

OA Literature: The Gift of the Big Book

I was always looking for something to “fix” me. I wasn’t exactly sure what was wrong, but I frequently felt like an “outsider.” I never fit in, in my family, in school, in life. I often turned to books for a solution, i.e., the latest self-help guide that would turn my life around. I looked for advice to change me into anyone other than who I was. And I wanted a magic formula to sail through life with an ease that I’d never had.

The solution came when God, my Higher Power, intervened, and brought me to OA, and to *Alcoholics Anonymous*, commonly referred to as the “Big Book.” This text became what I had been looking for—a “how to” manual to fix me, from the inside out, and help me move through life with step-by-step instructions, otherwise known as the 12 Steps.

In the “Big Book,” I learned of those in whom “the problem had been solved.” They were people like me, connected, not in the small details of our lives, but in the big picture of our disease. People like me, with broken relationships and regretful pasts. People like me, who had hit their own rock bottom – mine, on my knees, pleading with God, to save me from the hell from which I could find no reprieve.

Guided by my sponsor, I started to experience this reprieve by following these directions, the same ones those first one-hundred followed. As I worked the 12 Steps, God put the pieces of my life back together, as I learned to turn everything over to Him.

Through the wisdom in the “Big Book,” I have received many gifts. I started to experience freedom from the bondage to self. I wake up now and realize I no longer have that constant chatter of self-hatred. The “Big Book” taught me that I’m not a terrible person—I’m a fearful person who is spiritually ill. I’ve experienced joy as I repaired relationships that I thought could not be mended. And received kindness and forgiveness I thought could not be given. I’ve been gifted with courage to continue through difficult parts of my recovery and I’ve felt God’s grace as He carried me through particular Steps.

Most of all, the “Big Book” has gifted me with hope that I can have a new life; one very different than the one I’m starting to leave behind, one day at a time. One day at a time through the gift of OA, through the gift of the “Big Book,” I am hopeful for a “life beyond our (my) wildest dreams.”

~Anonymous



**OVEREATERS
ANONYMOUS®**
MILWAUKEE AREA INTERGROUP
Serving Eastern Wisconsin

In this issue...

Abstinence: One Day at a Time.....	6
Editorial Policy	2
Looking Good!.....	3
MAI Board	2
OA Literature: The Gift of the Big Book	1
Reading 12 Step Literature	3
Seeking a Sponsor.....	2
So Many Gifts	5
The Promises: They Are Not Extravagant	4
What Do You Hope To Achieve?.....	4
When All Else Fails, Follow The Directions	5

Milwaukee Area Intergroup

Serving Eastern Wisconsin

MAI Website oamilwaukee.org

Facebook Overeaters Anonymous - OA Milwaukee

Contact Info

414-259-0640

Milwaukee Area Intergroup

PO Box 270054

Milwaukee, WI 53227

QR Code

direct to website



Board of Directors

Chair, Laurel: chair@oamilwaukee.org

Vice Chair, Louise: vicechair@oamilwaukee.org

Secretary, Cindy F: secretary@oamilwaukee.org

Treasurer, Carol Ann: treasurer@oamilwaukee.org

Region 5 Reps,

Darlene: region5rep@oamilwaukee.org

Bobbi P: region5rep2@oamilwaukee.org

World Service Rep, Lynn H:

wsorep@oamilwaukee.org

Leave a message for any board member:

414-259-0640

MAI News Available Via Email

Want to receive free, monthly MAI news via email? Send an email to emailblast@oamilwaukee.org with "subscribe" in Subject. Include in the body of the email your first name, last initial, and home meeting.

Your email address will never be distributed nor seen by other people receiving the mailings.

MAI Monthly Meetings

Third Monday of every month, 6:30-8:00 p.m.

Martin Luther Lutheran Church

9235 W. Bluemound Road, Milwaukee, WI 53226

Each member group can have two voting representatives. All OA members are welcome.

OA World Service

oa.org

Free OA podcasts featuring OA speakers: oa.org/podcasts/. A podcast is a radio-type show you can download from the Internet to your computer.

A link also is available at this site to get World Service Office (WSO) information.

Spanish OA Website Espanol@oa.org

French OA Website Francais@oa.org

Region 5

region5oa.org

Cocoon Submissions

We need and want your stories of recovery, poems and pictures, that share your experience, strength, and hope!

Issue	Deadline	Topic
2nd Quarter	March 16	Celebrating OAs Freedoms

Send to cocooneditor@oamilwaukee.org or OAMAI, Attn: Cocoon Editor, PO Box 270054, Milwaukee, WI 53227.

Editor: Louise

Editorial Policy

Out of the Cocoon is the quarterly newsletter of the Milwaukee Area Intergroup of Overeaters Anonymous, Inc. We welcome OA-related contributions from members. Material cannot be returned, nor can payment be made. All submissions must be signed; names will be withheld upon request. The editor reserves the right to make editorial changes and to refuse any article not meeting the editorial policy or that breaks any traditions. Articles may not appear in the quarter of submission. Other OA groups may reprint articles without permission as long as credit is given. The opinions expressed herein are those of the writers, and not of the Intergroup or OA as a whole.

Seeking a Sponsor?

The MAI Twelfth-Step-Within Committee maintains a list of available sponsors and temporary sponsors so newcomers and those still suffering can get direction and support. If you need help finding a sponsor, email 12th-stepwithin@oamilwaukee.org or call 414-259-0640 and leave a message. Provide your contact information, the type of sponsor you are seeking (i.e. food, step, maintenance, late night calls, for newcomer, temporary, etc.), and any other specific needs you have.

Available to Sponsor?

Please add your name and phone number to the list so you can help another member. Indicate type of sponsor you are willing to be (see above for ideas) and time of day you are available.

Reading 12 Step Literature

Day after day I admit my powerlessness over food and everything else in my life. By turning my powerlessness over to God, I am accepting help. I ask my Higher Power to show me His will for me and for my ability to concentrate on recovery.

Reading Twelve Step literature reminds me that I have a disease and that I can recover, one day at a time. The program teaches me that I must commit to work and live by the Steps. Maintaining abstinence, being accountable to my sponsor, giving service, and making amends are some of the actions that keep me in recovery. As I keep these commitments, each day, I receive the healing, happiness, joy, and freedom that eluded me before program.

I am grateful to God, to my family, to my OA family, and to all who love me unconditionally for their part in helping me become the woman I am meant to be. Permanent recovery is possible, and I am worth receiving it.

Reprinted from Voices of Recovery, p. 74



Photo is not of an actual OA member



Looking Good!

I love the indexes in the OA daily meditation books, *Just for Today* and *Voices of Recovery*! At my fingertips, is support and information from my fellow OA members on so many topics. Having an issue with boundaries? Anger? Working Step 4? Look it up in the index, and another member's experience, strength and hope on the topic is right there, ready to assist.

"No longer is there a sense of hopelessness, no longer must we each depend upon our own unsteady willpower." Whether the OA Promise, partially quoted here, the slogans, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, or the daily readers, there is so much in the program literature to provide support for our journeys. Take a look, the looking is good!

~Jane D.

Second Quarter 2020 Theme

The theme for the second quarter 2020 *Cocoon* is "Celebrating OAs Freedoms." OA provides us with many freedoms, e.g., freedom from our disease, old thoughts, old behaviors. What freedoms have you obtained in OA? Deadline: Monday, March 16.

The Promises: They Are Not Extravagant

My heart lifts and I smile whenever I think of the Promises of the program. They can be found in the literature, in the *Big Book*, on pages 83 and 84 in the 3rd edition. I've been in meetings where the promises are read with the words, "Are these extravagant promises?" To which the members of the group respond, "We think not!"

I was broken when I showed up to OA. I thought if I could just lose weight, I would feel better about myself.

What Do You Hope to Achieve?

Daily Meditation Book
For Today – p.204

"Repetition is the only form of permanence nature can achieve" is what I love on that page. It tells me if I want ongoing recovery, I need to practice or repeat what works. I spoke with someone this morning about getting to know her Higher Power better and she responded, "That's scary!"

In further discussing her fear it was because it was new and unknown. We were able to diminish her fear by discussing like anything new and unknown, we practice and get better and better at it and it gets less and less scary.

In the beginning of working the program for me, it was scary to walk into a meeting and meet new people. Now making my home Saturday morning meeting is one of the highlights of my week. The repetition of attending has become a form of permanence that helps maintain serenity and peace in my life. And, there are still activities I need to practice, like adding more telephone calls to a variety of OA members.

What about you? What form of permanence would you like to achieve?

~Jane D.

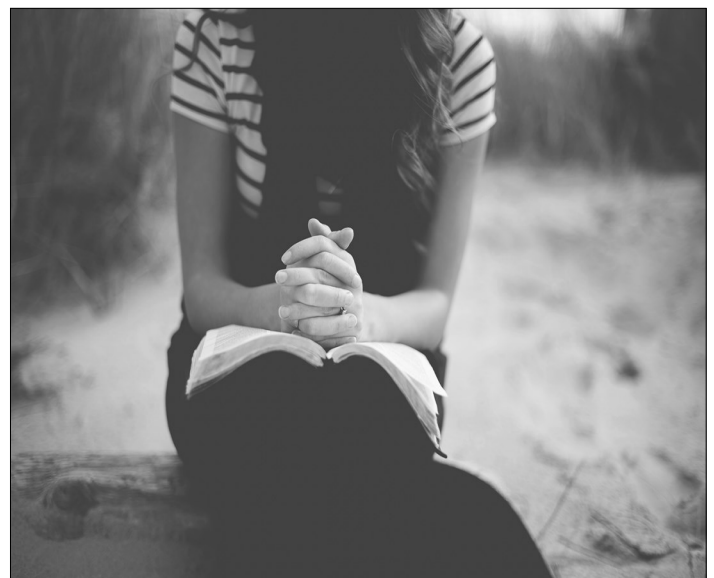
I felt like I couldn't get anything right, especially something that seemed so simple to other people, eating normally.

Some people never seemed to struggle with their weight, what to wear and even seemed to eat and drink whatever they wanted. I felt like a failure. Through the program, I learned I was comparing my insides with other people's outsides. I learned my body reacted to food differently than other people's and I learned I could abstain one day at a time – because *God was doing for me what I had never been able to do for myself*. I did have a new freedom and a new happiness. *I could see how my experience could help others.*

Today, most days, I am happy, joyous and free because of what I found here in OA. The answers and lots of understanding of what was happening with me I found in the literature. "The Doctor's Opinion," found in *Alcoholics Anonymous* describes the allergy of the body and the compulsion of the mind. The promises and many of the slogans spoke to me and I hope you find they speak to you, too.

So please, stay for the miracle. There's one for each of us here.

~Anonymous



When All Else Fails, Follow The Directions

Our predecessors in *Alcoholics Anonymous* wrote the first literature with the book of the same title. The members who worked together to write the book made it simple by labeling one of the chapters, “How it Works.” As human beings, we can complicate almost anything.

I understand when they started, the experienced members often led newcomers through all 12 Steps in a weekend or a few days. They didn’t want the newly sober lost or wallowing in their past mistakes, which can happen if someone stalls on Steps 4 and 5.

They wanted new members to see how they could be useful to themselves and others, sober. Newcomers became involved immediately, active in service to become part of their groups and give back what had so freely been given to them. These directions are in the “How it Works” chapter.

Overeaters Anonymous is a suggested program. However, if we get stalled or stuck, the literature, and the *Big Book* specifically, gives us the directions to follow to ‘live a life of sane and happy usefulness.’

~Jane D.

So Many Gifts

OA-ers connected

Answers offered

Lessons learned

Ideas explored

Twelve Steps practiced

Experience shared

Recovery granted

Acceptance received

Truths revealed

Understanding available

Relating by reading

Empowerment offered

~Anonymous



Abstinence: One Day at a Time

Abstinence encompasses my entire life. My day starts and ends with abstinence. I MUST adhere to it to have an abstinent day and maintain an abstinent life.

It is not only about the food. Abstinence also includes my behavior towards others. When I put down the food, I have more control over my moods and behaviors and think more clearly. Abstinence includes my daily self-care on all levels: physical, emotional, and spiritual.

In order to stay away from the food, we must change our thinking, our way of living, and what we put in our mouths. This includes taking better care of ourselves so that the need for the food is no longer a necessity. We no longer need to hide in the food, because we have a wonderful life and lifestyle to live.

In order to live abstinely, we must examine all parts of our lives: our work life, our family life, our friendships. We need our outside connections and interests, a belief in something greater than just us managing all of this each day; a belief such as a Higher Power, our OA Group, or nature, or whatever else serves as a source to not feel alone, and empowers us to live the life we are meant to live. We especially need to learn to treat, and feel better about ourselves.

At the core of all addictions is SHAME, so it's an inside job, although we have a lot of outside tasks in order to live this way. It takes time to develop and adhere to an abstinent meal plan. It isn't like a diet, where we get a list of what to eat and follow it to the letter and, "to hell with everything else going on in our life or with others!" We need to find something that works for us individually, and this is why OA does not make us follow a specific food plan. It must meet our lifestyle, our needs, and fit us so that we can maintain and follow it.

It is very difficult to do all of this on our own. That is why we are not limited by who can help us. We can talk to other OA'ers. We can see a nutritionist, one that understands we cannot follow moderation as a guideline and choose anything we feel like eating. Certain foods will need to be let go, but the gift is that we no longer crave those foods, no longer overeat, and have a clearer mind and ability to move forward

with our lives. We can get a sponsor. This may take time to find one that fits.

Although it is perfectly okay to find a temporary sponsor to get you started.

Listen during meetings. Talk to others after meetings or make outreach phone calls until you feel you have found someone that has what you need and you can work with them and follow their guidelines. We can work the 12 Steps and we have tools. These enable us to let go of past behaviors, negative feelings about ourselves and others, and face each day with a toolbox of items that can get us through the day.

ONE DAY AT A TIME. JUST 24 HOURS is what we strive for each day. We can go see a counselor, join a house of worship, connect with nature, or whatever it is that will help us get to that place where we can enjoy our lives. We no longer seek out food as the answer to it all, and begin to feel good about ourselves, inside and out!

I believe in and have experienced the 12 Promises of the program coming true for me—thanks to my Abstinence! There is nothing better or as satisfying as when you are able to eat an abstinent meal and feel better after you have done that! Trust me--it will happen for you. Believe in yourself...and get the help you need...knowing your journey starts with ABSTINENCE!

~Jill M.

