



NOVATIONS

December 2021

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF NORTHERN VIRGINIA INTERGOUPE OF OA

A Beautiful & Sacred Gift

I have really been getting a lot of guidance and clarity from HP during meditation lately, particularly during OA meditation phone meetings. On a recent group meditation call, these words came to me as a message to my body after I realized what a beautiful and sacred gift my body actually is.

Dear Body,

You are so amazing! You have been trying to take care of me for so many years. And for so many years I have been ignoring you, neglecting you, overfeeding you, starving you, injuring you, pumping you full of stress hormones, and depleting you . . . and I am so sorry!

You poor, precious thing. I have not seen until now how amazing you are, how hard you work for me, how much you sacrifice for me. It's time for me to start taking responsibility for myself and treat you with love, dignity, and respect.

You have graciously accepted the extra weight I put on you in my attempts to self-soothe or run from emotions. You have, without hesitation, succumbed to a virus to help me avoid a situation that I needed an excuse to get out of because I was too afraid to face it legitimately. You have absorbed many negative feelings and memories that I have been too cowardly to face and process. But it's time for this to stop. You are a gift from God! I need to stop abusing you and start loving and appreciating you!

Body, today I will take care of you. You don't have to take care of me. I will listen to you and respect your boundaries. I don't need to make up reasons or excuses for taking care of you. I will just do it.

God, thank you for this amazing body you've blessed me with! Please help me to listen to and love my body today. Amen.

I was encouraged to share this letter with other OA members, and my conviction to work the program and stay connected with HP is reinvigorated every time I revisit these words. Thank you for giving me another opportunity to share and strengthen my program. Many blessings to you and your beautiful body!

— Katherine H., Long Beach, California USA, Lifetime

Garbage Disposal Moments

Life happens while the garbage disposal stops working.
Life has no remote;

There is no "Pause" to press while the kitchen's stomach empties out onto the floor in an acrid flood.

There is no "Pause" to press until I reach my ideal weight;
Until the herniated discs mend;

Until the pandemic is over and meetings are face-to-face;
Until we have a week for the perfect family

holiday gathering.

Life happens while the family snatches a couple hours to gather for a holiday brunch between flights;

It happens through face masks and over
Zoom and phone meetings;

It happens in doctor's waiting rooms;

It happens while I learn self-acceptance;

It happens while the garbage disposal isn't working.

—Marie L. (Thank you, J, for the inspiration!)

Step Twelve

Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these Steps, we tried to carry this message to compulsive overeaters and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

Step 12 Spiritual Principle

Service

Tradition Twelve

Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all these Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

Tradition 12 Spiritual Principle

Spirituality



Willingness

When we begin our journey in this program, many of us struggle with abstinence and approach it in much the same way that we approached any diet and that was with will power. Our willpower never lasted very long in the face and strength of this disease of compulsive overeating, bingeing and any other form of struggles with food.

Praying for the willingness every day can lead to doing something that I don't want to do or I believe that I can't do. I keep praying and doing the next right thing and then in HP's time, I am doing the very thing that I thought was impossible. The willingness to live by HP's will and to practice the principles in all my affairs has everything to do with my fears:

- ◆ Fear of change
- ◆ Fear that I won't be taken care of (my needs not being met)
- ◆ Fear of not doing it perfectly, etc.,

But in order to grow spiritually, I must change and grow.

Willingness applies to all areas of my life and to my working this program:

- ◆ Willingness to be abstinent
- ◆ Willingness to give up certain foods and eating behaviors
- ◆ Willingness to use the tools of the program
- ◆ Willingness to call my sponsor and others in the program
- ◆ Willingness to pray and meditate
- ◆ Willingness to follow directions
- ◆ Willingness to write
- ◆ Willingness to call in my food plan as part of the surrender process
- ◆ Willingness to plan what I eat and eat what I plan
- ◆ Willingness to grow along spiritual lines and have a relationship with HP
- ◆ Willingness to turn my will and life over to HP on a daily basis
- ◆ Willingness to listen and be quiet
- ◆ Willingness to make amends when I need to
- ◆ Willingness to be totally honest and transparent

Is it *willingness* or *trying*?

If I am *trying* to be abstinent, if I am *trying* to give up certain foods, if I am *trying* to pray and meditate, etc., that means I am doing it on my own.

Willingness means that I am asking God to be a partner in this process of change.

—Kristin W.

Grinches & Tools

The holidays are here; let the festivities begin!

I have galas to go to, celebrations to celebrate, and food to eat.

I'm reminded of the Grinch.

"There's one thing I hate--

All the FOOD, FOOD, FOOD, FOOD!"

(Well, he used the word "NOISE.")

Isn't it true though-- all the games and tricks we play to torment ourselves?

All of a sudden *it* appears!

The mouth-watering holiday food, drinks, and meals.

Then I rationalize, connive, and conspire to get it, without even knowing it.

I hate it, but it comes anyway, excuses—

"Well, I didn't eat a full breakfast to save room for a big lunch;"

"Well, I didn't eat lunch to save room for an afternoon snack;"

"Well, I didn't have a big dinner to save room for desserts."

Let's face it, who am I fooling?

Myself.

Of course.

I've been preparing just for this holiday,

For this one day of the week,

Sometimes for years,

But it still says,

"Gotcha!"

And all the work I did to avoid junk food just goes down or up my throat anyway.

It seems like I can't stop it.

Or, can I?

I have the Tools of Recovery:

marathons, telephone, writing, and reaching out.

Most importantly,

I have prayer and meditation.

It works.

It really does.

Faith without works is dead.

—Anonymous





Tradition Twelve: "Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all these traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities."

Anonymity: This tradition helps me remember it is not all about me. It's about all of us and we are all equal. This calls for restraint, self-control, humility, sacrificing what I want if it will hurt the group or be contrary to any of our Traditions. It's about my self-centered fear that I won't be recognized, that my needs won't be met.

Spiritual: Although I came to OA about the physical problem of not being able to stick to a diet while my weight continued to climb, I was handed the only solution that works for me: The Twelve Step Program. I learned that although there are physical manifestations to my illness, it is fundamentally spiritual in nature.

The higher power that directed my life took two deadly forms, one was my unaided will and the other was the food I couldn't stop eating. I needed a Power greater than myself and greater than the food.

Spiritual problem.

Spiritual solution.

Foundation: Without a foundation, I sink. I'm lost. I live miserably and die miserably.

All these traditions: Every tradition reminds me to put the group first, to stay focused on our purpose, and to avoid bringing outside issues into the meeting room.

Ever reminding us: Because every morning I wake up and start my day as a compulsive overeater. I need to be reminded that my behavior and speech should not be an obstacle to anyone's recovery, happiness, or peace of mind. Outside the meeting room I also need reminders to not impose my ideas on others.

To place principles before personalities: I once read that Bill Wilson had decided to use the word "principles" instead of "rules" since he thought it wise to not give a list of rules to alcoholics. This wisdom applies well to me too. The unrecovered member in me still wants to make the decisions.

Every principle reminds me that the principles, not my will, need to guide my life.

—Anonymous



An Amends & a Surprise!

I am Alice, and I am powerless over food. And this is a story of one of my Ninth Step Amends...

It was early in my second year of OA when the time came for the Ninth Step. As the Big Book and the OA 12/12 say, my list of amends arose from my Fourth Step and there was one woman who was definitely high on my amends list.

The event occurred more than 30 years ago, but I still remember it as one of the few times when I was simply not a nice person. I can still see the room we sat in where she had asked me to comply with some specific limitations which I disagreed with.

The ramrod went straight up my backbone and I became cold and adamant. Despite her explanations of why she was asking me to do what she was asking, I flatly refused, stating that even though I knew how she felt about the situation, I would not comply. Period. And I didn't.

That memory haunted me for years. I'm not that kind of person. Usually I'm a team player, gracious and open to adapting. But on that occasion. I was a downright mule!

So, when I came to the Ninth Step in my program, I knew that I had to make amends.

After discussing it with my sponsor, I decided to write to her. I crafted my amends letter, shared it with my sponsor and, with her blessing, sent it off. As we are told, I had no expectations. This was for *me*, for my recovery. It was not to re-establish any kind of relationship or to make her like me, and I was peaceful with that.

Several weeks passed and one day I received a reply. I was surprised to hear from her and even more surprised that she had absolutely no memory of the occasion! She accepted my amends and went on to talk about a spiritual author she had been reading who wrote a book about the second half of life—which she recommended to me. Since I am in that stage of my life I figured, "Why not?" and so I ordered and read the book.

That led to more and more books by that author and one specific book that he recommended by another spiritual writer. I have to say that reading that particular book and watching—and now owning—the movie made from it, totally transformed my concept of and relationship with my Higher Power. So, a simple amends morphed into a deep change in my spiritual life. I couldn't have possibly seen that one coming!

Making amends is not always easy; but from this experience I can say I learned that if I stay *open*, an amends could result in a wonderful surprise!

—Alice M.





Upcoming Events

DECEMBER

- 11 Saturday, 2 pm
MEETING MODERATORS' ORIENTATION
- 12 Sunday, 3 to 4:30 pm
CONNECTION IS THE OPPOSITE OF ADDICTION
OA Virtual Regional e-Workshop Series
- Sunday, 1 to 3 pm
TWELVTH STEP WITHIN DAY WORKSHOP
- 18 Saturday, 10 to noon
INTERGROUP ZOOM MEETING
- Saturday, 3 to 4:30 pm
CRAFT & CHAT
- MAY 2022**
- 6-8 Friday, 5 pm to Sunday, noon
FINDING THE POWER WITHIN THE STEPS
45th Annual Region 7 Retreat

Zoom Changes

The OA NoVA Intergroup has purchased a second Zoom line that is now available to meetings on a first come, first served basis. In order to reserve a meeting time, please contact the calendar manager at zoommanager@oanova.org and receive written confirmation. Any individuals or meetings using either Zoom line at an unscheduled time may be removed from the line and their meeting access revoked.

Existing meeting numbers and passwords for Line 1 will change on December 12 at 6 pm, and the meetings will be managed differently; moderators will no longer use the Zoom Manager login. If your meeting is already using the Intergroup line, please contact zoommanager@oanova.org to receive your new meeting number and passcode to share with your meeting members. The website meeting information will be updated by midnight December 12.

At 2 pm on Sunday, Dec 11, an orientation session will be held for meeting moderators to learn how to facilitate meetings beginning Dec 13. All meetings using the Intergroup Zoom lines must provide a current Zoom point of contact for their meeting, including name, phone number, and email.

Work is underway to update the NoVA Intergroup Website to include fast links to all the meetings. Once the update is completed, participants will be able to find a meeting on the calendar and enter it with one click. For any groups not using the Intergroup's Zoom account, please provide your Zoom hyperlink to 12stepwithin@oanova.org as soon as possible.



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.

Intergroup Board of Directors

Chair: Amy A
Vice Chair: Nicole L
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You are receiving this email because you opted in via our website:

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Our mailing address is:

OA NOVA
P.O. Box 1992
Annandale, VA 22003

Personal stories express the experience, strength, and hope of the individual member and not of OA as a whole.



Thank You


to all readers, writers, proofers, new friends and old who have helped make this issue—as well as all the other issues this past year— possible! Twelve issues, one letter at a time!

The topic for the January 2022 NoVAtions is "Beginnings" or anything about Step One. All 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: December 20, midnight.

May your Holidays be warm & abstinent!
In Gratitude and Awe,
Marie L, Editor



Why did Rudolf cross the road?



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.

H	D	E	W	A	T	P	S	T	F	I	E	N	E	S
D	T	O	O	T	R	I	H	E	C	L	E	M	E	D
E	H	I	N	A	T	C	N	K	E	Z	O	E	R	N
C	P	E	N	N	W	N	J	S	T	M	H	D	F	E
I	R	C	K	V	E	M	U	I	E	E	A	I	U	I
V	E	N	O	I	L	R	L	O	L	L	K	T	E	R
R	S	E	M	X	V	B	W	O	N	S	U	A	C	F
E	E	N	R	E	E	F	V	S	P	A	N	T	A	C
S	N	I	E	N	C	E	Z	W	H	T	A	I	E	Y
Y	T	T	H	C	A	R	O	L	S	E	H	O	P	C
L	S	S	S	R	E	C	N	A	D	M	V	N	U	S
E	Q	B	A	A	Z	N	A	W	K	O	Q	P	I	P
B	C	A	D	H	E	A	R	T	H	C	I	Q	W	E
E	R	I	F	U	X	A	C	A	N	D	L	E	S	T
G	N	I	R	E	H	T	A	G	N	I	R	A	H	S



Dorothy and Stuart are honeymooning in Moscow, strolling about St. Petersburg Square on Christmas Eve, 1972. A light precipitation gently kisses their happy faces. "

Stuart: "I think it's raining."
 Dorothy: "No, it's snowing."
 Stuart: "How about we ask the communist officer over there? We talked to him yesterday, and he knows everything!"
 Stuart: "Officer Rudolph, is it raining or snowing?"
 Officer Rudolph: "Definitely raining."
 Stuart to Dorothy (sunnily smiling): "See? Rudolph the Red knows rain, dear."

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|------------|------------|----------|
| Abstinence | Blitzen | Candles |
| Carols | Catnap | Comet |
| Cupid | Dancer | Dasher |
| Donner | Fire | Free |
| Friends | Gathering | Hanukah |
| Hearth | Ice | Kwanzaa |
| Love | Meditation | Meow |
| Peace | Prancer | Presents |
| Rudolf | Service | Sharing |
| Snow | Steps | Tinsel |
| Twelve | Vixen | |



HIDDEN MESSAGE

ANSWER TO NOVEMBER'S PUZZLE

E	P	R	O	E	M	D	S	G	R	W	E	A	Y	I
C	E	P	M	E	E	I	S	R	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	Z	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	F	E	F	N	T
I	O	E	C	N	I	N	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
Y	T	I	L	I	M	U	H	F	S	U	O	Y	O	J
E	C	N	A	R	E	V	E	S	R	E	P	O	A	I

SECRET MESSAGE

How to Get Stuff Done:
PROGRESS IN LIEU OF PERFECTION

Twelfth Step Prayer

Dear God,
My spiritual awakening
continues to unfold.
The help I have received I shall
pass on & give to others,
both in & out of the Fellowship.
For this opportunity
I am grateful.
I pray most humbly
to continue walking day by day
on the road of spiritual progress.
I pray for the
inner strength & wisdom
to practice the principles of this
way of life in all I do & say.
I need You,
my friends, & the program
every hour of every day.
This is a better way to live.

Photo by Alan S.
National Arboretum, 11/28/2021