



# OA Desert Recovery

July & August 2016

NEWSLETTER@OASOUTHERNAZ.ORG

## DUMPING MY FEELINGS ON "THE PAGE"

I think the writing and literature tools are the two I use the most. [I find that reading in the OA daily devotionals gets me started writing in the mornings.](#) I alternate first reading the "For Today" then the "Voices of Recovery." More times than I can count the topics have spurred me to new thoughts. I think about how the reading applies to my life and I write my thoughts in my journal. Often I find some thought that touches on

what is happening that particular day, and I sometimes feel compelled to email my thoughts to other OA members.

When I first got started in recovery meetings and before realizing my food compulsion, I would journal, writing my thoughts down until I could see what was really bothering me. I still pick up my journal to write about what I am thinking and feeling. It helps me to dump all the thoughts in my head, whether or not they seem to connect to each other, so that I can sift through the thoughts and gain some clarity. [I use my journal to write letters to God.](#) I dump out all of my thoughts,

concerns and worries, telling God what is in my mind and on my heart. I record what I have eaten and my plans for the day.

Over my many years in recovery, I have collected all the literature available in the OA library and I subscribe to the Lifeline magazine. I have read, at one time or another, every word in every OA book. [What I keep coming back to are the words in the AA Big Book, the OA 12 x 12 and the daily devotionals.](#) I like that the home meeting I attend, as often as possible, has a rotating format so that we read from these books at some time during the

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## NEWS FROM OA SPRING ASSEMBLY

I recently attended the Spring Assembly in Abilene, TX. The region comprises seven states: Arizona, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas and Utah. Per our by-laws, *“The assembly of Intergroup (IG) representatives is the group conscience of the IGs of Region 3. The purpose of the Region is to help carry the message of OA recovery to the still-suffering compulsive overeater.”* There were a total of 18 representatives added to five Steering Committee members, yielding 23 voting members. There are 24 Intergroups in Region 3; therefore, not all were represented and one or two IGs had more than one representative.

A Trouble Shooting Workshop focused on the topic of promoting unity and diminishing an “us versus them” mentality. The differences sometimes have focused on food plans, different literature and meeting formats. **The primary**

**outgrowth of the workshop was to be ever mindful that we are all part of OA.** I was asked to serve as one of the seven IG representatives who participated in the audit for Region 3. This is a procedure conducted at both the Spring and Fall assemblies.

Highlights of business included full discussion of six amendments. Prior to this there were 10 items on the Consent Agenda that were briefly described and approved. Four of the six amendments were passed and essentially involved updating or removing certain committee member service requirements. Two amendments were withdrawn for further review, one involving the need for human oversight in some aspects of newer technology, and the other item addressed increasing the prudent reserve for Region 3.

Highlights of committees resulted from working lunches for *12<sup>th</sup> Step Within (TSW), By-laws, Ways/ Means/Finance (W&M) and Public Outreach and Public Information (PIPO)*. TSW proposed adding on more workshops, improving communication, and sharing ideas

between different OA service bodies. By-laws will research other regions’ trustee goals and examine other regions’ by-laws. W&M will update the auditing procedure and ensure three different states are involved in the process, revise handbook, explore fundraising and further investigate the Prudent Reserve amendment. PIPO will investigate upcoming trade show participation and research individual IGs for successful PIPO events.

I served on the PIPO committee and will consult with our own SEAZ IG to look at previous events and forward information to the Region 3 PIPO committee chair. **The next event in which region reps will be participating is the Fall Assembly in September, occurring in Austin, TX.**

Elisa M.  
(Senior delegate)



- Sept.1-4, 2016  
World Service Convention  
Boston, MA.
- Sept. 9-11, 2016  
Region 3 Fall Assembly  
Austin, TX.
- Annual OA Fall Retreat  
October 28-30, 2016  
Theme: “Alive In Recovery”  
Holy Trinity Monastery,  
St. David, AZ.

**Practice  
Living  
Abstainly  
Now**

**Admit  
Believe  
Commit**

**Step 7**—Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.

## TO ASK IS THE ANSWER

Humility has been a challenge for me. In the past, I think my focus was on feeling humble; I would try ways to make myself feel humble. I would change my facial expression, body language, and words to control myself into feeling humble. Maybe I was trying to control others, so that they would see me as humble.

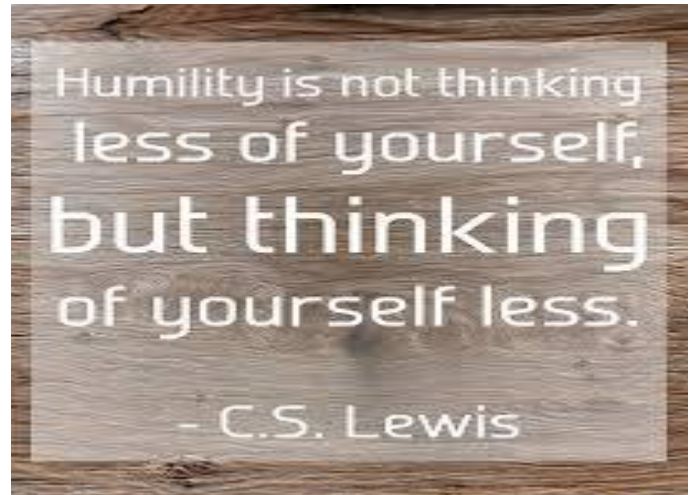
I've had new insight when reading Step 7. Humility is not a feeling at all—it is an action! **This is a program of action.** To ask is a concrete action demonstrating humility.

To be truly open to the answer, whether it is yes, no, or maybe, is to trust and have faith. **To receive a “yes” to my asking and fully appreciate it, is a gift of gratitude. To receive a “no” and receive it without anger, is a gift of acceptance. To receive a “maybe” and to be able to wait, is a gift of patience.**

To ask is to admit that I need help, and that I can't do it alone. To ask is to be vulnerable because I bare my soul and express what I need. To ask puts me in relationship with God and my fellows.

This is a spiritual program and a “we” program. **Together we can do what we could never do alone.**

Maureen T.



**Tradition 8**---OA should remain forever non-professional, but our service centers may employ special workers.

### SPECIAL WORK BY SPECIAL WORKERS

*Our Intergroup learned something about Tradition Eight last year. Ours is not an English-speaking country, so we wanted OA literature translated into our own language.*

*Several people were enthusiastic in beginning the translation of the 12 Steps section of the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous. Others corrected the text those translators had written. We copied this translation and sold it, even though it was far from perfect.*

*We had started out thinking we could translate literature without employing anyone, but once our Intergroup had enough funds to pay a professional translator, our experience taught us we needed to hire one. OA members reviewed the translated text to ensure our proper use of the OA vocabulary.*

*Now we are looking forward to going through the same procedure with the 12 Traditions and printing both texts into an OA “Twelve and Twelve” in our language.*

*Transformation newsletter, Region 5*

## An Under-eater in OA

I am writing to offer the perspective of a newcomer that suffers with anorexia and compulsive exercise behaviors. Throughout the past month, I have been attending OA meetings regularly and the only Anorexics and Bulimics Anonymous meeting in Tucson. [Because OA seems to be a more established program and there aren't a lot of support groups on an outpatient basis for anorexics, OA has become a safe haven for me.](#)

Following a recent meeting, I was feeling particularly low and physically very uncomfortable in my body. Because I am so new to OA and to Tucson in general, I don't have very much support in terms of people. Instead, I reached for the OA newsletter I had picked up just that evening. This particular newsletter featured [a photo of a woman with the Serenity Prayer tattooed on the side of her ribcage.](#) The photo was beautiful, but all I saw was the size of the woman's body. Her size bears a startling resemblance to my body when I am still using behaviors associated with my eating disorder. Humans come in all shapes and sizes, and although that shape and size may be perfectly healthy for that woman, it is definitely not for me (and not for most of the human race).

When I brought this issue to my home OA group, I was met with a lot of compassion, but most didn't seem to relate to it. Perhaps not everyone with anorexia struggles with body image issues and distortions, but as someone that does, [the photo was extremely triggering.](#) There is definitely a time and a place for exposing oneself to triggering images and situations, but not within literature that has been designed as support material.

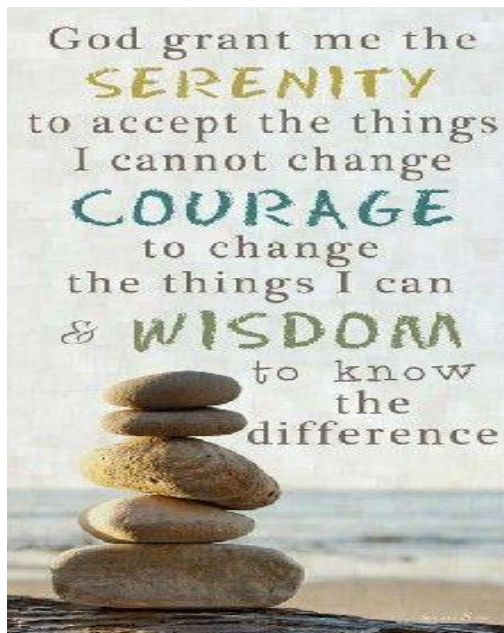
My first negative body image memory, that my thighs were too large while wearing a sugar plum fairy

costume for my ballet recital, was when I was 4. I am now 31 so the body image challenges are deeply rooted. When I raised the issue of body image in the OA meeting, the perspective that "body size doesn't matter" was offered as a solution to my discomfort with the image.

[I have been trying to make my body size less of a focal point for many years.](#) The body distortions and body image challenges that I suffer are very painful. My body size is not something that I can easily convince myself to accept, even when I am underweight or at a healthy body weight. While I recognize the temptation to tell someone with a small body frame that they are beautiful and have nothing to worry about, it is simply not helpful and can actually be rather harmful for me.

Glossing over the issue of body image makes me feel that I don't deserve support at all, that I am weak and pathetic for complaining. Many bulimics or anorexics I know are very triggered by images they see and constantly compare their body size with others. So [I am writing today not just for myself, but for other men and women out there that might attend an OA meeting in the future.](#) I want them to feel supported and heard even if their experience is not one that other OAs can relate to directly.

Holly, Tucson, AZ



Here are the next two verses to this prayer. The last two verses will be printed in the September/October edition.

***Living one day at a time;  
Enjoying one moment at a time;  
Accepting hardship as the  
pathway to peace.***

***Taking, as He did,  
This sinful world as it is,  
not as I would have it.***



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month. I still, after all these years in recovery, get something out of reading the Step and the Tradition of the month.

I use the writing to monitor how I am doing. Am I checking in with myself during the day to report about what is happening in my day? *I know that when I am upset, the first thing I reach for is my journal.* I ask myself questions about what I am thinking and feeling. This technique helps me to get in touch with my feelings. I was inappropriately touched when I was young and I have come to realize, through working the steps and processing my feelings instead of eating and stuffing them, that I use food to disconnect from the feelings I find hard to accept. *When I write about those feelings and trust God to help me sort through those feelings, I do not "have to" eat over them.*

I have been able to grow up and mature in my emotional life because I was willing to take the suggestion of writing about my feelings. I am a long way from the immature 29-year-old I was when I attended my first recovery meeting. *The writing and literature tools have been the most helpful for me to get in touch with what I think and feel about some issue that is bothering me, tempting me to compulsively eat.* I thank God for the progress that I have made in walking this path of recovery, trusting Him to guide and direct my every step.  
Darlyn

## LEARNING A NEW WAY

*This week a phone call got me thinking about writing and literature, so here are my thoughts.*

**Writing**--a sponsor insisted I write before telephoning her with an upset. Her reason was that *the process of writing would slow down my impulsive brain and enable me to see what my part was in reacting with upset.* For the most part my experience has proved her correct. Another suggestion she had was never to confront another person with my upset feelings at them. I was expected to write, share it with her, and then see if there was a gentle request I could make to the person to prevent the situation repeating itself. This has been harder to follow.

*I had so much group therapy that taught me, "when you \_\_\_, I feel \_\_\_ and I would prefer that you \_\_\_" method of confronting others. I did not want to let it go. But I practice what my sponsor suggested. The AA "12 x 12" says in Step 10, pg. 96, "every time we are disturbed, no matter what the cause, there is something wrong with us." That sentence certainly gives credence to the wisdom of the above writing practice.*

**Literature**--Now, the Big Book, pages 100-101, comes to mind regarding the issue of people mentioning specific or general binge food information in their sharing--*"shielding the sick man is doomed to failure."* For one who cannot meet the conditions of life, *"there is something the matter with his spiritual status."* *It is my opinion that trying to control what other people say is not helpful to me or to them.* Working on my own spiritual status is the best use of my time and energy.

Anna Mouse

We have an on-going need for stories, articles, poetry and original artwork to be published in the newsletter. Issues are bi-monthly, published in the odd-numbered months, and deadline for each issue is always the 5th of that month. In 2016, we would like to focus on the Tools of Recovery. For the September/October edition, we will feature: Plan of Action. The co-chairs meet weekly to edit items received and need submissions to be as early as possible.

[Newsletter@OASouthernAZ.org](mailto:Newsletter@OASouthernAZ.org)

## The ABC's of Working the Steps

Reading the OA literature, I see the phrase: "work the steps." I wonder what that means? I have heard Steps 1-2-3 summarized as: "I can't; God can; I think I'll let Him." I have come up with an **A.B.C. acronym: Admit, Believe, Commit**. I have to "admit" that I have a problem with food, "believe" that God can and will help me with my problem and "commit" to asking God for His guidance and direction to maneuver the situations and emotions that come up in my daily life.

But what about the rest of the steps? How do we "work" them? Looking over Steps 4 & 5, I see that I am supposed to look at my past experiences and see how I got where I am at. I need to honestly look at the past and then talk with a trusted friend/sponsor who can help me gain clarity. Steps 6 & 7 are working at recognizing our patterns of behavior/what we did and still do to cope with our problems, and asking God to help us find "a new way of living, of acting on life instead of reacting to it." Steps 8 & 9 involve cleaning up the wreckage of our past. Here is where we learn to admit we made a mistake and apologize.

Step 10 starts with the word "continuing" and it is continuing to work through the process of taking inventory, discussing what we did, learning how to live in recovery, and making a living amends. The nice thing about Step 11 is that in the process of working Steps 1-10, I am also working on improving my connection to, my understanding of and my relationship with God. And finally, I see Step 12 as sharing what I am learning as I learn it.

I haven't come up with a step-by-step acronym to go with the A.B.C. that I mentioned earlier. I think it is because it is more important for me to focus on the basics. If I can daily Admit, Believe and Commit, then the rest will follow. When I have practiced daily the first three steps, I become ready to look at the past, my part in what happened and apologize for my dysfunctional behavior. I, then, think that as I continue to practice daily the A-B-C process, that I naturally improve my conscious contact with the God of my understanding and share what is happening in my life.

My daily recovery depends on how well I get at remembering and admitting that I have a problem with food, believing that **God can and will help me**, and my commitment to turning my will and my life over to the care of God.

Anne

