

# RECOVERY LINES

A Twelve Step Publication of Overeaters Anonymous of Western Massachusetts

Mar/Apr 2020

*God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.*

## Westfield's 44<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

44th Anniversary Celebration is inspiring I attended the 44th Anniversary of the Wednesday Night New Friendship OA Meeting, in Westfield, on February 12th. It was touching as well as inspirational, to have an original group member lead the meeting. Kudos to the two speakers who presented recovery stories filled with honesty, personal experience, strength and hope. The following messages resounded with me: -My sponsor kept encouraging me - She had faith in me when I didn't -After my relapse, I kept going to meetings and eventually I became willing - Over the years, my abstinence evolved -A spiritual awakening is a process, not necessarily a one time experience -OA is a program of solutions - don't wallow in the problem, look for the solution -To make progress we must take action -My program of recovery is what works for me -OA cares -The principles and traditions are foundational to OA -In OA I learned to take responsibility for my part in what happened -I don't want to work the 12 Steps, I want to live the 12 Step

Congratulations Wednesday Night Westfield for 44 years in OA. Thank you for an amazing night. -Anonymous

## Nassau OA Unity Day Hybrid Workshop

There were 61 participants on the phone as well as a lot of people in the room for this Hybrid Workshop. Here are some of the new acronyms heard during the workshop. ~Anonymous

MAGIC = Me Accepting God is In Charge    A hammer is **not** a tool of recovery.

A B C for encouraging OA newcomers to feel welcome and at home in our meetings:

A = Ask them to help put the pamphlets out, put out the chairs, etc.,

B = Be a temporary sponsor for new people to help them get started in OA

C = Call them the next day after the meeting to say hello and see if they have any questions

## **Set Aside Prayer**

**God, please set aside everything I think I know about myself, my brokenness, my spiritual path and You, for an open mind and a new experience with myself, my brokenness, my spiritual path and especially you. Amen**

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## **Newcomer's Corner**

### Welcome to Overeaters Anonymous

"If you have tried to achieve a healthy body weight through many methods, only to fail repeatedly, or if your inability to control your eating is beginning to frighten you. Then please consider attending an OA Meeting. You will find others who have the same concerns and who share your feelings. Chances are you will find many of the answers you need.

Overeaters Anonymous is a simple program that works!" ~ from "Where Do I Start? Pg 1

**WELCOME HOME**

### **You Might Be an Overeater if...**

~Your car automatically pulls into a drive through

~If your dog takes your food and you fight to get it back

~Your 3 second rule changes to 20 sec, then a minute, then WHATEVER

~Shopping yesterday and no food for today

## MEMBER'S SHARE      Topic: Procrastination

This topic has been in my days lately. Last night I was talking about how it is fear. It is all based in fear. I want to get my hair cut. I stopped using that salon that I had used for 10-12 years. I was afraid to make an appointment. I was sure I would be angry with myself. I played out what I would say for the appointment so when the day came, I just needed to do it and face my fear. I called the phone number and found it was not in service. We checked and they had gone out of business. All that time I had wasted, hours and hours! I hope it is a lesson I can remember. There are so many ways to use that time. ~~Anonymous

This is a very big issue for me. I tend to look at everything I need to do, then I don't do whatever I was thinking of. It is hard for me to think of doing everything in small chunks. At work, I am very organized, plus I know that when I leave I don't have to think about it until the next day. When I go home, however, that is a different story. I do readings and meditation, but I am not so good at writing things down. I have been told to make 'lists' but I look around and I just feel so overwhelmed. I also really hate housework so that doesn't help either. I wish I could do a little and there are days that I do like the dishes and the laundry. I love to have my house decorated, but I always get stuck where I should really put things. My steps one, two and three took me a long time. I go on to step four, however, and I just work on it pieces at a time. I become anxious with things that come up and I put my pen down. I talk to my sponsor, but it is hard to face the next thing. This was a great writing exercise for me to pick up that pen again when I am thinking. ~~Anonymous

For me, procrastination is just another addiction. The urgent rush of fear due to a looming or impossible deadline feels like a kind of danger. On the other hand, an un-started or unfinished task or project adds to my burden of guilt about my unreliability for those who trust and need me to do what needs to be done. So, like any addiction, procrastinating gives me both a break from reality, and increases my fear and guilt about my habit of failure. I make so many excuses; and none of them need to be mentioned here -- each of us has are own set of standard excuses. I must face the fact that few, or none, of them are real or honest. All the excuses in the world will not help me be a better person, or feel healthier. So what can I do? I can face my habit of procrastination -- I must realize that it is just an unhealthy distraction from my program. I really do not like the way it makes me feel, or how it effects my health or my spiritual fitness. I really don't need it, or want it! I must use the tools of the program: I need to make that program call that I have been putting off. I need to go to that meeting I meant to get to -- even if I'm late! (But of course I *will* be on time if I can!) After all, any part of a meeting will help! I need to put 'Being On Time' into my Action Plan. I can write about why I am REALLY putting things off, and how working my program will help. (I CAN start attacking that "million things" list, if I can only *Do The Next Right Thing!*) I will read O.A.'s literature to find solutions, and accept the help that my H.P. has put there for me. I will volunteer to do service when the opportunity comes my way, and help the fellowship and my fellow O.A.s whenever I can. I can beat Procrastination, and become a better, healthier person! I'll try it today! ~Anonymous

I never used to think that procrastination was a defect of mine. I get things done, I accomplish tasks, and go to my meetings. However, upon further thought, I realize that when it comes to accepting that I'm in the process of some kind of spiritual growth, boy do I procrastinate! I may be challenged to work on a relationship, a bad habit, a slip back into old ways of being, my tendency is to push it to the back of my mind, tune it out, to procrastinate. Only when I am in a lot of pain, do I realize I have work to do. Usually this means slowing down, praying and meditating, making more phone calls and doing a 10<sup>th</sup> Step. I do wish after all of these years, I would become more aware and catch my procrastination sooner. However, I do have the tools and the steps to push me forward and not to stay stuck. As always, ACTION is the magic word! ~Anonymous

Always I would wait to feel the adrenaline rush with a tight time line – pushed to the limit, I would binge eat while completing the task (usually a report to write). For years, this is the way I functioned. It was unsettling, a continued cycle of the rush the let down and the non-functioning or at least minimally functioning. By listening and repeating the slogans in OA, one day at a time, one moment at a time, I slowly began to change. I began to prepare my day with prayer and pause. Not every day is perfect, actually I no longer strive for perfection, I just connect my plan with God on paper and then go about my day the best I can. I leave space for God to lead me in a different, new direction. So now I can be joyful in watching each day unfold, knowing I'm doing the best I can. Procrastination is no longer in my vocabulary. The pleasures and peace I feel has replaced the highs and lows of the cycle of procrastination as I live the 12 Step way. ~Anonymous

## MEMBER'S SHARE

Staying Focused on the Solution “Back of tranquility lies conquered unhappiness.” -David Grayson (For Today, February 19th) “Although the world is full of suffering, it is also full of the overcoming of it.” -Helen Keller (For Today, February 20th)

The above For Today readings embody the Serenity Prayer and what a speaker discussed at a recent OA Anniversary celebration - that OA is a program of solutions! With God's grace we learn to we conquer our demons and subsequently receive the gift of peace. In order to do this it is vital that we focus on solutions. When we change our thoughts and behaviors that enslave us in chronic unhappiness, and self-pity, we are able to to overcome (conquer) these issues to find tranquility, contentment, and peace. What a miracle! When we stay immobilized by our problems, we can not grow and change. We must move beyond the problems by focusing on the solutions. By excessively focusing only on the problem we can become blind to see beyond ourselves and our difficulties. We feed our addiction. As we learn to take responsibility for our part of the problem, and to look for the changes we can make, we become part of the solution. Changing ourselves is the essential part of OA and the 12 Steps. Has anyone noticed that food is only mentioned in the first step? Eleven steps are related to changing ourselves using the concepts and principles of OA. So, only 9% of this program is related to the disease of compulsive overeating! All the gritty details of our problems, trials and miseries do not belong in the OA rooms, if we are to achieve recovery. Maybe this leads some members to say, “How do I talk about the solution without first discussing the problem?” or “I thought we needed to discuss our problems in OA.” There is a right time and place for in-depth discussions. At meetings mentioning the general topic of the problem is probably enough background for members to actively listen. Most of our sharing/getting current needs to focus on the following: feelings, how the difficulty affects eating, ownership of one's contribution to the problem, what change(s) are needed, etc. This is how we share our “experience, strength and hope.” In-depth conversations can and should occur - perhaps with our Sponsor, or with an OA member after the meeting (or over coffee). -Anonymous

### **Fear vs. Abstinence and Action**

I do have a real fear of doing my 4<sup>th</sup> Step. I did it many, many, many years ago. I was getting a divorce. My ex-husband found it and showed it to his lawyer. I was so glad when the lawyer said that there was nothing in there that he could use. Now I am writing because it is years later and I am really ready to take that step. I am abstinent so my mind isn't in a fog. I just got done doing my first through three steps. I did them slowly this time. I really thought about what I was doing, keeping honesty always in front of my mind. I have defined my higher power, who I choose to call God, and what he means to me so that I can understand who I am turning my will and life over to every day. I read the fourth step last night and have gotten my paper out to take action. I know that when I get home from the meeting, that is what I'm going to sit down and write about the first question in the step. What a wonderful and freeing time this is in my life! ~Anonymous

### **The OA Tools**

At every meeting I attend the tools are included in the format, but often they are not talked about at meetings. I have come to realize just how important the nine tools are to my recover. **Meetings:** I go to at least three meetings a week and attend as many workshops as possible. If I don't want to go alone, I call someone. It's nice to spend the travel time with an OA friend outside of a meeting. **Telephone:** I appreciate calls and I make calls. Lately there are so many spam calls that I write in the “Love Books” to leave me a message and I will call back. I'd rather do this than miss a call. **Writing:** In the recent past, I have completed and OA 15 week step study in which writing was the answer for me. I wrote and wrote and wrote about all of the readings, whether it was assigned or not. **Anonymity:** I appreciate the anonymity in Overeaters Anonymous. I used to talk about people, but have learned and benefited from the practice of anonymity. It allows me to be me...something it took me a long time in this program to figure out. **Service:** I have done service at the group, intergroup and region level. It has allowed me to broaden my fellowship and learn so much about the workings of the OA fellowship. **Literature:** I am not an avid reader, but in meetings and getting together with my sponsees, I have read many of the wonderful literature and stories from fellow overeaters , which most of the time I can identify with something in their stories. **Action Plan:** Although I don't write down an actual action plan, I am always doing something that keeps me out of the food! **Sponsorship:** Wow, what a learning experience this has been. I see in my sponsees what I have seen in me. I enjoy sharing and caring 1:1 with people. They learn from me and I learn from them. Awesome concept! And last but very important, **A Plan of Eating:** My plan of eating has changed throughout the last 10 years and I have given away over 100 pounds. This has been my reward for working the steps, using the tools and staying abstinent. It has been truly a blessing. My program is not perfect, but I have had success with spiritual growth, emotional health and now physical recovery. I could not have done and could not do any of this without my Higher Power and the OA fellowship...Thank you all! Anonymous

## Unity Day – To be continued in the future newsletters ~ Region 6 Trustee

There is no THEY; there is only WE. That is the definition of unity. Together we can do what we could never do alone – together is unity. Many people think obviously of Tradition 1 and Concept 1, since the spiritual principle of both of those is Unity. But it seems clear to me that all of the traditions and all of the concepts work specifically to ensure the unity of OA.

Look quickly at the traditions and concepts and their relationship to the unity of our fellowship. There are three distinct ways that our traditions protect the unity of OA and its members. One is by teaching us not to try to set ourselves apart, making ourselves above OR BELOW any other member (Traditions 1, 2). Another way is by teaching us to be inclusive and protective of all members of OA (Traditions 3, 4). And a third way is by teaching us to protect our fellowship from divisions caused by outside interests (Traditions 5, 6, 7, 8).

**Tradition 1**, “Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon OA unity.” tells us why we want OA unity – we need it because our personal recovery depends on it! And how do we get it? -By putting our common welfare first.

**Concept 1**, “The ultimate responsibility and authority for OA world services reside in the collective conscience of our whole Fellowship.” shows how the unity works in our service structure. The Board of Trustees is not the ultimate responsibility and authority. The World Service Offices is not the ultimate responsibility and authority. The Managing Director of WSO is not the ultimate responsibility and authority. The collective conscience of our whole Fellowship is the ultimate responsibility and authority. That means each of us. Again, there is only us to do this – no one else can do it for us. We hold the ultimate responsibility and authority for OA world services. We are responsible for the unity of our fellowship.

**Tradition 2** assures us that “For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.” It adds a bit of a wrinkle – there’s only one ultimate authority, a loving God. BUT wait a minute, if we all have our own Higher Powers who is this loving God? It tells us clearly that this loving God is “as he may express himself in our group conscience.” And, of course, our group conscience is only us. So WE are responsible to be informed about an issue, to express our point of view even if we might be in the minority, to listen to others with an open mind, and then to express the ultimate authority of our loving God by taking a group conscience. No one person can do this – not even the most trusted servant. If one person makes the governing decisions, they have set themselves apart from the group conscience, and there is no unity.

**Concept 2** states “The OA groups have delegated to the World Service Business Conference the active maintenance of our world services; thus, WSBC is the voice, authority and effective conscience of OA as a whole.” It doesn’t say voice, authority and effective conscience of one or two factions of OA, it says as a whole. So just as in Concept 1 the collective conscience of the whole Fellowship comes from the groups, the groups give the voice, authority and conscience of OA to the delegates elected to WSBC. But we need each one for an effective group conscience; division and exclusion will destroy us.

**Tradition 3**, “The only requirement for OA membership is a desire to stop eating compulsively.” defines who comprises the WE that we protect with our unity: anyone with a desire to stop eating compulsively. If we start excluding people from the group, then we’ve lost the unity of including anyone with a desire to stop eating compulsively. If we start pointing out our differences – well, she doesn’t have that much weight to lose; well, he’s the only guy in our group and doesn’t fit in; well, she weighs over 400 pounds and can’t sit on our chairs; well, he’s a bulimic and nobody else is; well, she still eats sugar; well, he says he doesn’t have a problem with flour; well, she only reads the Big Book; well, he hasn’t worked the steps using the OA workbook. We are all individuals, there are a million differences between us, but if we have a desire to stop eating compulsively, then we can be a member of Overeaters Anonymous, and our unity should be protected at all costs.

**Concept 3**, “The right of decision, based on trust, makes effective leadership possible.” asks us as group members to trust that our trusted servants will work toward OA unity, and we give them the right to make decisions for us.

**Tradition 4**, “Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or OA as a whole.” is another definition of unity. If our group doesn’t consider the effects of our decisions on other groups or OA as a whole, we can cause confusion and division in the fellowship. If one group decides to change the 12 Steps, it affects other groups and OA as a whole, and divides us, disrupting our unity. If a group makes an autonomous decision and then claims that theirs is the only right way and all other OA groups are “doing it” wrong, they set themselves apart and disrupt the unity of the whole.

**Concept 4**, “The right of participation ensures equality of opportunity for all in the decision-making process.” is about equality, which is one of our bases for unity – we need each member, each member being as important as any other member.

# SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES

## Public Info/Professional Outreach

Help WMI spread the word to young people, colleges, medical professionals: Join our committee:

Email: [newsletter@wmass.org](mailto:newsletter@wmass.org)

Brochure Holders are available

## SERVICE IS SLIMMING

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### NEW (HYBRID) PHONE MEETING

If you cannot get to a meeting, the Sunday Longmeadow meeting has opened up a phone line so that you can join the meeting. A Hybrid meeting is a combination of a face to face meeting and a phone meeting.

**PHONE NUMBER: 712-770-5505**

**CODE: 753581#**

# TRADITIONS AND CONCEPTS OF SERVICE

**Tradition 3:** The only requirement for OA membership is a desire to stop eating compulsively.

Spiritual Principle: Identity

**Concept 3:** The right of decision, based on trust, makes effective leadership possible.

Spiritual Principle: Autonomy

**Tradition 4:** Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or OA as a whole.

Spiritual Principle: Trust

**Concept 4:** The right of participation ensures equality of opportunity for all in the decision-making process.

Spiritual Principle: Equality

## SLOGANS

- ♥ Easy Does It
- ♥ Let Go and Let God!
- ♥ Happiness is an inside job
- ♥ Principles before personalities
- ♥ Attitude of Gratitude
- ♥ Willing to go to any lengths
- ♥ Half measures avail us nothing
- ♥ It works, if you work it
- ♥ You can't keep it unless you give it away
- ♥ It takes as long as it takes
- ♥ Keep Coming Back
- ♥ Failing to plan, is planning to fail
- ♥ Bring the body, the mind will follow
- ♥ Name it, claim it, dump it
- ♥ You spot it, you got it
- ♥ Let it begin with me



**PLEASE cut this Bookmark and share it**



### OA PROMISE

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

No longer is there a sense of hopelessness, no longer must we each depend on our own unsteady willpower.

We are all together now, reaching out our hands for power and strength greater than ours,

And as we join hands, we find love and understanding beyond our wildest

## UPCOMING OA EVENTS

- **Sunday, March 22, 2020, Swk Sunday Meeting Anniversary, 3:30-4:30**  
Southwick Congregational Church, Rte 202/10 and Depot St, Southwick, MA
- **Saturday, Mar 28<sup>th</sup>, 2020, Greenfield Mtg. Sponsorship Workshop, 9:30-11:00am** Franklin Medical Center Conference Room C (Baystate Health) 164 High St. (Immediate right, once in front doors, facing High St., but driveway is on Beacon St.
- **Sunday, Mar 29, Holyoke Meeting Anniversary, 7-8:30pm**  
Holyoke Medical Center, Rm 188, Holyoke
- **Saturday, May 9<sup>th</sup>, 2020, Fun and Fit and Fellowship in OA, 2-4pm**  
Sponsored by the Feeding Hills Meeting, St. David's Church, Springfield St, Feeding Hills, MA
- **WMI Retreat, June 5, 6, & 7, 2020, Genesis Spiritual Life Center**  
53 Mill St, Westfield, MA - Space available, Register NOW See flyer on website
- **Region 6 - OA Convention 2020 Burlington, MA** (<https://oaregion6.org>)  
Fri, Oct 23, 2020 3:00 p.m. - Sun, Oct 25, 2020 12:00 p.m.  
Boston Marriot Burlington, One Burlington Mall Road, Burlington, MA 01803.  
**Registration is currently \$55**  
**Hotel rooms and meal plan sign up is now available on the website**  
**Also: If you are looking for a roommate or need a roommate check the website**

Contact the Intergroup with any upcoming events. If there is difficulty with submitting an event, email the corresponding secretary at [correspondingsecretary@oawmass.org](mailto:correspondingsecretary@oawmass.org) or [websitecoordinator@oawmass.org](mailto:websitecoordinator@oawmass.org).



### Serenity Prayer

God grant me the

SERENITY to

accept the things I

cannot change;

the COURAGE to

change the things

I can; and

WISDOM to know  
the difference.

### Responsibility

**Pledge:**

Always to extend

the hand and

heart of OA to all

who share my

compulsion; for

this I am

responsible

