



Sea to Sky Intergroup Newsletter

Volume 167

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

WELCOME SUMMER!

What's New

New Meeting in South Burnaby!! Looking for a meeting on a Tuesday night? There's a new meeting that started June 6th on Tuesdays at 7:30 PM at the Burnaby Fellowship Centre, 7638 6th Street, Burnaby (off Kingsway at 14th Avenue). It's a Big Book / Speaker focus. For more info, contact Zayna at 778-847-5862. All welcome!

INTERGROUP NEWS

We are very pleased to welcome **Sonia** from our Cloverdale Meeting as our new **Intergroup Archivist!** Please send any material suitable for archiving with your intergroup representative. We meet the last Saturday of every month. Thank you for your service, Sonia!

Do you have 4 to 10 hours a month? Intergroup open service positions (at time of printing): public information coordinator, marathons/retreats coordinator and 12 Step within coordinator. If you are interested in being of service, please attend the **next Intergroup meeting on Saturday, July 29, 2017 at 10 am (we meet at 1630 Edinburgh Street, New Westminster).**

All OA members are welcome at Intergroup meetings. Join us!

REGION ONE NEWS

Want to take your service to the next level? We are members of OA's Region 1 and **there are service positions open at Region 1.** The general requirements are: abstaining from compulsive overeating for a least one year; two years of service above the group level, if a member of an intergroup; be working the Twelve Step Program to the best of his or her ability and have taken the fifth step. If you are interested, please go to <http://www.oaregion1.org/2017-region-1-assembly.html> for more information. If you're interested but don't qualify just yet, here's something to strive / thrive for! Nominations are due by August 1 and the elections will be held at the Region 1 Assembly in October (see next column!).

UPCOMING EVENTS

Serenity Retreat, July 14-16, near Mount Hood, Oregon. Hosted by the Oregon Intergroup at Camp Arrah Wanna Retreat

Center in Welches. US\$207 with accommodation and meals. Info: serenityretreat@oregon-oa.org or Loriann at 503-704-8571.

Fueling the Freedom Marathon, July 22 in Calgary at "The Farm", 200, 80054-226 Ave West. 2:30-5:00 PM. Do you have something you want to burn that will set you free? Bring any writings or letters you'd like to burn, old 'God box' items to release or a 4th Step to give away. By donation.

Big Book Workshop, September 8-10, Issaquah Holiday Inn, 1801 12th Ave NW, Issaquah, WA (2h 40m southeast of Vancouver) US\$55. Phone 541.313.6431; email: pnwbbstudy@gmail.com or see the flyer online at: <https://sites.google.com/view/bigbookworkshop>

The **OA Region 1 Assembly** is in Seattle this year. Mark your calendars for **Wednesday, October 11 through Friday, October 13, 2017.** If you are planning to attend the Assembly, please remember to register here: <https://form.jotform.ca/70737463422254> Registration is US\$35 and includes Thursday lunch and a binder of Assembly materials. Motions for the Region 1 Assembly are due by August 11th – please see the Region 1 website for more information (oaregion1.org)

Right after the Assembly is the Region 1 Annual Convention, Friday, October 13 through Sunday, October 15th also at the Doubletree Suites by Hilton (Seattle Airport-Southcenter). Registration information (including a link for mail-in registration) is found here: <https://sites.google.com/site/2017oaregion1convention/online-registration-form-1>

Conference registration is Cdn\$197 and the Convention special room rate at the hotel is US\$109 per night. For more information on the Convention, please look here: www.oaregion1.org/region-1-convention.html

NEWCOMERS' + SPONSORS' RESOURCE

At the World Service Delegates Meeting in Albuquerque in May, the Sydney, Australia Intergroup shared their "First 12 Days in OA" handout. It helps a newcomer work through the newcomers' welcome package. Download your copy here: <https://oaseatosky.files.wordpress.com/2013/02/first12days.pdf> and please consider including it in your newcomers' welcome. Thank you to Faye for bringing this back to our Intergroup.

How's Your Faith? Step 3 in Action

Like many OA meetings, my home group welcomes newcomers by asking an experienced member to explain OA in broad brush strokes and to share what they were like when they first came to OA, what their fears were, what they learned, and how they are now. One common theme is the use of "God" in our program.

Faith. It is a troubling concept for those who have struggled with the diet mentality of willpower, self-control, and personal responsibility thrust on us by well-meaning family members, concerned physicians, and a for-profit weight loss industry.

We have all the good intentions: to start again Monday, to never buy [binge food] again, to go to the gym... As the Big Book says, "*Many of us had moral and philosophical convictions galore, but we could not live up to them even though we would have liked to. Neither could we reduce our self-centeredness much by wishing or trying on our own power. We had to have God's help*" [p.62].

Reluctance to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God (as we understand God) can be a HUGE barrier to progress. We struggle with the spiritual principle which underlies the Third Step: FAITH.

Step 3 is where we decide to trust God with our recovery. We admit powerlessness to overcome addictive behaviours on our own (Step 1). We realize (at least in theory) a Higher Power can deliver us from the insanity of addiction (Step 2). Now we are ready to take the step of giving these matters over to God as we understand God.

This is a huge leap forward in faith. We trust that God can restore us to a right mind; a sane mind that leads to sane and healthy behaviours and a life filled with greater serenity, personal power and even joy. We recognize that we need guidance to find a new way of living.

If we are willing to try to find a Higher Power through the steps, then we have to make a decision to WORK the steps. And, as Lawrie C says, that really is all Step Three is -- a DECISION (<http://www.therecoverygroup.org/wts/2005/2005-03q3.html>). It's not actually turning our will and our lives over. It's just a DECISION to do that. In order to turn my will and my life over, I have to get rid of the things in myself that are blocking me from my Higher Power. And that takes work, in particular, Steps 4 and onward.

In Step 3, we have faith that we can turn over that rigid sense of self and an obsession with food that binds us up in resentment, anger, and fear. We read the Big Book on how the addict is constantly battling for control:

"...like an actor who wants to run the whole show; is forever trying to arrange the lights, the ballet, the scenery and the rest of the players in his own way. If his arrangements would only stay put, if only people would do as he wished, the show would be great. Everybody, including himself, would be pleased. Life would be wonderful. [...] What usually happens? The show doesn't come off very well. [...] What is his basic trouble? Is he not really a self-seeker even when trying to be kind? Is he not a victim of the delusion that he can wrest satisfaction and happiness out of this world if he only manages well?" [Big Book, pp.60-61]

We realize we have to let go of our need to be in control. But practically, what does that mean? It takes Step 3:

This is the how and why of it. First of all, we had to quit playing God. It didn't work. Next, we decided that hereafter in this drama of life, God was going to be our Director. [...] Most good ideas are simple, and this concept was the keystone of the new and triumphant arch through which we passed to freedom. [Big Book, p.62]

Step 3 is the first step that requires action. The first two steps focus on reflection and introspection. Now, we make a decision. We shift our mindset from thinking about OA concepts to carrying them out. So, **Step 3 is the simple decision to let the God of my understanding be the overall manager of my life.** I "let go and let God".

We read in the OA 12&12, that practicing this principle of faith means that "we will no longer go through life acting however we feel like acting at any given moment. Instead we will look to our Higher Power for guidance and strength as we face each decision" [p.103].

It takes a recalibration of our default reactions to life. **We start to ask for help with behaviours where we are like the child who never grew up.** If my immediate reaction is "Oh! I wanna..." then the right answer may be "no, I shouldn't have that." And if my kneejerk reaction is "no! I don't wanna!" then usually this is precisely the thing I should do.

So, we take the **Third Step Prayer** and – privately, with our sponsor, or in a meeting with our fellows – say: "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" [Big Book, p.63].

The Step 3 Decision is to ask for help, to seek guidance, to stop and mindfully canvass our Higher Power for direction in all our affairs. We can start with food, but sooner or later, we will turn to God in all things that trouble us. However, we haven't completed the transaction when we say the words of commitment in prayer.

Just saying the Third Step Prayer does not turn our will and our lives over to God. We have to choose, over and over, day to day, to bring recovery into our lives. That's what Steps Four through Twelve are: the way to turn our whole lives - past, future, and present - over to God.

The AA 12&12 describes the process as letting God in and then doing something about it. "*Like all the remaining Steps, Step Three calls for affirmative action, for it is only by action that we can cut away the self-will which has always blocked the entry of God - or, if you like a Higher Power - into our lives. Faith, to be sure, is necessary, but faith alone can avail nothing. We can have faith, yet keep God out of our lives*" [AA 12&12, p.40].

We practice consciously seeking God in big things and small. That is:

"As we go through the day we pause, when agitated or doubtful, and ask for the right thought or action. We constantly remind ourselves we are no longer running the show, humbly saying to ourselves many times each day "Thy will be done." We are then in much less danger of excitement, fear, anger, worry, self-pity, or foolish decisions. We become much more efficient. We do not tire so easily, for we are not burning up energy foolishly as we did when we were trying to arrange life to suit ourselves" [Big Book, pp.87-88].

This is serenity: the spiritual state of acceptance that helps us recovering addicts to achieve a state of calmness and peace. Taking Step 3 (daily, if need be) is how we drop our resistance to recovery. As we practice being conscious of a higher power, our inner voice will gradually turn from a hunch or occasional inspiration to gradually becoming a working part of our minds [Big Book, p.87].

And boy, will we need this! **Once we put the food down, we will likely begin to contend with emotions that we have stuffed down.** Wounds that have been numbed. Dreams that have been shattered. For many, addiction is a way to cope.

Some of our difficulties coping are centred on emotions. In the process of letting go of compulsive food behaviours, we "get to know" our feelings. Our developing coping skill of turning our troubles over to our Higher Power for guidance is put to the test. This is inevitable. We find ourselves actively pursuing those uncomfortable emotions, the very thing that we have been addictively avoiding for years. **It will be uncomfortable at times.** Very uncomfortable. [Remember the Tools? Work them when it's uncomfortable. Work them when it's not uncomfortable so you have practice for when your emotions get icky.]

As OA-er Dominica A writes, "My emotional dam broke and a lifetime of stuffed emotions came flooding out. I had no idea how to contend with them. Let Go and Let God. **When I get into self-will, I say, 'God, I surrender. I give this to you right now. Take it because I don't want it. I trust you.'** Then, I do my best to let it go."

This is Step 3 and faith. We remind ourselves if we turn it over and don't let go, we end up upside down! We right ourselves and take Step 3 again. Daily. One day at a time. That's faith in action.

-Jennifer S.

Sorrow looks back; Worry looks ahead; Faith looks up! ✨ We can no longer be content with just getting by. ✨ If God brings you to it, He will bring you through it. ✨ It is when you act on faith that you actually have it. ✨ I sought my soul, but my soul I could not see. I sought my God, but my God eluded me. I sought my fellow and I found all three. ✨ Without God, I can't. Without me, He won't. ✨ I am powerless but not helpless. ✨ Faith is taking the first step when you can't see the whole staircase. ✨ If you want to change who you are, change what you do. ✨ Faith makes all things possible. Love makes all things easy. ✨ Pray as if everything depends on God. Work as if everything depends on you. ✨ We are never defeated unless we give up on God. ✨ The future is as bright as your faith. ✨