



# **A BITE OF RECOVERY**

\*Behaviour

\*Information

\*Thoughts

\*Emotions

## **SURRENDER**

Thank you for picking up the Winter 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).

- The Newsletter Committee

I love Conventions! Our Intergroup used to hold them every year and for many years they were the highlight of my OA program each fall. As the OA Region 2 website ([oar2.org](http://oar2.org)) tells us, "Conventions promote recovery, fun and fellowship ... they provide a lot of program in a short time which boosts the recovery of current members and helps the newcomer obtain foundation in the OA program." The Heart of Canada's Convention (20-21 October 2023) fulfilled all of this, especially after 3 years of COVID isolation and restrictions!

The message of our 2 guest speakers from Alberta resonated with many of us and helped to refresh our commitment to working the steps. Their moving sharing of journeys and explorations of steps 1-3 and 6-7 (among other things) constantly reinforced the importance of honesty and surrender in this program. It is only through the admission of complete lack of control with this disease that we have the motivation to do the hard work required by the 12 Steps. And part of that hard work is learning to admit to our lack of control in so many aspects of life and surrendering our next right action or thought to our Higher Power. We hope this edition of *A BITE of Recovery* allows you to reflect on this important concept as you travel your OA journey.



## Are OA Conventions worth it?

Since joining OA in 2015, I have always gone to an OA convention. The first one, I met and made a good friend. I also met my future sponsor whom I still have. At another one the year after, I saw a connection between my past abuse to my eating problems. I had been to four conventions before COVID and discovered something new at each one of them. This one is no different.

Actually, it was different. This was the first one after COVID. We had to close meetings, some never reopened in a building again and have stayed only online. We have become used to being at home as we are too afraid of getting sick or we have become accustomed to staying at home where it is more comfortable. This convention helped people realize what was missing. They enjoyed being amongst others, listening to their stories, where we must sit and pay attention.

I felt like I was back in the first meeting that I went to in 2015. It felt nice and familiar. I was also struggling to get my abstinence back when I went. I was able to get it back after the convention.

Why? The first topic that one of the speakers, Ashley, had talked about was being honest with your program, yourself, and your HP. She mentioned about having mental health problems. When she worked the program, it had helped with her mental problems.

This hit me hard. I have been dealing with mental health problems since my previous job which I ended up leaving. I was at school full time, plus working a full-time job at a new place. I thought getting away from a toxic workplace would have helped me, but I did not get rid of the mental baggage that the job left me. Then after graduating school, other things ended up happening to make my mental health worse. During this time, I was not working my program very well, if at all. So, what Asheley said made total sense to me . Between not working my

program and trying to control everything, I was making my illness worse.

The other speaker, Alanna, mentioned that she was self-centred, thinking others didn't like her or were always talking about her. It was part of my mental illness but I did not realize that my illness was making me self-centred, unkind and not humble. Alanna said that we have to feel our feelings and embrace the dark side. That is what I keep trying to hide from and deal with as a compulsive overeater.

I realized at that moment that I had a lot of work to do. The main one, which I find hard to do at times, is relying on my HP. I must work on that big time. I had no food neutrality as I had triggers, food, and emotions, causing me to eat due to not using my HP or program. The program, as mentioned by the speakers is meetings, pray to god or chosen HP, readings, sponsor, write letters to God, and meditate every day.

I have gained my abstinence back since the convention. I am working with my sponsor on the program again. I am praying to God when I need his help with everything. My food, any anxiety, or self-centred thoughts, over situations with family or others. I also pray for thanks for anything good. Well, that one needs a little more work on as there are times that I do forget to thank Him.

I have also eliminated more foods in my diet and that has helped me. I have not done all the tools, like meditation yet, but I am working towards all the tools I need to do. This convention helped me connect and start a burning under my butt to get me going again. It gave me, more hope, wisdom, courage and strength. I am forever grateful for that.

- Lori V



## **CONVERSATIONS WITH TWO MEMBERS**

Please enjoy our conversation with two of our members – Jeannine and M.W. – as they share their stories and how attending the convention has helped in working the program.

### **1) Tell us a bit about your journey as an OA Member.**

**Jeannine:** My journey as an OA member: I came to OA 15 years ago. Although I couldn't understand why members were forever reading from the Big Book and talking about alcoholism, I wanted what they had, so I found a sponsor and I worked these strange steps. I got quick recovery and my weight just melted off. I loved my new, skinny body, and I started focusing way too much on my appearance rather than on program, and so I relapsed. I was in and out of relapse for many years.

At one point, I left the fellowship, but it took me less than a week to realize that I couldn't face life without this program and its fellowship. I continue to work the steps with the guidance of a sponsor, and although it has often been challenging, I cannot imagine life without OA. It has changed my life, helping me to heal from complex trauma and to build new, healthier relationships.

**M.W.:** Before trying O.A. I had no idea or hope that I could overcome my poor eating habits or excessive weight. I've cross-pollinated from another program but didn't know how step 1 could apply to food or eating compulsively. It didn't take long to see my powerlessness over my food behaviours. I was buying and eating all the wrong things whether I wanted to or not.

The compulsion to eat destructively was running the show and seemed to have a mind of its own. When I understood that, I put the other foot into OA and went all in. Coming to believe and turning it over to my HP has been nothing short of a miracle. I'm about 7 months abstinent and at least 50 lbs lighter. Hallelujah!

### **2) What takeaway did you get from the Convention that will help you enhance your OA Program?**

**Jeannine:** The convention helped me to realize how I was being dishonest with myself and how this had been playing with my mind. For a while now, I'd been allowing myself small (abstinent) "add-ons" to my meals. I'd do this just because I felt like it, often when I was already feeling quite full.

In the back of my mind, I knew that I was giving myself permission to eat more than I actually needed. So I've stopped adding on to my meals and I'm no longer doubting whether I'm truly eating abstinently, and so my thinking is clearer.

**M.W.:** Taking step 10 more seriously and seeing more in depth the ways that I can be selfish, fearful, dishonest, etc. These things can be pretty sly and need to be investigated to uncover deeper truths about myself, my feelings & reactions, the ego and what not.

### **3) Would you recommend attending future OA Conventions to other members?**

**Jeannine:** Of course! It's important to spend time immersed in program and to connect with people from other meetings, or with people we've only spoken with online. We need to seize all the opportunities we can to come together and build relationships. Addiction is a disease of isolation, and an in-person convention is an antidote to the disease.

**M.W.:** Of course!

### **4) What topics would you like to see at a future Convention?**

**Jeannine:** I appreciate listening to members who have strong recovery and hearing them talk about the Steps or how they work their program. Whatever topic they choose works for me.

**M.W.:** Meditation and Sponsorship

## ANNOUNCEMENTS!

### Monday Meeting

**NO** Meeting on December 25<sup>th</sup>

**Yes**, there will be a meeting on January 1<sup>st</sup>

### Tuesday Meeting

**ONLY ZOOM** Format after December 31<sup>st</sup>.

### Thursday Meetings

Thursday Night meeting is going to hybrid every second week. An OA member has offered to open up their home every second week for face to face and zoom. Face to face will start after the holidays. The address of the person and phone number will be announced at the meeting. It will not be posted on our website or hotline. Please come to a zoom meeting to find out where our face to face meetings will be. There will be coffee and tea and fellowship after the meeting.

Our program and meetings will only get stronger if we start leaving our homes to participate with other members. Once the meetings are going, you can talk to The Thursday rep to see where the meeting is held. Remember, Thursday night is a closed meeting. Only members and newcomers can come to the meetings.

*Looking for a way to do service? If so, please consider volunteering to be part of the Newsletter Committee, or think about submitting an article about your journey of recovery, artwork, photos, etc. We are also looking for ideas for themes for future issues. Please contact us at: [abiteofrecoverynewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:abiteofrecoverynewsletter@gmail.com) to volunteer or give us your suggestions..*





## ANNOUNCEMENTS, CONT'D

### Winnipeg Wellness Expo 2024

is around the corner.

Great opportunity to practise our tools & do service!

Mark the dates on your calendar:

**February 16** Friday - Booth Set Up

**February 17** Saturday 10 am – 6 pm

**February 18** Sunday 10 am – 5 pm

We need volunteers to join the planning team as well as for 2 hr. shifts during the expo at the Convention Centre.

If you have further questions or would like to volunteer please contact:

Gail Cantor, 204-782-5087  
[oinquiries23@gmail.com](mailto:oinquiries23@gmail.com)

Central Ontario Intergroup is hosting a Quick Step Workshop on five Tuesday afternoons, 2-3:30 Eastern, 1-2:30 Central time, Feb. 20, 27, Mar 5, 12 and 19, 2024.

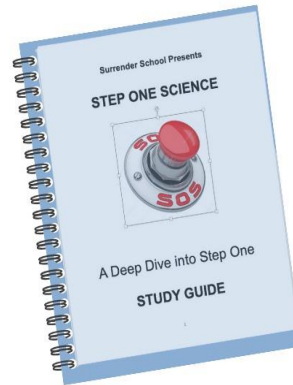
Free – 7<sup>th</sup> tradition suggested of \$15 for entire session or \$5 for one session.

To register, please email:  
[coiquicksteps@oaontario.org](mailto:coiquicksteps@oaontario.org)

Full info about the event can be found at:  
<https://www.oaontario.org/announcements/quickstepstudy-m9fyg>



**SURRENDER SCHOOL  
PRESENTS  
Step One Science  
7-Week Zoom Workshop**



Join us to examine the science of powerlessness over addiction using a digital study guide specifically created by Surrender School.



**Two Offerings**  
Wednesdays 3:00PM PT, starting Jan 10, 2024  
or  
Sundays 11:00am PT, starting Jan 14, 2024

Our mission is to share 12-Step and other supportive recovery solutions with those who want to live free from disordered or unhealthy eating.

Check out the webpage for Region 1:  
Many interesting links such as:

- Newcomer Package
- Podcasts
- Special Focus Meetings

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



## Prey/Pray

Daily I fought with my dragon, with weapons I'd forged from my will. Daily my strength seemed to lessen, while his seemed stronger still.

Daily he drubbed in battle, then feasted on me, his prey. Daily my life seemed so hopeless that I wondered if I could stay.

By chance I heard of a meeting, where people like me could report on how they've dealt with their dragons—so I went, as a last resort.

I sensed a power in that room, though I sat in the back and passed, because my dragon would not come in—and I felt I was home at last.

“He’s waiting outside, and I’m scared.” “He’s feeding on me from within.” “My dragon is ever-present.” “We know, ‘cause you’re where we’ve been.”

And I thought, “If you really knew me, you’d be scared: I’m a freak.” Then they shared their stories and pamphlets and showed me I wasn’t unique.

*“Keep coming back and we’ll love you, till you’re able to love yourself.” “Take all your former behavior and leave it outside on a shelf.”*

I surrendered my weapons of will and took up the tools they said “Use.” Of course I would try this program. I had all, and nothing, to lose.

I came to lose weight and then leave, but sanity caused me to stay. I pray that I never forget the wisdom I’ve gained in OA.

I need it to do my footwork, three times each and every day As I sit down with my dragon, and pet him, softly, and pray.

— Joe

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## The Joy of Letting Go

**We begin this process with step one – surrender. For some of us that is impossible at the outset, so we do what we know has worked for others. We go to meetings, we make an effort to express our feelings openly, and we *act as if* the power to change, to abstain from compulsive overeating is already ours.**

- For Today, ©Overeaters Anonymous, 1982, Page 8, January 8<sup>th</sup>

## ***We are not alone ....***

When I look back at my eating history prior to coming to my first OA meeting, I always felt such shame about the person I was and the way I looked at and handled eating. Since my dad would get ill with kidney infections and be off work when I was very young, I always remember worrying that there wouldn't be enough to eat at meals. If the circumstances ever arose where I was surrounded by volumes of food, I ate as if I had been starving for a month. I can remember distinctly when my uncle visited us from the farm and brought in a sack of fresh corn on the cob. I think I wolfed down about 8 of them, barely taking time to catch my breath or even chew properly. Needless to say, I didn't keep the food down long as my body totally rebelled at absorbing so much in such a short time and promptly expelled it. I was horribly embarrassed in front of all my family.

That, of course, did not stop me in the future. But from that time on, I made sure no one ever saw me eat like that again. I became the master of closet eaters. Since no one else in my family or friends showed these tendencies, I grew up thinking I was the only crazy person who indulged like that to the point of blissful oblivion. I grew up feeling more and more worthless and moved into an extreme people pleasing mode to (I felt) justify my reason for existing. I was very active until I hit 20, so I never had a weight issue – but I sure had a food obsession issue. When I stopped being so active and continued to overeat, the pounds came on. I dieted the same ++ pounds off over and over again until my 45<sup>th</sup> year when I reached 300 pounds. I felt so alone and different but hid it from everyone. I presented the “smiling me” to the world and kept the “crying me” to myself when I was alone or standing in the shower with my tears flowing until the water ran cold.

When I walked into my first OA meeting on May 27, 1995, I was met with a welcome and smiles from everyone in the room. Not one person seemed to be judging me for the weight I brought with me. That was the start of my healing journey. From that first meeting, I learned that I was not alone in my compulsive food behaviours. When the sharing started around the table, I just about fell off the chair. Everyone was telling a similar version of my “crazy”. That was the first time I could talk about the way I acted around food and the way it made me feel and not get the “deer caught in the headlights” stare. Instead, people were nodding and listening with kind understanding eyes and ears.

My healing began slowly that day and with the help of everyone in the program, it continues today on a daily basis. I tried so many other ways that failed and I gave up on all of them. I may still struggle occasionally with my compulsive behaviours but I will NEVER stop coming to meetings and connecting with others in OA. One kind person in the program years ago, gently said to me, “God does not make junk, so why do you think you are?” That one simple sentence changed my outlook on who I am. I continue to work my program daily by connecting with my Higher Power and others in OA to remind myself that I am a good person who is trying to do her best to live life one day at a time. This program was never meant to be done alone. Our power derives from the strength and support we receive from each other.

As the holidays approach and all the food temptations that accompany them, please take some time for yourself to connect with other OA members. If you haven't already done so, get a sponsor or interim sponsor that you connect with often, if not daily. Make a connection with others in the program to do a buddy system or keep connected when all our schedules will be out of whack and the disease of compulsive eating is just waiting to sneak back into our lives. I always think of our members as beautiful flowering twigs. One twig is pretty strong but two, three or several together can resist the worst storm that tries to blow us over.

- PK

## Twelve by Twelve

My name is Sharon.

My old life was one of constant bingeing and restricting, obsessive thoughts of food and weight, a false belief that “thin” equals “happy and loved,” and feeling immense shame, self-hatred, and self-centeredness. I did love people and wanted to do better, but active addiction was my higher power, and I was enslaved to it.

Today, I am abstaining from all of these obsessive behaviors. I accept my imperfect body (and yours!). I am old, wrinkled, and arthritic, but I am content. I’ve been the same healthy size for several years. I eat sanely and exercise with pleasure daily. I usually feel very tired by evening, but it’s because I’m tired out from an active, useful life and not from bingeing and obsessing.

How could I have changed so radically? By abstaining from compulsive eating and compulsive food behaviors and by following our simple program of the Twelve Steps, which I’ve worked every day since I became abstinent in January 2014.

I’m on my fourth round of working all the Steps in order... I work almost all of the Steps every day.

I take the Steps in two different ways: 1) thoroughly working them in order over a period of weeks and months and 2) working them quickly every day.

I’m on my fourth round of working all the Steps in order, this time very slowly, digging deeper and sharing every word I write with my co-sponsor each week.

I also work almost all of the Steps every day. In my written Step Ten inventories, I discover areas other than food over which I am powerless (Step One), and I turn to God, as I understand her, to restore me to sanity (Step Two).

Steps Four, Eight, and Nine are built into to Step Ten, and as I address all of this writing to God, stopping frequently to ask her for inspiration and then listening for an answer, this is also part of my Step Eleven prayer and meditation for the day. I review the Step Principles I practiced or failed to remember, and list those that I especially want to

bear in mind for the new day. I also list the service work I did or plan to do (Step Twelve).

Step Six comes up naturally, since my character defects are nearly always the cause of problems I have with other people or the harm I do myself. I take time to honestly consider whether I am ready to be relieved of these defects, and if not, why.

Step Seven is a precious moment of surrender, when I get to let go and stop trying so hard and so unsuccessfully to change defects myself. I entrust their healing to God, humbly saying, “in your time, in your way.” This takes a lot of faith and trust since experience has taught me that her way is not always something I like! I wasn’t suddenly showered with the gifts of patience and acceptance as if they were fairy dust; rather I was given service work that was very hard for me and received lots of patience and acceptance from people whom I’ve come to love.

And Step Three? It is dearest to my heart. Oh, I have so far to go! I take back my own will many times throughout the day, but each time I truly surrender, the tension leaves my body and I sense a bubbling of joy arise. I feel calmed and energized, humbled and confident. Knotty problems and anxieties relax and dissolve.

It isn’t easy, this wonderful program. It takes a lot of work and willingness. Profound changes take time, but they are so worth it!

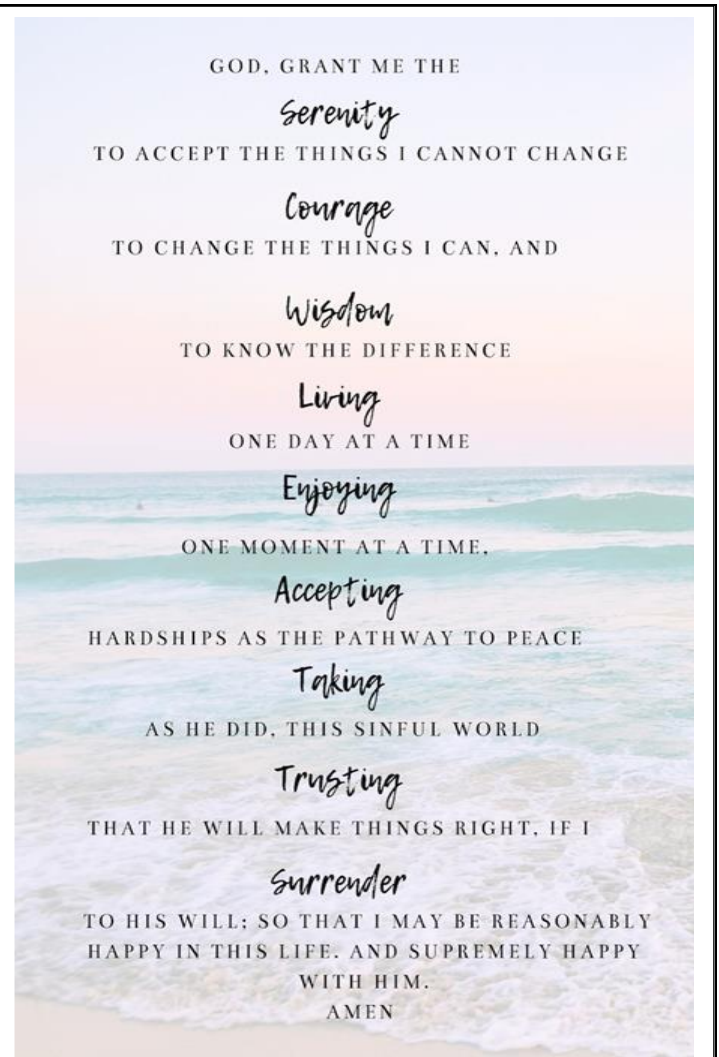
©Overeaters Anonymous, originally posted March 15, 2022





## LETTING GO TAKES LOVE

- To let go does not mean to stop caring, it means I can't do it for someone else.
- To let go is not to cut myself off, it's the realization I can't control another.
- To let go is not to enable, but allow learning from natural consequences.
- To let go is to admit powerlessness, which means the outcome is not in my hands.
- To let go is not to try to change or blame another, it's to make the most of myself.
- To let go is not to care for, but to care about.
- To let go is not to fix, but to be supportive.
- To let go is not to judge, but to allow another to be a human being.
- To let go is not to be in the middle arranging all the outcomes, but to allow others to affect their destinies.
- To let go is not to be protective, it's to permit another to face reality.
- To let go is not to deny, but to accept.
- To let go is not to nag, scold or argue, but instead to search out my own shortcomings and correct them.
- To let go is not to adjust everything to my desires, but to take each day as it comes and cherish myself in it.
- To let go is not to criticize or regulate anybody, but to try to become what I dream I can be.
- To let go is not to regret the past, but to grow and live for the future.



## **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 ZOOM Meeting**

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

Meeting ID: 863 772 3075/Password: WpgF2F

### **MONDAY: 7:00 PM HYBRID Meeting on ZOOM + in-person**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82629926338?pwd=LzcrSzk0U05jT0o2MW1CL3pKVlJ3UT09>

Meeting ID: 826 2992 6338 / Password: recover

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

### **TUESDAY: 7:30 – 8:30 pm ZOOM Meeting**

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

Meeting ID: 865 8696 7187 / Password: Freedom

**PLEASE NOTE: AS OF THE END OF DECEMBER 2023, THIS MEETING WILL BE ZOOM FORMAT ONLY**

### **WEDNESDAY: 7:30 AM ZOOM Meeting**

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

Meeting ID: 862 1344 4550 / Password: 279813

### **THURSDAY: 7:00 PM ZOOM Meeting EVERY WEEK + IN-PERSON EVERY SECOND WEEK**

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

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82629926338?pwd=LzcrSzk0U05jT0o2MW1CL3pKVlJ3UT09>

Meeting ID: 826 2992 6338 / Password: recover

**PLEASE SEE FULL DETAILS OF THE CHANGES ON THE ANNOUNCEMENT BULLETIN BOARD ON PAGE 4 OF THIS ISSUE**

### **SATURDAY: 10:30 AM HYBRID Meeting on Zoom + 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

