

The Newsletter
of the Baltimore
Area Intergroup
of Overeaters
Anonymous



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THE OA STEPPINGSTONE

FALL ISSUE

OCTOBER 2023

What Part Does My Gratitude Play in Recovery?

I have a three-fold disease. It is physical, mental, and spiritual, and five years ago it almost killed me.

Physically, I weighed almost 300 pounds and was very sick from four serious medical conditions caused by my life-long cycle of dieting and overeating compulsively. Mentally, I felt that I was going insane because I was always in distress, and to soothe myself I thought about food ALL THE TIME. My life felt completely out of control. And spiritually, I lived in a reality of constant fear and self-hatred. A therapist who knew me 13 years ago said last week that she had never met someone who hated themselves as much as I did.

By working the Steps described in the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous, I now have a daily reprieve from my misery. Physically, I am maintaining a loss of 150 pounds and no-longer suffer from the four conditions that threatened my life. Mentally, I feel sane and use my clear thinking to take care of myself and be of service to others. And spiritually, I choose to live in a reality where a Power greater than myself loves and protects me and I am safe. I have become empowered by my connection to this Higher Power and now feel like a worthy and powerful person.

The promises described in the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous are all coming true for me. I say that I am “recovered” because I have had a spiritual awakening and have food neutrality, which basically means that I enjoy my food more than I ever did when I ate compulsively, but once my meal is done, I don’t think about it again. And I NEVER need to soothe myself with food any more.

I no longer multiply my miseries, so I am happy. And the truth is that I am happy even when things don’t go my way, even when something “bad” happens. The reason for this state of happiness is that I am now ACUTELY AWARE OF MY BLESSINGS and, every moment of the day, I am GRATEFUL for them.

I am very grateful for this program that has given me the tools to recover my sanity. I am incredibly grateful for my connection with a Power that I can’t explain or understand but believe is there, loving and protecting me every moment of the day. I am grateful for all the love in my life that I give freely and freely receive.



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What Part Does My Gratitude Play in Recovery? (continued from page 1)

Here's an example of how it works: A few months ago I suffered from such a bad migraine that I ended up in the hospital emergency room twice in one week. As expected, the wait was long (12 hours the first day and seven the second) and I was very ill. But I was so happy that my friend who accompanied me was taken aback. She said: "Dorit, why are you so happy? You're ill, you're sitting in a crowded ER with stupid babies crying and people coughing, the triage nurse didn't even give you a quiet/dark room to wait in . . ." and she went on and on.

I looked at her genuinely surprised. I KNEW that there was a Power greater than myself that loved and protected me, and so while everything she was mentioning was true, it REALLY didn't matter! What I was aware of (and was ever so grateful for) was the fact that I lived in Canada and had access to medical help when I needed it, that I had brought all the abstinent food I needed with me, that I had a friend who cared enough about me to spend hours in a place that clearly distressed her, and that there were other friends and family keeping in touch with me through my phone.

The fact that I was in more pain than I had ever been in, even while birthing my daughter, did not affect my happiness and my ability to be grateful for all the many blessings in my life. I'm not suggesting that my life is perfect, but when I do fall back into fear, anger, or hatred, MY RECOVERY GIVES ME THE SKILLS, THE DAILY PRACTICE, TO COME BACK INTO GRATITUDE AND AWARENESS OF MY MANY BLESSINGS. That is what working the Steps has done for me. That is what it can do for you, too.

~ Dorit Perlin

A Thank You and an Invitation

Dear OA Friends,

This is a thank you and an invitation.

Thank you so much for being there with me on my recovery journey. I began this journey 46 years ago in Baltimore. OA was young; OA was growing. We started meetings and they flourished. Even after I moved to Harford County I knew my recovery came from what I found in those early days.

I now find myself relocated to the Eastern Shore. I knew, even before I moved here, that having a face-to-face meeting was going to be very important. I met someone else from the area and we started the meeting together in January. And no one came . . . and no one came. Should we give up? I wasn't ready, so we redoubled our efforts, and we posted it on the OA website (what was the reason for the delay?) We put it in local papers—and what a coincidence—people are coming! Virtual is a good back-up, but for me there is nothing like a

face-to-face meeting.

Please, if you find yourself on the Eastern Shore, come to the meeting. If you are not here on a Monday, call and we can meet for fellowship.

Below is the information about the meeting.

Monday 7:00 pm
Worcester Library—Ocean Pines
1107 Cathell Rd.
Berlin, MD 21811
1st meeting room on the left

Open literature meeting
Call Terri for more information 410-459-9100

Hope to see you all in November at the Region 7 Convention if not before.

In love and service,
~ Terri

Four Benefits of Service

Recently, I participated in a workshop on service in OA, and I reflected on some of the benefits of service I have found in my recovery.

1. The first benefit of doing any kind of service is that it **forces me to get outside of myself** and focus on helping someone else with their recovery.

Back in the early days of Alcoholics Anonymous, Bill W. and Dr. Bob discovered that, as they said, “helping other drunks” was the best way to perpetuate their own recovery.

Compulsive eating is a shameful disease. For most of us, people can see the results of compulsive overeating through our weight, and we see it in the mirror. But even for “normal” body types, if they are compulsive eaters who hide the results through purging or excessive exercise, that’s still a hidden shame.

Shame makes us want to isolate ourselves. And the pandemic made isolation even more of a habit, justified by personal health reasons.

So whatever your form of service, I think it offers the benefit of connecting us to others, feeling empathy for their suffering, learning from their victories, and breaking our sense of isolation.

2. The second benefit is that service - especially a verbal commitment to someone - **keeps me showing up, and the only way to find recovery is to keep showing up**. In my professional life, I am a classic fast starter - but terrible finisher. The best way to stay on track with a project for me is to schedule a meeting with my other collaborators and to commit to having something new accomplished by the time of the next meeting. So in OA, too, making a commitment to some sort of service - and sharing that commitment with someone else - helps me keep showing up, and that helps keep my recovery in focus.

3. **Service makes me feel “part of the team.”** Theodore Roosevelt said the critic who sits in the stands just observing isn’t of any consequence. The person of consequence is the one who gets into the arena and “dares greatly.” Whatever the sport may be - the 15 or 45 players who are on the field are part of the team and have a true bond that the 40,000 people in the stands who cheer for them can only hope for.

4. **Service keeps me on the team and able to play the long-game of recovery.** Being part of the team - your people, the fellowship - is essential for long-term recovery, especially after the honeymoon phase has passed. There’s a well known African proverb that says, “If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.” At times we will be experiencing a strong recovery and will be able to help others. Sometimes life is going to hit us hard, and we’re going to need someone else to lean on. That’s why traveling in recovery together is so important.

There are other benefits, of course, but these are four benefits of service that mean a lot to me. Whatever form of service you choose, service is the way to keep experiencing our own recovery and to keep sharing the message of hope we find in OA.

~ Hans M.






The Buzz

(Something Heard at a Meeting That Kept Buzzing in Your Head!)

“Being humble is NOT thinking less of yourself—
it’s thinking of yourself less.”

I Am a Grateful Compulsive Overeater Because ...

- 
- I know longer live with the physical cravings or mental obsession of my disease.
 - I have food sobriety and can be around those foods that used to lure me, call me, and give me initial elation, of which no amount consumed was ever enough to satisfy me.
 - I no longer need to feel alone, as I have this program and a Higher Power unique to me so that I can be the best version of myself today.
 - I have a community of like-minded people willing to share their vulnerability along with their experience, strength, and hope of recovery.
 - I know asking for help is a strength, not a weakness.
 - I have the Steps available to me that lay the foundation of transformative change from a disease mindset focused on my problems to a recovery mindset focused on solutions through action.
 - I have Tools in my arsenal for when things are going well and for when they are not. I can never return to the beginning of my journey as I have gained knowledge and proven actions to solidify my life in recovery.
 - I know the joy and satisfaction found in service - from the simple acts of technical support or hosting a meeting to sponsoring others along their path to recovery.
 - I found a sponsor who had what I wanted and is so generously willing to work with, challenge, and inspire me.
 - I have such beautiful places to walk, as this is where I find a strong connection to my HP.
 - I have emotional calmness that allows me to remain present and proactive rather than numb and reactive (at least, most of the time).
 - I have the Serenity Prayer, which reminds me of the courage, wisdom, and acceptance of change as it applies to me.
 - And finally, I am grateful for the Promises, which I can honestly say are coming true for me.



~Lori B from Nelson, British Columbia



Slipping

Hi, I am Sally, a very grateful recovering compulsive overeater. I have been in OA for 21 years and have been abstinent about 80 - 85% of that time. I haven't ever been in what I consider relapse, which I think of as giving up, stopping, not working the program, or not going to meetings. I have never left. BUT, I have had slips. I may not yet be where I want to be, but I sure am not anywhere near where I would be without this program. The blessing is that each time I have had a slip, I got back on track by looking at my program and working it more fully or maybe differently. I recently read something on an OA email loop about slips. The writer said, "If you are driving and you make a wrong turn, you don't go back home and either stay there or start over. You turn around and get back on the right road." My husband and I travel a lot so this hit home. I navigate and am pretty good at it until I am not. I say "whoops" and turn around. We turn around and continue. We may have to pull over and study the map, but we don't go home and start over or stay at home. That is how I feel about my OA program. When I make a wrong turn, I say "whoops" and turn around and get back on the program road. I usually study the "map" and see what I hadn't been doing and correct that or add some extras.

So what causes my slips?

- * SLIP - acronym: Sobriety Loses Its Priority
- * Complacency and cockiness – Oh, I've got this. What I have is a chronic, incurable, deadly disease that requires daily application of this 12-Step program and conscious surrender to God.
- * Not reading my materials or working the Steps on a daily basis. The Big Book says we have a daily reprieve of our disease as long as we stay in fit spiritual condition.
- * I don't think, or I have built a wall up around my ears and don't hear or listen to God.



I could talk more about what causes slips, but I want to get on to what I have done to get back on a solid path. I mentioned that I look at how well I am working my program. These are some of the things that I have done that have worked:

- 1) Pray
- 2) Read extra literature. I have all the OA and AA books. I get them out and read them. I read *Lifeline* magazine.
- 3) I reread my notes from meetings and conventions and other OA workshops.
- 4) I make lists of all the pointers that I have read, heard at meetings, or heard at conventions.
- 5) I go back and rework the Steps in different ways, such as using *The Twelve Step Workbook of OA* and the *Twelve Step Workshop and Study Guide*.
- 6) What I am doing right now is listening to the Joe and Charlie tapes. When I first came to OA, the group I joined was a Big Book Study meeting and we listened to these tapes. Since then I have listened to them in my car. Now I have them on my Audible app, and stop at important points and take notes. This has been such a blessing and has gotten me back on a wonderful abstinent path. The first thing that they reinforce is that we have a disease of the mind. Our disease tells us that we can eat whatever is calling to us. It lies to us. It blocks the consequences from our minds. Once we eat that substance, the physical craving begins. Our only way out is through our Higher Power and by working the steps daily. I just saw a poster for an addiction panel, and it said "Choice or Disease." I believe that we have a disease. The only choice we have is whether or not to work the Steps, which is the solution. The Steps and abstinence are our medicine for our disease.

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Slipping (continued from page5)



- 7) Another thing that I have been doing that has been very helpful is something I was reintroduced to by Sue B., who led a relapse workshop using the *Slipping 30 Questions*.
- 8) I have gone to workshops and retreats over the years, and I love the Region 7 convention. I am planning to attend this year, and hopefully I will get to meet some of you in person. A couple of things I heard at the convention that really stuck with me are “make a list of your binge foods and then don’t eat them” and “no small liberties.”
- 9) I have to watch for HALT (Hungry, Angry, Lonely and Tired). Tired is my biggest problem. My disease tells me that food will help. I now say, “Disease, you are a liar!” And no, one bite will hurt because I learned early on in program that one bite is too many and a 1,000 are never enough. I try to focus on the positive side of HALT (Honest, Accepting, Loving, Thankful).
- 10) And I work the Steps daily. I say the first 3 Steps every morning while I read my three OA daily readers and say the 11th Step morning prayer. I do an 11th Step nightly examination. And, I work my 10th Step inventory when anything is bothering me. And as the 10th Step says in the Big Book, to do a 10th Step fully, I am working Steps 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9.
- 11) I use the Tools. The Tools are not the program, but they are the tools to help us work the Steps, which are the program. I like the mental picture that the Tools are the railing that help us climb the Steps. So yes, it is essential that I have a food plan and a sponsor, that I am a sponsor, that I use the phone, and that I do service.
- 12) And PRAY!!! I am powerless, but my Higher Power, whom I call God, takes care of me and has control.

These are some of the things I do so I don’t SLIP so that sobriety or abstinence doesn’t lose its priority. And one final thought: What is abstinence? OA has been struggling with a definition for this all along. When I came into program, I had some old literature that said your food plan was the same as your abstinence. Well, the 2021 World Service Business Conference came up with this revised Abstinence and Recovery Policy: Abstinence is the action of refraining from compulsive eating and compulsive food behaviors while working towards or maintaining a healthy body weight. Spiritual, emotional, and physical recovery is the result of working and living the Overeaters Anonymous Twelve Step program on a daily basis.”



As I said in the beginning, I don’t know where I would be without this program. Not only would I be huge, but I would also be totally nuts. As they say, I came for the vanity but stayed for the sanity. So don’t give up. Say “whoops” instead and then turn around and get back on the right road.

~ Sally



**FIND AN OA
MEETING AT**

<http://oabaltimore.org/>

**JOIN YOUR
FELLOWS AT
INTERGROUP!**

The Baltimore Area
Intergroup meets
virtually one
Sunday a month from
2 - 3 :30 pm.

The Autumn
Intergroup dates are:

**October 15
November 12
December 17**

To access the meeting
link, visit
[http://oabaltimore.org/
intergroup/](http://oabaltimore.org/intergroup/)

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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BALTIMORE AREA OA HAS A FACEBOOK PAGE!

Follow BAIG's new **Facebook** group! Our new Facebook page, Overeaters Anonymous, Baltimore Area, will be a source of inspirational information, meeting information, *Steppingstone* articles, and special event announcements. Join us!

- ◆ We are looking for someone who would like to become the administrator
- ◆ Help us get out the OA message! Contact Hans M. at 443-878-3503

EVENTS

Region 7's in-person convention, SAIL INTO RECOVERY, will be held at the Princess Royale in Ocean City, MD from November 3rd - 5th, 2023. Registration is now open!

- ◆ Regular registration for \$65 is open until November 2nd
- ◆ After November 2nd, registration is \$75
- ◆ There are still rooms available, but they are going fast! Book your room before October 24th to guarantee the discounted rate!
- ◆ [Click here to register.](#)

ABOUT THE BALTIMORE AREA INTERGROUP

The Baltimore Area Intergroup (BAIG) 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. BAIG presents recovery workshops, produces the *Steppingstone*, serves as a liaison between groups and Region 7 and the World Service Office, and reaches out to the community to offer the hope of recovery from compulsive overeating.

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.

WSO ON THE 7TH TRADITION

Did you know that the suggested 7th Tradition contributions are 60% for Intergroup, 30% for WSO, and 10% for Region after your group prudent reserve? Fellow members, consider a Paypal monthly direct contribution to BAIG (Baltimore Area Intergroup).

CONTRIBUTE TO THE STEPPINGSTONE!

Deadline for the next issue: December 5, 2023

We welcome your contributions to the Winter 2023 issue! Suggested topics include:

- Recovery from Relapse
- Your gratitude "list" (How does gratitude help you maintain your abstinence?)
- Any other subject that inspires your recovery

You can also create a puzzle, drawing, painting, or other art (no faces, please). Contributions from everyone - newcomers to long timers - are valued. Articles may be edited. Send your contributions to steppingstone@oabaltimore.org by December 5!