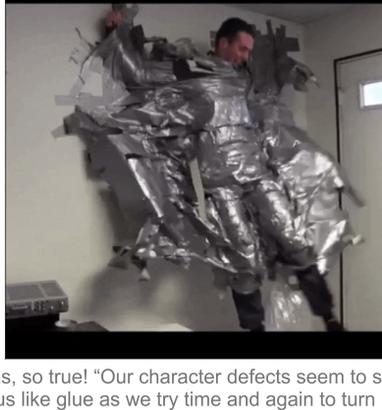




NOVATIONS

Step Six: Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character

Spiritual Principle: Willingness



Alas, so true! "Our character defects seem to stick to us like glue as we try time and again to turn them over to God." *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous (Second Edition)*, p. 45.

Letter from the Chair

Oh, how I struggle with willingness! Most of all, the willingness to work for what I want. I want to lose weight, not admit my faults. I want to eat whatever I feel like and not suffer the consequences, not consider the other guy's side in an argument. I want to be right and to win, not accept the things I cannot change.

One of the most valuable exercises my sponsor asked me to do in working Step Six was to take a look at my searching and fearless moral inventory (Step Four) and see where my wrongs and their exact nature (Step Five) were harming me. At one time, these were simply part of my character, and may even have been assets. But then they were warped by my addiction into something that kept me apart from others. Confidence became pride, discernment warped into judgment. Sensitivity and feeling turned to fear and numbness. At one time we were all openhearted, fresh and innocent, and then life happened. It made us unhappy people who ate our way to 300 pounds or starved our way to 90. It made us throw up shields to keep from getting hurt.

For me the power of Step Six – indeed, of Steps Four through Ten – is in lowering my shields. In becoming brave enough to be frightened and to know that the only way around is through, as the poet Robert Frost is quoted saying in *For Today*. In being willing to consider that a Higher Power will protect me spiritually and emotionally if I become vulnerable enough to be genuine with others. Does it always "turn out for the best"? No. Sometimes I get hurt. But living my life sitting tight within the circle of my defects of character only ensures that I will be unhappy and frightened alone. If I allow my Higher Power to draw me outside the circle, I discover that I can see my fellows more clearly and compassionately, and that I am part of humanity and the Divine One. This is worth everything, and I am entirely ready and willing to give up my defects in order to get this gift. It's a no-brainer trade.

Kate I.



The Pandemic Lockdown and Willingness

Like everyone else, depression and lassitude are dogging my footsteps as the lockdown gets longer. Yes, the economy is opening up, but I won't be able to resume normal activities right away. I struggle to get out of bed, preferring to read news or junk fiction rather than get up, go to meetings or exercise.

The more I wallow, the more I want to wallow. And the less I want to abstain or keep in touch with the Program. Instead, I become frustrated at my inability to halt the self-destructive behavior.

Re-reading Step Six in the OA Twelve and Twelve helped me focus on the problem behind the wallowing – grief and fear of pain. My father and my oldest friend are dying. And the pandemic has prevented me from seeing them for months, since they are at high risk of infection.

I pray for the willingness to be uncomfortable, to grieve, to recognize that there is nothing I can do to prevent them from slipping away.

The recent webinar put on by the Virtual Region about recovering through times of grief and trauma was very helpful. Three OA veterans spoke of abstaining through agonizing personal tragedies. They stressed the importance of a daily routine focused on recovery—the Steps, Tools, prayer/meditation, service, etc. Seems like a lot of work, but—honestly—what else do I have to do right now?

The lockdown also revealed dishonesty about my food. After several weeks of eating at home, I realized I was losing weight. Those lunches and snack breaks while I was running errands were extremely unhealthy. Once this is all over, I commit to packing my own food before hitting the road.

Anonymous

What's Next for our Meetings?

We're all wondering what our meetings might look like when meeting locations reopen. There are several options—live meetings, virtual meetings (Zoom or phone), hybrid meetings with some participants present and some remote, or splitting meetings into separate virtual and face-to-face meetings. Each group will have to decide this issue itself. NOVA Intergroup will continue to maintain the Zoom account for groups in our area.

Intergroup will consider, on a case by case basis, financial assistance for microphones or amplifiers for meetings that decide to go hybrid. See the forthcoming email from our Intergroup Chair for more information.



Mark Your Calendar!

Saturday, June 27 1:00 - 2:00 pm—Newcomer Workshop I, Central Virginia Intergroup [Click here for more information on June 27 and follow on workshops on 6 July and 12 July](#)

Sunday, June 28 3:00 - 4:00 pm—Twelfth Step Within Webinar, OA Virtual Region [Click here for more information](#)

Tuesday, June 30 7:30 - 9:00 pm—"Don't Bury Your Defects in the Sand," Philadelphia Area Intergroup [Click here for more information](#)

Saturday, July 4 9:00 - 11:00 am—"Freedom from Bondage," (speakers and sharing), Philadelphia Area Intergroup [Click here for more information](#)

Tuesday, July 13—NoVAtions articles on Step Seven/Humility due to novations@oanova.org or k2lovesrabbits@gmail.com

Saturday, July 18 10:00 am - 12:00 pm—Northern Virginia Virtual Intergroup Meeting, Zoom instructions to follow

Don't Forget the Seventh Tradition!

The pandemic hit OA hard. Please visit [World Service](#), [OA Region VII](#), [OA Virtual Region](#), or [NOVA Intergroup](#) to donate. As always, however, we need *you* more than we need your money.



NOVATIONS

It takes a village to produce a newsletter. Do you have some useful feedback or something you'd like to share with fellow OA members in Northern Virginia? Send us your thoughts, jokes, pictures, articles—anything that reflects your experience, strength and hope to novations@oanova.org. July topics: Step Seven and Humility. *Please send items NLT than 13 July.*



As always, the opinions expressed here are strictly those of the people sharing them and not of OA as a whole.

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