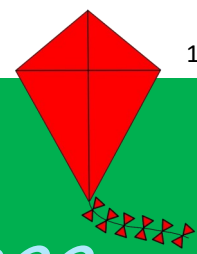




# NOVATIONS

March 2022



THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF NORTHERN VIRGINIA INTERGROUP OF OA

## Craving Vs. Conscious Contact

I've long felt that, for compulsive eaters, one of our worst fears is simply being hungry and having to sit still and do nothing about it. The association between physical hunger and existential void triggers the sense of hopelessness that preceded so many of my forays into the deadly rituals from which I now abstain. Its black-sheep brother, the craving, is simply hunger with an attitude.

A craving is an urgent desire—a manic call to action. Once it gets into the mind, it can turn into a compulsion, a constant irritant, a distraction from reality, an insistent voice that beckons the host to remember only the pleasure of the addictive act, none of its dire consequences.

However, a craving can also be a reminder to tap into a source of power far greater than any urge, desire, or thought. Food addicts can face down our enemy and enjoy the miracle of sober eating three times or more each day. Every time we make the right choice, we find the value in learning to wait; to delay gratification; to pursue the goal of ingesting just enough food, no more and no less—and grow spiritually in the process.

Once I got abstinent, I found I was most prone to cravings when I was overly emotional, stressed, or over-busy; when I had gone from drawing energy from a surplus borne of a daily pursuit of balance, and drifted

into my essence, the well of spiritual protection that my faith in a Higher Power has brought about.

I have a disease that requires a level of mindfulness in order to avoid the pitfalls of old behaviors. I have a recovery that demands daily conscious contact with a spiritual entity/energy/deity that grounds me and invites me to transcend my physicality and enter a world of connection, optimism, and peaceful acceptance of my disease—the disease that became the admission price into this beautiful alternate living experience.

So, when I experience a craving, I can overreact and give in to it (as I did so many times before), or I can remember

that my admission of powerlessness over food brought me to Overeaters Anonymous and ultimately to this spiritual world, whose benefits far exceed any fleeting pleasure that a bite of food could offer.

The more I choose the latter, the closer I come to being the person I was meant to be, the one who can be of maximum usefulness to his fellow addicts.



—Neil R., Baltimore, Maryland USA  
(Lifeline, September 1, 2028)

### Step Three

Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.

### Step Three Spiritual Principle

Faith

### Tradition Three

The only requirement for OA membership is a desire to stop eating compulsively.

### Tradition Three Spiritual Principle

Identity

**THE SYMPTOM IS PHYSICAL.  
THE PROBLEM IS EMOTIONAL.  
THE SOLUTION IS SPIRITUAL.**

## The Dance of Me and We

I'm not religious. I don't even know if I'm spiritual—I don't even exactly know what that means. So, I thought I would write about how I work the Third Step.

I don't have a traditional sense of a Higher Power or practice any religion. I question the meaning of the word "spiritual." Does it mean I meditate, that I'm into astrology, that I like being in nature, enjoy yoga? Since it's used in so many ways these days, its meaning has become fuzzy to me and I no longer find it particularly helpful.

That said, I like the Third Step prayer. I've been saying it every day for many years, and I've been in OA for over three decades. I just sort of enjoy the flow and ideas in it even though it doesn't align with the way I use language and think about the way the world works.

So, what does that mean to me? First thing that comes to mind is the idea of a me/we balance. There's me—this thing I call "Alan" that is what's inside of my skin, the experience of being a human, a person. And then there's this thing called "we" which is really just everything else: the other people, nature, the organizations, the systems that I'm part of.

And at some level, I have to take care of me, but at another level I have to interact and be of service with the "we"—with everything else. And those two ideas are different yet need to balance together.

And then I think about how my I'm-me-and-then-

there's-everything-else philosophy is not the truth of science. Science now knows that we're all interconnected. Just like I breathe air from many sources and take in the light from the sun which is energy from the distant source at the most fundamental level, science has proven that we're all interconnected at levels we can't even understand. So clearly, there really is an "us" that permeates it all, but I just live in the story of "me."

So, if we know at the physical level from science that we are all interconnected, could it even be that our experiences, our interactions with the rest of the universe, our connection with nature, that deep fundamental sense of me/we is also in a flow, is also an interconnection? And then, if there is this interconnection that we can experience, what does it mean? What is my goal? How do I dance with it? How do I work with it?

I feel like my goal is alignment and flow. For years I did many kinds of couples dancing where there's a constant communication between the two people as they work together to move as one. In that same way I try to align and flow with the world around me. Just like in a dance, the goal is to have a beautiful experience and make a meaningful dance for each partner. The same is true for the world around me.

I also enjoy the metaphor for the ocean, which is huge and vast. It's constantly flowing in so many directions with its many kinds of waves and tides. The amount of movement of water in the ocean is incalculable.

With that said, if I am just one drop in the ocean, what can I do? I can't know the whole ocean, but I am part of the whole ocean. What I can do is look at the flows around me—the little water droplets to my right and left, above and below. And I can try to flow and move and exchange energy with them, and in that sense, I start to think of myself as being in alignment with what we would call the Third Step.



What's the key to this Third Step alignment, this slow dance I've been talking about? The key may just be letting go of control, knowing I can't control all the waves and that I'm just one drop of water.

And then, since I don't know where the ocean is going to take me because

I don't have control, I can choose to be curious: "Oh, look where the ocean is taking me!"

Finally, when it comes back to the basics of OA where we make it more pedestrian and get out of these large ideas, it becomes about service. Service in OA connects me to others. It creates a greater harmony of the whole. The more I care about you, the more I try to help you not overeat and have a better life; the more we are together, the more we are abstinent. It's not just "I am abstinent," but you are abstinent. We are in recovery.

So that is how this nonreligious, nonspiritual person does try to have an experience with the Third Step.

—Alan S.

## Upcoming Events

### MARCH

13 Sun, 3 to 4:30 pm

[VIRTUAL REGION 2ND SUNDAY WORKSHOP](#)

"The Next Right Thought or Action"

19 Saturday, 10 to noon

[INTERGROUP ZOOM MEETING](#)

### 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"

27-30 Tue-Wed

Virtual [WORLD SERVICE BUSINESS CONFERENCE](#)

"We Can Do Together What We Could Never..."

### MAY

6-8 Fri, 5 pm to Sun, noon

[45TH ANNUAL REGION 7 RETREAT](#)

"Finding the Power Within the Steps" "

## New Interactive Meeting Calendar

Work has been completed on OA NoVA Inter-group's website calendar to include fast interactive links to all meetings. Meetings are viewable by a week, a month, or by meeting agenda. When viewing the one-week display, meetings are color-coded green for phone, blue for virtual, purple for hybrid, and magenta for live (in-person). One click on a meeting tab opens a new window with detailed information about the meeting, including Zoom and phone links. Check out the new meetings page [HERE](#).

If you would like to add your meeting's Zoom link, please provide your virtual meeting's invitation to [12stepwithin@oanova.org](mailto:12stepwithin@oanova.org) as soon as possible.

## New Audiobooks Published

OA's beloved Brown Book is now an audiobook! Using readings by OA members for the book's CD set, our first audiobook includes the entire text of *Overeaters Anonymous, Third Edition*—from the forewords to the appendices. During daily activities or when you need a recovery boost, listen to more than forty stories by OA members sharing their experience, strength, and hope, including our founder's share: "Keep Coming Back: Rozanne's Story." For ordering information, click [HERE](#).

—World Service News

## 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](mailto:12stepwithin@oanova.org)

## Help Needed!

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

## Thank You

to all readers, writers, & proofers who have helped bring this issue to life! The topic for the April 2022 NoVations is anything about Step Four. Share your experience, strength, and hope through an article, poetry, or artwork. Please attach articles in a Word doc. and artwork in a photo file.

Mail to: [novations@oanova.org](mailto:novations@oanova.org).

Submission Deadline:  
midnight March 20.

In Gratitude,  
Marie L, Editor



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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.

# It's a Present in the Present

This puzzle is a word search puzzle that has a hidden message in it.

1. First find all the words in the list. Words can go in any direction and share letters as well as cross over each other.
2. Once you find all the words, Copy the unused letters starting in the top left corner into the blanks to reveal the hidden message. (Need help? See the answer in April's NoVations.)

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



There was an OA-er from NoVA,  
 who messed up and then started ova.  
 He worked One through Twelve,  
 then began loving selve;  
 Just for today he is soba.

- |             |           |            |
|-------------|-----------|------------|
| ABSTINENCE  | ANONYMITY | AQUAMARINE |
| ARIES       | COURAGE   | FAITH      |
| FIRE        | FREE      | HAPPY      |
| HIGHERPOWER | IDENTITY  | JOYOUS     |
| KITES       | LOYALTY   | MARCH      |
| MEOW        | PATRICK   | PISCES     |
| ROBINS      | SAINT     | SERENITY   |
| SHAMROCK    | SOBER     | SPRING     |
| THREE       | WATER     | WINDY      |

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### ANSWER TO FEBRUARY'S PUZZLE

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

**NO AMOUNT OF GUILT CAN CHANGE THE PAST,  
 AND NO AMOUNT OF WORRY CAN CHANGE  
 THE FUTURE.**



### *Third Step Prayer*

God, I offer myself to Thee—to build with me and to do with me as Thou wilt.

Relieve me of the bondage of self, that I may better do Thy will.

Take away my difficulties, that victory over them may bear witness to those I would help  
of Thy Power, Thy Love, and Thy Way of life.

May I do Thy will always!