



A **BITE** OF RECOVERY

***B**ehaviour

***I**nformation

***T**houghts

***E**motions

Control: Finding Strength in Surrender

Control: Finding Strength in Surrender

Finding freedom begins when we finally stop fighting. This issue of our newsletter explores the illusion of control and the profound relief found in letting it go.

The Illusion of Control

Many of us arrived at Overeaters Anonymous believing we could control our eating if we just tried harder. We counted, weighed, hid, and swore off certain foods, only to fail again. Our obsession with control quickly extended into every corner of our lives. We tried to micromanage our schedules, relationships, and environments, believing total order would bring us peace. Yet, the harder we gripped the steering wheel, the more out of control our lives became.

In OA, the pursuit of control actually works against us in three distinct ways:

- **It Fuels the Disease:** We try to control our food, fail, feel shame, and use food to cope. We hide our habits to protect the illusion of control, blinding ourselves to our internal emotional malady.
- **It Drives Emotional Distress:** Micromanaging people, places, and things keeps us in a constant state of anxiety and fear. When things do not go our way, we become angry, resentful, and physically drained.
- **It Blocks Our Recovery:** Insisting on running the show locks out a Higher Power. It prevents the vulnerability needed to connect with sponsors and fellows, keeping us stuck in failed willpower tactics.

True recovery starts when we admit that our self-will is not enough.

Finding Freedom in the First Three Steps

The first three steps offer a direct exit ramp from this exhausting cycle by addressing control head-on:

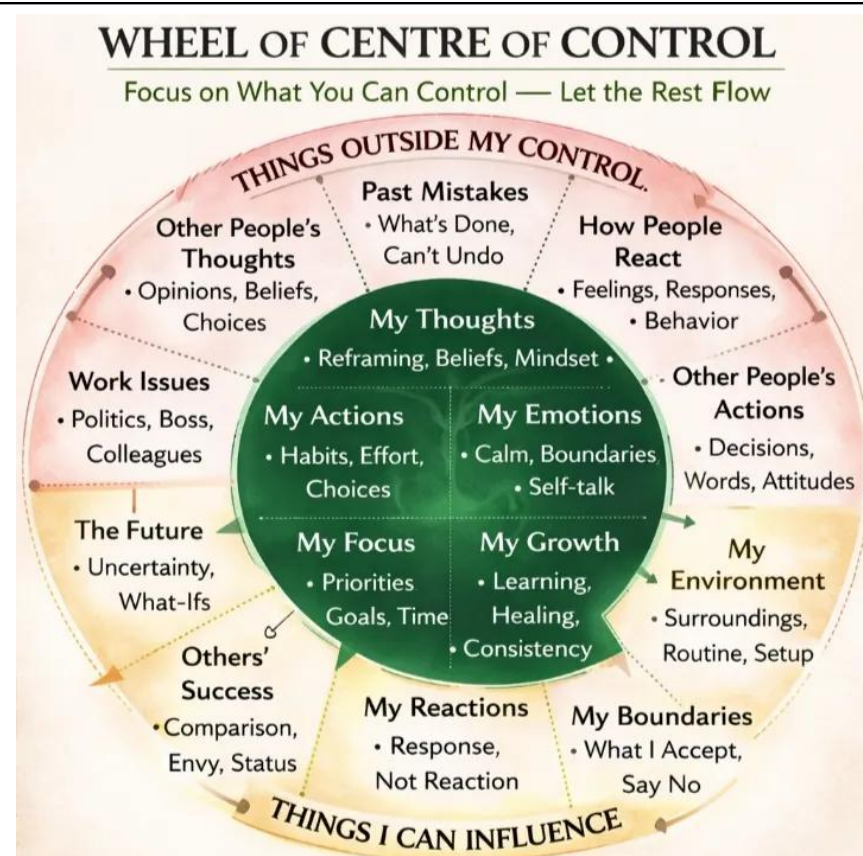
- **Step 1 (Admitting Powerlessness):** We admitted we were powerless over food—that our lives had become unmanageable. We stop fighting the losing battle against food and acknowledge that self-will has failed us.

Continued on page 2.....

- **Step 2 (Finding Hope):** Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity. We realize we do not have to fix ourselves alone.
- **Step 3 (Releasing the Wheel):** Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him. We make the daily decision to quit playing God.

The Relief of Letting Go

Surrender is not defeat or giving up; it is our greatest tool for liberation. When we stop trying to control the uncontrollable, we pass the heavy burden to a Higher Power. By putting down our defences, we lift the weight from our shoulders and make room for true recovery, lasting peace, and serenity—one day at a time.



C Maris: <https://medium.com/write-a-catalyst/the-wheel-of-control-bad1dd244ad>

In 12-Step history and recovery resources, the letters C-O-N-T-R-O-L are frequently tied to these core concepts:

- **C** - Choose to surrender your addiction or dysfunctional habits (e.g., Step 3).
- **O** - Open yourself up to a power greater than yourself (e.g., Step 2).
- **N** - Never fight the compulsion on your own willpower alone.
- **T** - Take an honest moral inventory of yourself and your past actions (e.g., Step 4).
- **R** - Relinquish the need to manage other people's behaviours.
- **O** - Own your own mistakes and character defects (e.g., Step 6).
- **L** - Let go and let God (or your Higher Power) guide your day.

Want to subscribe to our quarterly newsletter?

To receive future editions directly in your inbox, please go to our Intergroup web page at <https://oaheartofcanada.ca/abiteofrecovery-newsletter> and click on the subscribe link or email abiteofrecoverynewsletter@gmail.com.

- **Prefer a printed version?** If you or someone you know would like this newsletter printed and mailed, please contact Pauline, and she will gladly get a physical copy out to you! Email request to ppkulbaba@gmail.com or by phone/text to 204-781-4032.

Please enjoy our conversation with two of our members, Nataliia and Pauline, as they answer our questions about control and how the program has helped them.

1. How were you before the program with how you dealt with or recognized controlling issues, behaviours, or thoughts?

Nataliia Y: To my surprise, I only discovered that I had control issues several months into the program. Before that, I simply believed I was being the responsible person my loved ones wanted and needed me to be. So what if I rewarded myself with a few extra chocolate bars? The job was done, wasn't it?

Looking back, I can now see that my anxiety and fear of the unknown drove me to extremes. Even something as simple as neighbours I've barely known moving away can leave me grieving for days. I didn't realize how much I tried to control my surroundings in order to feel safe.

Pauline K: I am so grateful for this program in so many ways. My whole lifetime, one of my huge issues was trying to please people while also trying to control the outcome of events. I could never easily delegate any tasks for fear of them not being done well enough and thus making me feel inadequate if someone was unhappy. It was only through this program that I finally realized that I was using niceness to control others and situations. It is something I still deal with but have been able to recognize more quickly when I am backing myself into these situations.

2. How do you use the program to overcome issues with control?

Nataliia Y: Today, I know that the only person I can truly control is myself and my own actions. When I feel the urge to take control or become overwhelmed, a quick call to a fellow OA member or a short prayer usually gives me enough time to pause, regain perspective, and return to sanity.

Although there are still moments when it feels as though things will never be the way I want them to be, and disappearing seems like the easier option, I remember how fortunate and grateful I am to be part of this fellowship. Sharing my story with the wonderful people in this community reminds me that I don't have to face life alone, and that hope is always available if I am willing to reach for it.

Pauline K: My first sponsor always said, "Pauline, Breathe!" I still hear her voice in my head when I start doing my crazy dance of trying to deal with everything and everyone. I used to race into every situation without taking a moment to think. Since coming into OA and thanks to that voice in my head, I really try and take a moment to think, process and consider options before reacting. I get in a lot less trouble that way, which then stops me from turning to the food to console myself for my inadequacies.

Instead of everything rolling around in my head and causing panic, I now write lists and cross things off as I accomplish them. I also don't expect to finish everything immediately that is on my list. I'm learning to not say YES immediately, but to take the time to really evaluate if I have time. This is definitely a work in progress.

I do daily prayers and meditations to also help me take the time to process things properly. Thanks to program, most of the time I am able to realize that I can't control everything. Dear friends in program are also very good at gently reminding me to "Let Go and Let God" and to realize that others can step in when I become overwhelmed and can't handle everything.

DETACH (Don't Even Think About Changing Him/Her):

A crucial boundary tool that reminds members they cannot control others' behaviours

<https://humanmagnetsyndrome.com/hmsblog/my-favorite-12-step-acronyms/>

OA Concept 9 — The Spiritual Concept of Ability

In OA, “ability” isn’t about being the smartest person in the room or having perfect skills. It’s a spiritual quality — a willingness to show up, to learn, and to serve with integrity. Concept 9 reminds us that trusted servants are indispensable, not because they’re flawless, but because they’re willing. They bring their abilities forward, and they let those abilities grow through service.

Ability becomes spiritual when:

- we stop hiding from responsibility;
- we stop assuming someone else will step in;
- we stop letting fear decide what we’re capable of.

Service asks us to stretch. To try. To risk imperfection. To trust that our Higher Power can work through us even when we feel unsure. When we choose to serve — even in small ways — we practise spiritual ability: the courage to act, the humility to learn, and the honesty to admit when we need help. And every time we do something hard, something we’ve been avoiding, something that scares us a little... our ability expands. Our trustworthiness deepens. Our willingness strengthens. Concept 9 isn’t just about committees or service positions. It’s about becoming the kind of person who can be trusted — by others, by our group, and by our Higher Power — because we’re willing to grow.

- Christina H

7 Tips for How to Cope When Things Feel Out of Control

When life feels chaotic or overwhelming, it can be easy to get stuck in a cycle of stress and worry. But there are things you can do to cope with the chaos and find some calm. Here are some tips.

1. Be aware of your feelings. It’s good for you to have and show a range of emotions. It might help to write down what is happening and how you are feeling. Think about where in your body you notice your feelings, for example in your stomach, head, back, or hands.

2. Notice your mindset. The way you think about things really does affect the way you feel. If you tell yourself something is too hard or too stressful, it’s going to feel that way. But if you tell yourself you can handle something hard, you’re more likely to be able to.

3. Focus on what you can control. Try not to focus on what you can’t. Make a list of the things that cause you stress. Then decide which things on the list you can take action on and which you can’t. This can remind you what’s in your control and what isn’t.

4. Spend time doing things that are meaningful to you. For example, you could do projects with your kids, foster an animal, write postcards to friends, or do random acts of kindness for your neighbours. Do things that make you feel good or bring you joy.

5. Look for sources of stress you can limit. Then take steps to limit them. That might mean turning off the news, staying away from social media, or even having less contact with certain people.

6. Take more breaks. Pay attention to your current challenges but find ways to take your mind off the chaos. Spend time on a hobby or project. Call a friend. Start watching a new TV series. Whatever you decide, make sure it makes you happy and feels worth your time.

7. Be sure your coping strategies are helpful. Find things to do that help calm and relax you. Reading for fun, taking a bath, or spending some time being mindful are the types of things that are more likely to reduce stress than add to it. But things like staying too busy might exhaust you or add stress. A glass of wine or a beer in the evening may not be a bad thing for some people, but alcohol can make stress and anxiety worse. Just make sure that the things you’re doing to cope are helping rather than hurting. And if you need more help finding helpful coping strategies, think about talking to a counsellor.

<https://myhealth.alberta.ca/Health/pages/conditions.aspx?Hwid=acl3668>

Dear God, I come to you today because I feel tired and heavy. I try very hard to fix everything, plan everything, and hold it all together by myself. I confess that I am holding on too tightly to things I cannot change.



Third Step Prayer

God,
I offer myself to Thee—to build with me and to do with me as Thou wilt. Relieve me of the bondage of self, that I may better do Thy will. Take away my difficulties, that victory over them may bear witness to those I would help of Thy Power, Thy Love, and Thy Way of life. May I do Thy will always!" (p. 63 BB)

Forgetting or Accepting

Sometimes, I have resentment about being in this program. I say the Serenity Prayer daily, follow a food plan, and try to give myself ten minutes each day to pray or meditate. I go to a strength and flexibility class three times a week and walk three to five times weekly. I read the literature, listen to podcasts, go to meetings, and meet with my sponsor. Yet, sometimes I still think a magical hand is going to come down and make me the perfect weight, the glorifying payoff for all my efforts.

But then my sponsor says, "Why are you here? Only to lose weight?" That might be why I joined OA in the first place, but it's not why I stayed. OA has three components: spiritual, emotional, and physical. So, getting to a healthy weight is part of it, but is the physical greater than the emotional and spiritual?

The spiritual growth I've experienced has been one of insight. Who is my Higher Power? I have called that presence in my life "Spirit." Most of my life, I have given thanks daily. I've seen synchronicities that occur when Spirit is present, when I have faith. But in my sickness, I lost that faith and let my shadow side rule. My shadow side kept my thoughts obscure and obsessive. It kept me striving to carry out my own will. My shadow side told me that no Higher Power cared for me.

At first, I was just willing to give my power to Spirit. But at some point, it became evident that I really had guidance and could relax into that. I could trust in that. Even so, I questioned it often: Is that true? Is Spirit really guiding me? Well, I was driven to OA at just the right time. I'd tried nearly all imaginable diets; some worked. But each time, I wanted sustainable support. That is why I sought out OA—for support, fellowship, and guidance in losing weight. What I found is so much more.

But first, I had to admit to myself that so many things had become unmanageable and that my eating was out of control. In the beginning, I could not call myself a compulsive eater. I ate well, I thought: mostly organic, real food, including food from my garden. But I ate six or eight cups of it at a time, and I'd also go seven hours without eating, so my hormones were a complete mess. I felt unloved, unworthy, undesirable. I was alone and lonely. Just getting to the point of admitting all this was not due to my will. I didn't want to admit it. I believe I had a helping hand with Step One.

Second, I had to figure out whether a Higher Power existed for me and, if so, what it was. I realized I had one, but I'd lost faith in relying on its direction. When I decided to be willing to believe my Higher Power was guiding me, I started seeing the many ways I was guided, not just in food choices but also in my family and work life.

Continued on page 6....

So, I got a sponsor. Then I had to give up my will. I still struggle with this. I have desires I want met, and I'm conditioned to believe no one except me can satisfy my needs. This little piece of false thinking keeps me struggling. Yet I can turn to faith. Faith in the guidance I get from Spirit is one of the mainstays of doing my OA work. Desire is one of the hindrances that keeps me stuck. Having faith means having acceptance for all that is and recognizing that my thinking-head need for control can be changed. It takes faith and it takes surrender. I ask for this daily.

Listing my inventory in Step Four has brought about much of my emotional change. I am nowhere near resolving all the issues I brought up in the forty-one pages it took to write my inventory. I struggled with the term "character defects." To me, these are traits or strategies that I used to cope. I tried very hard not to deal with guilt, shame, resentment, anger, arrogance, self-centeredness, and unmet expectations.

I was sad as I read my inventory to my sponsor in Step Five. I could see part of myself as a child without the support I needed. I could see why I had become such a strong-willed person: to find that support in myself. I can stop blaming myself for my headstrong, feisty independence that brought me into the chaotic life I now lead.

Here at Step Five, I find myself 20 pounds (9 kg) lighter, yet still struggling with wanting to be at my healthy weight. Now, I can see how I let my inner critic blame me for not being at my healthy weight, just as I blamed myself for being raped and molested, for having a difficult daughter, for giving a child up for adoption at 15, and even for the rape of my sibling. I really can't control any of that; but inside myself, I was holding onto responsibility for it all. Now, I accept it all happened. I accept that I did have guidance, even if the tools I developed to deal with my life were misguided. They kept me alive and functioning. Now I know I can turn all of that over to Spirit. Spirit was there then and is there now.

Spirit guides me all the time. Sometimes I slip into my isolating, self-willed coping mechanisms and forget to allow that guidance. My shadow side wants to argue and do it in a way that maintains my struggling. I am used to it. Other times, though, I see that what I call my will has often been my direction driven by an unseen force: Spirit. My action plan is definitely driven by Spirit, and it is working. Sometimes, for me, it is just a matter of accepting that guidance.

So am I working on all three aspects of OA? Yes. Do I get impatient now and again? Yes. Do I struggle with releasing those character traits/defects that keep me in my old way of life? Yes. Is this a journey? Hell yeah.

What guides me now? Faith and acceptance.

— Darlene M

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OA Autumn Word Search

Q	W	A	M	S	C	O	U	R	A	G	E	B	Z	H	E	B	A
H	O	P	E	L	T	U	X	X	L	E	S	S	O	N	S	D	H
J	H	I	G	H	E	R	P	O	W	E	R	K	P	F	A	J	A
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A	Q	D	T	L	J	W	E	L	J	A	V	S	N	N	S	D	N
D	J	G	Y	V	A	S	Z	O	B	N	U	P	O	G	G	S	S
T	C	A	J	A	T	L	J	X	C	H	Y	A	U	T	U	M	N
P	G	D	S	Y	L	M	W	O	E	Y	L	M	D	I	D	D	C

Find: (Answer Key on Page 12)

HONESTY

HOPE

SURRENDER

POWERLESS

HIGHER POWER

RECOVERY

COURAGE

AUTUMN

HARVEST

FRUITION

LESSONS

LEARNING

FALL

GRATITUDE

WILLINGNESS

I do not expect anything from others so their actions cannot be in opposition to wishes of mine.

- Swami Sri Yukteswar

Our need to control other people, places, and things is like a poisonous snake that turns back and attacks us. Managing the lives of our family, friends, and co-workers is a thankless job that leads to frustration and anger. We get angry when people don't do things our way and they get angry because they resent being told what to do.

It is possible to become so involved in judging and directing the lives of others that we lose our own lives. How do we tell if we are overly involved and too controlling? A good way to measure our take-charge behaviour is to get honest on paper about all the things we worry about, all the advice we give, all the ways we try to control others, and how we feel if people don't do things our way. Sharing our list with an objective party is a beginning in sorting out our controlling behaviour.

As we learn to let go of others, we can get back our own lives unhampered by everyone else's problems.

Today, help me get honest about how I judge and try to control others.

- S. Coleman and M. Porter: *Seasons of the Spirit*, Hazelden Press, 1994.

A Prayer for Surrender

- ✓ Open my hands to release the outcomes I am trying to force.
- ✓ Calm my racing mind when I worry about what will happen next.
- ✓ Replace my fear with your deep and quiet peace.

things I can't control things I can control

@mental.health.with.emma

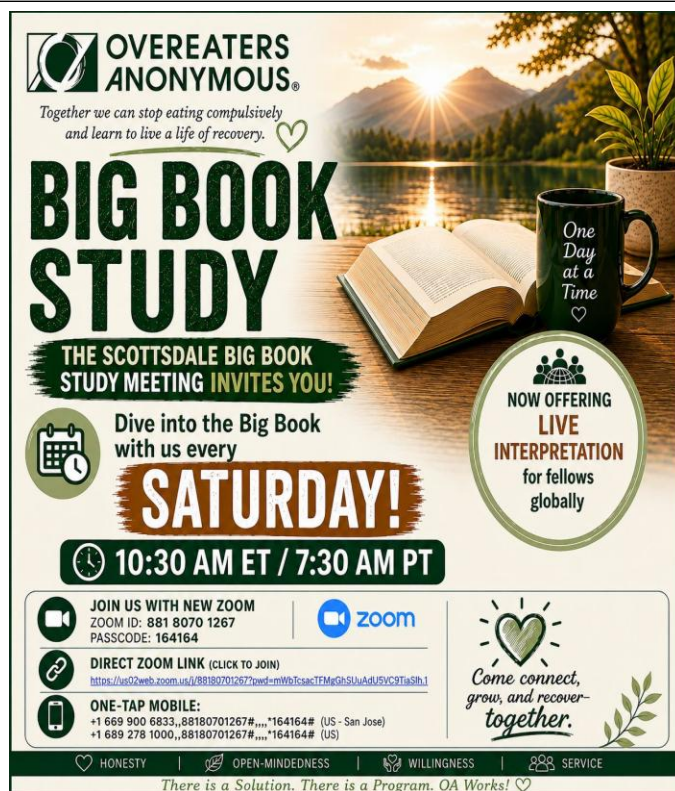
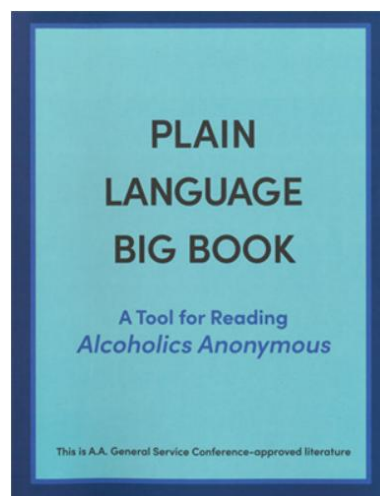
Other peoples perceptions of me.	→	My reactions to other people.
The fluctuations of my mental health.	→	Practising self care when I feel bad/anxious/unwell.
the state of the world around me.	→	Making positive changes (big or small).
If I get unintentionally triggered.	→	Not engaging in self destructive behaviours.
Other peoples actions/demands/needs.	→	My boundaries.
Being able to control/ know the outcome of every situation.	→	My choices.
What other people do with their lives.	→	What I do with my life.

Choosing Happiness

Ironically, the more we try to control others, the more we are controlled. Our emotions become reactions to others rather than reflecting true choices. Happiness, to us, becomes no more than fleeting moments of relief tied to the moods and behaviours of others. Happiness is a choice. We can choose to let go of attempts to control people,, relationships, and situations, and thereby free ourselves from their control. We can choose to let go of anger and resentment when others don't fulfill our expectations. We can choose to live out our own lives and work on our own growth. Happiness isn't having everyone and everything going our way. It grows out of a quiet choice to accept the things we can't control and to concentrate on changing what we can ourselves.

- From A Moment to Reflect

Please share this news with your meetings, and thanks for supporting our Fellowship by making your purchase through the OA Bookstore. Happy reading!



*Stop being mad at
people because they
aren't who you want
them to be.*



For your own sanity, just *let things be*.

As hard as it is, *there is peace in accepting that you cannot control everything*. You do not have to carry every burden, fix every broken thing, or force every door to stay open. Sometimes, protecting your peace means releasing the need to understand why something happened or to make sense of everything. It means allowing people to leave, allowing plans to change, and allowing life to unfold in ways you did not expect.

For your own sanity, just let things be. Not everything is worth your attention and not everything requires your response. Take a deep breath. Some battles are not meant for you to fight. And sometimes, peace begins the moment you *release what you cannot change* and let go of what you cannot control.

Peace in Solitude



Journal Prompts for Daily Reflections on Control

- ✍ What or who am I trying to manage right now that is not mine to fix?
- ✍ What parts of this situation (or other situations) are within my actual power, and what parts belong to someone else?
- ✍ What emotions (like helplessness, fear of failure, or vulnerability) am I trying to avoid by taking charge?
- ✍ How does trying to control others or outcomes impact my relationships and my energy levels?
- ✍ What would happen if I stepped back and allowed this situation to unfold without my interference?
- ✍ What is one small expectation or demand I am placing on myself or others today that I can drop?
- ✍ If I trusted the process and my higher power right now, what would my next peaceful action look like?

Serenity Prayer

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.

Living one day at a time; enjoying one moment at a time; accepting hardships as the pathway to peace; taking, as He did, this sinful world as it is, not as I would have it; trusting that He will make all things right if I surrender to His Will; that I may be reasonably happy in this life and supremely happy with Him forever in the next. Amen.



HEART OF CANADA: ONE DAY AT A TIME

**HEART OF CANADA
OVEREATERS ANONYMOUS
2026
CONVENTION
Cost: \$10.00**



SATURDAY, OCTOBER 17, 2026

REGISTRATION: 9:30 - 10:00 AM

PRESENTATIONS: 10:00 AM – 4 PM

(LUNCH BREAK 11:30 – 12:30)

**PLEASE JOIN US TO HEAR OUR FOUR PRESENTERS AS THEY SHARE
THEIR HISTORY IN OA AND HOW IT HAS CHANGED THEIR LIVES.**

LOCATION:

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

(STREET PARKING ONLY ON ROBERTA AND HENDERSON)

**COFFEE/TEA PROVIDED: IF POSSIBLE, PLEASE BRING YOUR OWN
MUG/TRAVEL CUP**

PLEASE FEEL FREE TO BRING YOUR LUNCH

(PAY AHEAD OR ON THE DAY)

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

CHEQUES SHOULD BE MADE PAYABLE TO "OA INTERGROUP".

I insist that men shall have the right to work out their lives in their own way, always allowing to others the right to work out their lives in their own way, too

– Giuseppe Garibaldi

Is there a secret place in our heart that still believes we can control others and force them to change? Do we find ourselves hanging onto the hope that our lives will be better when others change and do things our way? Or have we learned that the only person we can change is ourselves?

We have the power to set limits on the hurtful behaviour of others. We have the right and responsibility to clearly let others know our limits. And when someone continues to be hurtful to us, we can find a way to step out of that person's circle of pain.

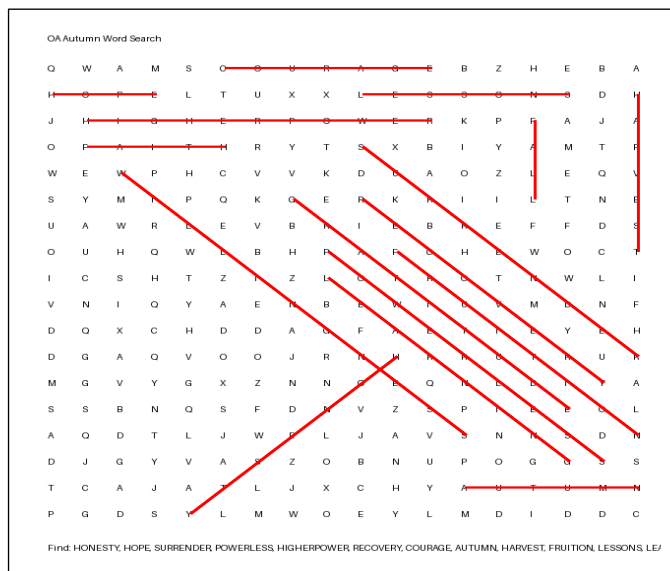
But in letting go of the need to change others, we liberate ourselves. We are responsible for our own lives, and are free to let other people be responsible for themselves. This is a wonderful new freedom that will greatly enrich our lives.

Today, let me believe that trying to force changes on someone else is a waste of life's energy. Help me to change me.

– S. Coleman and M. Porter: *Seasons of the Spirit*, Hazelden Press, 1994

OA Autumn Word Search

Answer Key



TWO THINGS YOU ARE
IN TOTAL CONTROL
IN LIFE ARE YOUR
ATTITUDE
EFFORT

Overeaters Anonymous Winnipeg Meeting List

OA Heart of Canada webpage: <https://www.oaheartofcanada.ca>

Use <https://oaheartofcanada.ca/oa-heart-of-canada-calendar/> to join from the webpage.

All Winnipeg meetings are Central Time and use the same Zoom link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86213444550?pwd=UWWhsRmZsVHF0d0dadkM0bXdaUGg2dz09>

Meeting ID: 862 1344 4550 / Password: 279813

To access the meeting by telephone: Manitoba Telephone # - 204-272-7920
(Long Distance May Apply)

Telephone Meeting ID: 862 1344 4550; Password: 279813

Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86213444550>

Day	Time (Central Time Zone)	Type/Details
Sundays	11 AM – 12 noon	ZOOM meeting only
Mondays	7-8 PM	IN PERSON ONLY Good News Fellowship Church, 891 St. Mary's Rd near Fermor – St Vital
Wednesdays	7:30 – 8:30 AM	ZOOM meeting only
Saturdays	10:30 AM – 11:40 AM	HYBRID Meeting (ZOOM and IN PERSON) John Black United Memorial Church, 898 Henderson Hwy at Roberta - North Kildonan

HEART OF CANADA MESSAGE LINE: 204-334-9008

EMAIL: oaenquiries23@gmail.com

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Doing service in Overeaters Anonymous means taking any action—big or small—that helps carry the message of recovery to a fellow compulsive eater while strengthening your own sobriety.

Part of our recovery program is to get outside our own heads and do service. Many of OA's groups and intergroups including ours are finding it difficult to get volunteers to do service.

Please consider doing service such as being a group rep, being a zoom administrator, secretary, key holder, help on committees such as convention, literature, Public Information or newsletter.

OA INFORMATION LINE

Volunteers needed for the OA Information line to check for messages and for the PI (Public Information Committee). A great way to do service without a huge time investment. Please call or text Gail Cantor at 204-782-5087 or connect by email at oa inquiries23@gmail.com.

SAVE THE DATE!

OA Convention

Saturday, October 17, 2026

**John Black United Memorial Church
(898 Henderson Hwy at Roberta)**

Registration: 9:30 – 10 am

**Program: 10 am – 4 pm with
short lunch break.**

**Please join us and hear our four
speakers as they share how they
work their program.**

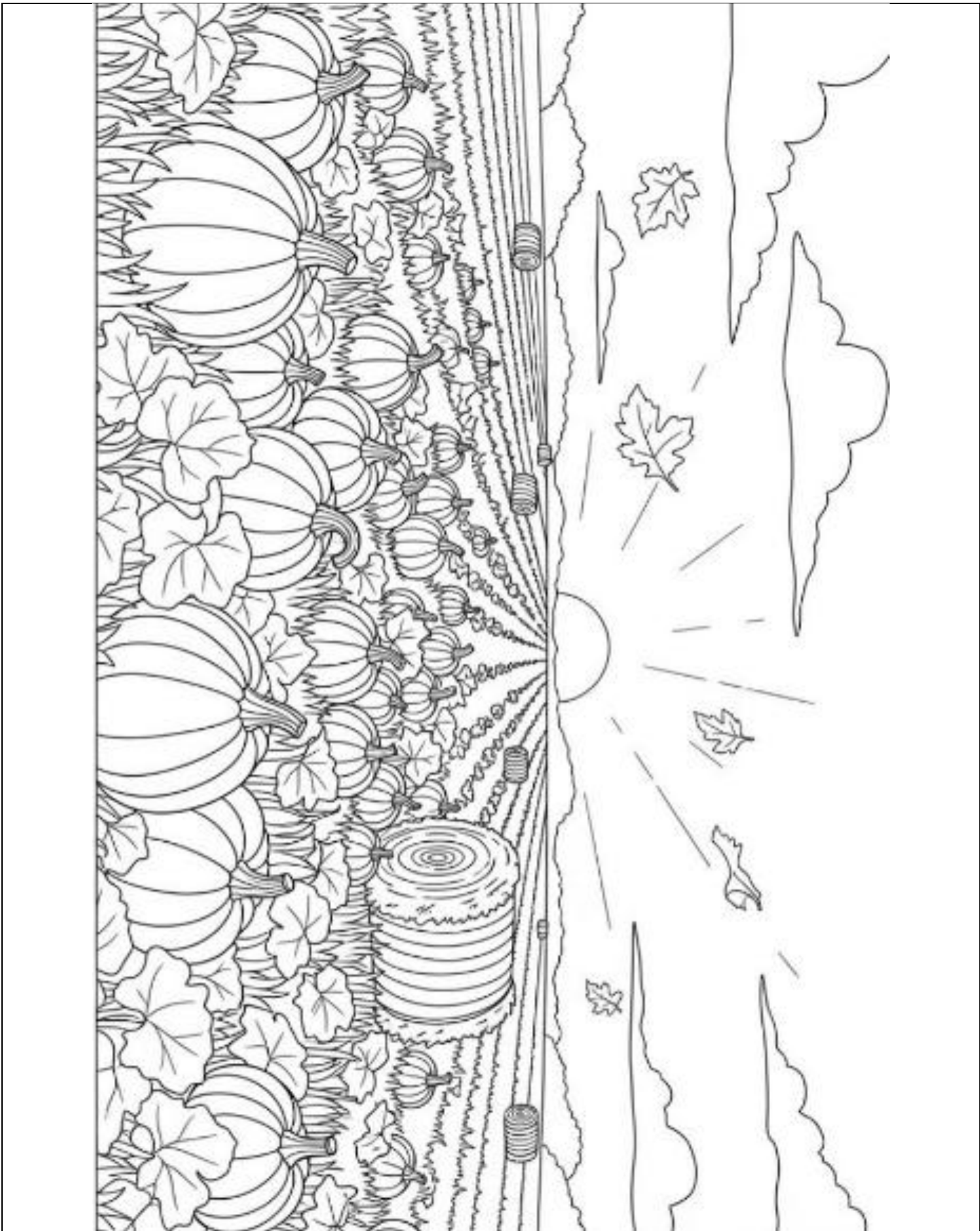
Cost: \$10

**Register at the door or via e-
transfer to:**

heartofcanadaconvention@gmail.com

***Please check out the poster for full
details of the convention on page
11 of this newsletter***







magicoloriage.com

