

# OA Desert Recovery

October 2021: Spiritual Recovery

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

## Free Program Literature

Our Intergroup Vice Chair is in possession of 21 *Overeaters Anonymous*, Third Edition books that are excess from the ones we bought for libraries in 2020. If you want one of these books at no charge, email her, and she will arrange to get one to you. Remember the supply is limited so the first to email are the first to get them.

Email:  
[soaz.ig.vicechair@gmail.com](mailto:soaz.ig.vicechair@gmail.com)

## I Found My Higher Power in the Most Unlikely Place

As I prepare to move this weekend (the reason why this issue is two weeks late), I could not help but reflect on my time with OA.

I've made no secret of the fact that I have not fully learned to love the desert like most of you despite living here for 29 years. I thrive spiritually around water and lush green grass. There is a song by the Eli Young Band that I love called *Saltwater Gospel*. I have never had a song that so perfectly described my feelings around the water like this one:

I just think about how small I am and life after we're gone  
I'm out here by myself but I know I'm not alone  
Yeah, I got all the proof I need and it sure makes me believe  
When I go down and sink my feet in the water  
And I soak up that sun and I watch it set  
Yeah, I can feel the power of the saltwater gospel  
I'm as close to God as I can get

The truth is, however, that I found my Higher Power in the desert because I found Program. My abstinence and Step Work has helped me build a strong spiritual foundation. The Promises came true, sometimes quickly and sometimes very slowly. It took 2 years to clean up the emotional wreckage of my past but 13 years to clean up the wreckage of our finances. Since March, my husband has been able to stop working and apply for disability, I retired from teaching after 29 years and work from home, we sold our home, and we bought a home near our son and his fiancée, which also happens to be near water and greenery. All of this was made possible because of complete reliance on my Higher Power.

-Michelle S.

**"God, I offer myself to Thee – to build with me and to do with me as Thou wilt. Relieve me of the bondage of self, that I may better do Thy will. Take away my difficulties, that victory over them may bear witness to those I would help of Thy Power, Thy Love, and Thy Way of Life."**

*Third Step Prayer*

## Program Acronyms

SUDS: seemingly unimportant decisions (that turn out to be important!)

PUSH: pray until something happens



Since I will no longer be in Arizona, I will not be the newsletter chair for 2022.

Contact Roni B. at [SoAZ.IG.Chair@gmail.com](mailto:SoAZ.IG.Chair@gmail.com) if you are interested in doing this service.

## Convention Experience

After more than 2 years with the Convention & Assembly Act AZ If planning committee, I was eager for the convention weekend. I knew the speakers would be amazing and I knew that the planning committee was ready and willing to do whatever needed to be done to make the convention awesome and unforgettable.

I have worked on 3 convention planning committees and I have to say this one was tops. We started out the usual way, looking for a good but reasonably priced hotel with all the rooms we needed and thinking, talking, debating, and voting for a catchy theme. And then the world closed up and Zoom became our meeting place.

Every month we would meet and throw around ideas for the convention and then one meeting over a year ago, after the Serenity in the Desert Intergroup in Phoenix hosted a virtual convention in August 2020, a suggestion was made that maybe our convention needed to be a virtual one. A motion was then made, seconded, and passed, and we moved on with a new design for our convention.

For many of us, figuring out how to navigate a convention in a virtual world was confusing and a little bit scary. But, that's the beauty of committees. The planning didn't depend on one person's knowledge and experience. We had so many people with different skills and interests that we had everything covered.

Our co-leaders kept us on track and picked up on gaps that needed to be filled as we moved along. So yes, I thought the convention itself was amazing and awesome, and I also found comfort and satisfaction that our planning committee had persevered through a challenging time, and we depended on each member to create that amazing and awesome convention.

- Janis

**"My Creator, I am now willing that you should have all of me, good and bad. I pray that you now remove from me every single defect of character which stands in the way of my usefulness to you and my fellows. Grant me strength, as I go out from here, to do your bidding."**

***Seventh Step Prayer***

## Service Cements Abstinence and Serenity



It takes a village. . . and that's exactly what it took – a village of creative and ingenious OA members sharing their experience and expertise to launch the Region 3 Convention and Assembly in August. What a magnificent, well-choreographed, life-changing event! With Jill and Michael at the helm overseeing all the details, many of us had the chance to cement our own abstinence and serenity by attending the various events at the convention.

What often is not considered, though, is that those “villagers” who serve perhaps benefit the most. The time and effort they shared to get the convention's cogs and wheels moving forward helped to strengthen and cement their Programs.

Initially I didn't understand the importance of the purpose or the importance of this cement. I figured it was enough for me to jet into a meeting to share my thoughts and perspectives and learn from others. No cement there, no offense. It's what happened six months later that made the cement begin to mix: getting a sponsor, hiking up the 12 Steps, and reading the literature. With time, the cement was beginning to harden and do its job.

But did it just take time? No. It wasn't until I joined other villagers to do things together – that's when my Program grew stronger. For my start, I sat around the table with others to plan one of our annual retreats. And then, after experiencing the miracle of the 12 Steps in 15 Weeks workshop series, I moved forward to co-lead the next one.

What really sealed the deal for me, though, is working with our Southern Arizona Intergroup. I worked on our website for two years and now I work with the Twelfth Step Within committee to organize a monthly workshop series. Wow!

All this service has not only strengthened my abstinence and serenity, it's cemented some friendships along the way. I've got program friends who send me texts and give me calls – and we get together for fun times.

Why not give it a try? Whatever you are doing now, ratchet it up a notch. If you are not yet serving at the meeting level, start there. If you already do that, consider working with the Intergroup. We start our new year in January, and we've got several positions open. Contact Roni B at [SoAZ.IG.Chair@gmail.com](mailto:SoAZ.IG.Chair@gmail.com) to let her know how you would like to serve.

This program works. I know that. But what I've learned along the way is that service is what keeps my foundation secure. Serving the OA community has cemented my abstinence and my serenity – and have I ever had fun along the way! There's plenty of cement to go around, so help yourself to some and let's build a village together!

- Joy V'M

**“And acceptance is the answer to all my problems today. When I am disturbed, it is because I find some person, place, thing or situation - some fact of my life - unacceptable to me. I can find no serenity until I accept that person, place, thing or situation as being exactly the way it is supposed to be at this moment.”**

***AA Big Book, page 449***

## Working the Steps

I'm so grateful to OA, and especially grateful to live in Tucson where OA is so easy to find, with examples of healthy recovery everywhere I look. Before I made it to OA 'this time' I had visited a meeting and did NOT see anything I wanted. Later, in the fall of 2000 when I came in, I had had enough misery and was ready to 'see' the recovery at my meetings.

I also had to get over my 'magical' thinking... the idea that God would magically take my desire to binge without my participation. Recovery wasn't magical though, and it didn't happen without surrender (Step 1) and lots of action by taking the steps and doing what was suggested by my sponsor and the Program. I had to abstain from bingeing and purging and be willing to adopt a food plan, however limited.

My first sponsor had what I wanted. She was at a healthy weight and wasn't struggling. She had peace and was at a healthy weight. Before she agreed to sponsor me, she asked me two things:

- 1) was I willing to abstain from purging no matter what? And,
- 2) was I willing to gain weight if that's what it took to recover?

I said yes (while seriously doubting I could do it). So she told me, "We do not purge no matter what! Even if you binge, you don't purge." As soon as I knew purging wasn't an option, my bingeing miraculously stopped. With her help I took my first pass through the 12 Steps of Overeaters Anonymous.

In Step 1 I surrendered my bingeing and purging. By far, it was the hardest thing I have ever done. By Step 2 I already knew that my God had to get bigger, big enough to give my food to. I knew that 'only' a power greater than myself could restore me to sanity. In Step 3 I began the practice of allowing God to guide my food life as well as asking his guidance daily in my thoughts and actions. Step 3 has been an ongoing process of growth and trust in my God. My humility and spiritual life have grown as the result of practicing the rest of the Steps. As the result of doing Steps 4 through 9, and continuing my daily practice with steps 10, 11, and 12, I am truly happy and at peace today.

Today my spiritual practice involves getting on my knees each morning and asking God to keep me sober and abstinent, and to know and do his will. I meditate most days by relaxing on my back with my limbs spread, concentrating on breathing deeply, listening to the sounds around me, and relaxing my limbs, my skin, my muscles, my brain (Step 11). I keep God in my thoughts throughout the day, and where I have wronged someone, I usually see it immediately. In most cases I am willing to make amends right away. If I am not willing, I talk to my sponsor and/or closed-mouthed friends, performing a mini 4th Step inventory if the resentment persists (Step 10).

Practicing the principles of the steps in all my affairs (Step 12) has become second nature to me. The psychic change that happened when I surrendered to the program has allowed me to move away from myself and to truly "see" people. I know in my heart that I am okay- whatever their disturbance or anger- I didn't cause it and I cannot cure it. I can be tolerant, kind, and patient. I can say my truth, if necessary, without anger or bitterness. I thank God that I am in my skin, and I thank him for my troubles because I would not want to trade my problems for anyone else's.

Meetings allow me to know my fellows and to carry the message (Step 12). When you reach out or ask for help, you allow us to share the miracle of recovery. Carrying the message by being a sponsor or just calling someone continues the circle of recovery. Without the newcomer and each other, there is no Step 12.

So whatever your situation, I'll be there for you with open arms if I can- just like the program was there for me when I was ready.

- Anonymous

**"I listened to their stories and found so many areas where we overlapped—not all of the deeds, but the feelings of remorse and hopelessness. I learned that alcoholism isn't a sin, it's a disease. That lifted the guilt I had felt. I learned that I didn't have to stop drinking forever, but just not pick up that first drink one day, one hour at a time. I could manage that. There was laughter in those rooms and sometimes tears, but always love, and when I was able to let it in, that love helped me heal."**





SUNDAY, OCTOBER 24<sup>TH</sup>, 2021, FROM 1 – 2:30 PM (MST)

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## Easing God Out

Register by clicking here:

[SoAZ.TSW.Event@gmail.com](mailto:SoAZ.TSW.Event@gmail.com)

Questions? Send email to Joy V'M at [SoAZ.12thStepWithin@gmail.com](mailto:SoAZ.12thStepWithin@gmail.com)

S-T-E-P R-E-C-O-V-E-R-Y

**SPONSORED BY THE 12<sup>th</sup> STEP WITHIN COMMITTEE**  
of the SoAZ Intergroup of OA

# **R**ESPONSIBILITY PLEDGE

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 28<sup>TH</sup>, 2021, FROM 1 – 2:30 PM (MST)

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**“Always to extend the hand and heart of OA  
to all who share my compulsion...”**

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S-T-E-P R-E-C-O-V-E-R-Y

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# ABSTINENCE: The Road to Recovery



Learn to Read the Signs Along the Way

## IDEA\* Event

*\*International Day Experiencing Abstinence*

**Saturday, November 20<sup>th</sup>, 2021 from 1 to 2:30 PM**

To Register: Send an email to  
[SoAZ.12thStepWithin@gmail.com](mailto:SoAZ.12thStepWithin@gmail.com)  
with the word **IDEA** in the subject line

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