

## Honesty, Open-mindedness, and Willingness

Three years ago, I was in the throes of a relapse. Although I had been in OA for 30+ years with many prolonged periods of recovery from food obsession, the disease had taken hold again. I had re-gained over 50 pounds, and every morning I woke up saying; “Today’s the day!” But by the afternoon I was planning my next binge. I was a mess. I couldn’t stop eating once I started, and I couldn’t stop from starting again.

There’s a quote in AA’s *Big Book* (“Spiritual Experience” in the Appendices); “*Willingness, honesty and open-mindedness are the essentials of recovery. But these are indispensable.*” To recover – I needed to reconnect with OA’s 12-step program. But the food obsession was blocking me from reaching out for help – I thought I could do it myself!

Today I am grateful for over 2 ½ years of abstinence from compulsive eating and a return to a normal body weight. Here is how these essential principles helped me to emerge from that relapse:

**HONESTY:** This is the Step 1 principle – I had to honestly face the truth about myself, about my powerlessness, and the unmanageability of my life. I had to admit; “I am a compulsive eater and I am in relapse.” Not “I’m having a little trouble with my food...I just need to get my act together.”

**OPEN-MINDEDNESS:** I had to be open to the suggestions I heard at the meetings. One of the suggestions was to go more meetings. When I began to attend 3 meetings a week (I had only been going to one) – that was the beginning of my emergence from relapse. I had to be open-minded when reading the *Big Book* and other AA and OA literature, and not allow my prejudice and defiance against certain writings shut my mind. There is a “Set Aside” prayer I use to help me have an open mind: “Higher Power, help me set aside everything I think I know about the my relationship with myself and others, with the Steps,

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

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**\*Second Quarter 2022 Theme**

*\*No first quarter Cocoon will be published.*

The theme for the second quarter 2022 *Cocoon* is “An Attitude of Gratitude.” How does an attitude of gratitude boost your recovery?

Or stories with your experience, strength, and hope.

**Deadline: Sunday, March 20, 2022**

## Milwaukee Area Intergroup

*Serving Eastern Wisconsin*

**MAI Website** oamilwaukee.org

**Facebook** Overeaters Anonymous - OA Milwaukee

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### 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 pm via Zoom or phone. Contact [chair@oamilwaukee.org](mailto: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/](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

*Serving Midwest US and Canada*

### Cocoon Submissions

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

<u>Issue</u>	<u>Deadline</u>	<u>Topic</u>
2nd Quarter	March 20	<i>An Attitude of Gratitude</i>

**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.

## Recovery Through Honesty, Open-mindedness, and Willingness

I am up an hour before the alarm. I have lots of feelings going on. I type them all out in a letter to God, the name I call my Higher Power. The feelings and the anxiety they create are all left on the paper. I feel at peace.

Previously, I would have lied to myself and convinced myself food was the answer to calm my feelings. I only needed a little, I told myself. Lie. It will make me feel better. Lie. A little led to more. And more. And more led to my feeling worse, and perhaps in a different way than when I started! Compulsive eating is not an answer for me, it is a problem. Being honest about how I feel, willing to work the tools and Step 11 and being open-minded enough to trust these will work, became the conditioned reflex

I needed in my life. I need to practice these principles to achieve continued abstinence. As I write this, so many phrases come to mind.

*We humbly ask God to remove our defects of character. Humbly we ask for help with the character defects we honestly identified in Step 4. We pray for the willingness, and the ability follows without fail, a Step 3 idea from the first edition of Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous.*

Honesty, open-mindedness, and willingness help me be the kind of human being I want to be, easier on myself and others, more loving, more forgiving. I find each day and each year better as we "trudge the road to Happy Destiny."

~Anonymous



## OA Teaches Me Acceptance

“Recognition of one’s limitations is a mark of intelligence, not ignorance.”

OA has taught me to accept myself for what I am, including being a woman with an eating disorder who is grateful for recovery. When I was actively into the food, before any therapy and before OA, I swore I’d never binge again after each tumultuous hated binge. But I went back to the food every time until I finally didn’t. That was when, out of desperation, I asked God for help to stop bingeing. After that prayer, I binged only one time on March 9, 1984. With His help, I was able to stop.

I know I’m only human. I don’t have the power to create miracles, but He does. I just have to do the footwork, everyday one day at a time. I do receive from Him the knowledge and the power to carry out His will for me. I must remember that He wants me to live my life fully. Living my life fully does not include bingeing and purging. That life is wreckage of my past. No place here for it in my present.

~Bobbi P.

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– and with You that I may have a new experience of my relationship with myself, with others, with the Steps and with You.”

**WILLINGNESS:** The key – I had to be willing to go to those extra meetings. (They are not “extra” anymore, just a part of my recovering life! I don’t drag myself to meetings, I look forward to the 3 or more meetings a week I attend). I had to be willing to ask a sponsor; “What should I do?” instead of “Here’s how *I* want to do it...” I had to be willing to do reading and writing on the Steps. I had to be willing to follow the directions as they are laid out in the OA and AA literature. Further, I had to be willing to share with my sponsor and other OA friends my fears, my angers, and my character defects. Once I share these, I’m no longer pretending “Everything is fine...” I can hold them up to the 12 Steps, and I can turn them over to my Higher Power and trust I will be relieved.

What I learned—and what I continued to learn is this: I don’t always know what’s best for me (or maybe – I usually DON’T know what’s best for me!) – but, my Higher Power does know, and I can ask daily for Guidance. And I can ask daily that we – all of us - be held in God’s Loving Care.

*~Anonymous*

## Power to Control my Attitude

I may be powerless over my food, the actions of other people, world events and the weather, but I do have the power to control my attitude. The way I think has influence on the way I feel. I can choose to look for beauty rather than ugliness. I can choose to be kind rather than react to someone else's rudeness. I can choose to be willing to ask for help from my Higher Power or OA friends rather than tough it out myself. I can pray for willingness to take action and let my Higher Power provide the ability. The OA program promises will come true if I work the program one day at a time and don't give up.

*~Judy W.*

## Autumn Leaves

Golden Maple leaves I see,  
Falling from near every tree.  
They swish, swish, swish beneath my feet,  
As if to never miss a beat.  
My trodden path is golden now,  
A gift to me to show me how!

## Self-Care

A cup of tea is all I need,  
To warm my soul and quell my greed.  
A walk outdoors will help me too,  
To keep me safe from sloth and flu.  
The joy I feel when health is here,  
Gives hope and life for all who hear.

*~Anonymous*



## Overeaters Anonymous is the Path to My Serenity

I read *Voices of Recovery* for December 30<sup>th</sup>. Every single word of this reading is the truth for me. I am blown away by how completely perfect this reading is. A good example of the synchronicity of the universe, the concept that when the student is ready, the teacher will appear. Here is what it says, line by line, and my thoughts:

**I was spending most of my energy on things I could not change, worrying, fretting and trying to make them come out “my way.”** This is so much me – how I have been so focused on the things I can’t change, COVID, inept and incapable politicians; what a waste of my time.

**Meanwhile, I was ignoring the things that I could change, spinning my wheels where they did the least good.** This is so true. When I focus on the things I can change, like my own behavior, my own attitude, taking responsibility for my own side of the street, the clutter on my own desk, then I can actually make changes; I can simply modify my own behavior. That is all I can do.

**No wonder I felt so much stress and self-loathing.** And this is so true for me, also. Sadly, I have developed psoriasis, and the root cause is stress. I wake up at night and can’t go back to sleep, and the root cause is stress. I want to compulsively eat between meals, or overeat at meals, and the root cause is stress. Self-loathing is ever-present in my head. Messages of self-hatred and criticism of myself populate my mind every day. I make a mistake, that’s just what it is, a mistake. I am not a bad person. And the transgressions of my past are in my past; as long as I’m not adding to that list, I’m on solid ground. I need to Let Go of perfection and Let God bring me serenity and peace.

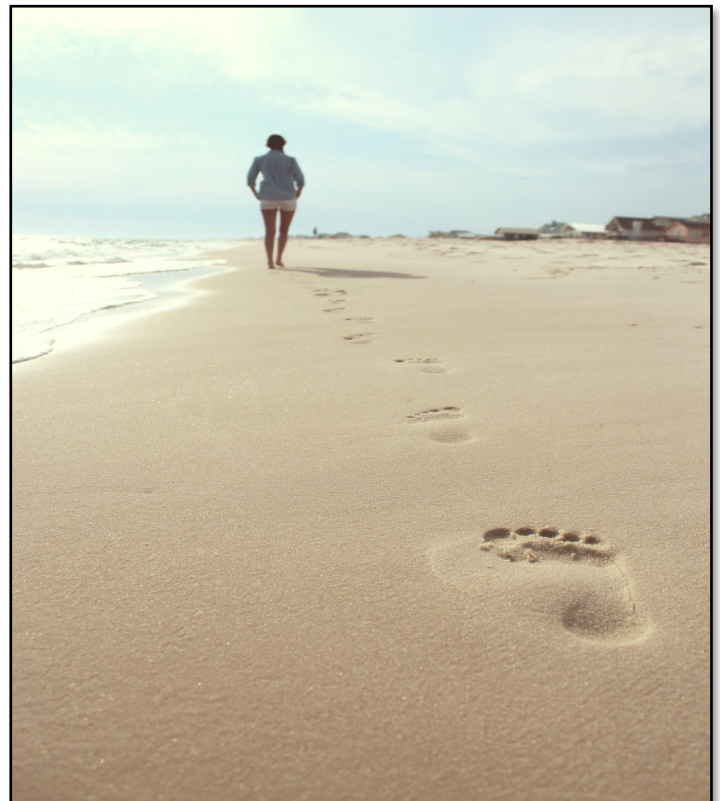
**Now, when I find myself troubled by an issue or situation, I think about it while I say the serenity prayer. If it is something I can change, I think of the Steps I can take to begin the change, and I pray for the willingness to take action.** So, the answers are in the Steps, that’s what I’ve heard. This is a battle – I have to work at it, work the Steps, Take action. I can’t just sit back and think that someone else is going to fix the issue or situation; I must do the work. Using the Steps, I review how I am powerless over the situation, and because I believe that I have a Higher

Power, and that I am not that Higher Power, I turn the situation or issue over to my Higher Power and ask for the willingness to do the next right thing.

**If it is something I cannot change, I turn it over to my Higher Power and pray for the willingness to accept it.** How simple is that, identify if it is something I can change and take the action, or if it’s something I can’t change, then go Step 3, and turn it over to Higher Power, and ask for the willingness to accept that I cannot change that person, place, or situation. It seem so simple, so clear, straightforward, and yet, this is where I have gotten hung up over and over and over.

**This exercise brings serenity to my life and helps me feel God’s presence.** And this is what I truly work for, to have serenity in my life, not just when I’m in a meeting, not just when I’m meditating or when I’m writing, but during the whole day, that is what I actually want, a day full of serenity. And I deeply want to feel God’s presence throughout the day, in whatever I am doing, Amen.

~Anonymous



## Meetings—Where Will They Lead?

I am grateful I have the flexibility to attend a meeting on Monday morning. I think it's significant to the obsessive thinking of my compulsive overeating mind. How many times have I thought I would start a diet or exercise program on a Monday? Now I know I have the continuity of program to look forward to on Monday morning and I smile.

This specific meeting is a *Big Book* study meeting. We don't change any words, we read them as they are written. We can hear the obsession of the mind and understand the allergy of the body in the book *Alcoholics Anonymous* as it is written. We recognize ourselves in the words of those who came before us and celebrate that others understand.

We have an illness that can be arrested each day. I am grateful to have the choice to suit up and show up. I feel a strong sense of community over the miles as we share recovery online.

In the beginning of my recovery journey, I thought keeping it simple was going to one meeting a week. I needed to do more. The addition of a meeting meant I didn't have to white knuckle my abstinence and often fail. It became so much easier to follow my food plan when I gathered with others who share my compulsion. Much like an island in what can be the rough waters of multiple weekend events, being at a meeting with fellow OA members on Saturday

morning who share their experience, strength and hope, helped me navigate the weekends abstinely. My serenity and spirituality grew.

I experienced the promises of the program. I knew peace. When I was first relieved of the ongoing anxiety I carried, worrying about everything, I was amazed. I wondered if others felt like this regularly. Being free of worry and guilt was unlike anything I felt before. It was a miracle for me. It was just one of many promises that came to pass for me. When I realized my experience could help others, I was surprised. Being abstinent is the greatest service. Do you remember when you arrived at OA and learned we can get off the dieting and shame merry-go-round? Helping others join us, is a life-giving gift we all have to give, one day at a time.

My best thinking got me to OA. Meetings give me community, people who understand my addiction and breakdown the lies I tell myself that I am doing 'ok', and I 'don't need all that program stuff.'

I receive the promises on an ongoing basis. God is doing for me what I was never able to do for myself. The relationship I have with my Higher Power was the greatest gift I received. It's one that continues to give, each day I show up. Hope you keep coming back and stay for your miracle.

~Anonymous

