



**OVEREATERS ANONYMOUS®**  
SEA TO SKY INTERGROUP

May 2019  
www.oaseatosky.com

On a clear day, I can see only as far as I have the courage to see.

Pray, but continue to row to shore.

## INTERGROUP NEWS & EVENTS

**Upcoming Intergroup Meetings:** Your Intergroup meets the last Saturday of the month – our upcoming meetings are **May 25<sup>th</sup>** and **June 29<sup>th</sup>** – always 10 am until 12 noon at 1630 Edinburgh Street, New Westminster. All welcome.

**Recent abstinence milestones are being celebrated!!** We know you're out there – we just didn't have anyone share their news this month. Your home group's news and celebrations are welcome inspiration to your fellows. Please send your home group's birthday news to [seatoskynews@gmail.com](mailto:seatoskynews@gmail.com)!

## REGION 1 EVENTS & NEWS

There is a new audio recording of a speaker meeting on the topic, **"What Do You Want Me to Sponsor?"** on the OA Region 1 website. You can find it here and listen online: <https://www.oaregion1.org/audio-recordings.html>



**Southern BC & Interior Intergroup Retreat, "Back to Basics", May 31 – June 2** at Seton House of Prayer retreat centre in Kelowna. \$200 by May 1 or \$240 after May 1.

**Registration.** Retreat registrar: [allisonglanfield@yahoo.com](mailto:allisonglanfield@yahoo.com)

**Greater Seattle Intergroup retreat, "Keep it Simple" on May 31-June 2** at Gold Bar, WA. <https://www.seattleoa.org>



**The Vancouver Island Intergroup hosts "The Big Book Comes Alive for OA", June 7-9** at St. Paul's Anglican Church, 100 Chapel Street in Nanaimo. For more information or to register, contact Michelle at [oaretreatvi@gmail.com](mailto:oaretreatvi@gmail.com)

Greater Columbia Intergroup retreat, **"Higher Powered," June 21-23** in Ellensburg, Washington. USD\$165 by June 3<sup>rd</sup>. [https://www.oaregion1.org/uploads/1/4/0/4/14047174/oa\\_retreat\\_lazy\\_f\\_2019\\_flyer.pdf](https://www.oaregion1.org/uploads/1/4/0/4/14047174/oa_retreat_lazy_f_2019_flyer.pdf)

**Greater Columbia Intergroup Retreat, "Higher Powered," June 21-23** in Ellensburg, Washington. USD\$165 by June 3<sup>rd</sup>. [https://www.oaregion1.org/uploads/1/4/0/4/14047174/oa\\_retreat\\_lazy\\_f\\_2019\\_flyer.pdf](https://www.oaregion1.org/uploads/1/4/0/4/14047174/oa_retreat_lazy_f_2019_flyer.pdf)

**Quarterly Region 1 Special Focus Speaker Meeting on Wednesday, June 19 at 7 pm. The topic is body image.** Join the call with the free online audio conference call app at <https://join.freeconferencecall.com/region1> or dial (515) 739-1458, (781) 838-3270 or (781) 838-3755 and enter pin 781502. Back-up numbers are needed because Canadian phone companies "block" lines they consider conference calls. You may incur charges if you do not have US long distance in your phone plan. Consider joining the meeting using the free online method instead!

## WORLD SERVICE NEWS

The **OA World Business conference** is **May 6-11** in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Intergroup is sending Faye D. as our delegate and we are looking forward to her report!

World Service's newsletter, **A Step Ahead**, has been published. Find your copy here: <http://oa.org/whats-new/>

**The revised and new Suggested Meeting Formats**, adopted at the WSO February Board of Trustees' meeting, are now posted online and available for free download. Find them online at [oa.org/documents](http://oa.org/documents) under "Meeting Formats."

## BREAKING ISOLATION IN RECOVERY

Recently in Vancouver, about 50 OA's attended a workshop on breaking isolation in recovery. Here are some take-aways with thanks to the organizers, Susan A and Greta H:

**One of the primary aspects of addiction is isolation – the inability to connect emotionally and spiritually.** Our isolation stems from pain, especially self-inflicted pain. As our addiction worsens, our isolation intensifies to the point of feeling completely alone in the world. We are trapped in a bubble of self, completely absorbed in our pain.

**In OA, we no longer have to be alone. The first word in the Steps is "WE".** When feeling overwhelmed by life, a connected person turns to friends, fellows, their Higher Power for understanding, support and solutions. The isolated addict turns to alcohol, drugs, or food for temporary relief. No one recovers from addiction by simply stopping using their substance of choice. We recover by creating a new life where it is easier not to use / abuse.

**In working the Steps, we confront our "Basic Operating Principles" that helped us survive but no longer serve us.** The workshop participants brainstormed some examples of conditioned beliefs that get in the way of a fuller life. Beliefs like, **"people must love me or I will die"** (dependency from early childhood); **"dessert = LOVE"** (substitution); **"if I am honest, I will be rejected"** (fear, people pleasing); **"I am too big, too tall, not pretty/handsome enough"** (self-loathing); **"I have to prove I am not stupid"** (low self-worth); and **"my job in life is to bring happiness to others, to make others feel good"** (codependent, denial of self).

Greta H shared how the workshop helped her feel self-compassion when she realized how much of the isolation she

engaged in while in the disease came from her hurt childhood. "There were a lot of hurt children in the room" at the workshop.

**When our old negative beliefs are activated, we are more likely to fall into our defective Basic Operating Principles (character defects) and isolate.** What are the reasons you tell yourself not to go to meetings or be in touch with a sponsor, other fellows? **Do any of these sound familiar?**

- **I'm too busy** with other urgent things (overwhelm).
- **I feel too ashamed**, too embarrassed (self-pity).
- **I'm too lazy**, it is too much trouble and time, inconvenient
- **I don't want to bother others** with my problems – they are always the same ones! (unease / vulnerability).
- I don't want to disappoint others (shame, fear).
- **I'm too fat** (unworthiness, shame).
- **The weather is too nice / too awful** (denial, excuses).
- **I already know what they will say** (defiance, superiority).
- **It is / I am UNIMPORTANT** (shame, judgment).
- **I've got this** (pride, defiance) or I know it all already (pride)
- **I think I can pray away the cravings!** (pride).
- I don't like feeling uncomfortable so I'll just avoid this person / situation (vulnerability, fear).
- **I can't find my "willingness"** (avoidance).
- **I don't want to give up fantasy / lie of being a normal eater or obsessed with my looks** (dishonesty, pride).
- **I'm afraid** to be honest with myself, loved ones, sponsor, fellows (fear, judgment, rejection).

Here are the warning signs of oncoming isolation:



- increased anger and resentment, blaming others;
- ignoring signs of negative thinking and distorted thinking (a. k. a. "stinking thinking");
- intensified cravings;
- giving up healthy, self-esteem-able activities;
- returning to old self concepts ("I am a waste", "I am bad")
- feeling lonely;
- keeping secrets (not being honest with ourselves or others)
- feeling overwhelmed and out of control;
- increased sense of boredom.

The three ingredients to breaking isolation are **willingness, honesty** and **humility**. We work the 12 Steps with a sponsor. We become willing to let others in (ask for and accept help). We also become willing to be of service. We break out of our isolation by considering the needs of others without expecting anything in return.

**BREAK ISOLATION**  
Let's talk!

We must share all our sources of pain (i.e. Step 5). We are only as sick as our secrets. After sharing, we realize our secrets no longer imprison us. We can hold our head up and look others in the eyes without feeling dishonest or 'less than.'

As we work the Steps, we develop humility. We can simply be "one of" humankind – one who has made mistakes, has shortcomings, and is striving toward becoming healthier, mind, body and soul. We can also apply this understanding to others. Humility removes the judgmental barrier that has blocked us from experiencing healthy connection with others.

**Strategies to break isolation include:**

- **Saying YES!** Allow yourself to accept help, to be of service.
- **Spend time with fellows** (especially those with strong recovery) outside of meetings to build connection.
- **Keep your commitments** and build the muscle of showing up even when you feel reluctant.

- **Seek outside help if you need it.** There are no professionals in OA. If your issues around isolation run deep, it is well worth seeking outside help.
- **Use your Action Plan** to set and keep realistic goals. Review regularly with your sponsor or another fellow. Aim to do one small thing each day to break your isolation.
- **Risk rejection.** Fear keeps us paralyzed. Things may or may not work out but doing nothing guarantees you will stay isolated!



OA is not a self-help program – it never was. Like all 12 Step fellowships, ours is a self-abandonment program. If we continue to isolate, we continue to be centered on self. As long as we are centered on self we will not recover. **When we are willing to accept guidance and ask for support, our relationships with others, our Higher Power and our self all start to heal.** [-Editor]

→ **Our disease is one of isolation, and closeness is the risk most feared.** Today, with the support of my fellow OA's, I do not need guarantees that I will be accepted every time I reach out. I just go ahead and do it. **For today, I am ready to walk toward the world, to risk becoming a part of it.** – *For Today*, September 15

## AN AGONY AUNT RECOMMENDS OA

*Dear Prudence*, I have been married for 13 years. My wife, 49, is a physician. She counsels women about their weight constantly. The problem is she is overweight and has been for our entire marriage. She is about 5 feet 3 inches and weighs 200 pounds. Throughout our marriage I have tried to set an example by exercising regularly. **She has joined several gyms with "good intentions" but never follows through.** I have asked her to go walking with me, but she always has "reasons" why she can't. I am extremely worried about potential health risks such as diabetes and cardiac disease due to her obesity. Any attempt to discuss her weight problem is interpreted by her as my trying to control and change her. **She lies to others about her weight** whenever asked (like at the airport or for health insurance purposes). **She ignores the warnings and advice of other physicians; she just buys bigger clothes.** We recently attended a conference where obesity was discussed. That night at dinner she smeared a ton of butter on her rolls anyway. Nothing I can say or do makes any difference. Should I just give up on her? I love her and want to help, but she doesn't want my help. - *Concerned Husband*



*Dear CH*, A smart psychiatrist once told Prudie something rather Zenlike that applies in spades to your dilemma: "All you can do is all you can do." Your suggestions and coaxing have fallen on deaf ears. **This woman belongs in the chocolate cake wing of the Betty Ford Clinic—or a therapist's office—or a chapter of Overeaters Anonymous.**

**Her choice to do nothing is a choice—for whatever reason.** She may be, to paraphrase Kurt Vonnegut, committing suicide by chocolate mousse. She may be packing on the blubber to use as armor in the bedroom. She may be compensating for some emptiness in her life. The best thing for you to do is nothing, since you have made your position known. **A severe weight problem, like alcoholism or drug addiction, can only be tackled when the person with the problem decides to do something about it.** This is a classic case of, "Doctor, heal thyself." - *Prudie, resignedly* [abridged from *Slate.com*]

**Set Aside Prayer** ~ Dear God, please set aside anything I think I know about myself, about my disease, about the 12 Steps, and especially You; so that I may have an open mind and a new experience of all these things. Please help me to see the Truth. Amen.