



A theorist without practice is a tree without fruit.




Sea to Sky Intergroup Newsletter

August 2018

IT WORKS. IF WE WORK IT.

INTERGROUP NEWS & EVENTS

Elections were held for many Intergroup service positions at the June meeting. Welcome to Cheri (12th Step Within Coordinator), Greta H (public information / professional outreach coordinator), Calen B (WSO Alternate Delegate), Alicia D (assistant treasurer), Serena (literature coordinator), Mellissa R (meeting directory coordinator) and the many familiar faces returning to serve another term. Thank you! **Several positions remain open; come to Intergroup to explore service as a tool of recovery.**

"OA Study Hall" is in session! Join our new meeting focused on the tools of Literature and Writing on **Tuesday nights from 7:30 to 9 pm** at the Alano Club, 176 East 2nd (at St. Georges) in North Vancouver. There is a short meditation, time to work on your daily OA reading and writing or individual step study, and then time to share on your work. \$2 per person for rent. Bring your journal, favourite pen and OA literature, Big Book, daily reader, workbook or step study material... 

All members are welcome to attend our **Intergroup meeting on Saturday, August 25, 2018** at 10 am, in the church hall at 1630 Edinburgh Street in historic New Westminster. Accessible. Ample free street parking.

➔ **Plan ahead! One Aurora Meeting in Whitehorse is hosting its annual retreat in October.** Details to come. If you are interested in visiting, they would love to see you in the Yukon. Info: Christine at oayukon@gmail.com

Has your home group hosted a marathon in the last year? If not, why not?

REGION 1 EVENTS & NEWS

The **Virtual Sponsorship Program at Region 1 needs more sponsors from BC to meet the needs of our fellowship.** If you are willing to sponsor via phone, text, or email, please register: <https://www.oaregion1.org/find-a-sponsor-or-sponsee.html> Questions to Jo Ellen at northskye@cablone.net

Greater Seattle Intergroup, August 19, "Sunday Sponstravaganza Speaker Marathon," Samaritan Center, Seattle, 7 pm. Contact: Cate 206-225-9230.

Greater Seattle Intergroup, September 14-16, "Big Book Weekend Workshop," Issaquah Holiday Inn, find the registration information here: www.seattleoa.org/bbworkshop_2018/

Vancouver Island Intergroup, September 15, Sponsorship Workshop in Nanaimo. Details to come. Save the date!

North Cascade Intergroup / Region 1, September 15, "Relapse Prevention and Recovery Workshop," Best Western, Everett, WA. 10 am to 3:30 pm, suggested 7th is \$5. Details are found on the Region 1 website or here: oa-nci.org/images/2018_September_NCI_Region_Event_Flyer.pdf

Mark your Calendars: Upcoming OA Phone Marathons, all day, dial 712-432-5200 and enter Conference ID 4285115# (long distance charges may apply depending on your phone plan). Upcoming dates and themes: **Saturday, August 18,** "This is a 'WE' program not an 'I' Program"; **Monday, September 3,** "We Cannot Rest on Our Laurels"; **Monday, September 10,** "The Beginning of a Spiritual Awakening" and **Wednesday, September 19,** "Making Amends".

Region 1 Convention, October 19-21, Spokane, Washington. Best rate of CDN\$197 for registrations by August 31. More info is found here at www.oaregion1.org

Los Angeles OA Birthday Party, January 18-20. Registration opens in August. www.oalaig.org/oa-birthday-party/

WORLD SERVICE NEWS



Sponsors

Sponsorship Day is the weekend of August 18th. Remember to send your gratitude to your sponsor and all those who sponsor in your OA community!

The **Final Report from the 2018 World Service Business Conference** is now available online. Check here for how motions fared, committee reports, suggestions for outreach and workshops, OA's audited financial reports and more: <https://oa.org/files/pdf/Final-Conference-Report.pdf>

OA is increasingly connecting with members virtually! The new **Virtual Services Region** has its own website – www.oavirtualseervices.org – with information on phone, skype, chat and other virtual meetings as well as OA online resources. **The next phone marathon is Saturday, August 18th.**

SPECIAL FOCUS: AUDIO RESOURCES

There is recovery in your ear buds or computer speakers! **OA World Service** has podcasts ranging from each of the Steps and Traditions, to virtual workshops on sponsorship, an overview of OA books and literature, committing to abstinence and a whole host of other topics. <https://oa.org/podcasts/>

You can listen to **OA Region 1** speakers, including keynotes from conventions and speakers on topics each of the Steps, body image, relationships, recovering from relapse, a sponsorship workshop, food plans and more. See the audio archive at <https://www.oaregion1.org/audio-recordings.html>

The **OA Los Angeles Intergroup** has a ton of audio resources – check out their archive here: <http://www.oalaig.org/laig-virtual-speakers-bureau/> They also have recordings available for download in iTunes.

♪ Did you know the Step 11 Prayer is also a song? Artists who have recorded these beautiful words as "Prayer of St. Francis" include Sarah McLachlan, Kristin Chenoweth, Elira-Hari, and Vince Ambrosetti. The Three Tenors and Olivia Newton-John have also recorded the prayer under the title "Instrument of Peace" while Susan Boyle's version is "Make Me a Channel of Your Peace." Hear your favourite on iTunes, Google Play or Spotify. **Music is a wonderful way to pray.** ♪

Another great resource is **A Vision 4 You.** They have two daily phone meetings (live!) you can phone in or listen later: <http://www.avision4you.info/> Their "Special Sunday Edition" podcasts have an extensive archive by topic and speaker. <http://www.avision4you.info/sunday-special-edition-podcast/>

STEP 11 MEDITATION PRACTICE: LOVING KINDNESS

Many members find meditation apps a big help in their daily practice. Want to try a new meditation practice? Loving Kindness is a good one and guided recordings can be found online and in the Insight Timer app. It's important to our recovery that we learn to evoke feelings of love and kindness toward ourselves and others. This meditation works to plant those seeds!

One popular version of the Loving Kindness meditation to try is this:

Loving Kindness Meditation in three rounds: ① **May I be free from inner and outer harm... May I be safe and protected... May I be free of mental suffering or distress... May I be happy... May I be free of physical pain and suffering... May I be healthy and strong... May I be able to live in this world happily, peacefully, joyfully, with ease.** ② **May my loved ones be... [repeat all].** ③ **May all sentient beings be... [repeat all].**

ABSTINENCE IN OA: ONE DEFINITION!

Abstinence in OA is defined as “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.”

There is one definition of abstinence in Overeaters Anonymous! Too often I hear statements in the rooms of OA like, “My definition of abstinence is...” or “My current abstinence is...” but these represent a misunderstanding of our program. The OA.org Abstinence Presentation states, “We are either abstinent or we are not!”

Abstinence is black and white. What varies are our food plans. Some of us weigh and measure, some of us don't. Some of us abstain from flour, some of us don't. Some of us commit our food nightly, some of us commit our food weekly. The differences go on and on. **But a food plan is a tool to support abstinence — the action of refraining from compulsive eating and compulsive food behaviors.**

Overeaters Anonymous is not a program of moderation. It is a program of abstinence. As a recovering food addict and bulimic, I owe my life to this fact. Outside of OA, I can find an endless supply of dietitians, doctors, weight-loss programs, friends, and family members who will support me as I try to eat my alcoholic foods in moderation like a normal person. But outside of OA, I nearly died. That's why it is crucial for me and many other compulsive eaters, food addicts, bulimics, and anorexics that OA remain a program of abstinence.

If you feel ashamed to admit that you are still struggling with compulsive food behaviors, or that your plan of eating is not giving you freedom from physical craving, then you are missing the point of Step One. Step One states that I am powerless over food. As the Abstinence Presentation puts it — “I can't!” is the whole point of the program!



My powerlessness over food is nothing to be ashamed of, just like having cancer is nothing to be ashamed of. It's a disease. That's why I'm in Overeaters Anonymous.

OA is not a support group, although it's wonderfully supportive. It's not a diet club, although we do talk about food. **OA is a 12 Step program of spiritual recovery for the abstinent compulsive overeater, food addict, bulimic, and anorexic to experience freedom from the bondage of food** — so that we don't have to compulsively eat, or even want to, one day at a time.

The Big Book states that by the time the sober alcoholic has reached Step 10, “sanity will have returned. We will seldom be interested in liquor. If tempted, we recoil from it as from a hot flame. We react sanely and normally, and we will find that this has happened automatically. We will see that our new attitude toward liquor has been given us without any thought or effort on our part. It just comes! **That is the miracle of it. We are not fighting it, neither are we avoiding temptation. We feel as though we had been placed in a position of neutrality—safe and protected.** We have not even sworn off. Instead, the problem has been removed. It does not exist for us. We are neither cocky nor are we afraid. That is our experience. That is how we react so long as we keep in fit spiritual condition” (pp. 84-85). **This is the level of freedom promised to us in our wonderful program.**

I'll leave you with some questions from the Abstinence Presentation: It's suggested we define our own plan of eating. Does that work for you? What part does fear play in adopting suggestions from your sponsor or health-care professional? What does “contempt prior to investigation” mean? Will it take more will power? More research? Are you ready to “give up”? To surrender?

– *Fernanda, Vancouver* [Ed: the OA Abstinence Presentation podcast and accompanying slides are found here: <https://oa.org/podcasts/april-13-our-primary-purpose-abstinence/>]



OA Sound Bites

This month's question...

“What actions do you include in your daily routine to support your recovery?”

🗣️ Prayer and meditation every morning are absolute musts. My meditation can be sitting still with my eyes closed, doing a guided meditation or going for a mindful walk. Other things in my daily routine (I need more consistency here) are phone calls, reading and writing. – Alicia D., Coquitlam / Vancouver meetings

🗣️ I thank my HP for another day when I wake up, read the *For Today* reader entry, commit my food plan to my food buddy by email, and do a Step 10 inventory in the OA Region 1 Journal. – Jennifer, North Vancouver

🗣️ I pray on my knees, read the daily readers, and do my exercises - it's a morning ritual. At the end of the day, I check to make sure my food for the next day is ready. – Greta, Saturday Fairview meeting

🗣️ I read *For Today* and write a gratitude list every morning. – Cory, Coquitlam Tuesday meeting

🗣️ I pray in bed and connect with my higher power, follow a food plan, report what I ate to my sponsor, go to the gym, and reach out to others daily. – Sue, Coquitlam Tuesday meeting

🗣️ I phone my sponsor, call someone in program, log my food, and journal. – Laurel, Coquitlam Tuesday meeting

🗣️ I hit my knees first thing in the morning and last thing at night, and I read a bit of the Big Book every day. – Wendy, Vancouver Sunday meeting

➔ What do you do for your recovery every day? ♥

CONFLICT WITH OTHERS

From time to time, we all experience conflict. It may be that we just can't get along with that new co-worker. Maybe our friends are driving us crazy. Or our partner isn't living up to our expectations. Dealing with any conflict is difficult for recovering addicts. **In working the Steps, we see that we were not only in conflict with ourselves, but also with people and situations in the world in which we lived** [BB, p.108]. We learn that conflicts are a part of reality, and we learn new ways to resolve them instead of running from them.

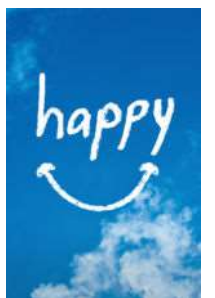
What is my relationship to conflict? In our 12 & 12, the Step 4 chapter asks us, “How have I created or perpetuated conflict with others?” and “Have I been so afraid of conflict that I accept abuse rather than risk asserting myself?”

When tempers rise, it is often a good idea to back away from the situation until cooler minds prevail. We can always return for further discussion when we have calmed down. We can't avoid troubling situations, but we can use time and distance to find perspective.

When we are upset at someone or some circumstance, let us see this as life holding up a mirror. Something in this other person or situation triggers something in me – what is it? And we work our program to uncover what it is. As they write in the AA 12 & 12:

We learned that if we are seriously disturbed, our first need is to quiet the disturbance, regardless of who or what we thought caused it. To see how erratic emotions victimized us often took a long time. We could perceive them quickly in others, but only slowly in ourselves. ... We had to admit we had many of these defects, even though such disclosures were painful and humiliating. [p.47]

We work through these issues in ourselves. We talk to our sponsor and others in recovery. We ask our HP to remove these defects of character. **We find we can live happier and more effective lives when we focus our attention on doing our Higher Power's will each day, rather than on conflicts** [OA 12&12, p.154]. We free ourselves to concentrate on our recovery, without being drawn into the conflicts that seem to rage in the world around us.



No one can live completely free of conflict. In recovery we learn that we can live, and even thrive, with a minimum of strife. We food addicts can learn a lot from OA's Tenth Tradition about concentrating on our message and avoiding controversy in all our affairs. **We learn how to “live and let live.”** We focus on our own emotional hygiene and practice loving detachment to others rather than becoming enmeshed in a battle of wills when reason is clouded by self-justification, fear and resentment.

The hardest part is accepting we need to improve our response to a problem (how we think about it, feel about it, or what to do about it). Very few people want to focus on improving their own response. It's easier to build a strong case for why the other person should do the improving. If you want change, however, think about what you can do first. What's your part?

Conflict is a part of life. We can't go through our entire recovery without encountering disagreements and differences of opinion. Sometimes we can back away from these situations, taking time to reflect on them, but there always comes a time when conflict must be resolved. When that time comes, we take a deep breath, say a prayer, and apply the principles our program has given us: honesty, openness, responsibility, forgiveness, trust, and all the rest. **We stay present, we clean our side of the street. We didn't get abstinent to keep running from life and, in recovery, we don't have to run anymore.**

The principles OA has given us are sufficient to guide us through any situation. We resolve that, just for today, we will strive to confront conflict in ourselves and in others in a healthy way. [Ed. with thanks to NA's *Just for Today*, July 4]

Thanks to Alicia D, our reporter this month, and the members who shared.