



NOVATIONS

January 2022



THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF NORTHERN VIRGINIA INTERGROUP OF OA

Coming to the Table

...One Night I had a dream...of course, it was about food; after all, I'm a recovering compulsive overeater.

In the dream, I was standing in the doorway of a small nondescript side room looking into a palatial banquet hall. The table was set with the finest place settings and the sort of cuisine fit for royalty. The guests were seated along both sides of its length, laughing, talking, engaged. My eyes tried to scan to the end of the buffet, but it disappeared over the far distant horizon. I did, however, notice that each chair appeared to be occupied.

I started to repeat the scan, this time beginning nearer to where I stood. It was on the opposite side of the table that I spotted the one empty chair. Who, I wondered, hadn't shown up? What could possibly have kept that one guest away from what appeared to be a once-in-a-lifetime event?!

As I watched, hidden in the shadows of the doorway, my sadness for the missing guest grew--as did my curiosity. Finally, I took a couple steps into the room and sidled closer around the great hall's edges towards the empty chair.

Once at an improved vantage point, I could see that dust and cobwebs had collected on the chair's lower stretchers, and that the empty seat was being used as a catch-all for neighboring guests' belongings. The plate held a small stack of emptied serving platters that blocked my view of the place card.

As I moved closer, the old mantra "Who do you think you are?!" spun deeper into its tired worn out rut. "You shouldn't be here--you aren't even dressed right!" But still no one had noticed me, so I stepped up to read the card.

There, beautifully hand-scribed in gold, was *my* name!

I glanced around. Of course, there must be a simple mistake: there was another person with the same name as mine. After all, who did I think I was?

But I knew. I knew it was meant for me. And I knew that I had been the missing guest, and that I had been missing for my lifetime. And I also knew that there was no one to substitute for me; that only I could fit the empty space. Only I could live my life.

My sadness overflowed into grief.

When I woke, I knew that there was only one "next right thing" to do, and that was to quit hiding out in the shadows I'd falsely perceived as protection from further

pain, to dust away the cobwebs and clear off the seat and take my place at the table.

*** Epilogue ***

I'm learning to stay at the table and to give up the guilt-ridden, misplaced responsibility that kept me holding my neighboring guests' baggage and empty platters. I'm learning to not be afraid of the unknown dishes that are passed along to me; after all, the banquet Host has individualized my servings and wouldn't offer me something that I don't have the means to digest.

And I'm learning that I have a voice and that not only is it okay for me to use it, but that it's my job to speak up for myself, to take responsibility for my own mistakes and character defects as well as my successes and strengths.

Who do I think I am? I'm me, and I'm where I belong; after all, I'm an invited guest.

--Marie L.

Step One

We admitted we were powerless over food—that our lives had become unmanageable.

Step One Spiritual Principle

Honesty

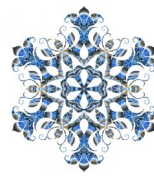
Tradition One

Our common welfare should come first: personal recovery depends upon OA unity.

Tradition One Spiritual Principle

Unity

Reworking the Basics



A New Year's Self Inventory

How did I get to the point of isolation? I binged; I ate to numb myself from my problems and stress, my disappointments in life. I was embarrassed by my eating behavior and didn't want to face my friends, so I withdrew. I forgot what I'd learned through working the Steps; I forgot because I stopped working them. I forgot because I stopped connecting with others and with God.

Meetings, telephone, electronic messaging, and face-to-face contact are what build one's strength in this program. Connecting with others, in any form, is what reaffirms my purpose in life and drives me to take action. The more I act, the better I feel. The better I feel, the more I want to connect.

I missed the connections I'd had when I'd been working my program. I wanted them back. So, I took the first step by reconnecting with God. "Get to a meeting," He said. So, I got myself to a meeting, and then to another, and another. It was all starting to come back to me. I listened to the shares of others, and then I began to share. It felt good to be a part of something again and to feel hopeful. I realized that part of my recovery was dependent upon sharing myself with others.

As I began to rework the basics of the program that I'd forgotten, I found that, outside the program, I could exist in food situations with others. I felt strong again. This strength helped me use the program to deal with my problems, the stress and the disappointments I was experiencing. I no longer had to hide.

I will never be a normal eater. I am different from non-compulsive eaters. I may stand out in a group of normal eaters, but I never have to feel alone. I accept my disease and know that there are many people just like me in OA. I have a responsibility to myself and to others in the program to do whatever I can to be a good example of a recovering compulsive eater.

— Liz B., Chicago, Illinois USA
(Reprinted from *Lifeline*, April 2019)



TO GET PHYSICALLY FIT,
YOU HAVE TO MOVE.
TO GET SPIRITUALLY FIT,
YOU HAVE TO BE STILL.

"Those of us who live the program don't simply carry the message, we are the message."
(p 86-87, OA 12 & 12, 3rd edition).

What is the message I am living?

Am I moving toward or maintaining a healthy body weight?

Or

Do I continue to compulsively overeat?

Am I living according to the principles of the program by working the OA steps?

Or

Do I use familiar, but defective, ways of responding to life's ups and downs?

Am I using prayer, meditation, and the tools of the OA program to seek God's will for me?

Or

Do I continue to act on my own?

What is the message I am living?

—Anonymous



Recovery

Don't feel disillusioned by where you are now
your progress is good enough
it's meaningful
it's on time
though everything may go unacknowledged
every silent step is movement
in the right direction

when it feels as though
everyone is going forward
and you're being pulled back by
your own demons or your past
remember that every moment in this journey
will play its part in the greater narrative —
what a beautiful story to share one day
written just by living your life.

—KL

Upcoming Events

JANUARY 2022

- 1 Saturday, 8 am to 12 midnight
[VIRTUAL IG NEW YEAR'S DAY MARATHON](#)
 Step 1 Spiritual Principle: Honesty—Surrender is Winning
- 7-9 Friday to Sunday
[VIRTUAL LIFELINE CREATIVITY WORKSHOPS](#)
 Sponsored by World Service
- 15 Saturday, 10 to noon
[INTERGROUP ZOOM MEETING](#)
- Saturday, 3 to 4:30 pm
[CRAFT & CHAT](#)
- 22 Saturday 10 am to 6 pm to
 23 Sunday, 9 am to 12:30 pm
[27th ANNUAL WINTER RETREAT](#) (Virtual)
 North Jersey IG of OA

MAY 2022

- 6-8 Friday, 5 pm to Sunday, noon
[FINDING THE POWER WITHIN THE STEPS](#)
 45th Annual Region 7 Retreat

Have an Announcement?

If you wish to publicize a flyer or news item about an OA event via group email and on the website, send it to

"The 12 Steps Within Committee" at
12stepwithin@oanova.org

Please include your contact information so you can be reached for any questions.

Intergroup Board of Directors

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

OANoVA.org

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

Zoom Changes

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 virtual meeting's invitation to 12stepwithin@oanova.org as soon as possible.

"Lifeline" Reinvented!

It has been a year since the OA's print magazine, *Lifeline*, was discontinued. Since then, there has been a dedicated effort to reinvent the magazine. The result is *Lifeline: Stories of Recovery*.

OA World Service will launch it's new blog forum in February on oa.org where members can share their experience, strength, and hope both to inspire each other and to attract the still-suffering compulsive eater who is searching online for a solution. The new digital format will welcome text, images, audio, and video submissions from members while taking care in processing these submissions to maintain anonymity.

To learn more about how to contribute to these new creative avenues, the OA board and the WSO are hosting three virtual workshops on January 7, 8, and 9, with a focus on creative ways to carry the message. The workshops are scheduled with different time zones in mind, so members from around the world can participate. Share the [workshop flyer](#), check out the [Lifeline page](#), and [register for the workshop](#) by Wednesday, January 5.

—World Service News

Thank You

to all readers, writers, & proofers, who have helped bring this issue to life!

The topic for the February 2022 NoVAtions: "Restored to Sanity." What has been your journey to sanity? Share your experience, strength, and hope through an article, poetry, and/or artwork. Please attach articles in a Word doc. and/or artwork in a photo file and mail to:

novations@oanova.org

Submission Deadline: midnight January 20.

Wishing You a New Year of Warmth and Abstinence!
 Marie L, Editor



The Serenity Prayer

God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change,

(Steps 1, 2, 3),

the courage to change the things I can,

(Steps 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9),

and the wisdom to know the difference.

(Steps 10, 11, 12)