

OA Desert Recovery

Phrase: "Stay in Your Own Lane"

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By Rhonda S

When I got to OA, I thought I was responsible for everything, and I tried to manage and manipulate so I could get what I wanted. I never had ANY control over others. I have learned, with the help of OA and another program, that I have to mind my own business and keep my mouth shut. When someone asks for my opinion, then I can give it. I avoid provocative conversations with my younger daughter. It works so much better because I am staying in my own lane.



By Becki B

Sure, "Stay in Your Own Lane" means mind my own business. But how exactly does that apply? I could look at it as telling me to not worry about other's struggles, to do my own goals, and leave it at that. But, as a compulsive overeater, when I notice something troubling me, I have learned that I need to look at it. Signals warn me that my disease is active in my thinking. Worrying about somebody else's business is one of those signals. Paying too much attention to other's problems tells me that there is something inside me that I am avoiding. It is one step from evading my issues to hiding from them behind food. "Stay in My Own Lane" means to mind my business and to use my program to mend it.



Michelle S

Remembering to stay in my own lane is an important part of my recovery journey in OA. Before Program, I compared my insides to others' outsides and worried about what others were doing and thinking (especially how they thought about me!). This carried over into my first months of recovery when I found myself comparing my progress to others in the group, often feeling inadequate if I was not seeing the same results. Over time and with consistent abstinence, I realized that focusing on others distracts me from the real work I need to do for myself. Staying in my own lane reminds me that my path to recovery is uniquely mine—it is not a race, nor is it about measuring up to anyone else. It is about taking responsibility for my choices, my spiritual connection, and my emotional stability to be the best *Michelle* I can be.

This mindset also helps me set healthy boundaries and avoid taking on the burden of others' journeys. I cannot control or fix anyone else's struggles no matter how much I care about them. I focus on what I can control—my recovery! That means attending meetings, working the steps, sponsoring, and giving service at the IG and Region 8 level. This approach has brought me peace and clarity, allowing me to experience recovery in a way that feels authentic and sustainable. My progress is not about perfection but about showing up for myself, one step at a time.

By Michael A

“Stay in your own lane” has many meanings. Here’s what it means to me:

Occasionally my sponsor will say: “Michael, this is a selfish program.” He means that no matter what service I might give to the OA community, my number one priority must be my recovery. Why? Because if I lose that, I lose everything. Which means I have nothing left to give.

- I sponsor several people, but if that work keeps me from doing my daily prayers, I’m out of my lane.
- I do service for some of the meetings I attend, but if that work keeps me from doing my daily reading, I’m out of my lane.

And whenever I’m out of my lane I’m in danger of getting side-swiped. Or worse yet, smacked by on-coming traffic.

That’s what my sponsor means when he says this is a selfish program. He might just as well say, “Michael, stay in your own lane.”



By Janet R

"I was given ONE life to live...why not live it?"

I used to drive my car wherever and however I wanted. I *could not* follow the law! I had to do it my way! I lived the rest of my life the same way. I was always in someone else's business. I always thought I knew what was right for everyone else. If people would only do it RIGHT, I would not have to instruct them on how to do "it" the right way...MY way! (It's called "being a Controller.")

It is like playing baseball. I am the Pitcher. (Period) *That* is my position...but I have to go to first base and tell them that Outfield has it wrong, and then I have to tell the Umpire he is wrong and correct him, too. I can never just play my own position in life. I am way too busy fixing You!

Thanks to the Steps. I have SLOWLY learned to stay in my own lane and just play my own position in life.



By Judy G

"Stay in your own lane!" is excellent advice; however, it's heartwarming when you're squeezed into a corner due to unforeseen circumstances and your Fellows step away from their own lanes to offer to lend a hand (In my case, a much-needed LEFT hand) to help fulfill obligations.

In mid-November, I took a hard fall which resulted in a spiral fracture of my left humerus. I am so grateful that dear OA friends stepped out of their own Lanes-- and into mine--to offer much-needed help this month. They demonstrated the meaning of the word, "fellowship" and, to say that I am grateful, is an understatement.



By Joy V'Marie

Lanes? What lanes? Actually, one of my unforgettable moments was watching five lanes of traffic squeeze into four lanes on a road outside of Adana, Turkey, honking away, telling everyone not to stay in their own lane, but to get out of theirs!

I've had my share of reckless driving. I usually stayed in my own lane, but I tended to inch up rather closely to the driver in front of me. Thankfully no one ever took my bluff and slammed on their brakes. That would have surely ended my career as a tailgater.

I was that way in "real" life, too. I'd get too close to someone else's business, peering over his or her shoulder, wondering what in the world was being done. I'd make comments, of course, and brag away about how I had done this or that a different, "better" way. What a boor! Nowadays, I hope I've changed, but just to be sure, listen closely when I walk by. If I'm not walking the Steps, working the program, staying in my own lane, I'm probably honking my horn.

Editor's Note: It's been such an interesting year focusing on the nine tools and then on three popular OA slogans. Thanks to our newsletter writers and to all of you who read the newsletters and provided support and encouragement. Martha S-N will be our new editor in 2025. Please honor her efforts and those who will provide the articles in the new year. Best to you all! ~Judy