



## Sea to Sky Intergroup Newsletter

Volume 172  
December 2017

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

LOVE AND JOY COME TO YOU.

### INTERGROUP NEWS & EVENTS

All members are welcome to attend our **Intergroup meeting** on **Saturday, January 6, 2018** at 10 am, 1630 Edinburgh Street, New Westminster. The 2018 Intergroup budget is on the agenda.

The following **Intergroup positions** are vacant if you are looking for a service opportunity: vice-chair, marathon & retreats coordinator and 12<sup>th</sup> step within coordinator. More details are on [www.oaseatosky.org](http://www.oaseatosky.org).

**Special Seasonal Fellowship** - The Cloverdale meeting's annual holiday **Candlelight Meeting** will be on **Thursday, December 14, 2017** at 7 pm. Join this special event at Cloverdale United Church, 17575 58A Avenue, Surrey. Friends and family are also welcome to attend.

**Spreading the Message:** If your group has a special speaker coming or is planning a workshop or step study group, please send the details to [seatoskynews@gmail.com](mailto:seatoskynews@gmail.com).

**ARE YOU USING THE TOOLS TO WORK THE STEPS?**

### REGION 1 EVENTS & NEWS

**Greater Seattle Intergroup Retreat, February 2-4, 2018** at Camp Huston, 14725 Ley Road, Gold Bar, Washington. US\$160 before December 31st. <http://www.seattleoa.org/winter-retreat-registration/> or email [Retreat@SeattleOA.org](mailto:Retreat@SeattleOA.org)

**North Cascades Spring Renewal Retreat, April 6-8, 2018** at Camp Casey Conference Center on Whidbey Island, near Coupeville, WA. Registration by March 1<sup>st</sup> is US\$135. Info: Allen at 360-678-9358 or [allen@taylor635.com](mailto:allen@taylor635.com). The registration form is available on [oaseatosky.com](http://oaseatosky.com) under "events".

**Save the date!** Vancouver Island Intergroup Retreat, June 8-10.

### WORLD SERVICE NEWS

**Interested in a meeting service position?** World Service suggests we have a "**Designated Downloader**" who checks [oa.org](http://oa.org) and [oaregion1.org](http://oaregion1.org) for news & events each month. This person then shares this info with their home group during the 'announcements' part of the meeting!

### ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ 12 STEPS ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ TO A BETTER HOLIDAY SEASON...

1. We admitted that the holiday season has a deeper meaning than devouring food. ✿
2. We came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could help us see and celebrate the true meaning of the season. ✿
3. We came to believe that our Higher Power could help us appreciate the joyfulness of the season as we understand it. ✿
4. We made a searching and thorough examination of our relationship with food during the holidays and other things we enjoy about the season. ✿
5. We admitted to our Higher Power the exact nature of our food habits during holiday season past. ✿
6. We became entirely ready to allow our Higher Power to remove our attachment to food as a necessity of the holidays. ✿
7. We humbly asked him to remove our desire to compulsively partake of holiday treats. ✿
8. We made a list of all persons whose presence makes the holiday season joyful for us and with whom we would like to share our joy. ✿
9. We made plans to spend time with those people whenever possible, except when to do so would remove us from our primary purpose of abstinence. ✿
10. We continue to enjoy the company of friends and family and other nonfood aspects of the season. ✿
11. We sought through prayer and meditation to improve our appreciation of the season, praying for knowledge of its meaning and the joy we feel at the time. ✿
12. Having realized that sharing the joy of this season with others far outlasts the fleeting pleasure of food, we gave ourselves the gift of abstinence throughout the holidays and gave others the gift of our full attention and appreciation. ✿

*-Edited and reprinted from New Horizons newsletter, West 10th Street Big Book Meeting, November/December 1998.*

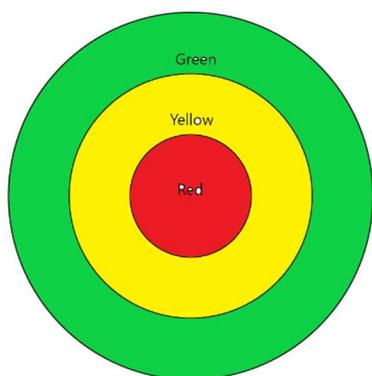
**Subscribe to your Newsletter** by following our blog on the OA Sea to Sky website ([www.oaseatosky.org](http://www.oaseatosky.org)). **Contributions** to the Newsletter are very welcome! Please contact Jennifer at [seatoskynews@gmail.com](mailto:seatoskynews@gmail.com). Your newsletter is printed the week before Intergroup (the last Saturday of every month). The opinions expressed in this Newsletter belong to the contributors and may not represent our Intergroup or OA as a whole. This month's masthead photo is the Lights of Hope Holiday Light charity display at St. Paul's Hospital, Vancouver by M. Wheatley. Together we get better!

## TAKE-AWAYS FROM THE ABSTINENCE WORKSHOP

The Northshore OA Recovery Group (Thursday night, 7.30 pm, Northshore Alano Club, 2<sup>nd</sup> @ St. Georges, North Vancouver) hosted a writing and collage workshop on the OA definition of abstinence at the end of October. 33 OA-ers attended and for those who wanted to come but couldn't join us, here is a summary of the workshop ideas for you to explore at home!

The OA definition is "Abstinence is the action of refraining from compulsive eating and compulsive food behaviors while working towards or maintaining a healthy body weight. Spiritual, emotional and physical recovery is the result of living the Overeaters Anonymous Twelve-Step program."

In this workshop, we worked through how we will implement abstinence in our own lives through writing prompts and a collage, based on the **three circles approach to abstinence**.



The red (centre) is the smallest and where we run into the most trouble. These are foods and behaviours that DO NOT make us abstinent.

The yellow (middle) zone is where we may run into trouble, we may not, depending on how strong we are in our recovery at that time.

The green zone is where we want to live our lives – these are the

foods and behaviours that make our life rich, that keep us from compulsive eating or food behaviours, and help us maintain or work towards a healthy body weight.

To do this exercise for your own abstinence plan, brainstorm, collage, meditate on what goes where on your own diagram. Remember, RED means STOP. To figure out what goes in your red zone, ask yourself: What foods do you have to stop eating to protect your abstinence? What behaviours do you have to stop in order to move forward in your recovery? What character defects do you have to stop living? When do you get HALT (hungry, angry, lonely, tired) and what do you do? (What can you do to move yourself out of red and into yellow or green?)

**Yellow means CAUTION.** Brainstorm: What foods are part OKAY, part not? Do they confuse you? (Maybe they are a red for now?) Do you know when you are close to "slipping and sliding"? With food? With compulsive behaviours? Have you had to shift more foods and behaviours to the NOT OKAY list as you learn about yourself?

What behaviours are like slippery / slidey for you and need to be pursued with caution (yellow)? What events – family get-togethers, work events, life challenges – can trigger you? How have you recovered/bounced back from them in the past and what actions do you take to avoid them now?

**Green means GO.** Here put everything that fills your life when you are happy, joyous and free. These are the foods and behaviours that enrich my health and feed my body. The relationships and activities that make my life rich and happy and support my recovery. Do you get a Green Light every day?

As part of the workshop, we answered the question, "the biggest risk to my abstinence right now is..." Many of us (23 out of 32) chose to hand this over to our Higher Power by placing our answer in the "God Box" at the workshop. Afterwards, I worked out writing / prayer prompts to help with each of those risks. Here is a partial summary in case you find one of your challenges on our list:

**Physical / Practical Risks to Abstinence:** tired, my family's food desires, late night television, not wanting to cook, lack of planning. Writing prompt: *For Today*, March 14: "Nothing can bring you peace but yourself. [...] I cannot will myself to have peace of mind, but I can re-examine my priorities. Am I putting enough time and effort into activities that nurture my spirit?"

**Self-criticism, self-worth, not taking my recovery / self as a priority:** writing prompt: *For Today*, January 19: "I have never seen a person grow or change in a constructive direction when motivated by guilt, shame and/or hate. [...] For today: I let no one – including myself – try to shame me into changing something about myself I wish were different. I pray to be relieved of guilt and self-hate and to accept and like myself exactly as I am. That is where I can begin to change."

**Self-will – wanting things my way:** writing prompt: *For Today*, March 3: "It is when we try to make our will conform with God's that we begin to use it rightly. [...] Willfulness, which I have often confused with determination, perseverance and individualism. The latter are qualities belonging to people who think and act in a balanced, rational, adult manner. Self-will is an infantile expression of omnipotence, the delusion that I can force life to be exactly as I want it to be. [...] Seeking to conform my will with God's is what restores me to sanity. It gives me abstinence, peace of mind and freedom from obsession."

**Perfectionism:** *For Today*, February 22: "The maxim, 'nothing avails but perfection,' may be spelled 'paralysis.' [...] Perfectionism is another obsession and I pray to be relieved of it. I do the necessary footwork by taking one small step toward a project or activity I have been putting off."

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**Abstinence Prayer - Dear God, Abstinence is the most important thing in my life right now. Help me to do what is necessary to get it. And help me to do what is necessary to keep it. Amen.**

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**Not being mindful / Distraction / Impulsivity:** *Voices of Recovery*, March 7: "Instead of acting on impulse, we pause long enough to learn God's will. Then, instead of resorting to willpower, we relax and reach out to receive help from our Higher Power. All we need to say is 'God, please help me do Your will.'" [OA 12 & 12, pp.26-27].

**Fear:** *For Today*, February 4: "We should not let our fears hold us back from pursuing our hopes. [...] I can take the steps necessary to change my life in spite of my fears." And February 8: "All growth is a leap in the dark, a spontaneous, unpremeditated act without benefit of experience [...] For today: This program proves to me that my attitudes and habits are not cast in stone. I may not know a new way to be, but I can learn."

**Emotional overwhelm:** *For Today*, July 23: "It is possible to feel a full range of human emotions and remain abstinent. Feelings have no power. They cannot dictate my actions."

For more from the workshop, copies of the handouts or photos of other OA-ers' workshop collages for inspiration, email your request to your newsletter editor! - Jennifer S, North Vancouver

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🌱 I can't be craving and grateful at the same time. 🌱 It's about the food until it's not about the food. 🌱 It's not what you're eating, it's what's eating you. 🌱 The way to ask for help is to say, "I need help." 🌱 Happy, joyous and free (Big Book, p.133) 🌱 The best things in life aren't things. 🌱 When I stopped living in the problem, the problem went away. 🌱 Release what does not bless you. 🌱