

MARCH 2018 – IS IT LUCK? WHAT LEADS TO RECOVERY?

NoVAtions, Northern Virginia Intergroup of Overeaters Anonymous

FROM THE EDITOR

So, this will be a short article. No, it's not luck. It's work. It's commitment. We can't do it halfway. It has to be the most important thing in our lives, or we will not truly recover. And even working at it 100%, we need to accept the fact that a relapse may be just around the corner. As we say in the rooms, while we are recovering, our disease is in the other room doing pushups, just getting stronger. That's the bad news.

The good news is that recovery is possible if we are willing to make that commitment and do the work. How do I know this? I have friends in the room who have been recovered for decades; some who have relapsed and recovered, sometimes more than once; and some who are struggling day to day, just like me (some are in all three of these categories!).

What do we all have in common? We all have both the disease and the desire to overcome it. That is the only thing that is required. What leads to recovery is working the program every day, using the tools and working our way through the Steps with the help of a sponsor. At every meeting I attend, you bring your experience, strength, and hope to me and teach me so much. You serve as valuable examples of spiritual strength and human frailty, and that combination provides a powerful support system of wisdom and compassion. My life is truly blessed every day that I spend in your company.

- Kate I. (Co-Editor)

THIRD STEP PRAYER

God, I offer myself to Thee, to build with me and to do with me as Thou wilt. Relieve me of the bondage of sin, that I may better do Thy will. Take away my difficulties, that victory over them may bear witness to Thy power, Thy love, and Thy way of life. May I do Thy will always.

"Third Step Prayer." *Alcoholics Anonymous: The Big Book*



CALENDAR AT A GLANCE

NOVA

NoVAtions Deadline, Mar 6

Intergroup Meeting

Mar 17

10 AM – 12 Noon
Hope Lutheran Church,
Annandale, VA

REGION 7

Spring Assembly 2018

Mar 9-11, 6 PM Fri to 3 PM Sun,
The Inn at Reading, 1040 North
Park Road, Reading, PA 19610

Into the Looking Glass

May 4-6

Plim Plaza Hotel, 2nd &
Boardwalk, Ocean City, MD
Speakers, workshops, fellowship!
For info/contacts, see
<http://oaregion7.org/calendar/>

Region 7 Convention:

Recovery – It's a Shore Thing!

Nov 2-4

Holiday Inn Oceanfront, 6600
Coastal Hwy, Ocean City, MD
Call Terri 410-450-9100 or Mike
732-939-2472

OTHER EVENTS

Unity Through the Traditions

Telephone Meeting

When: 3rd Sunday of Every
Month at 3 PM to 4 PM EST
712-775-7035, Participant Code
530554#

Sponsored by Region 8.

My dear recovering friends,

Here are a few things I've heard at OA meetings and intergroup meetings over the years:

The whole is greater than the sum of its parts. We're all in this lifeboat together so don't poke a hole in it. My recovery depends upon OA unity. A meeting should fit itself to be of maximum service to the one who still suffers. The newcomer is the most important person in the room. The need for recognition, domination, and ego-inflation are character defects that controlled our actions before we recovered. If it ain't broke, don't fix it. OA has a tried and true method of recovery that has been handed down from Roseann to her sponsees, to our sponsors, to us, and we pass it to our sponsees. No matter how many years of abstinence I get, I'll never be a doctor in this program, always one of the patients like everyone else. Our leaders are but trusted servants, they do not govern. We freely give what was freely given to us, and nothing more. Embellishing, "improving," adding to, or changing OA only dilutes it. The only truth I have to give at a gathering of compulsive eaters is "what it was like, what happened, and what it's like now" – that is my story, that is my experience, strength, and hope. Anything new that I made up would only be a theory, not "experience strength, and hope," not "tried and true," and not needed in OA. Rarely have we seen a person fail who has thoroughly followed our path. What path? The path is a food plan, the 12 Steps, and using the tools; it's not fancy, but it works. Thousands of compulsive eaters have recovered using the same 12 Steps that millions of sober alcoholics have used.

When I was new, I brought a pencil and pad to meetings and wrote down things I heard that I wanted to remember. My sponsor said, "You don't have to write it down, Peggy, you'll hear the good things over and over." I attend meetings regularly to hear the basics over and over so I remember the good things. We're all different; some of our experiences are hilarious, and some are heart-breaking. Our stories make meetings interesting, but the basic program of recovery from compulsive eating keeps on working for everyone who works it. As a "trusted servant," I am committed to keeping the path clean for those who come after us.

- Peggy (Interim Chair, NoVA Intergroup)

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OAADSY.

And here is your hint: K = O

THE BUILDING BLOCKS OF SPIRITUAL HEALING ARE THE TWELVE STEPS

STEP OF THE MONTH- STEP 3

Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God *as we understood Him*.

PRINCIPLE OF THE MONTH

Faith

TRADITION OF THE MONTH

The only requirement for OA membership is a desire to stop eating compulsively.

CONCEPT OF THE MONTH

The right of decision, based on trust, makes effective leadership possible.

Broken Dreams



As children bring their broken toys
With tears for us to mend,
I brought my broken dreams to God
Because He was my friend.
But then instead of leaving Him
In peace to work alone,
I hung around and tried to help
With ways that were my own.
At last I snatched them back and cried,
"How could you be so slow"
"My child," He said, "What could I do?
You never did let go."

STEP THREE: GIVING IT UP

*"Once we compulsive overeaters truly take the Third Step **we cannot fail** to recover." (emphasis added)*

- *The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous, Pg. 27*

After telling my story at meetings, I get flurries of phone calls from old and new members asking for the "inside scoop" on how I really did it. It's not just the seventy-three pounds I released; people want to know about the serenity, what keeps me centered and calm despite hair-raising personal experiences in my life. What made the program's tenets click now, finally?

Simple: the Third Step corresponds to the principle of faith. Once we truly make the leap to believe, no matter what, that a power greater than ourselves will restore us to sanity and will take care of every other issue in our lives as well, we cannot ever fail to recover, and the compulsion to binge disappears. It has to happen! That power, I now know, has always been there for me, like a bridge waiting to be crossed. It's so simple that most of us believe there must be more to it than that, some other trick or secret.

There are no secrets, no magic. Anyone can have what I have. I've been cornered, trapped. The gate to freedom has closed behind me. I looked inward and there was honesty. I looked outward and there was hope. I looked up and there was faith.

- March 2, *Voices of Recovery*, Overeaters Anonymous

AS I AM (ON HIGHER POWER AND SPIRITUALITY)

I feel really connected to my God most of the time. And every so often, out of the blue, I get a message that moves my program and my recovery forward in leaps and bounds. It happened again yesterday while I was attending a marathon.

At one point, we were invited to do an activity. On half a page, we wrote the name of a personal hero and the qualities that led us to admire them. Then we wrote our own name on the other half and copied beside it those same heroic qualities, whether we had them or not.

I started the exercise, but all at once, my hand flew to a blank corner of the sheet. I madly wrote a few of my own personal qualities: ways of being that were useful to others, things people said they appreciated about me. It stopped me cold.

You see, for most of my life, I thought I was junk. I had low self-esteem that I sometimes disguised with arrogance or controlling behaviors. I was constantly comparing myself to others, mostly seeing myself as inferior. And I ate over it!

Could it really be that I have worth? That God needs me as I am, as I am growing, in a plan only known to that inner voice we share? I admit the thought of that possibility had me almost shaking. I sat there in my own world of discovery.

NOVATIONS BIZ

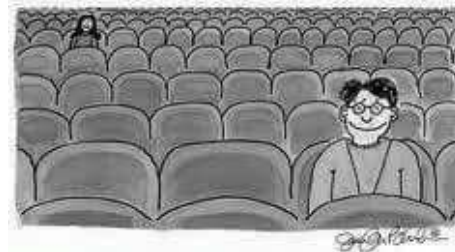
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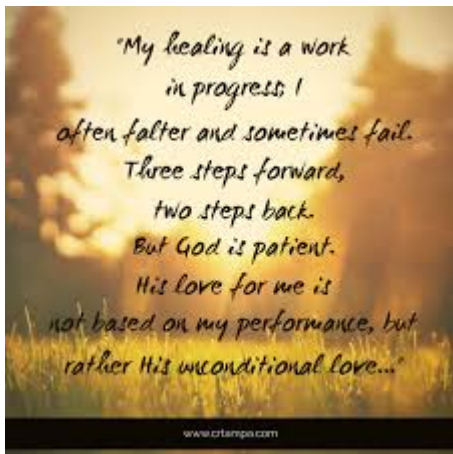
NEXT NOVATIONS TOPIC

"Strong Abstinence: What Is It?" – Articles due March 6th.

SUBMITTING TO NOVATIONS

Have something to say but think you can't write? That's what your editors are here for. Submit your thoughts and we'll work with you to polish your valuable contribution. Feel free to submit an article on the monthly topic or whatever you feel moved to share. *Submissions can be anonymous if desired.* Events announcements, original poetry, and art also welcome! Email submissions or suggestions to novations@oanova.org or, if you prefer, mail it to NoVA IG, P.O. Box 1992, Annandale, VA 22003.





Coming out of it, I heard the speaker suggest that, through program, we could become like our heroes, developing the qualities we'd listed "beyond our wildest dreams." I can really sense the good in that suggestion—we all want to make progress in practicing the principles in all our affairs, and role models play a part.

But in this twenty-four hours, my learning was in a different realm, so when the speaker asked if anyone would like to share what they had discovered, I approached the mike on unsteady legs.

"I am so grateful for this exercise," I said. "Today, HP zapped me. Most of my life, I tried to emulate others, but in this moment, I've been told I need to develop the gifts and talents that I've been blessed with personally. I have a uniqueness to embrace. Making comparisons or trying to be someone else, as I've so often done, only hurt and paralyzed me. Everything I need to get out of my rut is found by working the Steps, using the Tools, being in fellowship, and trusting God to give me everything required to succeed. I can feel a new freedom and joy in my heart!"

Thanks for being part of my journey.

— K., Canada

From Lifelines Online, <http://www.oalifeline.org>, Accessed 2/10/2018

FYI

IG CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR NEEDED

We are thankful to Peggy B. for stepping in to serve as interim IG Board Chair, but the **position is still open**, as is that of Vice Chair. If you meet the qualifications (working the twelve steps, traditions, and concepts for a year; at least 6 months of continuous current abstinence; abstinence during tenure; and regular membership of an affiliated group), please consider this area of service. See our bylaws (Article IV, Sections 2 & 3, at <http://oanova.org/erewhon-intergroup-policies-and-bylaws.html>) and the Operations Manual (Board Officers, pages 8 & 9, <http://oanova.org/oa-nova-intergroup-procedures-manual.html>) for a more complete position description and contact us at chair@oanova.org if you would like more information or to submit a nomination.

YOUR OA NOVA INTERGROUP TRUSTED SERVANTS

OA NOVA & IG



- Interim Chair:** Peggy B.
- Vice Chair:** Open
- Treasurer:** Rhodessa B.
- Secretary:** John K.

Next Intergroup Meeting:
 Saturday, March 17
 10 a.m. - 12 noon
 Hope Lutheran Church, 4604 Ravensworth Road, Annandale, VA.

OA NoVA is a vibrant fellowship with more than 45 weekly OA meetings that span Alexandria, Arlington, Annandale, Ashburn, Bristow, Burke, Falls Church, Fredericksburg, Leesburg, Manassas, McLean, Purcellville, Reston, Springfield, Vienna, and Warrenton, Virginia.

The OA NoVA Intergroup (IG) serves and represents the above member groups and carries the message of recovery to those with the problem of eating compulsively, by fostering the practice of the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous, guided by the Twelve Concepts of OA Service.

Cryptogram solution: I can't surrender what I refuse to accept.