

NOVATIONS

July 2023

The Monthly Newsletter
of the Northern Virginia
Overeaters Anonymous
Intergroup

The Reason Behind the Steps

A friend of mine in the fellowship once quipped:
"The best-kept secret in 12-step programs are the Twelve Steps!"

We all know the steps. I am a procrastinator. It took me far too long to work all twelve Steps. It helped me become willing when an old-timer explained to me the reason behind the steps, their motivation for existence. That reason is spelled out in the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous and backed up by OA literature.

Part One: Addiction is incurable. The reason for this is that addiction takes control of our minds. Our disease, hijacks our thought processes. If all we have to fight our addiction is our minds, and if our minds are working for the addiction, then we are absolutely beaten. [Big Book, Ch 2] "You have the mind of a chronic alcoholic. I have never seen one single case recover..." [p 27]

Part Two: We ask, "Is there no exception?" The answer begins in the Big Book pp 27 ff. "'Yes,' replied Dr Jung, 'there is. Exceptions to cases such as yours have been occurring since early times ... once in a while, alcoholics have had what are called vital spiritual experiences ... huge emotional displacements. Ideas, emotions, and attitudes which were once the guiding forces of the lives of these men are suddenly cast to one side, and a completely new set of conceptions and motives begin to dominate them.'"

Dr. Silkworth "... unless this person can experience an entire psychic change there is very little hope of recovery. ... Once a psychic change has occurred, the very same person who seemed doomed ... suddenly finds himself easily able to control his desire for alcohol..." [BB p xxvii]

So Part One is the fact that *addiction is incurable* because our minds are against us ... Part Two tells us that *if the mind can be fundamentally changed somehow, then addiction can be arrested*.

Dr. Jung called this ... a "spiritual experience". Dr. Silkworth termed it a "psychic change" ... Bill W. labeled it a "spiritual awakening". Whatever the name, the personality change sufficient to bring about recovery from compulsive overeating has manifested itself among us in many different forms.

The goal of the addict is not to "get sober". That won't work. *The goal of the addict is to attain a fundamental personality change.* And a by-product of that fundamental change is abstinence. Another by-product is peace of mind.

Our incurable disease of the mind can be arrested by a fundamental personality change, but there's a catch. Until the 1930's, the only known way to get that required personality change was by chance, as if being struck by lightning.

The joyful, exuberant Part Three of our story is the fact that some alcoholics in the 1930's found a formula which could create the necessary personality change to achieve sobriety/abstinence. This formula they listed as a "program" of twelve things to do. As a result of this formula, the average person no longer had to be struck by lightning to have the required fundamental personality change. They could bring it about, slowly but surely, by following this recipe. The steps should really be called "spiritual experience for dummies". *Any person, including you and me, can now find a spiritual experience, with the resultant sobriety/abstinence and peace of mind.*

This explains why old-timers will tell you that you can't join a 12-step program any more than you can join a recipe. What we can join is a fellowship, made up of people who follow a program. In fact, the program preceded the fellowship. The first 12-step fellowship, Alcoholics Anonymous, took its name from the book explaining the program. Other 12-Step groups like OA, followed.

As a newcomer, I was told to make sure my home meeting was a step meeting. By working the steps, I can indeed attest that I have had a personality change. Not a sudden, dramatic transformation. But rather, a slow, unsteady, sometimes painful, progression from a life of fear to a life where I know (most of the time) that there is a Higher Power, and that all is well in the universe. I have been given peace of mind and abstinence. Just for today.

- Anonymous from a NoVA Region member

Welcome Back!

We have missed you.

Our Intergroup newsletter, NoVAtions has not appeared since January 2023, as Intergroup looked for a new editor. The editor has been found and a group of other OA members have agreed to help get us back on a regular publishing schedule.

In each of the following newsletters, we will focus on the Step and Tradition that correlates to that month (e.g. August will be Step 8, Tradition 8 and Concept 8.) We will include other articles to support your OA recovery. We also plan to emphasize being user-friendly to new members of OA. We will "Keep it Simple!"

We look forward to including your experience, strength and hope, when you are willing to share it with us. If you can write about the current month's step or tradition, even better!

We are compiling a list of our favorite OA 12 Step slogans. Please drop a line to share your favorite slogans with us. Thank you in advance!

Your submissions may be sent for consideration to novations@oanova.org no later than July 20th for August and the 20th of the preceding month for all following months. (e.g. Aug 20th for September.)

Welcome to OA. Welcome Home!
--NoVAtions Editor

OA 7th Step, 7th Tradition and 7th Concept for July

Step 7: Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.

Tradition 7: Every OA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.

Concept 7: The Board of Trustees has legal rights and responsibilities accorded to them by OA Bylaws, Subpart A; the rights and responsibilities of the World Service Business Conference are accorded to it by Tradition and by OA Bylaws, Subpart B.

Slogan of the Month:

Let go and Let God.

So few words to express something that has taken all my Step work, and all the wisdom of Fellows that I've received over many years in order for me to understand and at last to experience.

My attempts to control my weight, my feelings, and other people are not only futile, but actually block the help I've asked my HP to give! God is real, loving, and willing to help me, so let go and let God. Then I am free to do my own work with energy and joy.

- Sharon, OANova member

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