

## Seeing Acceptance Differently in OA

"There by God's Grace, go you or I," was one of the things I remember hearing my father often say while I was growing up. Though they both did their best, I was raised in an unstable environment by parents who had been raised in unstable environments. They taught me how to think, or see things according to their own understanding. But theirs was a world of hardships. My mother modeled for me that certain things, like violent or angry behavior, would have to be accepted. But the truth is, acceptance then was more like pushing down how you felt, enduring it and not breathing a word to anyone about what went on in our house. That was then.

But now, I am blessed by what I learn in the Twelve Steps of OA. Like a child, I am being taught a new

way of thinking from a **H**igher Perspective, along with a different meaning of what acceptance really is and how to apply it.

For me, the most critical and difficult change had to come from accepting myself and others, which I could not do myself. Before I could spot my own meanness, failures, or poor fashion choices, I could spot other people's, leaving me with few friendships or happiness. Now I know that according to *Alcoholics Anonymous*, when I lack acceptance, I will not experience serenity. Though I have had many wonderful gifts, I didn't even know what serenity was or how to get it for the first 48 years of my life.

Now, in OA, I have learned that if something or someone is "making me" restless, irritable, or discontented, I'd better do a tenth step, unless I want to be back in the food, and unless I want to give up the gift of serenity that I experience from my gracious HP. I don't want the misery I used to have ever again.

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### Second Quarter 2021 Theme

The theme for the second quarter 2021 *Cocoon* is "Dealing with My Character Defects."

How have the Twelve Steps helped you deal with your character defects during the pandemic or in general?

Deadline: Friday, March 12, 2021.

## Milwaukee Area Intergroup

*Serving Eastern Wisconsin*

MAI Website [oamilwaukee.org](http://oamilwaukee.org)

Facebook Overeaters Anonymous - OA Milwaukee

### Contact Info

414-259-0640

Milwaukee Area Intergroup  
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Milwaukee, WI 53227

### QR Code

direct to website



### Board of Directors

(New board members take office at November meeting, based on October elections)

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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](mailto:emailblast@oamilwaukee.org) with "subscribe" in Subject to receive our "News You Can Use." Include 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](http://oa.org)

Free OA podcasts featuring OA speakers: [oa.org/podcasts/](http://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](mailto:Espanol.@oa.org)

French OA Website [Francais.@oa.org](mailto:Francais.@oa.org)

## Region 5 [region5oa.org](http://region5oa.org)

*Serving Midwest US and Canada*

### Cocoon Submissions

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

Issue	Deadline	Topic
2nd Quarter	March 12	Dealing With My Character Defects

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

Editor: Louise V.

### 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](mailto:12th-stepwithin@oamilwaukee.org) or call 414-259-0640 and leave a message. Provide your contact information, type of sponsor you're seeking (i.e. food, step, temporary, etc.), and any other specific needs.

### 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.

## Acceptance During the COVID-19 Pandemic

I have to surrender to the reality of COVID-19 before I can be in acceptance. I have to give up any ideas about how life will play out. I have a choice. I can be in fear and act this fear out in many different ways (going to the food, hoarding, obsessing), or I can accept living in the questions and keep trusting HP to walk me through the unknown. Acceptance means wearing a mask, social distancing, limiting my activities with family and friends. Accepting the fact that I choose to be one of the first people in the grocery store when they open. Acceptance means welcoming my husband as he adjusts to working from home, accepting that he's now in the space that used to be mine while he was away at work. Acceptance means being mindful of his schedule, and accommodating each other as we make life at home pleasant.

One non-negotiable is my abstinence and my commitment to working the Steps and Traditions, using the tools, and being of service. I readily accept that meetings are now virtual and I'm seeing what blessings have been pouring into my life! I've made friends all around the world,

sponsor people in different states, and my perspective of the program is expanding. May online meetings continue once the pandemic is over!

I accept that my action plan has changed. My form of exercise is now online rather than at the gym. I'm doing 90 meetings in 45 days and my willingness to be of service has exploded! I am now a WSO Delegate. I'm chairing our local virtual OA convention, and I'm leading and speaking at meetings all over the country.

Staying out of resistance and fear and choosing acceptance in my thoughts and actions has allowed me to thrive during this strange time. Remaining abstinent and staying in constant contact with my HP has positively affected all of my relationships. I accept that I still do not know what will happen next month or next year. I will continue to work my program and rely and trust my HP. This gives me the priceless gift of serenity. It is true: acceptance is the answer to all of my problems.

~Lee M.



## Acceptance and Adaptations During the Pandemic

When I returned to Milwaukee after 15 years in Seattle, I was so happy to see my "old" friends in OA. I jumped right back into MAI meetings. Then, the pandemic struck and I couldn't attend face-to-face meetings. But Zoom came to the rescue, so now I can still connect with MAI friends. Even better, I can still connect with Seattle OA friends. Recently, I attended the Region 1 virtual convention (Seattle is in Region 1) and was delighted to hear a dear Seattle partner in recovery speak about spiritual, emotional and physical adaptations in her recovery during the pandemic. She gave me permission to share...

### Spiritual Adaptations:

- Continue to value HP and remember that HP is not YOUR HP or THE HP, but OUR HP. Being on Zoom calls, I'm reminded that I am part of something bigger—a circle of recovery.
- Concentrate on my gratitude list. Focus on three things about me, three things about life around me, and 3 things about people that are challenging me.
- Ongoing prayer and some simplified prayers: "Help me, help me, help me." "Dear HP...why me?" "Dear HP, #@\$ you!" and "Dear Sweet HP."

### Emotional Adaptations:

- Knowing what is the end of the meal, before I start, versus letting the end of the bag be the end of my mindless meal.
- Living **with** my partner, my **actual** partner, not my fantasy-princess-enabler.
- Working from home and accepting it.
- Attending meetings only online—no more beloved retreats for now!

### Physical Adaptations:

- Accepting and grieving my physical limitations that become more apparent as I'm not on the move at work all day.
- Taking the time to stop eating habitual foods that have worked for years, but which I am no longer

- Digesting as well, due to less movement and (egad!) aging. There are healthy alternatives!
- Carefully assessing how I feel when I make food changes: Is the change working, positive, helpful?

It's hard for me to summarize what my friend had to say, but I've reviewed this with her and she's given her go-ahead. I know for me, being able to go to meetings whenever I want has made me slow down and adapt to a more comfortable pace, rather than chasing hither and yon. I miss my home group, but I have met new folks all over the country and the world. I will keep my adaptations to my regular meetings going as long as they are Zoomed! Thank you to all my Partners in Recovery...in Region 5, in Region 1, all over the world and in the Virtual Region!

~Davney S.

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"And acceptance is the answer to *all* my problems today. When I am disturbed, it is because I find some person, place, thing, or situation... unacceptable to me, and I can find no serenity until I accept that person, place, or thing, or situation as being exactly the way it is supposed to be at this moment."

~from *Alcoholics Anonymous, 4th Edition*

## Accepting My Task

Wearing a mask is quite unnerving,  
accepting those who do not is quite a task.

Learning Zoom, how to enter a room,  
is a difficult, not insurmountable task.

Making a phone call, an order quite tall,  
staying connected, a necessary task.

Using the tools, disease calls us fools,  
need courage and strength to complete the task.

The Steps, principles, serenity are my destiny,  
staying spiritually fit is my task.

~Lynn H.

## Live and Let Live

*November 30, Voices of Recovery*

“I marvel as the day offers greater fulfillment of potential in every area of my life.”

My physical recovery began when I gave up bingeing and purging and, consequently, stopped compulsively overeating at age 33. That was a huge, exciting, and wonderful God-given gift. But I still felt lonely because I had very few friends.

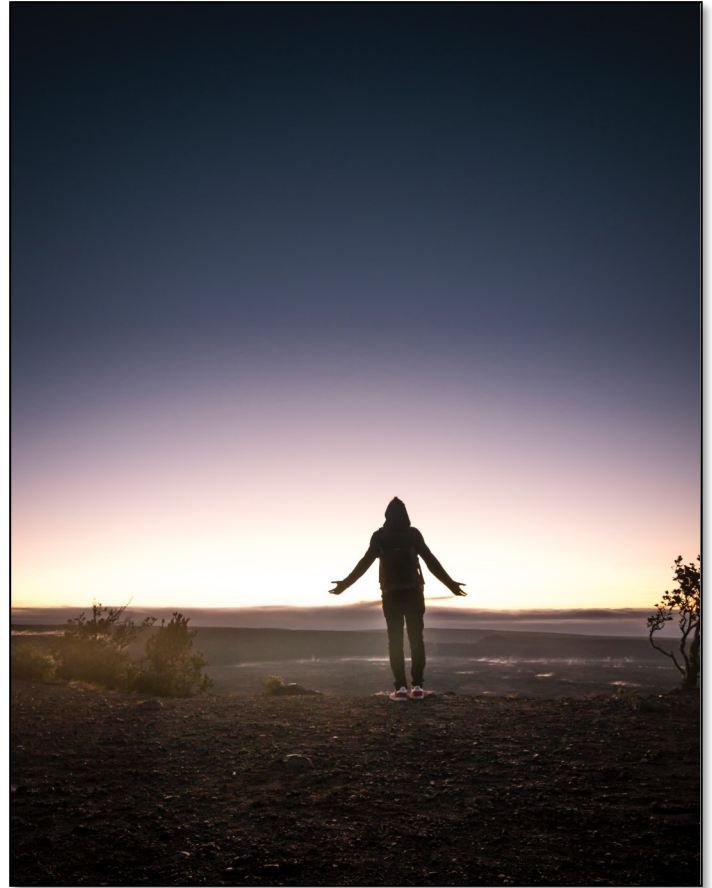
Fortunately for me, I grew to believe I was incapable of giving up/obsessing about, dieting on my own. That was the motivation I needed to join OA in hopes of gaining freedom from the bondage of commercial diets. But I received much more than I bargained for. I found friends who understood me and cared about me. Slowly, but definitely surely, I came to connect with, and befriend, some wonderful people. My loneliness is gone. In its place is a large circle of OA cohorts, some with similar interests to mine and some without. Nevertheless, we’re friends who, when there’s no virus in our way, oftentimes eat together, walk together, and meet together. I can’t wait. But until then, we’ll zoom together.

My favorite slogan is “Live and Let Live,” included in the compilation by G. DeMalynes, “Ancient Law Merchant,” 1622.

The OA Twelve Step Program has taught me to focus on my own recovery and not on the recovery of anyone else. I remember a conversation back when I first joined OA 32 years ago. I mentioned to my sponsor that I doubted that a particular member was really recovering. My sponsor had the perfect reply, “Bobbi, your focus needs to be on your recovery and yours alone. Besides, you really don’t know about her recovery.”

I immediately took it to heart. I knew that my sponsor was very wise and caring and spoke the truth. “Live and let live,” is how I live now. I have learned through Program to share my experience, strength and hope.” Thank you, God and the OA Program.

~Bobbi



## There’s a Lid for Every Pot

This old folk saying is used to comfort people looking for a sweetheart or life-partner—to stop worrying because someone just right is out there. Well, if you are looking for a sponsor, someone just right is out there for you!

MAI’s Twelfth-Step-Within Committee has a list of over 20 men and women available to sponsor! All you have to do is ask. You can leave a voicemail or send an email with your request. We’ll get back to you as soon as possible.

Call: (414) 259-0640

Email: [12<sup>th</sup>-stepwithin@oamilwaukee.org](mailto:12<sup>th</sup>-stepwithin@oamilwaukee.org)

In service,

~Cindy K. & Marsha B., Twelfth-Step-Within Committee Co-Chairs

## Sponsorship: This is How it Works

In the fall, I saw the announcement of an upcoming workshop entitled “Temporary Sponsors: Newcomers’ First Twelve Days.” I thought it would be good to learn how to use this new tool that OA World Service had developed.

I count among my character defects self-criticism and self-judgment, and I have continually questioned my ability to be not just a sponsor, but the best sponsor ever! If I took the training, I thought, I would have more expertise and skills.

The training was twelve days and one half-hour per day. It was a Zoom meeting and there were a dozen others participating. I loved the camaraderie and the honest sharing during the training sessions. People were from a variety of locations, which was interesting and fun. After it was completed, I wondered what God would have in store for me. I was open and let it happen, and it did.

One day, I answered a query about literature from a newcomer. We began to communicate on messenger, email and then the phone. I offered to be a temporary sponsor, to work through the “First Twelve Days” program developed by OA World Service. This was a terrific experience for me, and, as you will read, also for my temporary sponsee. I wrote along with her on several of the writing assignments and we shared our writings with each other. I felt so comfortable with Ally. Coincidentally, she lives in Virginia, only a few miles from somewhere I used to live! We shared much more in common than one would have thought, and we had some good laughs together.

Most importantly, Ally committed herself to the process and gave 100%. Therefore, she was successful and has some good abstinence under her belt. I have a feeling of accomplishment and I feel trusted and more confident. On the last day, when Ally sent me her writing assignment, which was to write about her observations of the first twelve days, I was blown away by what she wrote. What follows is Ally's experience. This is "how it works," because every day that I helped Ally walk through the first twelve days, I walked with her and found confidence in my experience, strength and hope.

Thank you, OA World Service, for developing this structured course.

~Terrie S.

*Both sponsor and sponsee have given permission to publish their stories and identify each other.*

### *Ally's Story*

These past twelve days have been hopeful, uncomfortable, and filled with feelings of resignation or sadness. It's like a grief process in some ways, like getting out of an abusive relationship. I know it's what I need to do to survive, but mourn what I wanted the relationship to be like, where I could stuff my feelings with eating without consequence.

The focus on one day at a time is the most radical change for me. I've tried to bring God into my food choices for years, but wasn't ready to jump into His arms with complete trust until now. Being part of a community of people who are welcoming and share so many experiences with me is eye-opening and feels like coming home. I can relate to people in a way I never have before because we share a common struggle.

I'm approaching this disease of compulsive overeating in such a radically different way than ever before. I've returned in the past to the same things over and over again with no lasting relief. A reading about embracing change has encouraged me to look outside the box in which I've been trapped for so many years. I've been able to challenge myself and work through questions and experiences I've not had the courage to confront before. I'm learning how to listen to God's voice and obey his will for me – as I know the ONLY way I can find freedom from compulsive overeating is with His help.

I've been blessed to have Terrie as my sponsor to start me off. Without her help, I don't know how far I would have gotten. The idea that someone gives so freely of their time and experience is an overwhelming gift. I'm inspired to help someone else on this path once I'm farther down the road and ready to trudge the happy trail of destiny alongside them.

~Ally F.

## Seeing Acceptance Differently

*Continued from page 1*

The Sick Man's prayer is instrumental in humbling me, so that I can rethink that which is unacceptable to me. It reminds me that I am spiritually sick and my attitudes are a big part of the problem. It's not easy to face myself, but the life I live now, because of what my HP has taught me, in the OA fellowship, is worth the time, prayer, reflection and discussion with my fellows, that I need to practice everyday. This was written as a way to give service so I hope it helps you, but in fact it really made me think, so it helped me to do it. Wishing you love and serenity.

~Lisa N.

## Growth and Recovery From Service

*Voices of Recovery, December 23*

“The growth and recovery I’ve received from doing service astounds me.”

Before joining OA, I was lonely. In fact, I was lonely for decades while attending just one OA meeting a week. But when God-with-skin-on asked if I could go to more meetings, I agreed to try it out. Wow! I began connecting with several OAers at several meetings. We all possess the desire to stop eating compulsively, and we share our experience, strength, and hope. I learned to listen better as I also learned about recovery from everybody’s shares.

Doing service has been a wellspring of connections with OAers. For me, it’s been a fun way of meeting new friends who are working together to accomplish some goals we have in common.

Additionally, I learned that if I want better friends, I need to be a better friend. So I pray for HP’s guidance and the knowledge to understand the path He wants me to take to accomplish this goal. I’m not perfect at this, but I’m making progress.

~Bobbi



## Acceptance is the Answer to All my Problems

*For Today, April 3*

“*Want is a growing giant whom the coat of have was never large enough to cover.*” ~Ralph Waldo Emerson

“*...what I wanted most as a compulsive eater was to be able to eat what I want...This illness is a symptom of want. What else did I want? More attention? More things? Yes- and more, always more.*”

Growing up, I was obsessed with The Brady Bunch. I’d plant myself on Friday evenings in front of the television, anxiously awaiting the start of the sitcom. I dreamed of Carol Brady as my mom.

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## Acceptance is the Answer to All my Problems

*Continued from page 7*

I imagined Marsha, Greg, Jan, and Peter as my siblings. I wanted what they had— a perfect family, laughing and loving and supporting one other— in good times and bad (as bad as you can get on The Brady Bunch). I wanted to be a part of *their* family. I didn't want my family. I wanted a different one. I wanted more. I always wanted more. I could never accept what I had.

Growing up in a one parent household, my family looked nothing like the Bradys. Nor did they look like my friends' families. We were different, defective, less than. Everyone else's family was better than mine, more normal, more loving, more everything. I carried shame about myself and shame about my family. They weren't enough. I wasn't enough.

But since joining OA, God is teaching me many things. I'm learning to accept the family God gave me. And accept myself. In OA, I'm learning that just as feeling superior separates me from God, so does feeling inferior. Thinking less of myself or my family is the same as thinking I, or they, are better than others. I'm working toward not comparing my family to anyone else's, or comparing myself to anyone else.

In Program, I'm learning The Brady Bunch was fantasy. No family is perfect. Every family has problems. I'm learning to accept the family I was given and the gifts they possess. God is giving me a second chance at a relationship with each of them. I'm learning to accept and like them, and accept and love myself. Acceptance *is* truly the answer to all my problems.

*~Anonymous*

## Writings from For Today Daily Meditation Book

Lately, to use the tools of Literature and Writing, I've been writing my responses to daily readings from *For Today*. Here are my thoughts from Nov. 14.

*Nothing, I am sure, calls forth the faculties so much as the being obliged to struggle with the world. ~Mary Wollstonecraft*

This *For Today* presents the idea that struggle — with “society's evils” or the battles within ourselves, brings us certain benefits. We learn from them, “sharpening . . . and fine-tuning the ability to distinguish truth from illusion”. I can easily accept the idea that we learn new behaviors and gain strength by facing fears and struggles and going through them.

But, the idea I have trouble accepting is the idea found in the quotation—that we are OBLIGED to struggle with the world.

“No!” I say. “That's not fair! I work the Twelve Steps! I'm maintaining a healthy weight! I use the tools! Why don't things go the way I want them to?” But I know that I have to turn away from the illusion, the magical “pink cloud” where everything is perfect.

Today I can turn away from illusion and express gratitude for the fine-tuning I've received by working Steps 4 through 9 and from relying on a power greater than myself.

*~Anonymous*

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“Acceptance is the key to my relationship with God today. I never just sit and do nothing while waiting for Him to tell me what to do. Rather, I do whatever is in front of me to be done, and I leave the results up to Him; however it turns out, that's God's will for me.”

*~from Alcoholics Anonymous, 4th Edition*