

# OA Desert Recovery May 2026

## Freedom from Isolation

**“We were never meant to face this disease in isolation”**

—The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous, 2nd ed., p. 14

### RECOVERY IS A WE PROGRAM, NOT A ME PROGRAM.

There is no question that addiction works to isolate us. How many times have I thought that I prefer to eat alone. Crazy, huh?.....for someone who often complains about being alone too much.

That’s when I know my addiction to food and obsession with food thoughts, food management, weight management, and body image is doing its job. My disease is keeping me all to itself so that it can have control.

My disease operates as it isolates so I can most effectively obsess on myself. When obsessed with self, I cannot reach out to others. I can’t extend my help and I can’t enjoy connections – the connection, the joy, the love, which powers the universe and heals me. Cruellest of all, addiction keeps me from being present.

When I am feeling listless, unmotivated, bored, or overwhelmed to downright depressed, I don’t want anything to do with others. But because of what I have learned in program, I am aware of the irrationality of my wanting to hide in my closet...as if that would help!

This awareness reminds me of the BB’s admonition to “take contrary action.” So, I push myself out there, knowing that one of the best regulating tools is being with folks whose energies are good for me. Sometimes that simply means being willing to get out there with other human beings – any healthy people HP puts on my path.

The way to chase away the ego and the self-centered condition, to stop wallowing in my loneliness, is to give myself, not my ego, the agency to do that.

As the BB says: “To watch people recover... to watch loneliness vanish, to see a fellowship grow up about you, to have a host of friends—this is an experience you must not miss.”

*Ann S*



Sponsored by *Southern Arizona Intergroup of Overeaters Anonymous*  
Editor: Martha S-Nafeh | [newsletter@oasouthernaz.org](mailto:newsletter@oasouthernaz.org)

While freedom from isolation is a benefit of Step Five, I gained that freedom long before I got to Step Five. When I walked into my first meeting, I saw how many others evidently struggled with compulsive eating, just like me. I can't say I wasn't afraid or that I felt comfortable, but I knew I wasn't alone. And there was a sense of freedom from isolation in that.

When I reached out and asked someone to be my sponsor, I was breaking free of isolation. I've had many sponsors during my years in OA. Each time I've asked someone to sponsor me, I was taking a risk and stepping out of isolation. By sharing with my sponsors and taking the Fifth Step, I allowed myself to be vulnerable. I became more comfortable in my own skin, more able to be myself with others and make connections.

Today, the connections I've made in OA are some of my most important relationships. Recently when my husband was in the hospital, my OA friends and fellows gave me incredible support. And I have opportunities to give support in return.

Thanks OA for ending my isolation.

*Nan B.*

Alone time is good, even healthy; time to think, plan, practice self care, read the literature and write a response, talk to my higher power. But that time going solo needs to be balanced with social time. There is a reason that outreach (telephone) is listed as a tool for compulsive overeaters. If for no other reason, being around other people gives me a chance to practice all those wonderful personality changes I told my sponsor I intend to make. Time spent with others can be used to help others, hear diverse opinions, and to just enjoy the great outdoors. It gets us out of our own mind, and into the openness inhabited by others. Freedom to be, to grow, to enjoy life.

*Becki B.*

Back in the day before OA and abstinence, there was no way I wanted anyone to see me binge-eat. More often than not, the rest of the world in my time zone was fast asleep, because I would give myself an hour to eat every crunchy or sugary thing I had on hand. Before the strike of twelve – giving new meaning to the phrase “like clockwork” – I would busy myself with flossing and brushing my teeth. Tomorrow I would diet! Of course, when I woke up, there was another tomorrow, and the cycle would begin again.

This secret life of mine really was no secret. My body didn't know how to whisper. Every year I would gain 10 pounds, and as soon as the growing me would tighten my seams, I'd be at the thrift shops looking for larger clothes. People who saw me infrequently must have noticed that I was increasing in bulk. I lived a double life. During the day, I would maintain the confidence and savvy my career required, and then at night, I would dive into the disease, knowing that I didn't have the backbone to say no to my binges. It wasn't until I came back to OA that I found hope and acceptance. The folks who were at the meetings understood the pain and agony I was suffering through. Once I embraced the Program and took the Steps with my sponsor, I knew I would never feel lonely again. I was not alone. I had been adopted, recovering alongside others like me – my OA family.

*Joy V'Marie*

Before I began my recovery I never had someone to share my feelings with. I really didn't have feelings yet. I was always feeling sorry for myself. That is what I shared. I also gossiped endlessly. I also had Frieda's hostages-my BFF. I am also an only child.!!

Then the miracle began. I did not realize that I was going to change in so many ways. I began to lose weight and I was thrilled. I lost my abstinence. I kept going to meetings. I learned how to trust and be honest. The loneliness was beginning to leave me.

*Rhonda S.*