



OA Desert Recovery

May / June
2015

NEWSLETTER@OASOUTHERNAZ.ORG

Refocusing On My Primary Purpose

When I was on vacation last summer and traveling across the country, I attended as many meetings as possible. OA's national website of registered groups helped me find a meeting almost everywhere I stayed so I was able to sample three or four meetings a week over a five week trip, and I attended some meetings more than once when I stayed longer than a day at any location. This was during most of June and many meetings were discussing Step 6 or Tradition 6, so I heard a variety of viewpoints. One woman shared thoughts that I believe are the true essence of Tradition 6.

She said she had been in trouble many times because she let money, property or prestige dictate her life.

Before she came to OA she thought she never had enough of any or all of them, and in her drive to get as much as possible, she alienated a lot of people. She had to be better than everybody else, or at least make others think she was better. She had to possess what she thought was proof of being better, like a bigger house or more money or expensive clothes or a nicer car.

She told how her envy and greed and arrogance, but also a lack of self-esteem, caused her to lose everything she achieved. When she got the bigger house her husband moved out, after she got the nicer car her selfish son drove away in it and never came back, after she got more money her spoiled daughter spent it on drugs. She related that ***the terrible hurt and pain she experienced in hitting her rock bottom also helped her find joy--*** in the God she had previously abandoned and in realizing how unimportant "things" were.

She went on to tell of her struggles to let go, to stop stuffing her feelings with food and to give rather than to get. As I listened to her, I realized she chose to focus on the primary purpose of our program, to establish a close and personal relationship with her Higher Power and to share her recovery with others. As she finished her comments, she said she still had obstacles to overcome but she felt ***she had finally acquired her newest and best possessions—peace and serenity.*** That powerful message heard one night in small town America still resonates with me a year later. How thankful I am this program is available and so wide spread that enlightenment can be found anywhere if I choose to seek it.

Peggy P.

Concept Six - Responsibility

“The World Service Business Conference (WSBC) has entrusted the Board of Trustees with the primary responsibility for the administration of Overeaters Anonymous.”

It is an awesome privilege to represent our Intergroup at WSBC, and elect trustees who will guide and direct the administration of OA as a whole in the coming year.

We chose people with solid recovery who have a proven service record. They are human like the rest of us, they have to work this program one day at a time, yet they show

all of us the courage and discipline that it takes to recover and to serve others. They have learned to approach service responsibilities as a privilege, rather than as a burden.

In my own life, the **principle of “responsibility”** is something I can work on every day. I’m learning to take action on problems as they arise rather than sitting back hoping they will resolve themselves or that someone else will step in and do it for me. I’ve learned how to ask for help from someone more knowledgeable when I don’t know what to do. I don’t procrastinate like I used to - putting things off until the last

minute or until things get so desperate I have to act. I’m not perfect, but I’m growing and trusting my Higher Power for guidance and direction. I take action when action is indicated. **OA is a great place to “grow up.”**

Neva

Overheard at WSBC 2015: **“It’s either good, or it’s an opportunity for growth.”**

Step 6: Were entirely ready to have God remove all of these defects of character

Willingness to Be Willing

There is so much involved in this step. Is anyone entirely ready? I have found that it is a day-to-day process. The key principle behind the step is willingness. I have asked and been asked the same question, “What if I am not willing?” The answer given was: **“to pray for the willingness to be willing.”**

That answer seems to be a conundrum. I assure you that it is not. The surprising thing about taking this advice is that it works much like “acting as if.” When I need to do something but I do not want to and I pray for help from God and He helps me to do what I cannot or do not want to do. **He gives me the willingness I need to do whatever I need to do.** I have used this solution when I didn’t want to get up out of bed, when I wanted to stop thinking about something, and when I wanted to eat. It works!

Recently I have come to understand that even when I thought I was willing, I really wasn’t. I was willing for the weight to be gone, for the consequences to my poor choice to be taken away, but I was unwilling to stop what I was doing. The solution to that problem only became obvious, to me, when I was willing to get honest with myself and examine my motives. It was only then that I realized that I was saying one thing and doing another. Once I was willing and able to become completely honest about myself, I was able to pray for the willingness to be willing. **All it takes is a little, tiny seed of willingness to take action.**

Darlyn

“The more we become willing to depend on a Higher Power, the more independent we actually are.” – AA Twelve and Twelve, p. 36.



June 26, 27 & 28th, 2015
OA Annual Summer Retreat:

**“Sunlight of the Spirit...
...Let Your Light Shine”**

Embry Riddle Aeronautical University
3700 Willow Creek Road
Prescott, Arizona 86301

OA Workshop May 30th

“The Difference
Between Abstinence and
A Plan of Eating”

St James Church @ 1-4 PM

Annual SEAZ OA Retreat

October 23-25, 2015

Holy Trinity Monastery, St. David, AZ.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Retreat Committee needs your service

We will be meeting after the monthly Intergroup meeting at St James Methodist Church, 3255 N Campbell Ave, Tucson, about 12:30pm. Please join us in creating the best-ever retreat weekend. We have jobs big and small that need your talent. Even if you cannot attend the retreat, it does not mean you cannot be of service. Join us, bring your wonderful ideas and be of service.

Tisket, Tasket....Do we want to make a Basket?

In years past, meeting groups chose to donate a basket to the Retreat Committee to be raffled at the weekend event to help raise money. Please discuss at your meeting IF you would like to do a basket, IF NOT how will you help the Retreat Committee? Please designate someone from your meeting to contact me, Nancy K at oaclown@yahoo.com to let me know what your meeting has decided to do.

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.

For the July/August edition we would welcome items tied to #7 and #8 Steps, Traditions and Concepts of program recovery. However, the co-chairs meet weekly to edit items received and need submissions to be as early as possible.

Newsletter@OASouthernAZ.org

Ego Gets In the Way

My daily step work involves reading a paragraph in the AA or OA 12 and 12 and writing reflectively and relating it to my own life. This practice has been ongoing for many months, and it has made a huge impact on my daily life and overall recovery.

When I think about Step Five, I think about this quote in the AA 12/12 on page 59. It reads "Because we were still bothered by fear, self-pity, and hurt feelings, it was probable we couldn't appraise ourselves fairly at all."

*What a true statement that is! On occasion, I play cards with some people who are in recovery. The other players try to teach me strategies and I get angry inside. I don't want other people to know more than me! I don't want others to teach me (I want to do it myself!!!). And then I wonder how much of this attitude has colored my work environment. When my office manager is trying to teach me something, I get angry inside, too. And when my sponsor makes suggestions, I often get defiant and angry. **I do not like being taught.** I struggle with a fierce independent spirit (ego).*

I don't like seeing this truth about myself, but feel hopeful that as I continue working the steps, God will continue healing me.

~Anonymous



Airing the Laundry

This morning in a meeting we reviewed Step 5, and I decided I was ready to share my writings on it. My first phone call to a Fifth Step sponsor started me crying, unable to talk for almost five minutes. She waited patiently for me to speak, and, when asked, she agreed to listen to me.

The experience was so comfortable, almost as if we were chatting while we hung my clothes on the line. She helped me see that all my clothes were important: the good stuff, the worn stuff (baggage from the past) and the clothes that needed mending (living amends).

She helped me see that the old underwear (worn and from the past) could now be thrown out because together we had looked at it and talked about it. Now throwing it in the garbage was okay---finished!

There we were, sitting at the table, sipping a cup of tea with our feet up, looking at those clothes blowing in the wind. **Finally, I could really see that what I had on my clothesline didn't look as bad as I had thought.** I was not comparing what I had to what others had on their clotheslines. This was all about my life and me.

She helped me see that every day I might need to hang out a few things by doing a Tenth-Step Inventory, and she promised doing that would lighten my weekly wash (review of each day). She was right; it did help. Do I forget sometimes? Yes, I do. As long as **I keep putting my hand in yours,** I'll be okay and keep learning one day at a time.

Edited and reprinted from Lifeline, May/2013

STEP FIVE: Admitted to God, to ourselves and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.

STEP 6: Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.

TRADITION FIVE: Each group has but one primary purpose---to carry its message to the compulsive overeater who still suffers.

Victor, Not Victim

To live life as a Victor and not a victim, I had to be willing to face the painful past instead of running to food for comfort and security. I surrendered to God that these memories will never change, but God can change me. Tired of dragging all insecurities from childhood throughout my adulthood, I chose to get well and became willing to take ANY risk to get IT!

I faced the fear of opening my hurts to another and took a leap of faith that this person would accept me even after they learned of all my weaknesses. I waited for days in apprehension of being rejected...but none was given. From this unexpected miracle, I learned to accept and trust myself for who I am with my own unique past.

Letting go of past hurts involves looking to the future in a new way. I had to become satisfied by being in God's will. I learned that honesty and maturity is required to let go of the past. You CAN discover all the treasures inside of you when you put trust and faith in Steps 4 and 5.

In these Steps I became willing to go back to the place of my frustration and pain. However, instead of running away to food, I brought God and the OA program with me through the doorways of my painful past. With this courage I confronted my fear and frustration - no longer was I a victim but a Victor. I was ready for emotional healing and the acceptance of daily miracles.

– Grateful OA member, Sierra Vista

SIMPLE AND PURE

The AA long form of this Tradition says each group “ought to be a spiritual entity” (Alcoholics Anonymous, 4th edition, p. 563). A spiritual entity means to me that OA is not out for a person's money, has no agenda to fulfill and has only good in mind for all who walk through its doors. OA wants to help me, and because I am a member of OA, I want to help others who share my compulsion.

This Tradition tells me that people still suffer, including many current OA members as well as those who have never heard of OA. Recovery from compulsive eating may be one of the hardest things that an individual can attempt. The Twelve- Step approach to recovery is simple but not easy. I have learned that anything worthwhile usually does not come easy. Because the fruits of working the OA program are worthwhile, recovery will take great effort for most of us. As a consequence, many, including myself, experience difficult times in recovery. I need to carry the message to those who need to hear it. I need to hear it myself.

And just what is the message? The message is that there is recovery from compulsive eating. Before coming to OA, I felt hopeless and didn't think anything could be done about my eating disorder and the constant struggle I had with food and weight. When I was younger I received the message that anyone who loves to eat will struggle with weight and diets for the rest of his life. I felt doomed, cursed, cheated and angry. Why me? I ended up hating myself because I considered myself defective. But one blessed day when I finally gave up and came to OA, everything changed. OA gave me hope because people in the meetings carried the message of Tradition Five to me. Simple. And for that, I am grateful.

Edited and reprinted from Calling newsletter, South Central Pennsylvania Intergroup, May/2013

Courtesy, Civility and Love- Concept 5 & 6

Recently, several OA members told me they had received scathing email and phone messages from another member who questioned their abstinence or qualifications to give service because of their size. Some have reacted so strongly to these unsolicited communications that they avoid meetings attended by the sender.

While I haven't received such communication, I was disturbed at their tone and content. What if a vulnerable member, whether newcomer or long-timer, receives such invective? That member may view one well-intentioned message as a condemnation from all of OA or may decide to leave the program over it. That could be a death sentence.

The Fifth Tradition states that our primary purpose is to carry the message of recovery to those who still suffer. We may believe that means carrying it to those who have not yet entered our rooms, but sometimes it must be carried within. How do we carry the message to those in our fold---with outstretched arms or a baseball bat?

Like the Twelfth-Step-Within, perhaps it is time to begin the service of the Fifth-Tradition-Within. Service bodies could explore how to help members help each other carry the message in a supportive manner, such as in workshops, newsletter articles or meetings.

To effectively carry the message of recovery to another, I must do so with courtesy, compassion and courage. If I am concerned about the quality of another person's recovery, how can I best communicate that concern? I may discuss with my sponsor and trusted friends (and my Higher Power) what I want to say and why---and I must respect anonymity. What is my motive? Am I taking another person's inventory? Is this a true concern that needs to be expressed to save someone's life?

If it is appropriate to forge ahead, should I send an email or would it be better to call or to speak in person? How would I feel if I received the message? How would I prefer to receive it? Am I prepared to extend the same courtesy? I may want to rehearse with my sponsor or a trusted recovering member, so I can ensure I am speaking in kindness but not shying away from stating a painful truth.

To fully receive the message, I must be open-minded, discerning and grateful. As a recovering addict, it is natural to shroud myself in a cloak of denial. I may need to hear that if I change my behavior, my recovery will improve. I need to be open-minded if another OA member lovingly suggests that I look at my physical recovery. Am I gaining weight? Am I overeating but believe I am abstinent? Am I in denial about a character defect? I must remember this disease is cunning, baffling and powerful and that OA members are here to help me recover.

I have the right to take what I like and leave the rest, to disagree with someone's concern or to tell someone I think he or she is out of line. *I have the right and responsibility to look within myself* when someone expresses concern, to be courteous no matter how others treat me, to adjust my food plan if I might be eating too much, and to amend my behavior when I am acting outside the spiritual suggestions of our beloved Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions.

Finally, I have the responsibility to keep coming back to meetings and to not allow personalities to triumph over principles. I must remember that the opinion of one member is not the opinion of Overeaters Anonymous as a whole. I hope all of us will be courageous enough to offer kind but truthful words to members in trouble, and will be open-minded enough to hear concerns. *Courtesy, civility and love will carry our message* of recovery further than we can imagine.

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