

OA Desert Recovery

Step Eight
Principle: SELF-DISCIPLINE
August 2023 | Issue 8



By Michelle S.

I thought I did not have any self-discipline when I came in the Program because no matter what I did, I could not stick to a diet. I had been on a diet my whole life, yet I was morbidly obese. Obviously, I did not have self-discipline! The truth is however, I was disciplined in many areas of my life. I just could not seem to do anything about my weight.

Once I came into program, I realized the spiritual solution was exactly what I needed. The only problem was that it would not work for me if I did not do certain things every day. The first self-discipline I practiced was not breaking my abstinence no matter what.

That meant following a food plan. The only way I could follow a food plan and stay abstinent was if I did my daily prayers. The only way my daily prayers seemed to work was if I did daily literature. The only way I seemed to understand the literature was if I emailed with my sponsor every day. Then I had to learn not to act out on my emotions, and the only way to do that, was more program.

Slowly, the habits built until I have routines for just about everything. They come to me as easily as brushing my teeth every morning. I start my morning every day with 16 to 24 ounces of water while I do my prayers, meditation, and a gratitude list. Then I email my sponsor before I have my morning coffee. I have reminders on my phone for when I get busy to stop, breathe, and pray. Every night, I send my 10th step to an OA friend and end with a gratitude list.

When I am upset about anything, I say the Serenity Prayer and do a gratitude list out loud. I was stuck in dangerous traffic for over an hour in Mobile, Alabama, on my way to Florida a few nights ago and spent an hour listing things I was grateful for. It comes automatically, just like when I was anxious during a biopsy recently, so I spent 45 minutes in the CT reciting the Serenity Prayer out loud where all the techs could hear.

It works if I work it!

By Judy G.

The principle behind Step 8 (Self-Discipline) reminds me to be on the alert for the number of times the first half of the phrase ("SELF"), shows up in my life. My fallback posture, for so many years was to be primarily concerned about ME. Learning to be genuinely concerned about YOU instead, is a sign to me that emotional growth is slowly, but surely, taking place. Working the Steps helps me recognize when SELF has taken over the steering wheel.

Self-Love...Self-Discipline!

By Becki B.

Self-discipline is the ability to control one's feelings and overcome one's weaknesses. To use this in everyday living, I must discipline myself so that I align my behavior with my values. If that is not always true, I must ask myself, do my values only mean something in certain situations?

For example, being kind is a value. I believe in kindness, but kindness is NOT my first reaction: when they say something stupid about me or when they are sarcastic to me or when they hurt my itty-bitty feelings.

This is a test of my self-discipline. I tend to get defensive, give sharp responses. Bad behavior will stop their comments since they will no longer speak to me. If I concentrate on aligning my behavior with my values, I will still be kind, no matter what. At least, if I cannot be kind, I can choose to do nothing. My value of being kind would be more important than being right, in control, or powerful. To grow in self-discipline, continuing to ask myself if my behaviors match my values is a good soul-searching question.



By Janet R.

Self-Discipline: I am ok even if "it" does not go my way. I no longer have to throw a fit or punish another person for not doing "it" my way.

Step Eight: Make a list and become willing to make amends. I *became* willing to make amends. Before God, my emotions and my thinking ran my actions. When I learned to make a list – sit with God, sit with my sponsor, make a plan – things went much better.

Step Eight is a preparation step for Step Nine. I had a broken relationship with God which I wanted to mend. I have broken relationships with people which I want to mend.

Each Step builds off the previous Step. I must embody the principle of the previous Step to equip me for THIS Step. For Step Eight, I had to have seven principles active in my life to do it. I believe that is why we do the Steps in order!

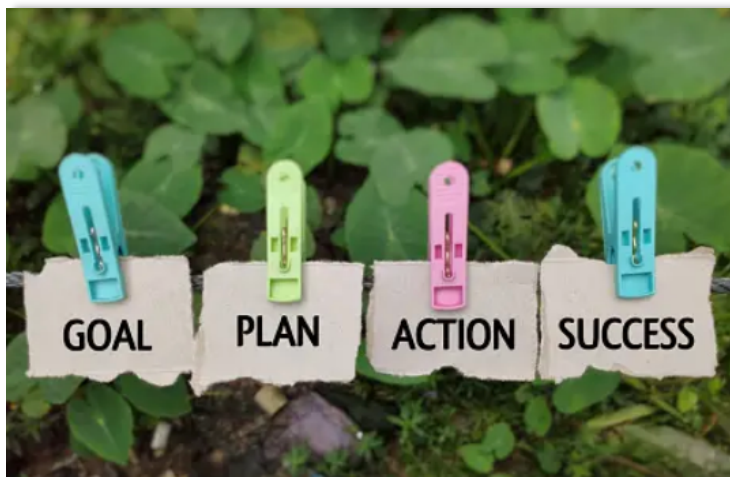
Step Eight is just more relief from the bondage to "self." Self that keeps you out of my life. Self that keeps you at arm's length. Self that stops me from being of maximum service to God and to others. Self that stops me from reaching out my hand to you.



By Jody M.

Anyone who knows me knows self-discipline is not my strong suit. One of our books tells us we are an undisciplined group in our active addiction, and I couldn't agree more! It took what it took for me to hit bottom & become *WILLING, as only the dying can be*, 'to go to any length' to get & stay food sober, one day at a time.

Recognizing peculiar mental twists & strange mental blank spots as being part of the disease which is trying to trick me into that first bite of something not safe for me to eat, I have to remember to surrender each day for daily reprieve in order to live abstinely through loving conscious contact with my Higher Power, an attitude of gratitude, and the wonderful OA fellowship.



Editor's Note: The focus for the September newsletter will be the principle for Step Nine – **LOVE**. Your submissions will be gratefully received when you send an email to newsletter@oasouthernaz.org by September 15th.

Thank you! ~Judy