

How OA Has Revealed Itself as Being Different

What makes Overeaters Anonymous different from diet or calories clubs or even from other 12-step programs? The obvious answer is its members and their addiction, but it goes further than that.

Many years ago, I went to a 12-step program because of an addiction of a family member and I needed to know how to handle it. However, I could not handle what was being presented to me. The idea of saying that this strong-willed, hard-headed woman was powerless over anything, was absolutely impossible. Then to have to turn my will and my live over to a power greater than myself when I was already doing that, made no sense to me. So I walked away from it.

Several years after that, I realized that I not only had a problem with food, it was controlling my life. I tried diet programs and could not stick with them. I didn't want to because they were too restrictive. A friend of mine suggested the 12-step program of Overeaters Anonymous. I laughed because I knew how I felt about 12-step programs the last time. However, I went to my first meeting. Nearly a decade and a half ago, I walked into OA to find something I was able to call "home." I had, and still have, no idea what changed. I don't know if it was the reason or the timing, or if it was just that that "power greater than myself" had prepared me for a new chapter in my life. I found

people who had a common addiction to food, food behaviors, and activities around food. The stories of experience, strength, and hope were very different from the stories I heard in diet clubs that told me what I had to eat and how I had to eat it. Instead, Overeaters Anonymous gave me no specifics on what to eat. At first, that made even less sense to me than being told what specifically I was supposed to eat did. I was told I had to stop my feelings and emotions with food.

Not only have I been willing to accept the suggestions of people who have succeeded in this program, I have asked for their suggestions. When I miss a meeting, I feel like I have missed an important event—some even call it a family event. In OA, I truly feel like I have been welcomed home and that is what has made all of the difference.

~Cindy

MAI Communication Changes

After surveying the membership and reviewing current needs, Milwaukee Area Intergroup (MAI) has decided to make some changes to its communications, which are brought to you by fellow members in service positions. The MAI newsletter, *Out of the Cocoon*, which you are reading, has undergone a facelift. You will see more stories about experience, strength, and hope in the pages. The newsletter will now be published quarterly in February, May, July, and October. That means your articles will be due on Jan. 1, April 1, June 1, and Sept. 1; they can be sent to cocooneditor@oamilwaukee.org. Events and announcements that used to appear on the back page of the *Cocoon* will now appear in the new monthly Bulletin. We hope you will enjoy receiving dated information more frequently, and will share extra "evergreen" Cocoons with newcomers.

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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

Board of Directors

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

| | | |
|-------------------|----------|--------------|
| Chair | Heidi B | 414-750-9823 |
| Vice Chair | Mary B | 262-652-5635 |
| Secretary | Joy M | 414-304-5078 |
| Treasurer | Kathy Wi | 262-236 9138 |
| Region 5 Reps | Lynn H | 414-281-2066 |
| | Kris W L | 414-731-8572 |
| World Service Rep | Lynn H | 414-281-2066 |

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 your first name, last initial, and home meeting in the body of the email.

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.
Rogers Memorial Hospital
11101 W. Lincoln Avenue, West Allis, WI 53227

OA World Service

oa.org

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

A link also is available at this site to get World Service Office (WSO) information including the quarterly newsletter “A Step Within.” The most recent quarterly newsletter is at www.oa.org/pdfs/asa1stqtr10bw/pdf.

Spanish OA Website

Espanol@oa.org

French OA Website

Francais@oa.org

Region 5

region5oa.org

Serving Midwest US and Canada

Cocoon Submissions

Yes, we need and want your stories of recovery, poems, pictures, and news!

| <u>Issue</u> | <u>Deadline</u> | <u>Topic</u> |
|--------------|----------------------|--------------|
| May | April 1 (no foolin') | TBA |

Send to: cocooneditor@oamilwaukee.org

Cocoon Editor: Cindy F.

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 12th-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. Provide your contact information, the type of sponsor you are seeking (i.e. food, step, maintenance, late night calls, etc.), and any other specific needs you have.

Available to Sponsor?

Please add your name and phone number to the list so that you can help another member.

Holiday Workshops Offer Solutions to High-Stress Days

IDEA Day

The International Day of Experiencing Abstinence (I.D.E.A.) was well attended by many in the recovering community of Milwaukee. Our event opened with a speaker. Then we did a writing activity. Perhaps you could write about it too: What is the difference between dieting and abstinence? Then we read an article about the difference between being willing or trying. We played the stand-up sit-down game if we had tried anything in the article. It was our daily exercise. Ha!

Here are some of the comments that came from the article: “If I am willing, I can learn,” “I can lean on God; I surrender,” “If I am trying, it is my way or no way,” “I am struggling; I can do this myself.” We closed with the Morning Abstinence Prayer: “Higher Power, today is a new day for me and with Your help it can be a day of abstinence. I ask for Your protection in case sometime during the day my desire to over eat is greater than my desire to abstain. I also ask for Your protection from anyone or anything that may interfere with my abstinence. I know that I am powerless over food. I believe You will restore me to sanity. Please help me to know Your will for me today and give me the willingness to carry that out. I turn my life over to You” (I also add my will and my food).

* * * *

New Year’s Day: Another New Day

New Year’s Day brought a fine panel of speakers, a few newcomers, a sprinkle of people in relapse, a few returnees, and the usual crowd of one-day-at-a-timers. The panel concentrated on the first three steps. Then there was a small group discussion using the new Twelve Step Workshop and Study Guide of Overeaters Anonymous.

Here’s what the panelists had to say. I am powerless (Step 1.) There is something bigger than me (Step 2.) I am willing (Step 3.) The program has become automatic like breathing.

No resolutions needed for the next speaker, just another day of working the program. Step 1 was a huge relief. Step 2 was easy because she already had “religion” (She now knows the difference of spirituality.) Step 3 She has learned to take time to reflect daily. This program is as easy or difficult as Steps 1-3.

The final speaker stated she has had a hard time with turning her will over; she keeps taking it back. But now she knows that if she does her best every day, that is all that is expected. **I can’t! You can! I think I will let you!** That is a slogan she depends on.

*Gratefully submitted,
~Sue W.*

“Welcome to Overeaters Anonymous, Welcome Home!” Dance

I went to the Share Your OA Journey dance at the Pass It On Club on Jan. 14. About ten members and guests came for a great afternoon of surrender and joy. We each were given a rock, and then we pitched the rock, letting go of our most stubborn defects. Then, we celebrated recovery through dance. We left the event feeling inspired and grateful for another day of peace and abstinence!

~Phyllis R.

“I can’t! You can! I think I will let you!”

Ideas For Attaining and Maintaining Abstinence at Any Time

A list similar to this one is posted at the Pass It On Club which houses many 12-step programs. This list is adapted from the Alcoholics Anonymous list to remain sober.

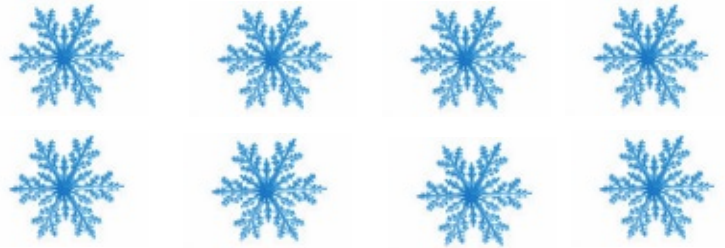
- Attend as many meetings as possible, without neglecting family, job, or other responsibilities.
- Call or meet with your sponsor, at least once a week. *This is your responsibility, not your sponsor's.*
- Call your sponsor, or another person, BEFORE you take that first compulsive bite, NOT AFTER!
- Find a home group that is convenient for you to attend weekly. ATTEND EVERY WEEK!
- Exchange phone numbers with numerous people; call them and listen to what they say.
- Go to meetings EARLY, talk to people, offer to help, introduce yourself, and meet people.
- Only arrive to meetings on time or early. *Responsible people are not late.*
- Stay on the first step, until you absolutely ADMIT, ACCEPT, and UNDERSTAND the step.
- Pray every day, for just one more day of abstinence.
- Thank your Higher Power every night, for the day of abstinence you were just given.
- Read daily from a meditation book, like *Voices of Recovery* or *Just For Day*.
- Read the *Big Book* and the *12 and 12 of Alcoholics Anonymous* and *12 and 12 of Overeaters Anonymous*.
- For a better understanding of the previously listed books, go to meetings where they are discussed.
- Read the Promises on pages 83 and 84 of the *Big Book*, to see how you are progressing.
- Work on your fourth-step inventory, set a date, and finish it. People who don't, EAT AGAIN!
- Work on your fifth step with your sponsor and DO IT! People who don't, EAT AGAIN!
- Stay out of drive-throughs unless you have a legitimate reason to be there.
- Go to workshops, conventions, and meetings when you are out of town.
- Don't be a loner, make OA friends. *You can't do this alone.*

- Ask others how they handle situations you are currently experiencing. People are happy to help.
- Hang this on your fridge, put in your desk or car, and check off things you are doing.

You might just stay abstinent. It works if you work it.

~Anonymous

Silently...Serenity



Silently,

Noiselessly,

Inaudibly. Serenity creeps into your heart

Serenity,

Calmness,

A quietude settles in your heart

Humility,

Modesty,

Humbleness takes the place pretentiousness once had

One day at a time

After days of prayer and meditation

Calling a sponsor and participating in a lot of meetings

Collecting

Accumulating,

Changing you. Molding you into the new you.

~Anonymous