

# Annapolis Area Intergroup Winter Newsletter

2023



*Step 12 – Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these Steps, we tried to carry this message to compulsive overeaters and the practice these principles in all our affairs. Spiritual Principle – Service*

This year is winding down and we are approaching the beginning of a new year. The holidays are here. A time for joy. The days are shorter and the nights are longer, it's the dark time of year. I love the holiday lights that brighten my neighborhood. But, once New Years passes, the lights and decorations come down and the darkness returns with a vengeance. I try to remember that we will soon pass the winter solstice, so the days get a few seconds longer each day. I think of the seeds buried in the cold ground that will grow and bloom in an explosion of green come springtime. Those seeds are all around us now, waiting for the right time to emerge. We've all seen how plants will find any crevice to grow through, the cracks in my sidewalk testify to that. The life force that resides in the seeds waiting for spring is a fierce thing. Just as the holidays come and go, the darkness has come – and it, too, will go. I just need the faith that God gave the seeds. And a little patience. God grant me patience!

New Year's is the time for New Year's resolutions. These resolutions to do better or different are the butt of lots of New Year's humor. We all know the tropes – this year I will spend less, save more, learn French, be a better person. Many of our resolutions are related to our disease. This year I will lose weight; this year I will stay abstinent. Whatever the resolution, the probability of keeping it seems vanishingly small. Resolutions are usually forgotten by Martin Luther King's birthday.

My resolution this year isn't to lose weight. I want to commit myself to the program more consistently, more honestly, and in more of my affairs. In short, I want to better live my life in harmony with the principles of the program and more fully live up to step twelve.

Our twelve and twelve reminds us that no matter how great our transformation we are not cured. We are invited to "continue the journey one day at a time". It goes on to note that we are fortunate that we cannot keep our recovery unless we share our experience, strength, and hope with others. As I've been told, we must give away that which has been so freely shared with us.

I pray that my service to others will be like the seeds, ready to bust out in news ways, grow and become stronger each day.

Wishing everyone one of you a wonderful holiday and an abstinent New Year.

Mark V.

## **Abstaining through the holiday seasons.**

In my family, holidays were eating days. The morning was spent preparing a feast. Afterward I was in the stupor and would watch TV, sleep, and think about the evening meal when I would nibble and sneak food. I was full of self-pity because I felt it. Everyone else was out there, living – going to football games, and so on, while I was being a good girl and staying at home with my parents, as if I were responsible for their happiness, and I could prevent the loneliness they felt in not having taken the action to invite friends to share with us, for whatever reason they thought was logical.

Last Thanksgiving I had no plans for dinner. I went to an AA meeting with a friend who called and needed a ride.

I knew that I did not want to be alone. I shared my feelings at the meeting, not really understanding them all. Later, I went to a dinner prepared and served by volunteers, program people like myself who needed desperately to get out of fear, self-pity and melancholy, all of which were strangely comfortable old attitudes of self centeredness. I saw love in action, and realize that my relations in the past were misdirected. I was seeking love, yes, but I was waiting for it to come to me. I didn't know that love comes to me in double measure to that which I initiate.

My mother showed her love by cooking and cleaning a house. My problem was expecting more from her than she could give, rather than accepting her. My inability, to be satisfied with what I had, and the combination of fear and resentment forced me to look elsewhere, for my needs, which were very real. I had learned, by sharing in meetings, and through 12 step work, to give away what I had. I made a mental gratitude list: abstinence, health, five senses, the freedom to choose, laughter, friendship, serenity, sunshine, a home. The list grew and grew. Soon I was dancing to the band and enjoy the people I was with. I didn't have to live in the fear of food and myself, a fear that would endanger my abstinence! I turn my life over to a Higher Power, the source of all my strength, and I was restored to sanity. By sharing with others, I tasted reality. I asked God to remove my fears and other shortcomings, and made amends to myself and others, by seeking an opportunity just to give of myself.

Upon meditation, at the end of the day, I realized I had called upon God, and been given everything I needed that day, especially the gift of abstinence and the desire and willingness to accept it.

The steps tell me that I alone can make a change in attitude and apply my new knowledge in other areas of my life. I feel whole and comfortable, knowing that God is preparing me and shaping me, like clay.

November, December 1974

Lifeline sampler.



## Unexpected Delay

With the holidays fast approaching, I thought I might share an experiences I had with traveling and staying abstinent. My flight from Baltimore to Chicago was supposed to be two hours long. It turned out to be eight hours long. Started out with a part needing to be replaced that delayed us an hour and a half. Then of course there were thunderstorms over Chicago and we had to go round and round above the clouds. Then we had to go to the Indianapolis airport because our plane was running low on fuel. Then, while waiting for the storms to clear, our pilots timed out and the airlines had to find two more pilots to get us back across Lake Michigan.

I had planned on having dinner with my sisters in Chicago. I did not pack a meal but I did pack a small snack of crackers and cheese. I knew that everyone on the plane was frustrated and probably very hungry. The only snacks available were the airline-supplied salty nuts and granola bars. Salty nuts make you thirsty and I did not want to drink a lot of water. Anyone who has ever used the facilities on an airplane knows why I did not drink any water. As for the granola bars, way too much sugar.

Feeling somewhat self-conscious I took out my cheese and 6 crackers. Suddenly I felt a little self-conscious. The compulsive eater in me really did not want to share any of my meager snack. In my mind, I was thinking they were all looking at me as being very selfish. But if I share, I won't have enough for myself I thought. We could be stuck on this plane for hours yet. It's the only food I had. I came up with all kinds of excuses not to share. I became very protective and tried to find ways not to let anyone else know that I was eating some thing.

It has been a very long time since I had those kind of crazy thoughts. As a compulsive overeater, I recognize that this disease will never be completely gone. It shows up in different ways at different times, and under unusual circumstances. I have to continually pray that I become aware of the disease trying to control me. I pray that God will tell me how to handle each difficult challenge through the holidays.

Well, I did offer my seatmate a cracker with cheese. She responded, "I never pass up crackers and cheese." Part of me wanted to cry. I ate my first cracker put cheese on the second one and offered it to this lovely woman. Clearly, she is not a compulsive overeater because she said "one is plenty for me". I was so relieved. As for the rest of the passengers on that odd flight, I tried not to have eye contact with any of them. Am I crazy? Yes! Am I still abstinent? Yes! Am I grateful to know that there is a program of recovery called Overeaters Anonymous? Absolutely.

Bobbi 2023

## OA Promise

I put my hand in yours, and together we can do what we could never do alone. No longer is there a sense of hopelessness, no longer must we each depend upon our own unsteady willpower. We are all together now, reaching out our hands for power and strength greater than ours, and as we join hands, we find love and understanding beyond our wildest dreams.

## The Twelve Steps of Overeaters Anonymous

1. We admitted we were powerless over food—that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong, promptly admitted it.
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these Steps, we tried to carry this message to compulsive overeaters and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

## OVEREATERS ANONYMOUS WORKSHOP

"Wisdom of the Big Book"

Virtual --- Join us on Zoom

Zoom ID: 858 2613    Zoom Password: BB4us1212

Sunday, December 17, 2023    2 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Three (3) Speaker Panel    Q&A

For More Information Contact:

Elaine B 860-543-2201

Hosted by CT Overeaters Anonymous Intergroup



### Definition of a slip and relapse in OA.

Relapse is not just on the physical level but on the emotional and spiritual levels as well. From personal experience, spiritual relapse occurs first because it was the most difficult aspect of the program to attain, followed by emotional, and eventually physical. Of course, emotional and spiritual relapse can occur without the physical ramifications and the sponsor might be able to assist the sponsee with the insights the sponsor may have after working with the individual for a while. A slip to my way of thinking is choosing to eat something that the individual had previously determined was detrimental to their food sobriety or acting in an emotional or spiritual way which leads to the old way of acting and thinking about life as had previously been lived prior to coming to OA.

### One day at a time.

There's no way I can start abstinence now; there are parties coming up, holiday meals and so on. I'll wait until I can see my way clear so I won't fail."

This is "bait" few of us have been able to resist over the years. It is an easy rationalization. But in OA we do not project future acts. We live today. By being abstinent just for today — no matter what the season or the circumstances — perspective is automatically restored to us. To eat or not to eat is not only no longer a problem; it is not even a question. Unless we make an issue of it, no one really cares what we eat or drink at parties, and as for holiday meals, only martyrs insist on setting themselves apart from everyone else. Thousands of OAs know they can enjoy good food and remain abstinent.

When compulsion to overeat sets in, try to get by for fifteen minutes. It helps to call another OA member. Usually, after a short while the obsession is gone. There is a realization that what you can do for fifteen minutes can be done for several hours, for a whole day. That's all we need.

With small accomplishments, a little at a time, and not worrying in advance about breaking abstinence, it becomes progressively easier.

One day at a time takes the worry out of worrying.

During the holidays I am surer than ever that abstinence is the most important thing in my life without exception; that I can hold on to it if I approach each day's trials and joys in the spirit of easy does it; and that it will not be too much to ask of myself if I remember that I only need to do these things one day at a time.

Happy Holidays!



## OA Trivia Birthday Bonanza

**PLEASE JOIN US IN CELEBRATING OA's 64th BIRTHDAY WITH AN OA TRIVIA GAME**

**WHEN:** Sunday, January 14, 2024

**TIME:** 1 PM to 2:30 PM Eastern time.

Rooms will remain open to 3 PM for fellowship

**ZOOM INFO:** <https://zoom.us/j/81286952848>

**MEETING ID:** 812 8695 2848

**PASSCODE:** 750781

**DIAL-IN:** 1 646 558 8656

**IN-PERSON:** YANA, 770 Aquidneck Ave., Middletown, RI

*Everyone invited to help create the event as well.*

*Due date for submissions is December 15, 2023.*

*Questions can be free-form, multiple-choice, or II in the blank.*

*Please also include answer and reference to OA approved literature.*

Any questions and to send submissions:

Call/text Carole at 916-730-9277

or email at [morrellcj1941@gmail.com](mailto:morrellcj1941@gmail.com)

*Birthday hats and costumes are optional*

**Time :** Sunday @ 5:00 PM

**Type :** Speaker

**Group # :** 49836

**Contact :** Bobbi

[bobbi@rothweb.org](mailto:bobbi@rothweb.org)

443-694-0292

Until further notice this meeting

will be conducted via Zoom.

Meeting ID: 857 0836 2015

Password: 956705

**Time :** Thursday @ 11:00 AM

**Type :** Literature –In person meeting

**Group # :** 24077

**Contact :** Bobbi

443-694-0292

**Address:**

Calvary United Methodist Church

301 Rowe Blvd., 1st floor, Rm. 119

Annapolis, MD

*If you fail to plan,  
you plan to fail!*

Sunday 6 PM

Woods Memorial Church

611 Baltimore Blvd,

Severna Park.21146

Room 152 Enter door on side of building closest to Baltimore Annapolis Blvd. Walk to other end of hallway.

Contact person:

Mary Kay 443-251-8507

### NEW FACE TO FACE MEETING

**Time :** Saturday @ 7:30 AM

**Type** Face to face

**Contact :** Kathy

(410)-919-8688

**Group:** thus far unaffiliated

**164 Club**

**Address:** 2016 Industrial Hwy

Annapolis, MD

**Time :** Friday @ 6:00 PM

**Type :** Leader's choice literature.

Step or Tradition last

Friday of the month

**Group # :** 17204

Until further notice this meeting

will be conducted via Zoom.

Meeting ID: 710 282 660

Password: 026377



## FROM SLIP OR RELAPSE TO RECOVERY

*This is an action plan for reclaiming and retaining our abstinence.* If we are struggling or have had a slip or relapse, we may need to take different actions than before to renew our commitment to abstinence and recovery. The food is the last to go when a compulsive eater slips, relapses, or struggles. A thorough look at food and food behaviors is necessary now because our lives as recovering compulsive overeaters depend on it. Slips, relapses, and struggles do not have to occur in the journey of recovery. But for some of us this does happen. The goal of this process is not to shame or beat ourselves up. It is to learn from it and move forward with a renewed commitment to ourselves, our abstinence, the OA program, and our Higher Power. This inventory and the actions that we take are the most loving things we can do right now for ourselves, our abstinence, and our recovery.

### **There are three parts to this action plan.**

*Part One* is an inventory of what happened. Here we will assess what we have been doing that hasn't been working.

*Part Two* is looking at ways to get out of relapse and back into recovery. A plan helps determine specific actions we are willing to take now. Following a plan also helps put our commitment to abstinence first—as the most important thing in our lives, without exception.

*Part Three* is creating an action plan to keep us out of relapse and in recovery going forward. This plan includes the use of the Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions, Tools of recovery, and other actions that may be helpful to us.

As each section is completed it is vital to share it with someone who is abstinent and recovering. This may be our sponsors or another OA fellow. Do not use the excuse of not having a sponsor to prevent us from doing this work. Remember, we are as sick as our secrets. Rigorous honesty is a must for getting abstinent and staying abstinent. This plan is designed to help us put fear, denial, perfection, guilt, and procrastination behind us as we take an honest look back and develop an action plan for going forward that will allow us freedom from food obsession.

**Part One:** Inventory of What Happened. Write down exactly what happened by answering the following questions. First look at the food. Write down exactly what happened as though there had been a video camera rolling. a) List the foods we were eating during our slip or relapse. b) Were we eating any of our trigger, binge, or other foods that are or may be a problem or that we haven't gotten honest about yet? c) If we aren't sure, try looking at the ingredients in the foods we have been eating. Look for patterns; are there common ingredients in foods we eat most often or in the foods we look forward to the most? d) Do we still have foods in our house that are trigger or binge foods? It is said that we relapse in the reverse order than which we recovered: most of us first recover physically, then we clear up mentally and emotionally, and finally we find "spiritual abstinence." When we relapse or slip, we first lose our spiritual connection (consciously or unconsciously), then our mental or emotional abstinence falters, and finally we lose our physical abstinence. We are at the end of the slip when we pick up the fork or the behavior with food, not at the beginning. Since the food is the last thing to go, it is important to inventory our feelings, thoughts, and spiritual connection. Can we identify any specific things that may have contributed to our relapse? Answer the following questions honestly and thoroughly. a) Look at our eating behaviors. Do we see anything that may be causing problems, such as eating in the car, sneaking food, eating standing up, eating in front of the TV, skipping meals, allowing too much flexibility in our plan, or anything else from which we need to be abstaining? b) What feelings were we having before the relapse? c) What were we thinking before the relapse? d) What secrets were we keeping or still keeping that need to be shared with our sponsors or another abstinent, recovering compulsive eater? e) What lies did our disease tell us that we believed? f) How did we decide it was okay to eat? g) Are we hanging around slippery people and slippery places, such as family, friends, relatives, restaurants, grocery stores? h) Where was HP? i) Were we doing our daily meditation and prayers consistently? j) Were we keeping honest, accountable, and current with our daily Tenth Step inventory? k) Were we making people, places, or things our Higher Power? l) Were the highest priorities in our life our Higher Power, our abstinence, and the program, or was it something else?

**Part Two:** Moving from Slip or Relapse to Recovery. With a better understanding from our inventory in Part One of what happened, let's take a look at what different actions will help us achieve abstinence today. In Part Two, we will be deciding exactly what actions we are willing to take now to move back into recovery. Answer the following questions with the Part One inventory in mind and refer to it as needed. Ask a sponsor (or another recovering member) for guidance if in doubt about any questions or responses. a) Are there changes we need to make to our plan of eating? b) Are there changes we need to make in our eating behaviors? c) Are there other actions regarding our food and eating that we need to take? d) What changes in our thinking do we need to make? e) What changes do we need to make to our program spiritually? By now, we are willing to go to any length for victory over food and compulsive eating. It is now time to move on to the next section.

**Part Three:** Action Plan for Commitment to Recovery. The following actions are necessary to achieve and maintain abstinence. Write an action plan for each item listed below. Share it with our sponsors or a fellow abstinent OA member. Ours is a program of action. Remember that "half measures availed us nothing" (Alcoholics Anonymous, 4th ed., p. 59). So don't think about it. Commit and get started now. How do we plan to utilize each of the nine Tools with our Step work? a) a plan of eating b) sponsorship c) meetings d) telephone e) writing f) literature g) action plan h) anonymity i) service

Remember, we only have to do this one day at a time, one moment at a time, and one meal at a time. May our Higher Power bless us, our recovery, and our abstinence.