



OA Desert Recovery

September
& October
2015

NEWSLETTER@OASOUTHERNAZ.ORG

ACHIEVING CLARITY IN MY EVERY DAY LIFE

Concept Ten: Service responsibility is balanced by carefully defined service authority; therefore, duplication of efforts is avoided. **Principle of Concept Ten:** Clarity

I realize I have been struggling with clarity. I have not been using the tools of the program as I normally do. I am still praying. I have a meal plan and follow it but I was not reading the literature daily, journaling daily or talking daily with my sponsor. I did not have the clarity that I would normally have had when I

1) Pray to God for clarity; 2) Take the time to think, pray and act; and 3) Fail to plan.

The definition of clarity is clearness of perception or understanding; freedom from ambiguity and the state or quality of being clear or transparent to the eye. When I read this I thought of the concept of transparency.

First I must be willing to seek God's help to clarify what I am thinking and feeling, determine responsibilities for myself and others and then decide what I need to do.

I feel as though I am struggling when I lose my ability to discern what I am thinking and feeling. I ask myself, "What happened?" Until getting into recovery and using the tools of the program, I was unable to explain to myself or anyone else what had happened and why I seemed to fall off the wagon of recovery. Through the use of the OA tools, I am better able to know myself and experience the clarity that God wants me to have.

I now see that **clarity is a two-fold process**. I need to perceive what I am thinking and feeling and I must be willing to be transparent with others. When I talk with my sponsor, attend a meeting and talk with fellow OAs or when I journal about my thoughts, God helps me to gain clarity through the process. When I am willing to be honest and share what is going on in my head, I

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GETTING TOGETHER IN O.A. RECOVERY

As the fall season rolls around think of the “treat” you can have if you attend the annual OA Recovery Retreat at the Holy Trinity Monastery in St. David, AZ. This year we are coming together **October 23-25** to observe the theme, “Recovery Frozen? Turn Up the Heat!” The only trick is, you have to register now and here are the details of how to do it.

Check-in starts at 3:30 p.m. on Friday, Oct. 23, and the actual retreat begins with the 6 p.m. meal, ending mid-day on Sunday, Oct. 25. The registration fee is \$120 for 2 nights and 5 meals and includes all the activities of the retreat.

If you want to attend only the Saturday session, registration fee is \$40 and includes 3 meals and the activities. Checks will be cashed on Friday, Oct. 16, after which time there will be **NO REFUNDS**.

Retreat questions, contact Mike A. (520) 390-6377 spunkyoldfart@yahoo.com or Nancy K. (520) 241-0019 oacrown@yahoo.com.

Registration questions contact Marti G. (520) 247-5043 mgilliam@theriver.com.

There are also a **limited number of scholarships available** on a first-come basis and are limited to half the cost of registration. Forms are available from your Intergroup Representative or on our website www.oasouthernaz.org.



WANTED: GENTLY USED OR NEW CLOTHING

Now is a great time to clean out your closets as **the Retreat Committee is asking for donations** of clean/gently used or new clothing for the indoor Clothing Exchange Sale to be held during the retreat weekend. **Items other than clothing that can be donated** include shoes, purses and jewelry.

The clothing exchange is a portion of the fundraising at the retreat that directly supports our SEAZ Intergroup so we can continue to be self-supporting. **Clothing will be displayed** in the hall during the retreat and there will be plenty of time to look over what is available and try on anything you might like to purchase.

If you have clothing to donate, contact your Intergroup Representative. If there is no IR for your OA meeting, call Chris N. (520) 721-1085 or 661-1991 (cell) and a clothing pick-up will be arranged, or items can be dropped off at Chris' house, 9631 E. Stella (area of Golf Links/Harrison). The committee asks that donated clothing be clean, folded and packed in boxes.

Donations will be accepted through Saturday, Oct. 17. You can feel good about cleaning out an item you no longer wear or that does not fit, and fellow OA members get new pieces of clothing for their wardrobes. So start down-sizing your closets now!

ACHIEVING CLARITY IN MY EVERY DAY LIFE (continued)

gain some insight into physical triggers (foods that trigger my compulsiveness), emotional triggers (situations that set me up for problems with food) and spiritual triggers (overextending myself) so that I am unable or unwilling to maintain the activities that keep me feeling connected to God, allowing me to hear His guidance and direction.

I get clarity by being abstinent. Through abstinence I establish and maintain my connection to God, my Higher Power. For me, I see I need to use all the tools of the OA recovery program to maintain my abstinence and ultimately my clarity. The phrase “Half measures avail us nothing” come to mind. If I slack off of what I know to do, I lose my clarity. Darlyn

More Thoughts about the Abstinence Workshop

I liked what we heard and saw at the Abstinence Workshop. First, we learned "*abstinence is the same for all members*" as per the WSBC 2011 definition. "The details of a plan of eating are different for each one of us. *The disease may manifest differently in each of us*: grazing, bingeing, overeating at meals, under eating, and purging in various forms. The purpose of a plan of eating is to help us achieve abstinence"

We did group brainstorming on those two headings. *We wrote personal affirmations for how to achieve abstinence.* We went through this abstinence checklist with one speaker sharing on each point or question and we did two more writing exercises One involved a small group discussion in which my group only had time for 3 of the 6 items.

The final page in *the handout listed resources*. There were between 40-45 attending and, for me, it was a profitable and stimulating time. Judith

Delegates Meeting Now

Our delegates are meeting Sept. 25-27 in Albuquerque, NM for the Fall Convention of Region 3.

Applications for open service positions of Vice Chair, Communications Secretary and Treasurer will be reviewed and hopefully filled.

More information on this and other business items from this conference will be in the next edition of the newsletter.



Win 7 nights
in a beautiful 3 bedroom
beachfront condo
in San Carlos, Mexico

Southeastern Arizona Intergroup OA Fundraiser
2015

Funds will be split 50/50 and donated to WSO
and Region 3 for high priority projects

Tickets \$10 each or 3 for \$25

Tickets available until Fall Retreat, October 23-25, Only 400 Available

Contact Rene T with questions (520)395-7250

How about a vacation in San Carlos?

Imagine winning 7 nights in a beautiful 3 bedroom condo on the beach in San Carlos, Mexico!

One of our OA members has generously donated the use of a week in her beautiful condo to our SEAZ Intergroup. **It was decided to use this donation as a fundraiser raffle to support our WSO** in Rio Rancho, NM, where there is a desperate need for furniture and supplies and for Region 3's Region Rep fund so those Intergroups without enough funds can send Representatives to Region 3 Assemblies and Conventions.

The funds will be split 50/50 and any fundraiser expenses will be paid by the SEAZ Intergroup. Tickets will be sold until the October 23 retreat and the winning ticket will be drawn there. **You do not have to attend the retreat to win the raffle.** Learn more about this opportunity and see pictures of the beautiful accommodations and the San Carlos area from your intergroup Representative or on the SEAZ Intergroup website.

SHOULD OA BE DISORGANIZED?

Make no mistake---whatever Tradition 9 means, it does not mean that OA should be disorganized. Because OA's structure is from the bottom up, each of us and all our service boards do have to be organized.

The difference between OA and the for-pay-weight-loss methods is that OA is about love and service. We support each other to abstinence through love and service. If I stay focused on myself, I am susceptible to self-pity and relapse. I am likely to stop coming back because I am not getting much out of it.

To get to meetings and share what may help another person, I must organize enough to plan, buy and prepare my food in a timely way. **At every service level, OA members need personal organization to do the intended work.**

We have by-laws, policy manuals and by-laws committees to keep us organized and to identify which volunteers are expected to do what. Organization requires individual responsibility, so that we can carry out the intent of the by-laws and group policies. I've assigned shelf space in my bookcase just for OA materials, and I keep things separated by group and service body. This allows me to do what I've said I would do. I cannot return from an Intergroup or service body meeting, heave a sigh of relief and let things go until the next meeting. OA keeps me too busy to not be abstinent!

That's how service is slimming---it's a matter of caring about others. **In OA, I have found love and understanding beyond my wildest dreams!**

Anonymous

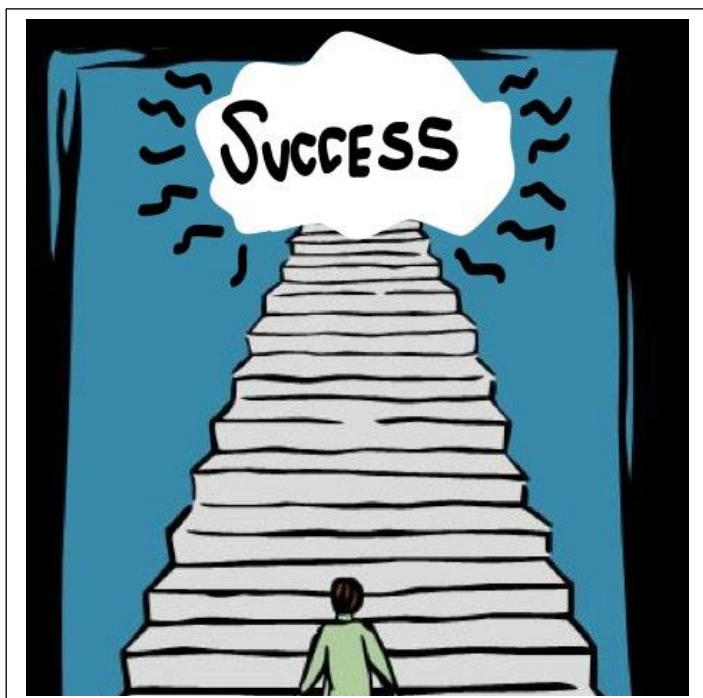


SEEING CIRCLES

I understand Tradition 10 in a visual way. I see two circles: one represents the world with the Fellowship, and the other represents the world outside OA. In the OA circle, I see our meetings---safe havens of sanity for members seeking recovery. I see our Steps, Traditions and tools. I see faces of those who "trudge the Road of Happy Destiny" (Alcoholics Anonymous, 4th ed., p.164). In the outside-of-OA circle, I see institutions like the government, churches, service organizations and corporations. I see faces of people: some I want to help and support and some I wish would never cross my path again. I have opinions about all these entities outside the OA circle. Do the circles overlap? I used to think that anonymity and Traditions 7 and 10 make the circles separate. Today I think differently, because the circles overlap with me. I bring myself into both circles regularly.

OA asks me to practice the principles in all my affairs, which includes both circles. Principles such as honesty, integrity, perseverance and service are not meant to be applied within OA's circle alone. I must also bring them into my family, work and social life---my world. I am free to support causes I believe in, write Letters to the Editor when I need to express myself, and work within spiritual institutions that align with my values. Tradition 10 recommends that OA stay non-opinionated to avoid wasting time and energy in public controversy. I will always have opinions about this news item or that community topic, but I keep specifics out of OA meetings. Time spent in the OA circle means carrying the message of recovery. I benefit from sharing how I have applied the principles of the 12 Steps and 12 Traditions as I overlap with the world outside of OA.

Sonia



WORKING STEP 9: AMENDS

In Step 8, I made my list of people I had harmed. Before I began, my sponsor told me I didn't have to be willing to make amends to everyone on my list. She suggested I pick one person on my list **I was willing to make amends to and do it.**

I picked an easy one---a friend in my church. My "wrong" had not been awful, and I was pretty sure it would not be an unpleasant encounter. **I apologized for what I had done.** (She had forgotten about it.) We went our separate ways.

Later that day, I saw her walking down the hall toward me and noticed that I didn't have a reflex to duck into a doorway to avoid her. The miracle was that I didn't realize I had the reflex until it was removed. This experience showed me how **the fear of people will leave me as I work Step 9.**

My experience and the freedom that followed after making even an easy amends gave me the willingness I needed to make the more difficult amends. **As I worked this Step and made more amends, I found all the promises coming true for me.** This program and these Steps really work.

Edited and reprinted from *Northern Lights* newsletter, Anchorage, Alaska

NEUTRAL REFLECTION TIME

Step 10 has kept me honest in my program. **I believe it's no coincidence that I stay abstinent when I'm honest, examine my assets and defects, and clean up my side of the street.** Once I start down the slippery slope of manipulating truths, distorting realities and justifying my actions (well-intended or not), I will compulsively overeat. This is not because I am an unsuccessful human being, but because my disease says it is acceptable to change reality to suit my needs.

When doing my daily 10 Step, **I must remember this a neutral reflection time.** Not only do I need to focus on my need for improvement or areas of challenge, but also on my successes that day.

How did I grow in the program? Did I improve? Did I share with or support another person in pain? Did I spend a few extra minutes meditating this morning? Did I write in my journal, take care of an errand I'd been putting off or be especially nice to a colleague at work? Did I remember to thank my Higher Power today or make an effort to learn more about that power if I'm still working on believing in a power greater than myself? **There are hundreds of small ways during the day that I can make a difference in my life and the lives of others.** Did I clear time in my calendar to do so?

Reflecting on these activities, as well as on the challenges I face, has helped me gain a better sense of self and start to believe in my HP's unconditional love for me. **This Step has started me on the path to self-forgiveness, clarity of mind and a balanced relationship with HP, others and myself.**

With Step 10, I have a simple (but not always easy) tool to make amends promptly and learn to love and accept myself in a non-judgmental, loving way---the same way my Higher Power loves me. **Step 10 is an ongoing reassertion for me that I am lovable, loving and loved---warts and beauty marks alike!**

Edited and reprinted from *Awareness* newsletter

Concept Nine – Ability

“Able, trusted servants, together with sound and appropriate methods of choosing them, are indispensable for effective functioning at all service levels.” (From the pamphlet, The Twelve Concepts of OA Service, #330)

Low self-esteem, that self-centered feeling that “I am never quite good enough” has haunted me since early childhood. In OA, I am finally able to correct that distorted perception of myself. A number of useful tools have been handed to me over the years. Among them, and one of the most valuable, is the gift of service.

Sponsors suggested to me early on that if I was asked to do service that I not allow fear and lack of self-confidence prevent me from stepping up to the challenge. I had a whole list of reasons not to take service positions and I’m embarrassed to admit I still use them occasionally. According to my sponsor, this is evidence that I am human. **What all my avoidance boils down to is self-centered fear.**

In order to take this suggestion, I employ “opposite action.” When my first impulse is to say NO, I pause and pray and respond with either “Yes, I’ll do that”, or “Let me pray about it and get back to you by a specific time.” Learning this new behavior was not easy. It is far more difficult to pause, pray and respond in a different way that will support my recovery, and to step outside of myself to serve others.

Research has been a key factor. **One way to alleviate fear is to educate myself.** If I’m asked to take on a service position I’ve never done before, and don’t know much about, I’ve learned to go to the OA literature and support documents found on OA websites to find out more.

At the meeting level, groups often have job descriptions and qualifications stored in a group binder to familiarize members with the jobs that need to be done. The OA Handbook for Members, Groups, and Service Bodies (#120) is also a wonderful resource in describing “recovery opportunities” at the group, Intergroup, Region, and World Service levels as well as the structure and function of each entity.

At the Intergroup, Region (3), and World Service levels, documents ranging from “guidelines” and “job descriptions” to Bylaws and Policy Manuals can be found on the respective websites (www.oasouthernaz.org, www.oaregion3.org, and www.oa.org). Prospective “trusted servants” will find a wealth of information there. No one came into OA service knowing all there was to know about their job or position. **We all brought our own unique skill set and educated ourselves on the rest of what we needed to know.** And, we all have found that those who have gone before us are more than willing to share their knowledge and skills with us. We learn more than ever how unity helps us carry the message. The more I learned, the fewer “excuses” I had – both in OA service and in taking responsibility in my personal life.

I happen to have a sponsor who does a lot of service and can share her experience, strength, and hope with me. For those who don’t feel that kind of support from the sponsor who has taken them through the Steps and supported their abstinence, adding a service sponsor is a perfectly acceptable practice. **I can never get too much help when it comes to my recovery.**

Finally, it is essential to my recovery and growth to have developed and to maintain a “fit spiritual condition.” That is where I get “the willingness and the ability” to do what I cannot do with my own unaided will. **Every day I have to decide to let HP do the “driving.”**

I am very grateful to have the Steps, Traditions, and Concepts to guide me in building a life of “sane and happy usefulness.” With my Higher Power’s help, and the help of all who have gone before me, as well as those I serve in the fellowship today, I just keep putting one foot in front of the other and doing the next right thing. What a miracle. Thank you for my recovery today, and for your service to OA.

If you didn’t have the ability before you began reading this article, you do now. So, keep coming back. And, the next time someone asks you to do service in OA – say “Yes!” **It may not be easy, but it is worth the effort.** You are worth the effort.

Love, Neva