



Hearing “Attitude of Gratitude” Transitions to Daily Practice

I heard the term “Attitude of Gratitude” at a meeting a long time ago, it so impressed me that I adopted it as my new daily commitment. It reminds me that no matter what doesn’t go my way, I can always find something for which to be thankful.

Early on in program, I would say, “If I can’t have what I want, then I will want what I have.” If I had a flat tire, I could be glad I had AAA, or that it didn’t happen on the freeway at rush hour. Each evening when I did my tenth step, I would find five things for which to thank my HP: a warm house, a bed to sleep in, fresh air to breathe, nutritional foods, etc. Even if I didn’t like my job, I was grateful that I had a job.

With all the things over which I have NO control, my attitude is something I can control. It has helped me to accept people just as they are without trying to change them. I don’t complain about the weather, because I can’t change that either. Life is too short to look at

things in a negative manner. For today, I am grateful to be abstinent, to be healthy, to feel loved, and to be free and independent.

Life is good thanks to OA and my HP.

~Judy W

Time Reveals Promises Happening in My Life

Wow! I reread the Promises from the *Big Book* and I realized that for the most part, I AM NOW LIVING THEM OUT IN MY LIFE!

Most days I greet the morning with hope and serenity. I face the day with gratitude and am anxious to see what new opportunities for learning and growing will show themselves. I feel very at home in my skin and the realization of this miracle humbles me.

There have been many ups and downs in my life—in the more than 20 years of program and before. But today I live with a plan, just for today, to eat well, nourish my soul, and face the emotional highs and lows that may come. I have the support of my Higher Power, my sponsor, other members in program, plus writing and literature.

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The theme for the third quarter 2022 will be Freedom. What freedoms have you acquired from program? What are you now free from? What freedoms are you working toward?

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Serving Eastern Wisconsin

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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., via Zoom. Contact chair@oamilwaukee.org for the information. 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
3rd Quarter	July 18	Freedom;

3rd Quarter July 18 Freedom;

What have you experienced?

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

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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.

Sending Out Gratitude, Love From My God List

I was looking for something else when I came across My God List. It grabbed my curiosity. Above it appeared the word God with three red hearts. I smiled as I began to read the list that appears below. The first item was a thank you: Thank you for blessings sent, not yet received.

And I kept reading:

- * I lovingly agree to your plan for me.
- * You have a beautiful life planned for me and I want to live it.
- * I have a divine gift I get to use humbly and gratefully.
- * Every day in every way, I am getting better and better!

- * I am an exclamation point! I won't be happy being anything but an exclamation point!
- * My love and enthusiasm are contagious!
- * God thinks I am delightful!
- * Who am I relying on? God or my finite self?

Reading this felt like an act of sending out gratitude and love. I accepted the gift of the list and said, "Thank you." This list was tailor-made for me, yet most of it could apply to most of us. It is on my phone and in my heart.

What would be on your HP List?

~Anonymous

Gratitude Lessons I Learned from Relapse

Prior to all my relapses, I fell prey to the idea that somehow, someday, I could control my binge foods and eat them like a normal person. I would say to myself (and no one else), "Maybe I'm not allergic to this anymore..." But as soon as I tried to prove myself a normal eater, the obsession took hold and I was off to the races. I couldn't stop eating those foods; and if I stopped for a short while, I couldn't stop from starting again. All my years of program knowledge did not help me out of relapse. I had a head full of program and a belly full of food and I was trying to do it myself—to get myself abstinent before getting myself to more meetings. I think I was trying to bombard my problem with my own self-will. "As soon as I can get my act together, I'll go back." But the loudest voices in my head were the ones planning my next binge. I really couldn't think straight.

Here's a few things I'm grateful to have learned from my relapses:

I'm grateful to have learned I will always have these abnormal tendencies. I AM a compulsive eater.

I'm grateful to have learned that I need three 12-step meetings a week for my recovery. (I go to at least 2 OA meetings and 1 AA meeting a week.)

I'm grateful to have learned that I have a tendency to revert to "self-reliance" when I'm in trouble—and that is a re-emerging character trait that I must always beware of. I need to ask for help, from my Higher Power and from those people that HP puts in my path (usually found at those three meetings a week).

Gratitude is something that can be practiced. I often text a "Gratitude List" to various OA buddies, and it always lifts my mood and brings me closer to HP. The smallest thing can be on the list. Here are a few examples:

- I caught a glimpse of the moon.
- I saw a thread of the sunset.
- My husband loaded the dishwasher and I held my tongue instead of criticizing how he did it! (That, by the way, is "living amends." By not inflicting my perfection-ism and unrealistic expectations, I become more accepting, more tolerant, and more loving of myself and others.)

I am most grateful for the Giver—my Higher Power. I thank God every day that I found OA and a Higher Power that allows me to do what I could never do alone!

~Anonymous

From Isolation to Trust and Other Lessons Learned

The greatest lesson I have learned in the Overeaters Anonymous program this year is first and foremost to live a life of usefulness and sanity, I need a Higher Power. A power whose thoughts and ways are higher than my own. Number two, I need the direction of the Twelve Steps which is provided by my Higher Power. Number three, I need the fellowship and community of other people who have the same malady as I do, so not only can I hear them, but they can listen to me. I can support them, and they can support me.

Sadly, I lived so many of my years in isolation I didn't know how to communicate honestly or openly,

Gratitude Acronym

GRATITUDE for everything

RECOGNITION of God's world

APPRECIATION for all living things

THANKFULNESS for all situations, even plugged toilets

INDEBTEDNESS for complicated life

TIME OUT to pause and be amazed

UNTOLD AMAZEMENTS to find everyday

DELIGHT in bird song, spider's ingeniousness, trees whispering

EXUBERANCE of life

~Sue W

and if I did, I often felt unsafe doing it. The beauty of anonymity in this program helps us to trust each other, when we find trusting others difficult. If my anonymity in the program is broken, I learn to forgive those imperfect people because I myself am imperfect. Forgiving and moving forward are the only options, if I want to keep my sobriety, even if it's scary. Trusting myself and others has been one of my greatest challenges in life, but I feel hopeful because it has gotten better due to the gift of his program.

Learning how to live the life my Higher Power has in mind for me, will be ongoing. That means if I stay close to my Higher Power, through prayer and meditation seeking His will and not mine, I will be guided. Though life won't ever be perfect, it can get better each day.

~Anonymous

Finding Higher Power Took Time

"God and I have shared many heartaches, but we've seen them through as only true partners can." (*Voices of Recovery*, Nov. 12)

Wow! I love that statement by our authors. That's my impression of my relationship with God, as well. We are true partners. Program tells me I'm never alone, because my Higher Power is with me all the time, and I believe it. However, I haven't always been so sure. When I first joined OA, I wasn't completely convinced that I even had a Higher Power. My sponsor told me to "act as if," so I did, and it worked, because I began to believe in HP. That was about thirty-four years ago. Nowadays, I favor Step 11: "Sought through prayer and Meditation to improve our conscious contact with God..." I pray to God throughout my day, and I feel a closeness to Him that I never felt before. And I have witnessed miracles in my life that must be a gift from God, namely my abstinence and my recovery. Those two gifts were not humanly possible to create. I know because I tried and failed many times until I asked for His Help. And, as a true partner, He did.

~Bobbi

Unity in Program as Described by a Newcomer

What does this newcomer know about Unity? I know:

“Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon OA unity.”—Tradition One

“I put my hand in yours and together...”—*Beyond Our Wildest Dreams*, p. 207

“Unity does not mean uniformity...”—*The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous*, p. 115

“When we apply OA’s Tradition Three, we find the treasure of friendship...”—*The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous*, p. 135

“It is written that we have ‘Many Symptoms, One Solution.’”—*Where Do I Start?* pamphlet, p.4

As a newcomer, I poked my head in and out of OA for several years. A meeting here and there, or perhaps a podcast. I purchased all the literature, and ate while reading about compulsive overeating behaviors. Never quite sure if I would ever be able to tackle this obsession. I read all about the promises, and felt they were not for me. Like always, I’ll start and never finish.

Nevertheless, my heart pointed me to the meeting lists. I opened up a bit more to the possibility of abstinence. I asked for the willingness, I asked for a Higher Power, I asked for a sponsor—and it happened. Today I can tell you I do not practice perfect abstinence. The difference today is I color outside the lines a little, rather than drive off the cliff.

We all have suffered in many different ways, in many different shapes and sizes, with many different behaviors. I am forever grateful for the unity of OA, the joining together for one solution. I put my hand in yours.

~Susan B

...Time Reveals the Promises Happening in My Life

From front page

I have invested much time and effort working program and yet over and over I am reminded that these results are a GIFT. I just daily need to do my part.

When I stopped to think about these words and what has changed in my life, I am full of amazement and awe. My life is so different and so much better than the plans I had for myself.

May you be blessed on your journey as well.

~Mary M.



Gratitude Lists Connect Sponsor, Sponsee

My sponsee and I write emails several times a week, and we usually include our gratitudes for the day. I received an email from her with no gratitudes, just saying she felt less than grateful at the moment. I couldn't tell what was going on for her from the email. I wrote back to her saying "I hope you are physically feeling okay, and that you are keeping your Higher Power near-by. It is in the first step we admitted we were powerless over (food, the price of gas, the weather, our kids, friends, politicians, grocery prices, sleep interruptions, dog behaviors, husbands and X-husbands, forgetting, other people's choices, and more), and that our lives had become unmanageable. And then we come to believe that there is a power greater than ourselves, God, Higher Power, the great universe, whatever/ whoever, but know that that power greater than ourselves is not US. I am not in charge. I cannot be in charge.

Then we make that decision (over and over and over to the CARE of God—I love that. The CARE of God. God CARES about me! So whenever I think I am

alone, whenever I feel scared, isolated, angry at everything, sad, hopeless, if I can remember step 3, I can remember that I turned my life over to the CARE of God.

Several hours later, I received a lovely gratitude list from my sponsee. Thank you to OA, thank you to Higher Power, thank you for willingness, thank you for once again realizing, this is how it works.

~Grateful anonymous member

Heard at a meeting:

"Things will happen and unfold, driven by my Higher Power or by my character defects."



Unity Day Unites Hands, Thoughts, Diversity, Program

Our Intergroup had a lovely Unity Day celebration and attending it spurred my curiosity about the meaning of Unity Day and how it evolved over the years. Also, I was happy that we broke into small groups to discuss the questions: “What keeps you coming back?” and “How can unity and diversity coincide?”

Unity Day is a day that celebrates the connection of all members and groups of OA to one another. Overeaters Anonymous observes Unity Day with a worldwide moment of silence at exactly 11:30 a.m. PST. We respectfully honor our differences in applying OA principles as we stand united in our common solution to recovery from compulsive eating, all over the world, all at the same time. It’s an awesome feeling. That moment of silence reminds us that we stand in harmony with one another, and in gratitude for the amazing recovery that awaits us as we work the 12-step program of Overeater’s Anonymous.

The history of OA is explained in a text entitled Unity Day History, which can be found on the World Service website, oa.org. The document says that at the World Service Business conference in 1986, Unity Day was adopted to be celebrated annually, with a theme of “Love Across the fellowship.” Ten years later, in 1996, the World Service Board established the last Saturday in February, but the policy motion was never established. Finally in 2018, the World Service Board voted to celebrate Unity Day on the last Saturday of February in even years and the last Sunday in February in odd years.

Unity Day reminds us that if we want to have a healthy relationship with food, we have to use the tools, all of them; and if we do use them all, miracles will occur for us. What miracles have occurred for members of our Unity Day celebration? An 82-year-old member shared how she is able to go to fitness classes now that she has gotten to a healthy weight. Another member shared how wonderful it is to not have the “monkey” (food) on her back all the time. Being able to buy clothes in any store, not the “big and tall” store only, was the miracle shared by one of the men at our meeting. One woman shared now that she lives one day at a time, she lives in the present,

not in the past, not in the future, and she considers that to be a miracle; she is no longer worrying all the time.

We agreed that we are proud that OA has a diversity statement, which is read at most meetings. OA was ahead of the crowd when it came to welcoming everyone, respecting our differences, yet uniting us in the common solution to our eating problems.

The most wonderful thing I heard at the Unity Day celebration is the fellowship is an arm of our Higher Power. The fellowship of Overeaters Anonymous brings us together, “regardless of race, creed, nationality, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, or any other trait.” And on Unity Day, we celebrate this amazing fellowship, joining hands and saying, “I put my hand in yours and together we can do what we could never do alone.”

~Terrie S



“I put my hand in yours...”

HP Opens the Door to Opportunity Right on Time

The program tells us in the second step to “act as if” and have faith that a Higher Power will help us with whatever problem, decision, or action we may be facing. And sometimes it’s faster than I could have ever imagined.

Reflections in Haiku

The following are a few Haiku. A Haiku is a Japanese poem of seventeen syllables, in three lines of five, seven, and five, traditionally evoking images of the natural world.

* * *

Feeling understood—
Honesty comes easily,
No longer repressed.

Hope is born anew
When love is experienced—
Feelings fill the air!

Faith’s belief in love
Defines a Higher Power:
Spirit in action.

Our “soul” is spirit-
Found in body, heart, and mind:
Nature’s gift to us.

~Mona

One morning, while I was doing my morning writing and completing my action plan, I wrote (and thought about) my commitment to sponsorship, how much being a sponsor helps my own program. I wrote, maybe I should ask HP if it’s time to offer to sponsor another OA fellow. The reason it was on my mind was that one of my sponsors had moved to Ohio, and, although we were in contact once a week, I considered the possibility that I had time for another sponsee. I thought about another person who I was sponsoring, who had called me regularly in the beginning of our relationship, but did not call very often any longer. All I did was write about this: I did not take any other actions.

Two hours later, not two days, not two weeks, TWO HOURS, I received a phone call. The nice person on the other end of the line asked if I was available to sponsor. WHAT? I couldn’t believe it. My Higher Power gave me the answer in two hours. I was floored. Of course, I said yes, and my faith in my Higher Power grew by leaps and bounds at that moment. Don’t give up before the miracle happens.

~Terrie S

