

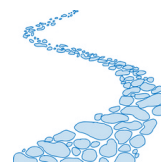
**The Newsletter
of the
Baltimore Area
Intergroup of
Overeaters
Anonymous**



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The OA Steppingstone



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Easy Does It...

Easy Does It....

I think that this can mean a million different things to me depending on where I am in my life and program. I try to always remember that it's taken me 52 years to get where I am emotionally, spiritually and physically. Do I wish I could wake up and be 125 pounds and mentally and emotionally sound... YES. But I am also coming to realize that I am not really sure that I would have wanted to miss this journey. I have been up and down and in and out of program but the one thing that I am slowly learning is that I am okay. I am worth the time and effort to put into myself as I do my family and friends. I have met and made lifelong friends along this journey. Some have come and gone after I learned or saw what I needed to and then I have made friends with people that I don't think I would have come into contact with if it wasn't for OA. I have created my family that supports me and loves me no matter what and I am truly grateful for that. I have this amazing group of friends that have listened, held my hand and cried with me. They tell me "Easy does it" and I listen. I hope that I pass that on as well. I only have today to live, and I need to be gentle and loving to me.

~ Susan G.
Pennsylvania

Call Five and Keep 'Em Alive!

Twelfth Step Within Campaign on the 12th Day of every month!



If everyone makes five phone calls to people we haven't seen at meetings, think of all the people we will reach. Let's all do our part and work on 12th Step Within Service. Reach out and touch someone. You could save someone's life today! Look through your "We Care" meeting phone list and write five names and phone numbers of members you haven't seen in a while. Then, call them just to say hello, invite them to a meeting, and let them know they are important and missed.

Why I Go To Meetings

Recently a friend of mine in program told me she was not going to meetings anymore. She said she wasn't getting anything out of them and was going to work her program in other ways. While each person has their own recovery journey, this made me so sad and got me thinking about why, after many years, I still go to meetings.

I stumbled into my first meeting in 1977, and while only one person in that meeting was abstaining, I read the steps and knew instinctively there was something magical about them. The people at that meeting treated me kindly and supported me. It was at that meeting where I met my first sponsor, who had agreed to travel across town from her home meeting so we could hear her story. Her friendship and example of recovery changed my life.

It was at meetings where I met people who were going through divorces, job losses, deaths, and who weren't eating over them. I could see the pain in their eyes and hear the anguish in their voices and their resolve to remain in recovery despite all of it. It was at meetings where I saw people (including myself for years) struggling to get abstinent, failing over and over and over again, but still showing up. It was at meetings where I saw people lose abstinence and still have the courage to keep coming, and I watched them regain it, learn so much from the experience, and become even stronger. It was at meetings where I saw people leave for months or years, only to come back, and restart the journey.

I went to meetings even though I was gaining weight. I went to meetings even though I was too sick from binging to sit up straight. I went to meetings when I was so jealous of the people who had the recovery I didn't, I could spit. I went to meetings even though I thought I was a lost cause and was going to be zapped dead of compulsive eating to show others what happens when you can't get your act together and find recovery. I went to meetings even though I binged on the way there and the way home.

And guess what? Despite years of set backs and frustrations, one day I got recovery, too!

And I still go to meetings! Why?

1. I don't want to take my recovery for granted - I have seen what happens to many people who stop going to meetings - they relapse. Will I be one of them? Maybe not, but I am not going to take such chances with my life.
2. I like them. I hear good, positive things at meetings. My mood usually lightens after a meeting. Are meetings perfect? Nope. But 95% of the time I feel better after I go.
3. I get to watch miracles. I see people who were just like me, sad and feeling hopeless, and I get to watch them change, lighten up, get happy, start to cope with life in healthy ways. Witnessing these miracles first hand is a joy like no other.



Why I Go To Meetings Continued

4. I get to pay back my own miracle. After almost 43 years of abstinence maybe I have "paid back" enough, but I don't think so! Every day I don't compulsively eat is a miracle, and I am in unique position to help others see that this miracle can happen for them, too! It is such a small commitment to play a role in saving someone else's life!

5. I get to make wonderful and lasting friends, and I get to see them and hang out with them on a regular basis! We care for each other. Are we perfect? Nope, but we're trying and we're having fun.

I love my home meeting at St. John's Church in Lutherville every Friday night at 5:30. We meet in person and we usually go out to dinner after. My dear friends are there and I hope you will join us and become a dear friend, too, or join any meeting, to keep the circle of recovery alive and growing!

~ Jane



There are a number of exciting upcoming events:

“One Day at a Time” - New Year’s Workshop - January 2

Winter OA Beach Retreat - January 20-22

New Comers Monthly Meeting - First Wednesday of Every Month

Second Sunday of the Month Workshops

For more information about these events, visit <https://oabaltimore.org/events/>

New events are always being added, so be sure to check the Events page regularly.

Keep Showing Up No Matter What—And Remember to Open the Gift



After the newness of program wears off, recovery can sometimes seem like a tedious process, and when it does, it is often accompanied by an insistent voice telling us to just cut back on our OA efforts and enjoy the success that we may be having, without having to go to such extremes.

When this happens, as it invariably will – think back to the last days or hours before you broke down and went to OA. If you were fortunate enough to have done some journaling during that time, find it and read it...and then read it again...because your life will never get any better than it was back then if you reduce the amount of energy that you spend on recovery activities.

Working a 12-step program to find a long-term solution to our problem means that there are no quick fixes for understanding and overcoming the repressed emotions that want nothing better than for us to give up and revert to our dishonest and self-destructive ways.

It means doing things that we don't want to do – that the voice in our head says we don't have time to do. I had to be willing to put my personal recovery before my family or my job – as dramatic as that sounds, because as it says in "How It Works", "half-measures availed us nothing" and the result of holding onto my old ways "was nil, unless we (I) let go absolutely".

Read "How It Works" every day for a month. It clearly spells out what is required to get the full benefit from our OA recovery program. Honesty, commitment and a sincere, maximum effort.

So, if we've been fortunate enough to experience a nice stretch of abstinence, or what seems like a too-good-to-be-true period of manageable living, it's important to remember how things were when we were hopeless and clueless; slaves to ways of thinking and acting that drained us of the will to fight back. I've seen that mindset re-assert itself, and it took people years to come back to program again, having to working harder than they did before - just to get back to where they had been. It sure isn't fair, but there's nothing fair about being an addict.

Until we've experienced every shade of frustration, every setback, every human interaction that triggered those old feelings of worthlessness – and STILL chosen to put our abstinence and OA recovery first... we risk failing to learn the very important lesson that our abstinence is not an accomplishment or a possession. It is a gift – an unmerited gift from our Higher Power...one that can slip away if we stop cultivating the inner motivation necessary to persist each day and do whatever is within our power (with G-d's help) to stay the course. We must continue to see things as they are; that we are not "in control" – we are promised a 24-hour reprieve. We can't abandon our disciplines and do our own thing. As I recently heard, "G-d can't steer a parked car."

Abstinence and recovery is a daily battle to the death with a cunning and powerful foe. If we become complacent, or come to believe that we can turn our willingness to work a rigorous program on or off like a light switch, we will end up where countless others have, back at step zero, wondering how it could possibly have happened again. We just have to open the gift. Every day, we have the opportunity to open the gift of abstinence, and to prove, by our actions, that we understand what a fragile and precious thing that it is. That is our gift back to G-d.



Find an OA meeting
at <http://oabaltimore.org/meetings/>

All contributions to this newsletter are the opinion of the writers and not of Overeaters Anonymous or the Baltimore Area Intergroup as a whole.

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About the Baltimore Area Intergroup

The Baltimore Area Intergroup is a group of OA members who seek a simple but more challenging level of service to help our affiliated meetings in the Baltimore metropolitan area. Our Intergroup presents recovery workshops, produces the Steppingstone newsletter; serves as a liaison between groups, Region Seven, and the World Service Office; and reaches out to the community to offer the hope of recovery from compulsive overeating.

The Baltimore Area Intergroup meets monthly (usually on the 3rd Sunday of the month) from 2:00 pm - 3:30 pm via Zoom. We will not meet in-person during 2023.

Every OA member is welcome to join us at Intergroup meetings as a representative of a group (or "meeting") or to learn more about the opportunities for service that help us grow as OA members. For Zoom login information or to learn more, visit <http://oabaltimore.org/intergroup/>.

Contribute to the Steppingstone!

The Steppingstone will now be published quarterly: January 1, April 1, July 1, and October 1. The next issue will be published on April 1, 2023. We welcome your contributions. Suggested topics include:

- Why I come to Intergroup...
- Step 4, Step 5, or Step 6
- Tradition 4, Tradition 5, or Tradition 6
- Your favorite slogans
- The Buzz — something heard at a meeting that resonated with you
- Any other subject that inspires your recovery.



You can also create a puzzle, a drawing, a painting, or other art (no faces, please).

Contributions from everyone — newcomers to long-timers and everyone in between. — are valued. The tool of writing is magical! Articles may be edited. Send your contributions to steppingstone@oabaltimore.org by March 15.