



I put my hand in yours and together we can do what we could never do alone.

WELCOME SPRING!

## What's New?

Looking for a meeting? Check out [www.oaseaktosky.com](http://www.oaseaktosky.com) for updates.

### Just a reminder - 7<sup>th</sup> Tradition

Paying our own way is an important part of recovery. Your Intergroup's budget needs a bit of help. Is your meeting contributing? Our 7<sup>th</sup> Tradition World Service pamphlet: [www.oa.org/pdfs/seventhtradition.pdf](http://www.oa.org/pdfs/seventhtradition.pdf)

## INTERGROUP NEWS

Thank you to Brita who served as Intergroup Telephone Committee Coordinator for many years.

Did you know that more than 1/2 of us said we were willing to do more service at Intergroup? Here's your chance! Open positions: telephone committee coordinator, archivist, public information coordinator, and 12 Step Within coordinator. If you are interested, please attend our Intergroup Meeting on Saturday, May 27, 2017 at 10 am (1630 Edinburgh Street in New Westminster). All welcome.



## REGION ONE NEWS...

May 19-21 Sunshine of the Spirit Retreat at Suttle Lake, Oregon - two speakers from the Seattle area with decades of OA recovery to share. Early bird \$175 (by April 28). Contact Paula (541-408-2302) or Mary (541-408-5945).

June 2-4 Southern BC Interior Intergroup Spring Retreat, "Building Strong Abstinence" at Seton House Retreat Centre, Kelowna; \$230 with shared accommodation & meals; \$120 commuter rate; info: Mary at [msavas9557@gmail.com](mailto:msavas9557@gmail.com)

Also June 2-4, Seattle OA-HOW Retreat, "A Design for Living that Really Works" at Huston Camp & Conference Center, Gold Bar, Washington; USD\$170 with shared accommodation & meals; info: <http://www.seattleoa.org/spring-retreat-registration/>

June 9-11 Vancouver Island Intergroup Retreat, "Nuts & Bolts of Recovery" at the Bethlehem Retreat Centre, Nanaimo, \$260 with private room & meals; \$75 commuter rate; [http://www.oaviig.org/uploads/4/9/5/2/49523661/viig\\_oa\\_retreat\\_brochure\\_2017.pdf](http://www.oaviig.org/uploads/4/9/5/2/49523661/viig_oa_retreat_brochure_2017.pdf)

June 9-11 Region 2 Conference, "Be Rocketed into the Fourth Dimension" in Costa Mesa, California [www.oar2.org/convention/upcoming](http://www.oar2.org/convention/upcoming)

June 23-25 Greater Columbia Intergroup Retreat, "Finding conscious contact with God as we Understood God" in Ellensburg, WA. \$145 early bird (before April 30). For info contact Jerri S at (509) 943-5626 or [DoxieGal@frontier.com](mailto:DoxieGal@frontier.com)

## OA WORLD SERVICE NEWS

OA Seventh Tradition Cycle—Giving and Receiving - see the many ways your contributions support your recovery by funding the OA program at every service level of OA. This new release from the Conference Finance Committee shows how every contribution, no matter the amount, helps OA to carry the message. <https://oa.org/files/pdf/Seventh-Tradition-Cycle.pdf>



## Writing Prompts for Recovery

Some OA's find directed writing helpful in their recovery. Here is a short list of writing prompts you might find helpful to journal.

If you want to work Steps 1, 2, and 3, try journaling on these topics:

- write a history of your compulsive eating
- describe how compulsive eating masked other problems in your life
- make a list of all the reasons, pros and cons, for believing in a Higher Power

➔ More writing prompts for Steps 1, 2, and 3 are found here: <http://www.oadenver.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/01/Thirty-Questions.pdf>

If you want to work Steps 4 and 5 in your journal, try these prompts:

- make a list of your fears
- what makes you feel guilty?
- what makes you feel ashamed?
- envious?
- angry?
- resentful?

➔ More Step 4 journal prompts can be found here: <http://www.12step.org/tools/journal-software/lifejournal-imports/>

⌚ Set a time limit and muse on the page about one of these writing prompts for a set amount of time (10 minutes is good).

Here are the rules: the pen (or fingers, if typing) never stops. If your mind goes blank, scribble until words come. Grammar, spelling, punctuation, *et cetera* do not matter!

Finish your thought when the timer goes off. You can choose to stop there or continue writing. 📝

↔ Share your writing with your sponsor or a friend in recovery.



## FOCUS ON SPONSORSHIP

Intergroup has a new Sponsorship Committee. Here is a short history lesson from the committee:

### AA's First Sponsor

*"But he (Ebby T.) did no ranting. In a matter of fact way he told how two men had appeared in court, persuading the judge to suspend [Ebby's] commitment. They had told of a simple religious idea and a practical program of action. That was two months ago and the result was self-evident. It worked!"* (Big Book, p.9).

Ebby T, a schoolmate and drinking buddy of Bill W.'s, was AA's first "sponsor." Bill was close to his bottom when Ebby called him up and Bill welcomed his proposed visit; Bill wouldn't have to drink alone. But when Ebby showed up at Bill's front door, Bill could see there was something different about him.

"The door opened and he stood there, fresh-skinned and glowing. There was something about his eyes. He was inexplicably different. What had happened? ...He had come to pass his experience along to me—if I cared to have it" (Big Book, p.9).

This was no preacher, standing at a pulpit and looking down at the congregation. Nor was he a judge, in robes and sitting high on a bench, addressing the courtroom. Not a policeman, with the weight of the law on his side, nor a spouse with tears in her eyes, begging for change and crushing the alcoholic with the full burden of guilt and shame. Not a psychiatrist or doctor, with their knowledge of science, physiology, biology or the workings of the mind.

**No finger wagging, admonitions or petitions. Just experience** – and what Bill came to learn, experience that led to a source of strength and giving rise to real hope for the possibility of change and an end to his misery.

Bill was discouraged after six months: not a one of his prospects got or stayed sober. It was Bill's wife, Lois, who pointed out that actually, one person had stayed sober: Bill himself. Thus was born the concept that carrying the message, one alcoholic talking to another. Sharing the knowledge gained from direct experience of addiction's siren call and hopelessness, the need for ego deflation at depth, surrender, and of finding a power greater than oneself, was virtually the only way to recover from this "seemingly hopeless state of mind and body" (Big Book, p.xiii).

**The term 'sponsor' is not used in the Big Book, but the directions given in the "Working with Others" chapter clearly explain how to carry the message.** By the time the 12 Steps and

12 Traditions book was published, these principles had been polished into something resembling our usage of the word today.

Nowhere, however, will you find a prescription for how to be a sponsor: no one method will work with every person in recovery, just as there is no one way to be an addict.

In AA, the instructions are clear: don't drink, no matter what. In OA, the water is a little muddier. **The right sponsor can make the journey to abstinence and the right eating plan for you a simpler journey.**

*-Mellissa R, Intergroup Sponsorship Committee*



## HONESTY (THERE'S NO ADDICTION WITHOUT LIES)

*"I'll never do that again."*

*"I used to be addicted, but now I can limit myself to just one."*

**Honesty is at the foundation of OA's Twelve Steps.** It is the principle behind Step 1. As the OA 12 & 12 says, "In step one we learned the principle of honesty as we admitted our personal powerlessness over food, and the fact that without help we could not successfully manage our own lives. Now we will want to continue being honest with ourselves in all our affairs" (p.103).

Lies are a natural and virtually automatic way of life for active addicts. **Through denial and diseased thinking, addicts (often very convincingly) lie to ourselves and our loved ones to preserve our compulsions.** We also lie to the world in an attempt to avoid stigmatization. We have lied about big things and small things, usually to avoid rejection or judgment (or to keep up appearances) until we've created a fantasy life that is more tolerable than our current reality.

Have you ever seen your reflection unexpectedly and not recognized yourself? Do you avoid shopping for clothes so you don't face what size you are? These are all signs of self-deception. Dishonesty.

Dishonesty serves a purpose in the addict's life. If we stop lying to ourselves about the damage our compulsive eating has made, we would have to stop abusing food and face a shameful pile of hurt we have inflicted on ourselves and the people who love us.

**Lies drive addictive thoughts and behaviours.** Honesty is very hard work. At first, it's much easier to hide our troubling emotions and continue using.

But honesty is key to our recovery. As the Big Book says, "Rarely have we seen a person fail who has thoroughly followed our path. Those who do not recover are people who cannot or will not completely give themselves to this simple program, usually men and women who are constitutionally incapable of being honest with themselves" (Big Book, p.58).

**In 12-Step recovery, the standard isn't occasional honesty or attempted honesty, but rigorous honesty. What does this mean?**

Rigorous honesty means telling the truth when it's easier to lie. It means sharing thoughts and feelings even when there may be consequences. In 12-Step recovery, we require ourselves to take a fearless personal inventory and promptly admit any dishonesty. We practice catching ourselves in the middle of a lie and correct it, even if it's embarrassing.

It isn't enough to be honest with oneself (Step 1), although that's a good start. OA's must also be honest with their Higher Power and other people (Steps 4 and 5), including family, health care providers, and fellows in OA. Steps 8 and 9 require the addict to take active steps toward honesty and the last three steps require practicing honesty on a daily basis.

Rigorous honesty extends to every aspect of life ("we practice these principles in all our affairs" – Step 12). We refrain from verbal lies, but also nonverbal lies (e.g., stealing or cheating). We are honest about our own fears, limiting beliefs and unhealthy patterns. We are honestly willing to change.

**Rigorous honesty in recovery requires authentic relationships, with ourselves and with others.** Relationships that leave room for struggles and failures, setting boundaries, and living in accordance with one's own values and principles. Telling the truth requires ongoing attention and practice even in the face of discouragement and fear about what others will think.

If some seeds of dishonesty creep in, this can be a sign that we are returning to ineffective coping strategies. As they say in AA, **"You're only as sick as your secrets."** Honesty is essential – it is the principle behind Step 1 – but there are another 11 Steps! If we don't actively work our program, learning new skills and addressing the underlying issues, honesty alone can't prevent relapse.

There is good news. **If we face the truths about ourselves, we come to know and love ourselves and others, imperfections and all.** The Promises come true.

**Want to Strengthen your Honesty in Program?** Here are some writing prompts for you to try: Describe situations and events where you have been dishonest. What has this brought into your life that you like or enjoy? What problems has it caused you? Are you ready to depend upon God / your Higher Power to keep you from dishonesty? What will that look like day to day? What will you do? What will God / your Higher Power do? ♥