT

SATURDAY MORNING 10:30 AM F2F Meeting on Zoom AND in-person

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

Meeting ID: 863 772 3075 / Password: WpgF2F

ADDRESS: JOHN BLACK UNITED MEMORIAL CHURCH, 898 HENDERSON HWY AT ROBERTA

IN NORTH KILDONAN

PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS MEETING HAS NOW RETURNED TO A HYBRID MEETING, INCLUDING BOTH ZOOM AND IN-PERSON FORMAT

