



NOVATIONS

November 2021

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF NORTHERN VIRGINIA INTERGOUPOF OVEREATERS ANONYMOUS

Learning to Know My HP

When I started the program, I did not have the strongest conception of a Higher Power. My sponsor told me to start acting "as if" I had a Higher Power. Once I did this, my mind was open to see all the miracles in my life for what they were: the blessings of my Higher Power.

Believing in a Higher Power allowed me to let go of the anxiety and agonizing that I used to do around every decision. Instead of spending all my mental energy worrying about when I should leave for this appointment or whether I should reschedule it or what I should do, I am able to talk to my Higher Power about it and ask Him to lead me to His will. Then I meditate and I let it go. Eventually, the answer will come to me.

Sometimes the answer comes in the form of something outside my control, such as when someone calls to cancel an appointment. Sometimes it's in the form of my intuition or my desire to choose one thing over the other.

Step 11

Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understand Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.

Spiritual Principle:

Spiritual Awareness

Once the answer has come in its own way, I can relax and know that the decision I've made is the will of my Higher Power. This is immensely freeing and has significantly decreased my anxiety over everyday decisions as well as bigger life decisions. I pray every day to my Higher Power. Though I usually have a routine, I know that if for some reason I don't get to my routine or I'm not finding the willingness to do it that day, my Higher Power won't punish me for it.

I used to think that if I didn't do things in the exact right way, there would be a negative consequence. Now that I have the freedom to choose my own Higher Power, I know that my Higher Power will not punish me for not being perfect.

I am exactly as my Higher Power intends me to be at this moment.

--Ari



Upcoming Events

NOVEMBER

5 Friday, 6 pm to 7 Sunday, 12 noon
[2021 REGION 7 CONVENTION:](#)
Take a Ride on the UJSS Recovery!

14 Sunday, 3 to 4:30 pm
[OA VIRTUAL REGION E-WORKSHOP SERIES](#)

20 Saturday, 10 am to 12 noon
[OA INTERGROUP ZOOM MEETING](#)

25 Thursday, 8 am to 8 pm
[THANKSGIVING ZOOM MARATHON](#)

27 Saturday, 3 to 4:30 pm
[CRAFT & CHAT](#)



As the oldest of six children, I have been attending the church services of my devoutly religious family's chosen denomination since my conception. When I was born eight weeks prematurely weighing a mere 3 pounds, 12 ounces, the doctors did not expect me to survive past the first 24 hours. And if I did survive, they predicted a variety of complications.

That was more than 60 years ago. Although I didn't develop any of the complications potentially precipitated by my early birth, I did, however, begin to develop a challenging relationship with food in my earliest years. My father was a college student and had to eat lunch quickly so he could get back to his studies or his part time job. Since I sat next to him during lunch, I also learned to eat quickly.

As I grew, my hearty appetite made my mother happy. During those growing years, food became my primary coping mechanism in dealing with life's less than enjoyable situations. It was also what I turned to in celebratory times. Food became my "happy place."

In the meantime, the relationship I had with my Higher Power was of a rather distant and casual nature. When I graduated high school, I wanted to get out on my own and prove I could take care of myself, which did not include depending on my Higher Power.

I continued to live my life like that until the past ten years brought one of life's more challenging events: a divorce. Throughout that difficult process, I began to reach out to my Higher Power.

At last, and more recently, I recognized that my eating behavior was compulsive; more hearty than healthy. And as much as I still enjoy eating--especially to celebrate life's more joyful events--it is not the "happy place" as often or as much as it used to be.

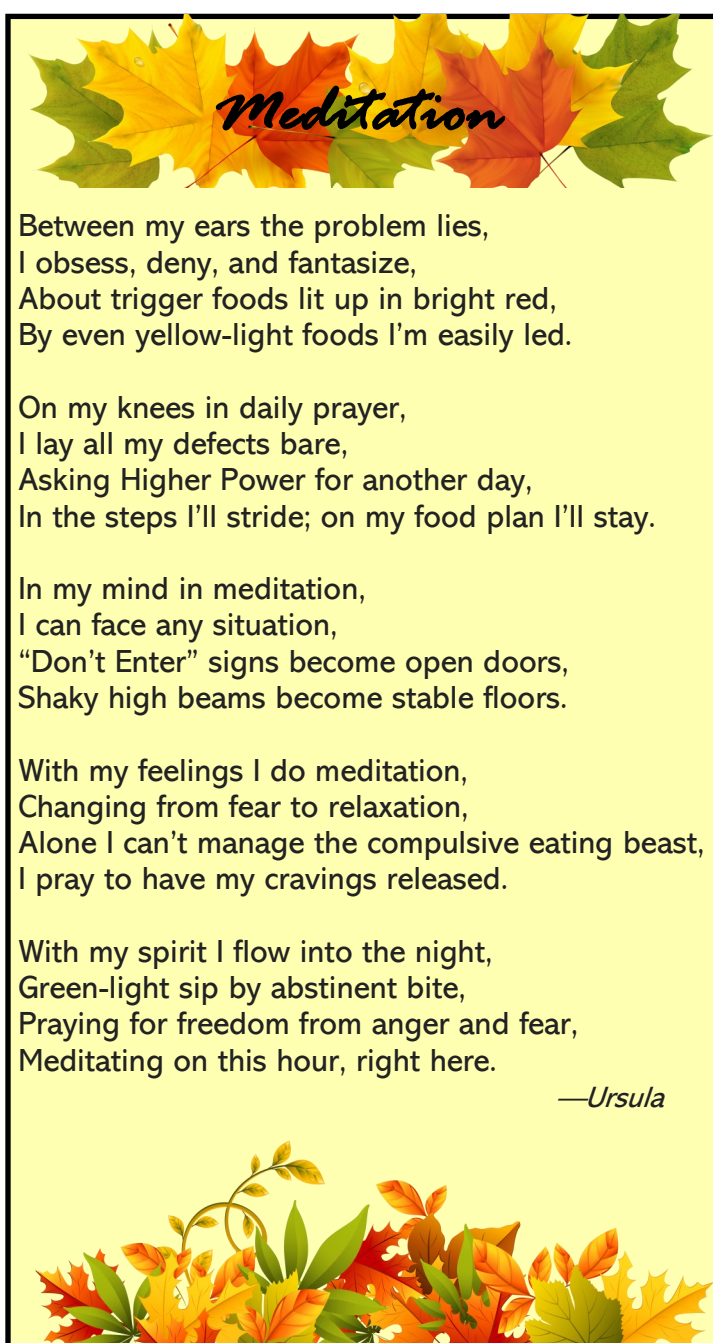
I have begun to lean into my Higher Power through more frequent prayer, with requests for guidance and strength. I understand Step Eleven to challenge me to actively seek to improve my relationship with my Higher Power, working to develop the kind of intimacy I would like to have

with a spouse or a close friend. That kind of intimacy is not immediate but develops over time with single-minded devotion.

It takes full-on engagement, which is somewhat contrary to my nature as an introvert. However, a relationship with anyone I find worthwhile requires engagement. It is incumbent then that I continue to reach out to my Higher Power and to do so regularly in whatever way that makes sense for me.

It is also necessary that I take the time to be silent, to be still, to listen for my Higher Power's responses. It is my experience that the responses will likely not come in the form of a direct answer, but a gradual change in behavior or circumstance

--Joe S.



Want to learn more about
Humility??
 Try studying
 TRADITION ELEVEN!



For me, a large part of Tradition 11 means developing humility in order to recover from compulsive eating. To keep principles before personalities, I have learned to share only my own experience, strength, and hope in OA meetings. I cannot speak for OA as a whole, because that sets me apart from the group.

I have also found that daily writing on and working on OA's 12 Steps and 12 Traditions is an especially helpful tool for learning more about humility.

What a gift to be on this journey with my fellow OA members from all over the world!
 —Anne M.

My Step Eleven Journey

I was 5 years old when I first experienced God within. It was a warm feeling of a presence. I would like to say it grew over the years, but that would not be true. My compulsive eating began at that time too—with 5 pennies my father had given me for the collection basket at church.

I bought penny candy with it at the corner store. Yes, in those days, I could leave my family apartment and buy and hide and eat candy without anyone knowing it. The rest is a story of eating, weight gain, teasing from classmates, dieting, weight gain, more successful dieting and then one day fear because I could no longer successfully stay on a diet, even for one day.

By the grace of the God of my understanding, OA had just started in my town. What a relief to learn that my compulsive eating was a disease, that there was a solution, and that there were other people who shared my problem and could guide me to recovery. It would also be untrue if I were to say that I grabbed the lifeboat and stayed abstinent. What I heard was: go to meetings, get a sponsor, get a food plan, and do service. I did all those things.

What I didn't do was the Steps. I was successful until one day when I didn't have the spiritual fitness to say no to the wrong food. The decision to take that first bite was the beginning of 18 months of pure hell—a memory I don't want to lose because it's a reminder of where a temptation could lead.

I will die, and before I die, I will take innocent people with me, and I will leave destruction in my wake. I could put a day or two together, a week or two, a month or two—but I always went back. I couldn't break the stranglehold food had on me. I didn't realize that food was in control, and I had no power over it. The abstinence I had enjoyed prior to that first bite was a gift from my Higher Power, but I thought it was due to my decision to try OA. I did all the tools and thought I had gotten myself abstinent. Meantime, I couldn't understand why other members were having so much trouble with abstaining.

What does this have to do with Step Eleven?

I had reached the point of despair. I threw in the towel. My resources were exhausted. Alone, I prayed "God, help me!"

The answer was immediate. I was given the gift of abstinence again. From that day to this, the God of my understanding has continued to bless me with abstinence. Step Eleven is the core of my program. I was "... 100% hopeless, apart from divine help." My experience: the first 10 Steps lead to Step Eleven, and Step Twelve flows from it. In order to carry out the dictates of Step Twelve, I have to be in "fit spiritual condition." I get and stay in fit spiritual condition by using my will power to embrace all of the Steps—especially Step Eleven—as a way of life.

Our program works. And if it can work for a wreck of a human being like me, it can work for anyone.
 —Anonymous



Tradition Eleven

Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, films, television and other public media of communication.

Spiritual Principle

Anonymity

All And All

It is woven
Beneath the groves
Of garlic cloves
In the shine
Of apple orchard trees
All yellow, green, and red
Are those orbs to be
Leading to the
Blueish of blue
Depths of the sea
And all that be
Beneath those waves
It is the mud
On my shoes
Brown and tan
With gravel too
And so with it
Time to pass
Serenity has
No firm mass
Because
When it comes by and by
I'll be there in splendor
With glorious desire
I shall surrender

~Mark S.

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You are receiving this email because you
opted in via our website.

Our mailing address is:
OA NOVA
P.O. Box 1992
Annandale, VA 22003

Do You Have an Announcement?

If you wish to publicize a flyer or news item about an OA event, send it to 12stepwithin@oanova.org and "The 12 Steps Within Committee" will post it via group email and on the website. Please include your contact information so you can be reached for any questions.

Step 11 Prayer

Higher Power, as I understand You,
I pray to keep my connection with You
open and clear from
the confusion of daily life.
Through my prayers and meditation I ask
especially for
freedom from self-will,
rationalization, and wishful thinking.
I pray for the guidance of correct thought
and positive action.
Your will Higher Power,
not mine, be done.

**OUR DISEASE WANTS TO KILL US BUT
IT HAS TO GET US ALONE FIRST.**

Thank You

to the Saturday Big Book Step/Traditions Study Group who have served as NoVAation's sponsors for this month, and to all who contributed to this issue!

The topic for December's NoVAations is Step 12. You are invited to submit articles, poetry, and artwork that reflect your experience, strength, and hope. Please attach articles in a Word doc. and/or artwork in a photo file and email to:

novations@oanova.org.

Submission Deadline: November 20 midnight.

In Gratitude, Marie L, Editor



HOW TO GET STUFF DONE!

A Word Search Puzzle with a Hidden Message

1. First find all the words in the list.
2. Words can go in any direction and share letters as well as cross over each other.
3. Once you find all the words, copy the unused letters starting in the top left corner into the blanks to reveal the hidden message.



E	P	R	O	E	M	D	S	G	R	W	E	A	Y	I
C	E	P	M	E	E	I	S	P	I	S	T	U	R	N
N	C	E	E	R	E	S	I	L	E	S	N	T	O	T
E	I	R	R	F	T	C	L	H	O	T	L	U	T	E
I	V	S	C	I	I	E	R	T	U	S	M	N	G	
T	R	I	Y	O	N	P	F	F	T	I	P	N	E	R
A	E	S	E	G	G	L	R	F	E	W	A	C	V	I
P	S	T	N	T	S	I	Y	H	O	P	E	F	N	T
I	O	E	C	N	I	N	T	Y	S	W	Q	L	I	Y
E	S	N	L	A	I	E	S	E	V	A	E	L	V	G
S	M	C	H	O	T	R	E	Y	P	P	A	H	K	E
W	O	E	M	T	V	S	N	H	A	R	V	E	S	T
C	O	U	R	A	G	E	O	W	Y	C	F	M	X	W
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|-------------|--------------|-------------|
| autumn | cats | courage |
| discipline | faith | free |
| frost | happy | harvest |
| honesty | hope | humility |
| integrity | inventory | joyous |
| leaves | love | meetings |
| meow | mercy | naps |
| patience | perseverance | persistence |
| service | steps | twelve |
| willingness | | |



HIDDEN MESSAGE



Need help?
Look for the solution
here in December's
NoVAtions.