



THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF NORTHERN VIRGINIA INTERGROUP OF OA

## Roadblock: Steps Six and Seven

*Step Six: Were entirely ready to remove all these defects of character.*

*Step Seven: Humbly asked him to remove our shortcomings.*



I clearly remember taking Step Five the first time, and the second, and even the fifth time. It all came down to not living in Steps Six and Seven. After Step Five, I felt like I was “free floating” because Steps Six and Seven, on paper, looked scary. I was completely baffled. First, the Big Book doesn’t provide detailed instructions on how to actually do Steps Six and Seven; second, the original writers devoted very little space to these steps in the Big Book; and finally, the biggest show stopper of all were the words “entirely,” “all,” and “humbly.”

I was completely stumped by these words. “Entirely” and “all” meant perfection, right? I thought I had to be completely and 100% ready to forsake all my habits--which were the very foundation of who I was as a person. And, if that wasn’t

enough, I was supposed to feel inferior to my fellows. Those, according to me, would be the keys of my success in the program: perfection and inferiority.

Little did I know the two top paragraphs on page 76 ( Alcoholics Anonymous Big Book, ed. 4) would eventually become the most impactful actions in my recovery. The paragraph on Step Six discusses asking God for help to become willing. It does not say I have to be perfect. Similar to Step Six, Step Seven says we ask God for strength to do his bidding, not mine. The distinction between my magical thinking mind and the actual words in the Big Book are very different. Step Six is about having an open-mind, not doing things perfectly and Step Seven is humility, not inferiority.

Since this is a one day-at-a-time-program for living, I need to take actions that are actually living Steps Six and Seven daily. I first ask God to put aside all my negative thinking, then I ask for an open mind, and finally, I ask my Higher Power for the humility to follow him today, wherever that takes me.

--Kelly P.

### Step Seven

Humbly asked him to remove our shortcomings.

### Spiritual Principle

Humility

### Tradition Seven

Every OA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.

### Spiritual Principle

Responsibility



**IF I GO TO BED  
WITH ABSTINENCE,  
I WAKE UP  
WITH DIGNITY.**



**JUST DO THE NEXT  
ONE RIGHT THING AT A TIME  
AND IT WILL  
TAKE YOU HOME.**

*And yet, I do awake by 7*  
(a tribute to the Arlington sunrise meetings)

I have never been an early riser  
And yet, I do awake by 7  
Despite drumming on the snooze button  
Reluctance to sever subconscious ties  
With a drowsy disease-free peace.  
Despite allowing ideas to slither in and tempt me  
With mantras of the importance of sleep,  
The availability of later meetings,  
And progress, not perfect attendance.  
And yet, I awake  
Sometimes early enough to have tea and chat first  
Other times breathless, full bladdered, camera-off  
Scrambling for my journal and book.

I have never been an early riser  
And yet, I do awake by 7  
Eager to feel smiles and warmth knowing  
To face the mirror on my own  
Shines too harsh a spotlight



Narrowing my focus to just one circle  
surrounded by darkness.  
And so, I awake knowing  
That “We have a disease,” first,  
Makes “I have a disease” bearable.  
That the poetic wisdom I hear holds the key  
To lifting my despair, to helping me believe,  
To making a plan one day at a time.

I have never been an early riser  
And yet, I do awake by 7  
I come confident that I have nothing to say  
That I'll just listen or be of service.  
Then, a spark of truth startles me  
Sometimes from a page, sometimes just a word,  
Sometimes spoken and sometimes whispered.  
The surprise overpowers my shyness  
And words spill from my mouth  
Exposing naked feelings and thoughts  
To nods, smiles, pens scratching, and hands waving.  
And thus, my weight is lifted  
My hope restored one morning at a time.  
I have never been an early riser  
And yet, my higher power wakes me by 7



## True Freedom



When a fellow OA member suggested I reflect on what true freedom looks like for me, I discovered I could probably write a book.

Before OA, I truly felt I already had it in the form of a solid career, a warm and loving home, the freedom of living where I lived, and more. Even today, I cannot dispute anything on my long list. After nearly a decade of learning through the [Twelve Steps](#) of OA, however, I now recognize what I had was freedom, but it was not necessarily true freedom.

Today, true freedom, for me, can be summed up in three words: peace of mind. You see, I never had peace of mind while I was enjoying my career, home, and family; I was deeply tormented. Physically, I was overweight and progressing toward type 2 diabetes. Emotionally, I was losing my self-esteem and self-respect. I was spending far too much time obsessing about food, while trying in vain to convince myself of everything from “I got this” to “who cares,” depending on the day. And I was under the illusion that I should try to control everything and everyone around me. (It’s hard for me to write that without smiling at my naiveté.) Spiritually, I was somewhere between numb and confused at best. That freedom was a far cry from my true freedom.

Today, I have peace of mind that represents my true freedom. Aside from my original list (minus the career since I’m now happily retired), the picture has changed beyond my wildest dreams! Physically, I have shed pounds and am at a weight that I’m comfortable with. The mirror is now a convenience and not a spotlight for my flaws. I’ve kept only one clothing size in my closet for the past several years. My health has never been better, and two years ago, my doctor said my blood test results were as healthy as an adolescent’s. Emotionally, I have a healthy self-esteem. (I’m no better or worse than the next person—who knew!) I have a ton of self-respect because I accept who I am, warts and all. I’ve gone from the roller coaster of denial and defiance to knowing I’m a compulsive overeater who has found sweet recovery one day at a time.

I accept that I will never again have the luxury of thinking, “I got this,” but that’s okay because I have the Twelve Steps to guide me. Spiritually, I have a Higher Power of my own understanding that I lean on daily in all things. Where there was confusion, I now have faith, so I don’t need more clarity to proceed. I have come to

a place where I can ask for and receive guidance, and if I allow it, faith will trump fear every single time!

True freedom has come in more ways than I ever thought possible: going to sleep without thinking of food; enjoying a TV show or road trip without obsessing about snacks; enjoying a holiday without the pre-holiday fears or post-holiday remorse about eating; being able to live and let live, especially with family and friends; being able to set healthy boundaries; being able to recognize when I need to apologize and say I’m sorry; accepting that I will always be a work in progress and that life is about good days and bad days—it’s not an all or nothing journey. True freedom is a beautiful thing!

— Joyce R., Canada (*Lifeline*, July 2020)

## Treasurer's Observations for May 2022

The spiritual principle associated with July’s issue is (Step 7) humility. At this moment, the only humility I can recognize in myself is that I do not know how to make this article entertaining despite being confident I can make it informative.

June’s financial information is not complete as I write. Therefore this article describes May’s dollars-in and dollars-out of our Intergroup, and some longer-term information.

Income in May (\$370.51) was one-third of the previous month’s and well below average. It was contributed by six individuals and two groups. The amount received in May covered our three monthly expenses that support meetings and members: Zoom lines, information distribution via email, and the splendid OA NoVA website that now includes a click-to-join meeting calendar.

At June’s IG meeting, the budget for the next twelve months (JUL ’22 through JUN ’23) was approved. It has a total (12 month) income and expenses of \$10,600. This includes four large annual expenses: a \$2,000 for any in-person meeting wanting tech support; \$1,600 for security and as-needed updates of the website; \$3,800 for IG delegates to attend in-person meetings with Region 7 and World Service; \$1,000 contribution to those service bodies. Any funds not used for these major expenses will be sent to Region 7 and/or the World Service Organization.

If you read this, consider attending intergroup—you demonstrate curiosity as to how it works. Thanks for reading *Novations*, and thanks to Marie for making it readable.

—Alice T., Intergroup Treasurer

## Stepping Into Freedom

Bill W. writes: "We have found much of heaven and we have been rocketed into a fourth dimension of existence of which we had not even dreamed." \*

I don't know about you, but I certainly was not convinced that would ever be possible. In fact, little did I know as I walked into my first meeting, I was just beginning my journey towards a God that loved me so much that he wanted desperately to hold me and carry me through my pain, if I let him.

I crawled into my first meeting downtrodden, scared, and hopeless. I left the meeting with an ever-so-slight lift in my heart. Where did that come from? Since I didn't believe in God, I must have done it all by myself.

But the next step was to turn my life and will over to the care of God. I didn't believe that God even knew I existed, let alone cared about my food or my obsession with my body weight, or any other obsession I was carrying around. If he did love me, I wouldn't be in this mess.

My sponsor suggested keeping an open mind about God. The words in Step Three, "as we understood Him," do not state what or how we believe in God. Instead, God is who we want and need our HP to be in our life at this moment.

After sharing my Fourth Step, my sponsor continued to love me for exactly who I was, warts and all, and I started to change.

I became willing to ask this: "God, remove these 'defects of character' which no longer serve me or you." Someone once told me I only needed 1% willingness to begin and I had to begin at the beginning before becoming entirely ready. One percent meant I was willing to begin my journey towards a closer relationship with my Higher Power.

Thank goodness it was only 1% willingness! I really liked some of my character defects. Like pride. I had a lot of pride. It was pride that helped me perform perfectly at my job. I was the perfect mother—I mean, I was perfect all around. Eventually, though, gratitude replaced pride.

When I reached Steps Eight and Nine, I was terrified. During Step Eight, my sponsor asked me to categorize my amends to prepare for Step Nine:

Category 1 - I'm now ready "wherever possible."

Category 2 - After praying for these people I will be ready sooner rather than later.

Category 3: When pigs fly!

Category 3 was my favorite. Unfortunately, I couldn't put everyone in that category. Turns out my first amend was in Category 3 with my stepmother. When visiting my hometown, I ignored her completely when I saw her running errands. There was just too much history and I was not going to make amends--ever! A miracle

happened. She was on a weekend trip for work in the same city I was living in. I literally ran into her while I was shopping. My amend to her was simply a bottle of Pepsi, a hug, and the words "I love you." That was it! It turned out to be the easiest and most powerful amend I ever made.

The daily inventory in Step Ten continues to keep me alert to the attitudes and behaviors I bring to people and situations. Am I positive or negative? Proudful or grateful? Joyful or obnoxious? Step Ten continues to give me the awareness of myself.

This brings me to Step Eleven. While at the beginning of my recovery, I was terrified of God. After working the steps, I was eager to grow with my Higher Power. I experienced God's caring, loving hands wrapped around me. He actually does care about me and my food. He cares about how I feel about myself. He loves me deeply and will never let me go.

Finally, my HP told me it was time to work with others. Frightened, but knowing God had my back, I quit running from sponsoring. Now I feel blessed to be of service.

I have been rocketed into the fourth dimension of existence. I have a life I never expected: Happy, Joyous, and Free.

—Kelly P.

\* Source: *Alcoholics Anonymous A Big Book, 4th edition, Ch 2, "There is a Solution" p. 25.*

## Thank You...

*...to everyone who has written,  
proofed and edited,  
and all who are reading!*

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In Gratitude,  
Marie L., Editor

## Upcoming Events

### JULY

10 Sun, 3:00 to 4:30 pm  
[VIRTUAL REGION 2ND SUN WORKSHOP](#)  
“Steps 10 - 12: Continue, Improve & Practice”

16 Sat, 10 am to 12 noon  
Virtual [IG MEETING](#)

### AUGUST

19-21 [SPONSORSHIP DAY](#)

### SEPTEMBER

16-18, Fri, 6:00 pm to Sun, 1:00 pm  
In-person [REGION 7 FALL ASSEMBLY](#)

23-25, Fri 7:00 pm to Sun 1:00 pm  
In-person [REGION 7 RETREAT](#)  
“We’re All Together Now”

23 Fri to 25 Sun

Do you need to publicize a flyer or news item about an OA event? Send it to [12stepwithin@oanova.org](mailto: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 Board of Directors

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

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Our mailing address is:  
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Annandale, VA 22003.

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

## World Service News

**ATTENTION GROUP SECRETARIES!** Do your part for the still-suffering compulsive eater by making sure your meeting details are up to date. First, look up your meeting at [Find a Meeting](#), and then if any information needs to be corrected, send us the updates through [Edit a Meeting](#).

If you need to convert your meeting to or from a hybrid meeting, you must contact the WSO directly. See our [Hybrid Meeting Instructions](#) for more information.

Thank you for your service!

**SPONSORSHIP**  **DAY** is a day set aside to acknowledge the importance of sponsoring in our Fellowship. This August 19–21, OA service bodies worldwide will host events to celebrate and examine the role of sponsorship in our recovery and to help OA members find sponsors. You can be a part of the Sponsorship Day solution! Here are some ways to give service:

- Send your event to OA’s Event Calendar by messaging the WSO through OA’s social media page at [facebook.com/overeatersanonymousofficial](https://facebook.com/overeatersanonymousofficial) (link opens to third-party website).
- Download sponsorship resources from [oa.org](http://oa.org), including the [“Sponsorship Success” podcasts](#) and resources found in the [Document Library](#) under the category “Sponsorship.”
- Purchase sponsorship literature from [bookstore.oa.org](http://bookstore.oa.org), including **A Guide for Sponsors (#200)**, **Sponsoring Through the Twelve Steps (#220)**, and **Sponsorship Kit (#210)**.
- Read the results of a recent OA sponsorship survey ([“Sweeping Survey Sheds Light on Sponsorship in OA,” A Step Ahead, Second Quarter 2022 issue, pp. 1–2](#)) for insights to help you plan your event.

According to our recent sponsorship survey, about three out of every ten OA members are available and willing to take on new sponsees. Let’s start planning to bring sponsors and sponsees together and bring home to everyone the importance of sponsorship in individual recovery.



**POST YOUR LOCAL OA EVENTS** to OA’s [social media page](#) (link opens a third-party website) by clicking the “Send Message” button on that page. Include all event information and a contact email address that maintains member anonymity. You may also drag-and-drop your event flyer into the message.





### *Step Seven Prayer*

My Creator, I am now willing that you should have all of me, good and bad.

I pray that you now remove from me every defect of character  
which stands in the way of my usefulness to you and my fellows.  
Grant me strength, as I go out from here, to do your bidding. Amen.

—Bill W., *Alcoholics Anonymous Big Book*,  
4th ed., p. 76.