



NOVA Actions

CELEBRATING 30 YEARS OF ARLINGTON SUNRISE MEETINGS

JUNE 2022

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF NORTHERN VIRGINIA INTERGROUP OF OA

Once Upon a Sunrise...

In May 1992, I stood in a parking lot after a meeting talking with a young man. I had moved from Oakland, California the summer before and told him about the daily 7 a.m. meetings that I had attended there. His response was enthusiastic, and an idea was born.

My husband, also in OA, helped find a meeting space in Arlington with parking and easy access to public transportation. I set up a schedule for the first few weeks where members committed to attending specific days so that no one would be at a meeting alone. However, before the end of the first month, attendance was sufficient enough that a schedule was no longer needed. We used the California meetings format; literature would be read a paragraph or two at a time, followed by sharing. When all who wished had shared, we'd move to the next paragraph. We began with the OA Twelve Steps, the AA 12x12, the Big Book, For Today, and the OA Brown book; the OA 12x12 and Voices of Recovery weren't published until 10 years later!

For most of the first year, my husband and I attended together regularly. Our first born arrived 6 weeks after the start of the Sunrise meetings. She attended with us until she began to crawl and bang on the glass French doors. After years of face-to-face meetings five days a week, scheduling conflicts that come with a growing family began to make regular attendance challenging.

In 2001, we moved outside the beltway. We worked hard to start morning meetings in Oakton and Fairfax. Eventually, we had a regular foursome; that is, until one of the four moved to North Carolina. With strong memories of sitting outside in the dark, waiting sometimes in vain for another member to join us so we could have a meeting, the group decided to try meeting on a telephone conference call. After a few months others joined us. This was the way the 6:45 am phone meetings came to be. One member from the Arlington Sunrise group also helped to start the 7 a.m. Thursday Bristow meeting.



Step Six

Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.

Spiritual Principle

Willingness

Tradition Six

An OA group ought never endorse, finance or lend the OA name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.

Spiritual Principle

Solidarity

St. Charles Catholic Church, Arlington, Virginia

I am awed by what has happened because I was willing to do what was in front of me in 1992. I had no idea at the time that I was doing anything that would last and lead to so many people being able to feel the OA love and hear the message of recovery. I am grateful beyond measure that others stepped up and kept the meetings going, showing up week after week and year after year so that the meeting was still there when the move to Zoom made it available to me once again.

Several days a week, I find comfort and home with fellows, both familiar and new, from all over the U.S. and around the world. There are vibrant meetings of 20-plus folks seven days a week who, with hope for the 24 hours to come, gather to share and support each other.

Thanks to everyone, including Past Me, who made this happen!

—Amy A.

Finding My Higher Power in the Deep End



Where is my Higher Power in my daily life—really? How much do I lean into Higher Power as I go through my day? I've often wondered until one day I found myself in over my head!

I can't swim. In fact, I'm terrified of water and dislike exercise. I'm in awe of those folks who find pleasure in exercise—not one of my gifts.

As my doctor insists on some form of consistent exercise, the answer came through a local seniors' swim program with two pools.

The first pool was shallow with warm water to help ease the pain of arthritis sufferers as they water-walked. Pool One also came with very chatty people—not my favorite sort early in the morning.

The second pool was a larger lap pool. If I used that pool, it would allow me to avoid the chatty crowd while I got my required exercise. However, there was one problem. Pool Two was 13 feet deep.

I had to make a choice: the chatty morning crew or the scary 13 feet of water. I chose 13 feet. And yes, it gave me pause for wonder. Was this my disease's isolation leading me once again into water over my head? Would I rather chance drowning than talk with strangers?!

I found a compromise in the form of a heavy-duty flotation belt. By wearing the belt, I could dog-paddle my way back-and-forth for an hour to achieve

exhaustion, which was my goal.

I soon learned that when I got into a routine of plugging in ear buds and listening to calming music or program literature recordings while I exercised, it set a good tone for the rest of my day.

Until the morning came when I found myself running late. I rushed out the door and to the gym, then hurried to the pool. Without a further thought, I jumped into the 13 feet of water.

And sank.

I'd forgotten my flotation belt!

Absolute panic!

The thought, "I'm going to die!" was almost simultaneously followed by, "This is like my Higher Power! If I jump into my day without my Higher Power!"

I grabbed one of the large white flotation beads of the lane divider and followed the divider hand-over-hand until I reached the pool wall. I pulled myself along the edge until I came to the concrete steps and hauled myself out of the water.

As soon as I reached the top, the first thing I did was scan the room. Relief washed over me when I saw that no one was looking my way! My self-respect, after all, was still intact!

I see that belt being exactly like my Higher Power. If I go into my day prepared with my HP, I am safe. Without my HP, I am completely unprepared to handle whatever comes my way. While I'm grateful for the ability to safely reach the edge of the pool that day, I'm also grateful for the epiphany of my HP's enabling protection in my daily life.

So, I still can't swim, but I know I can face the deep end if I go prepared, whether into the lap pool or the pool of daily life.

—Dottie K.



"I am the little flower sitting on God's lap and resting."

—Delia

TO GET PHYSICALLY FIT,
MOVE.

TO GET SPIRITUALLY FIT,
STAND STILL.



My journey to Overeaters Anonymous was not easy. I began overeating when I was pregnant with my first child. I started eating for two—me and my daughter; then I ate for three when I was pregnant with my second daughter two years later. I was still eating for me and my first child; I just added another plate of food when my second baby came along. Why not?

Being the compulsive overeater that I was, I wanted everyone to join in the “fun.” As my children got older, I continued to eat. I became more sneaky though. I encouraged my kids to put more food on their plates even when I knew they could not eat all of it. When they couldn’t finish their plates, I would clean them up under the guise of “not wanting the food to go to waste.”

Twenty years later, I showed up to my first OA meeting and I was only 59 minutes late. As I was outside talking to someone from another fellowship, a woman came up to me and said, “We’ve been waiting for you, Kelly.” I couldn’t believe she knew my name and what was really freaky was that I had no idea how she knew I was there for the OA meeting. I hadn’t even walked into the door of the OA room. But she knew.

She suggested I call her. Of course, I said “yes,” but didn’t get her phone number. Shortly afterwards though, I was at a meeting and ran into a friend of hers. It was mentioned that she was waiting for me to call and, needless to say, after that encounter, I walked away with her phone number. I was trapped! Now I had to call her.

I called, and can you believe she answered the phone, talked me out of an appointment with a diet representative the next morning and saved me \$500.00 and even convinced me to go to a meeting with her the following morning?! She did a pretty good job in our 15 minutes on the phone.

When I came into OA, I was terrified. But, I was more terrified of the consequences of not going. One of my sponsors would say, “There is no top weight.” I found that to be true. I became willing to try the OA way of life. Don’t get me wrong—at the beginning, I was only 1% willing, but that’s all I needed to get started.

After twenty years of eating and faking my way through diet and calorie counting clubs—and of course, life—I felt totally defeated. Since coming to OA six and a half years ago, all I did right was go to meetings and stayed in touch with my sponsor. I worked the steps, but I didn’t live the steps; I knew the tools, but I didn’t use them; I knew how to pray and meditate, but I didn’t.

Have you noticed the pattern here? “I,” “knew,” and “no action.” There is no “Into Thinking” anywhere in our recovery literature, rather it’s “Into Action.” I didn’t find

anywhere we were supposed to become abstinent single-handedly. Step 1 says “We,” not “I.” And, I have yet to find that another human being can help me with my compulsion, only my Higher Power.

I am finally willing to be abstinent; I am finally willing to live the program of Overeaters Anonymous; most of all, I am finally willing to let my Higher Power into my life. As a Result, I am free from the struggle with food. I definitely have challenges around my food, but through it all, my Higher Power has my back.

No matter what, keep coming back under any and all circumstances!
—Kelly P.



I had a plan for today. I stuck to it until ten o’clock when the furnace repair company called to announce they’d be here in 30 minutes. *Wait!* You were scheduled for after 1:00 this afternoon, not 10 in the morning!

I believe whether I agreed to the new schedule or demanded the original one, my next reaction would have been the same. The old synapse fired that suggested food was the real next right agenda item. I have to laugh; after all these years, my childhood reaction to stress was still to eat. That bitter “laughter” at my synapse—or my character defect—is closely followed by the OA recovery synapse that simply says, “Nope.”

I have a writing assignment as part of the 7 a.m. Sunrise (Arlington) group. So how marvelous that my brain suggested I use that to vent my irritation at today’s loss of schedule control!

I do not remember when I first came to the Sunrise meeting. It was in 1996 or ’97, and it was light outside at 7 a.m. I probably watched for someone to walk to the correct doorway, then followed them. Up the stairs and—oh my!—a circle of chairs and dozens of people on Monday morning! It became my Monday meeting despite the 30-minute drive. It was designed for folks with jobs—get to a meeting, get to work.

In 2003, a new work schedule prevented me from taking the time to attend this meeting. When I came back to Sunrise in 2012/13, I found many fewer attendees but mostly familiar, but older, faces. I felt affirmed at realizing our physical separation had not meant we weren’t trudging the road together for the intervening years.

Now in our Zoom world, Sunrise is back at the “big circle” attendance. I feel happy when I hear newcomers rejoice at finding the Arlington Sunrise meeting. It puts flesh on the words of our closing, “...and are gratified to be making footprints of our own for others to follow”.

--Alice T.

Sunrise Reflections

In 2003, we moved to Virginia from the San Francisco Bay Area. I had been in the program for 19 years and had been sugar-free for 18 of those years. I was, however, at my highest weight ever! Although not sure how that was possible, I never stopped going to meetings or working the program. But something was not right.

Then I discovered that the Sunrise Group met only 15 minutes from our apartment. It was a gift from my Higher Power! The biggest advantage to the 7:00 a.m. time was that I was at the meeting before I was awake enough to make excuses not to go.

I was frequently late and was running in as a fellow member was running off to work. That member and I decided that between the two of us we were at a whole meeting.

I also found that being able to attend meetings 5 days a week was important, as I did not have that availability before. The people were welcoming and loving. Several of them have remained good friends for the 19 years since I walked into the corner chapel at St. Charles.

The following year I lost 50 pounds. I finally was given the gift of willingness to give up other food categories such as wheat, rice, potatoes, and sweeteners. I found an east coast sponsor to supplement my west coast sponsor.

So many things I owe to my Higher Power, my OA program and the Sunrise Meeting. My life is "beyond my wildest dreams."

--Kitty V.

It's been thirty years since the Arlington Sunrise Meeting began. Time does fly! I've been in the OA program for 42 years now.

In 1980, I was unhappy and never thought I could stop eating compulsively. Food was my world and my Higher Power. I hated myself.

You OA members and the 12 Steps of the program taught me that life is worth living. Now I know that I have a Higher Power who loves me, OA tools to help along the journey when I want more, and sponsors who help me along the way sharing their experience, strength, and hope. Sponsors don't tell me what to do but tell me what they did in a similar situation.

The 12 Steps are a life journey, a new way to approach life without excess food, with a Higher Power and fellow OA members to help me along the journey.

—Joan H

The fellowship was so important to me at the beginning of my recovery. In the Sunrise Meeting of Overeaters Anonymous, I've shed tears—of sadness, relief, and joy. I also shared my tears for the miracle of recovery I found in the Sunrise Meeting. Listening to others share their experience, strength, and hope with each other, I learned how to live life on life's terms without shame or guilt.

When I came across the Sunrise Group of Overeaters Anonymous, I was desperate. I so much wanted to know why food seemed to negatively affect every aspect of my daily living: my relationship with my family, friends, and ultimately, my relationship with my Higher Power.

What I received was beyond my wildest dreams. For the first time in a long time, I experienced God's loving presence in all aspects of my life. The fellowship grew around me, helping me to accept life exactly where it was at that present moment. I learned how to be a friend, wife, daughter, and mother. I learned that I was a child of God.

The Sunrise Group of Overeaters Anonymous taught me how to slow down, find peace, and how to love myself and others without eating compulsively. It taught me how to use all the tools of recovery to grow in God's loving presence.

--Kelly P.

What about the Sunrise Meeting is so special for me? It's a daily dose of Fellowship that I can count on! I have learned many ways that have helped my Fellows in working the OA program. I like the variety of OA literature we use. Sharing the role of secretary one quarter of the year at a time seems like a great idea and helps me see myself as doing that service someday. It means a lot to me that any day of the week I have the opportunity to read the daily readings at the beginning or the end of the meeting.

Oh, yeah, the fairly new "WhatsApp" chat group is a great support at any time of day! It was begun at the request of a Fellow from outside the U.S. I was able to get a new sponsor when my previous one needed to reduce her overall load.

This fellowship is extremely Welcoming!! I feel personally supported and I am learning to support others. Another way that technology has supported me is that I send a photo and description of my food to a Fellow from this meeting and I suggested it to someone else and now she sends her food to me.

Recovery is in Progress!

--Suzanne K.

More Sunrise Reflections

I've only been coming to Arlington Sunrise since April 2021. I have been in AA for 35 years. Since there were no OA meetings I could attend in person, I have tried for years to work OA while going to AA. My food and food choices improved (no longer a size 20) but, despite all my efforts, I continued to binge occasionally and to compulsively overeat. The weight was gradually starting to rise again (size 12-14), and I had the gift of desperation.

After attending AA meetings on zoom, I finally realized that OA probably had meetings on Zoom too! I tried several different meetings and eventually found the Arlington Sunrise Group. I found out they meet every day which was perfect! I could attend a meeting first thing in the morning. The women in this group were incredibly friendly, kind and loving. Being in a room of other compulsive overeaters was like a first drink of water after a long drought. They knew! They understood without my having to explain. They called me and welcomed me. They made me feel safe and loved me until

I could love myself.

By the grace of God and the fellowship of OA, I have a flexible plan of eating and have not binged for 9 months! I attend a meeting every day; I text/phone an OA member every day; I check in daily with another member of OA to be accountable with my food. I have a fellowship that loves me unconditionally—even when I make mistakes. This is very important to me. I grew up with an alcoholic mother and tried to be perfect so she wouldn't get angry with me, but she always did get angry. I was terrified of abandonment. In this group, I know I can make mistakes and still feel loved. My inner child is finding a peace here that she never knew.

To say I am grateful for the Arlington Sunrise Group is not enough. God has, through this group, been able to reach me, been able to love me more deeply, been able to help me become abstinent. Thank you Arlington Sunrise. You have helped this still-suffering compulsive overeater find a way of life that works.
Happy Anniversary!

—Diane M.

When I first came to OA, I attended a few in-person meetings with the Saturday Springfield Early Birds. I then decided that it was too far to travel that early on a Saturday morning and I stopped going. Within two months, the world shut down due to Covid in March 2020. For the next three months, I disappeared into a food coma. I very successfully turned off *all* of my emotions with food and Netflix.

At the end of May 2020, a friend let me know that the Springfield group was meeting on Zoom and I thought to myself, "I can manage to roll over in bed at 8 a.m. on a Saturday morning. I don't even have to turn my camera on." That is where it started for me.

In June I realized that I would need to go to meetings much more often than once a week and I needed

to find a time that would coordinate with my work schedule. That is where the Arlington Sunrise daily 7 a.m. meeting came into play for me. I became willing to get up early enough to be ready for work before I would log into my meeting. The solidarity of fellows in this group as they surrounded me with loving support as I found abstinence and began working the steps was, and still is, priceless.

I'm going through some things in life that are very heavy emotionally right now and I feel supported by this group and beyond. I could not imagine trying to face these things with any type of awareness without them. I am so grateful and thankful for their continued support and love.

—Kris A.

Goldilocks and the Three Meetings

Goldilocks was a compulsive eater. For many years her eating was out of control. She finally decided to get help with her obsessive eating, so she went to OA.org to find a meeting over Zoom.

First she went to a newcomers meeting and it was helpful but after a while she found she was hearing the same advice over and over. The meeting was just too small for her. It was not a good fit.

She went back to OA.org to find a meeting that fit better. She found one that had a time of meditation before the meeting. Goldilocks liked meditation so she thought she would try that meeting. For ten minutes everyone in the meeting was quiet. Goldilocks thought, "This is great. I think I found a meeting that will work for me." Then a bell rang and meditation was over. The Zoom room erupted with noise, "Hi Shelia, glad you're

here!" "Welcome back Claudia!" "Good to see you Tom!" Folks were talking over one another and there were over 200 people in the zoom room. Goldilocks felt lost. This zoom room was just too big!

Not willing to give up, Goldilocks made another trip to OA.org and found the 7 a.m. Sunrise Meeting. When she arrived at the meeting folks greeted her. They read some literature and shared their experiences dealing with their compulsive eating. There were about 15 old-timers and newcomers in the room. She took some phone numbers from the chat.

Later that day one of the women called her "just to check in." For Goldilocks, the Sunrise Meeting was just right. She found her home group and has been there ever since.

—Adrienne C.

Upcoming Events

JUNE

- 5 Sun 5:15 to 6:15 pm
WRITING FOR RECOVERY
Virtual NoVAations Workshop
- 11 Sat 10 am to 12 noon
INTERGROUIP ZOOM MEETING
- 12 Sun 2 to 4 pm
CARRYING THE MESSAGE FOR 30 YEARS
Virtual 30th Anniv of Arlington Sunrise Meetings
- 12 Sun **HISTORY OF OA**
By Those Who Watched it Unfold
Part I: 2 to 4 pm Old-timers Share
Part II: Video Interview of Rosanne
- 12 Sun 3 to 4:30 pm
VIRTUAL 2nd SUNDAY WORKSHOP
"Gratitude is an Action Word"
- 13 Mon, 11:30 am to 12:30 pm
WRITING FOR RECOVERY
Virtual NoVAations Workshop
- 25 Sun 9:30 to 11 am
Virtual **TRIGGER WORKSHOP**
"Identify & avoid the triggers that make you want to eat!"
Sponsored by the FC Men's Sun Morning Group
- 25-26 Sat 9 am to 4:30 pm; Sun 8:30 am.to 4:30 pm
Virtual **BIG BOOK WEEKEND**
Sponsored by Region 7

Intergroup Board of Directors

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

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via our website: OANoVA.org.

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

Stories of Service

OA Region 7 Intergroup Renewal Committee is looking for your stories of how service has strengthened your recovery. Stories will be compiled to share with others in OA.

Suggested guidelines: A few sentences to a few paragraphs (less than 350 words). Include your name and the first initial of your last name, or sign your writing anonymously.

Suggested topics: "why service is important to my OA program of recovery," "how service saved my OA recovery program," or "how service kept me coming back to OA."

Send your response to:
r7intergrouprenewal@gmail.com by Wednesday, **June 15, 2022**. The Renewal Committee reserves the right to edit. It is understood that all submissions may be reprinted by other OA groups without permission.

World Service News

With a count of 218 delegates from 21 countries, OA's second all-virtual World Service Business Conference exemplified this year's theme: "We Can Do Together What We Could Never Do Alone." Not only did Conference delegates consider and vote on every motion, amendment, proposal, and election, but also the spirit of togetherness was shared through live interpretation, a first for Conference. Available in Portuguese and Spanish, interpretation highlighted OA's vitality as a worldwide Fellowship and aligned with our Fourth **Concept of OA Service**: "The right of participation ensures equality of opportunity for all in the decision-making process."

For more World Service News, go to
<https://oa.org/a-step-ahead/> to read the newest issue.

This June marks the 30th year since the Arlington Sunrise Meeting formed. In celebration of that milestone, the Sunrisers have sponsored this issue. Has there ever been such an outpouring of contributions to NoVAations?! It's been an editor's dream come true! A HUGE THANK-YOU to all you Sunrise Folks, everyone who proofed and edited, and all of you who are reading this! It's wonderful to be a part of so much love and support!

NoVAations tries to be published on the 1st of each month. Submission deadline is midnight on the 20th of each preceding month.

Submit to: NoVAations@oanova.org

In Gratitude,
Marie L., Editor

You are Invited

...to join in the Arlington Sunrise Meeting's virtual 30th Anniversary Celebration!
See the flyer to the right for details. The program will include a panel of Sunrise longtimers discussing their journeys in OA and sharing their memories of the Sunrise Group through the years.

Treasurer's Observations for May 2022

When do you suppose I learned to count calories? In High School, maybe age 16; probably earlier. That was before data on "calories spent exercising" was easy to find, but I'd figured out the connection between data-in/data-out. Counting calories in/out "then" may have prepared me for working with dollars in/out now.

I write to *NoVAtions* for the first time as Intergroup Treasurer. I hope to give you some information each month. This will be about April's dollars-in and dollars-out, and thoughts about the rest of the year.

Income in April (\$1,075.71) was contributed by four individuals and five groups. The amount received in April is about the monthly average since Zoom-life.

Where does the money go? Now-a-days, a solid \$300 per month supports our NoVA skeleton: Zoom lines, email accounts (like novations@oanova.org), Post Office box, website maintenance, telephone hot-line.

The money not spent on these necessities gets pooled for trips to World service or Region Conferences/Workshops—used to be four times a year. In these "COVID years," Intergroup has sent its surplus directly to OA World Service, and recently about \$3,000 to upgrade our website (including that marvelous interactive calendar).

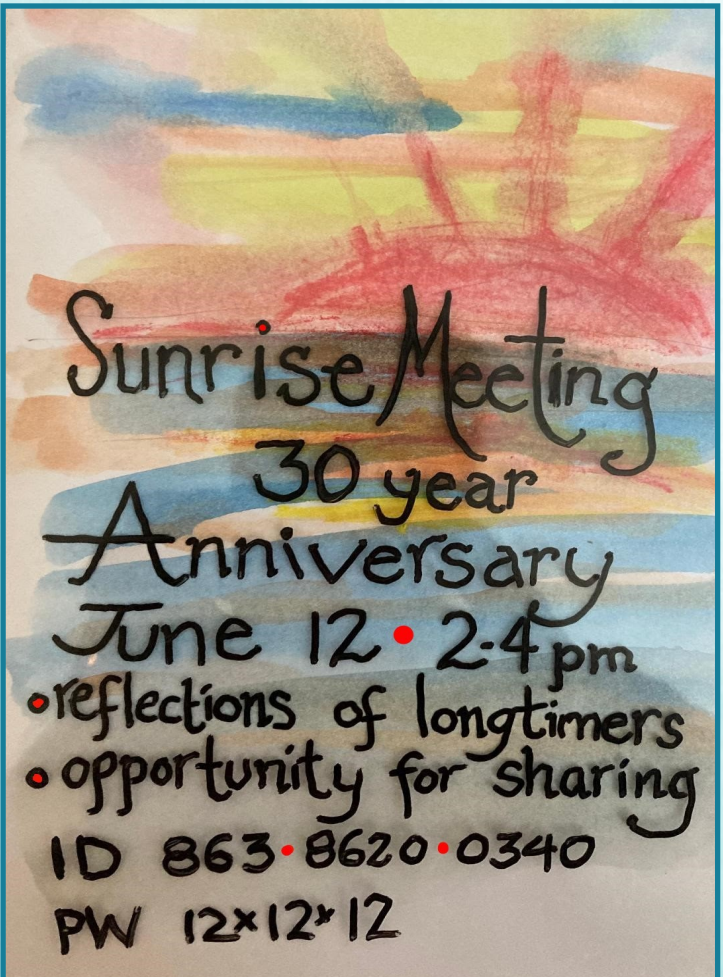
At this June's IG meeting, all present can vote on the budget for the next twelve months (July '22 through June '23). Please email me any ideas at treasurer@oanova.org. Currently, we have a \$2,000 reserve for any in-person meeting wanting tech support to become hybrid.

—Alice T., Intergroup Treasurer

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.



Sunrise Meeting
30 year
Anniversary
June 12 • 2-4 pm
• reflections of longtimers
• opportunity for sharing
ID 863 • 8620 • 0340
PW 12x12x12

Falls Church
Mens OA Group
Presents

Trigger Workshop

Identify and avoid the triggers
that make us want to eat!

Saturday, June 25th
9.30am to 11am EST

Zoom ID: 815 2874 7246

Pass: 12x12x12

Workshop sponsored by :
Sunday 8AM (ET) Men's OA meeting (Same URL)

Meeting is open to anyone who desires to stop eating compulsively according to Tradition 3.

More info on Men's OA meetings at OAmens.org

More Northern VA meetings at OAnova.org



Today

"The present moment is pregnant with possibilities we can't see or even imagine".

---Brian D. McLaren

Today

New, fresh, unspoiled! How terrific. What an opportunity. How exciting!

Did I dream that I used every single minute of this day thoughtfully?

I think so.

Will I use every single minute of today thoughtfully? I doubt it.

And yet

Today is here. Now. Waiting for me. Unspoiled. Clean. Open. Beautiful.

Filled with God.

Ready and waiting for me!

How will I act today?

Will I plunge into today with abandon or with care?

Will I treat this day as an old shoe or a new dress?

Will I honor this day with right actions, thoughtfulness, and love?

Will I feel God loving me and guiding me throughout the day?

God,

Take me into today with assurance that I am not alone. You are with me.

Your love for me will give me strength and guidance.

And my work will bring your love to others.

Today.

--Anonymous