



THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF NORTHERN VIRGINIA INTERGROUP OF OA

Uncovering Shame

In OA, we rely strongly on AA literature, and we are truly blessed to have it. I am infinitely grateful to AA and its founders and members. I do find, however, one critical difference between alcoholism and food addiction that, once addressed, finally gave me the freedom of back-to-back abstinence that eluded me for decades. Members of AA can walk away from alcohol. As hard as it must be, they can find new activities and new friends. With the support of their program, fellowship, and higher power, they do not have to engage with their substance again.

The Step Four inventory in AA literature focuses on fears and resentments and has been enormously helpful, but there is a critical difference for me as an overeater that requires additional probing in my personal Step Four inventory. My food addiction is not to individual foods but to eating itself. I have to

go head-to-head with my addiction three times a day. In order to do that abstinely, I have to delve deep. I believe strongly that my food struggle is an emotional struggle. I cannot be in emotional discord for long without it leading to a food struggle. Since I have to engage with my addiction every day, it puts me on very shaky ground to be in a state of emotional “dis-ease.”

I recently heard a helpful metaphor: If I wanted to replace the blades in a blender, I’d obviously have to turn the machine off. But would I then put my hand inside it? Of course not, because it might turn on if still plugged in. I’d first be sure to disconnect the power source, or the blades could start spinning and I could get badly hurt. Disconnecting the power source is key. So I had to ask myself, “What is the power source of my compulsion?”

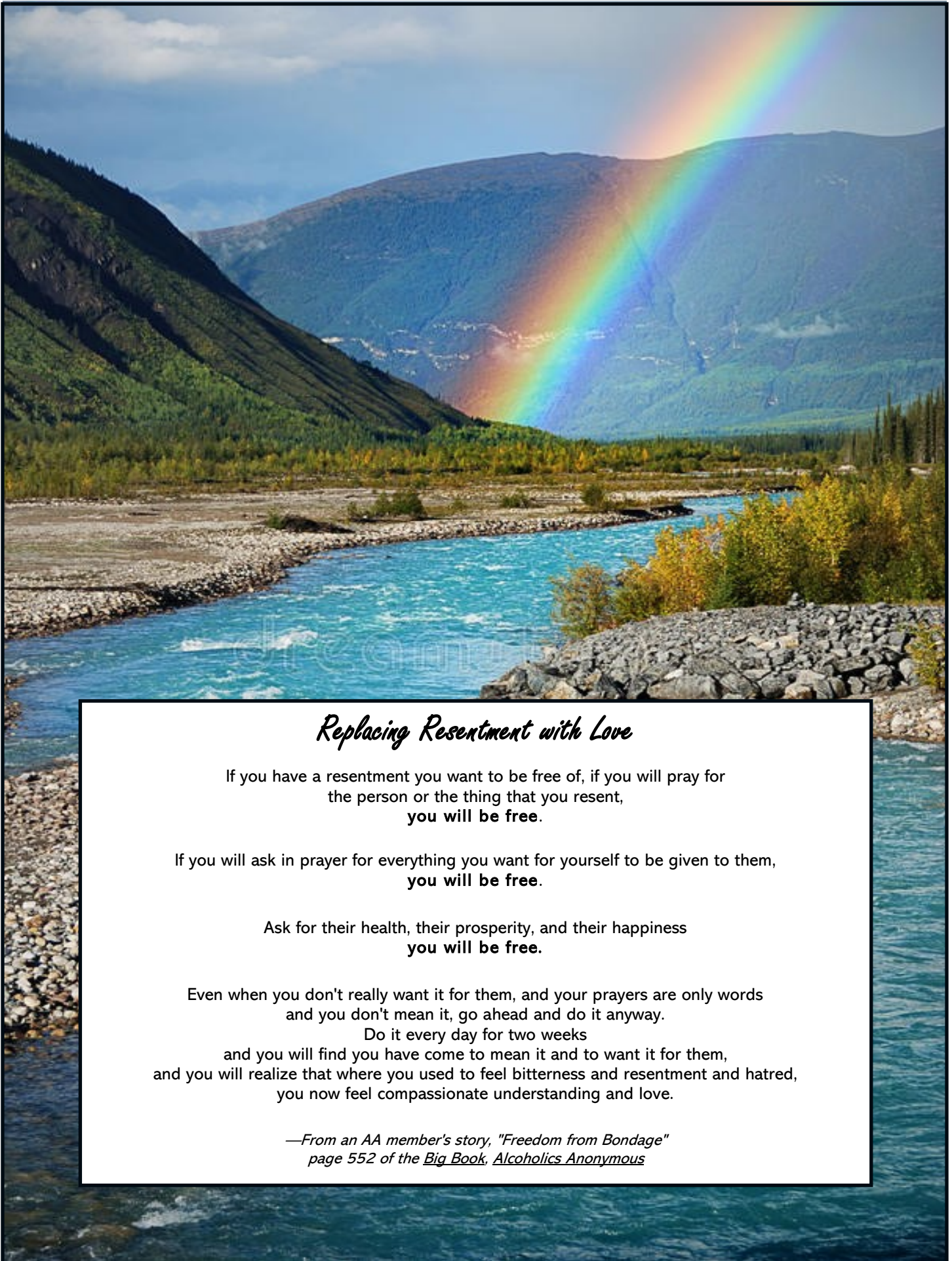
For many OA members, the power source of our compulsions is not just fear and resentment, but shame, which is rooted in the codependency that developed in our dysfunctional childhoods. Shame is my power source. If I don’t address it, the power can kick on again with the slightest trigger. Before I healed my shame, for example, a critical comment by a co-worker or supervisor was enough to send me into relapse. Trying to abstain without understanding the power of shame was like trying to stop the blender by only pressing the off button. It invariably kicked on again and cut me with a relapse.

My experience is that I only became able to abstain peacefully and consistently when I began a searching and fearless Fourth Step journey into my shame and codependence. I then began to enjoy the greatest gift of all: comfort in my own skin. This comfort is glorious and precious in itself, and it has protected my abstinence, one day at a time, for over five years.

— Leslie O., Broad Brook, Connecticut USA
Printed in *Lifeline* April 20, 2016

Step Four. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
Step Four Spiritual Principle: Courage
Tradition Four : Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or OA as a whole.
Tradition Four Spiritual Principle: Autonomy





Replacing Resentment with Love

If you have a resentment you want to be free of, if you will pray for
the person or the thing that you resent,
you will be free.

If you will ask in prayer for everything you want for yourself to be given to them,
you will be free.

Ask for their health, their prosperity, and their happiness
you will be free.

Even when you don't really want it for them, and your prayers are only words
and you don't mean it, go ahead and do it anyway.

Do it every day for two weeks

and you will find you have come to mean it and to want it for them,
and you will realize that where you used to feel bitterness and resentment and hatred,
you now feel compassionate understanding and love.

—From an AA member's story, "Freedom from Bondage"
page 552 of the *Big Book, Alcoholics Anonymous*

Upcoming Events



World Service News

APRIL

1-3 Fri, 6 pm to Sun, 3 pm

[VIRTUAL REGION 7 SPRING ASSEMBLY](#)

10 Sun, 3 to 4:30 pm

[VIRTUAL REGION 2ND SUNDAY WORKSHOP](#)

“Service Keeps Us in Program”

16 Sat, 10 to noon

[INTERGROUP ZOOM MEETING](#)

22-30 Fri to Sat

Virtual [WORLD SERVICE BUSINESS CONF.](#)

“We Can Do Together What We Could Never...”

Do you need to publicize a flyer or news item about an OA event? Send it to

12stepwithin@oanova.org and “The 12 Step 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 Needs Group Reps!

Our Intergroup (IG) serves best when meeting groups send representatives to speak for them and to bring information back home. IG needs your group's

participation by sending a member to speak for and vote for your group. IG meetings are via Zoom the third Saturday of each month from 10 a.m. to noon. Click [HERE](#) for more information.



Intergroup Board of Directors

Chair: Amy A
Vice Chair: Nicole L
Secretary: Alice T
Treasurer: Hortense D

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

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 OA as a whole.

LIFELINE will soon be back in our pockets and purses, this time as a blog on oa.org! As we look forward to the return of *Lifeline*, we invite you to share your recovery by sending in a submission. Send us your recovery-focused story, digital painting, song, video, or any other type of digital media, and we will put it in the queue for eventual publication. Read the new [Contributor Guidelines](#) for suggestions and use our [temporary submission form](#), found at oa.org/lifeline to send us your submission.

Let's share the miracles of our individual recoveries through this Twelve Step program! Let's make the new *Lifeline* blog a great resource for the Fellowship and for those who are just discovering OA online. Thank you for your service!



In a [LETTER TO ALL OA GROUPS AND SERVICE BODIES](#), the Board of Trustees has outlined new guidelines for screen- and audio-sharing portions of OA-owned literature. The new guidelines allow OA groups to temporarily screen- and audio-share a limited amount of literature during OA meetings that convene via videoconference. OA groups that meet virtually via other digital platforms may request written permission to screen- and audio-share limited OA literature during their meeting.

These guidelines were drafted in response to concerns voiced by the Fellowship and are intended to balance OA World Service's obligation to protect OA copyrights on behalf of the Fellowship and the Fellowship's need to refer to OA literature during virtual meetings.

Editor's Note

NoVations needs your stories of experience, strength, and hope! “But I can't write!” you might say. Just like one doesn't need to be on the TED circuit to share at meetings, neither does one need to be a Nobel prize-winning writer to share on these pages. Have a cartoon idea? Joke? Poem? Photos? I'll happily take your calls, emails, texts, and/or voice messages!

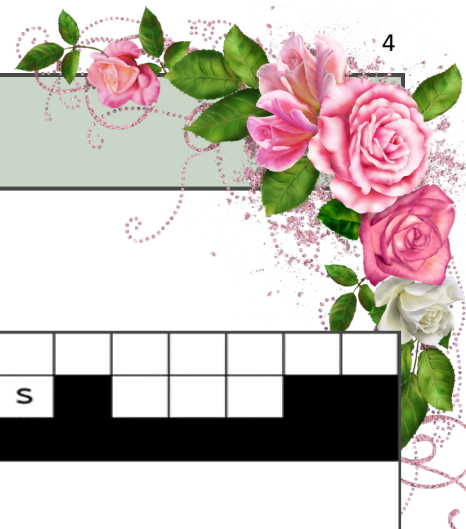
And again, a huge THANK-YOU to all of you patient, eagle-eyed proofers for helping me clean up my messes! NoVations is published on the 1st of each month; submission deadline is midnight on the 20th of each preceding month.

Submit to: novations@oanova.org

Yours in Non-edible Service,
Marie L. (571-429-2352)



They're Like Bad Bacteria!



DIRECTIONS:

The letters from each cell are below the puzzle.

Try to rebuild the original message by choosing the letters for each cell.

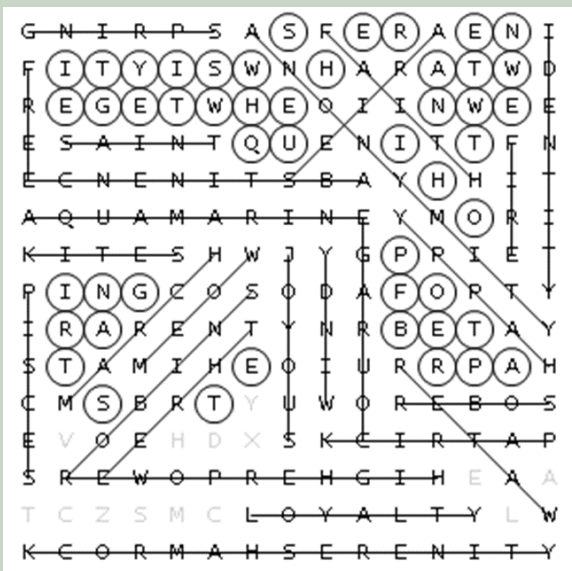


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**THE LONGER I LIVE,
THE MORE I AM TOTALLY
CONVINCED OTHER PLANETS
USE THIS PLANET
AS AN INSANE ASYLUM.**

ANSWER TO THE MARCH PUZZLE



IT'S A PRESENT IN THE PRESENT:
Serenity is what we get when
we quit hoping for a better past. .





FOURTH STEP PRAYER

Dear God, It is I who has made my life a mess.
I have done it, but I cannot undo it. My mistakes are mine and
I will begin a searching and fearless moral inventory.
I will write down my wrongs, but I will also include that which is good.
I pray for the strength to complete the task.