

My HP is Big Enough to Take Care of All of My Life

This year I learned I have an HP that is big enough to take care of all life had in store for me. I learned to hand over the fear of my parent dying and the grief that comes. I was so afraid the grief would overwhelm me and I would relapse. That’s what the fear told me.

Well, as it turned out, I was able to work the program one day at a time. I kept turning my food and feelings over and calling my sponsor. I kept handing over the emotions and I felt the feelings and they passed.

So, I learned this year I don’t have to drown in grief as I so feared. I have the support I need one day at a

time. I felt held by HP in my daily time of prayer and meditation. I felt the feelings and wrote and talked about them. The grief still shows up when I least expect it and I have learned to be with it. A lot of the time it moves to gratitude that I was lucky enough to have healed my relationship with my mom; I miss her and loved her deeply for who she was.

My HP is big enough to hold me and guide me daily if I keep using the tools and working the steps. I don’t have to live in the illusion that I am alone, HP is here as well as you all, reaching out the hands of fellowship and hope.

~Mary S.



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I Lovingly Agree

It’s a great year. I’m learning lots, growing, and finding more ways God, my Higher Power, walks with me each moment of every day.

I’m having fun redefining some words to make them more meaningful for me. Many words already have multiple meanings, so why not allow them to function in the best way possible? I am sure God helped me redefine the words. There are so many gifts we can experience when we agree to turn over will and our lives over to the care of God, *as we understand God*.

The word surrender showed up three times in 48 hours for me recently. One of my first sponsors told

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Milwaukee Area Intergroup

Serving Eastern Wisconsin

MAI Website oamilwaukee.org

Facebook Overeaters Anonymous - OA Milwaukee

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Board of Directors

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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.

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
1st Quarter	Dec. 16	How You Use Our Literature

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

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

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.

“Together We Get Better” Means I am not Alone

“Together We Get Better” is a phrase we so often hear in meetings, but it is so much more than just a phrase. It is a truth that can save lives. I’ve been in OA now for four years and though meetings and community within the groups always seemed important, in the last few months, my HP has really been stressing in my program just how much I need all of you. I can’t do this alone and, even though my HP needs to be my highest source of strength, I still need my fellow compulsive overeaters to help me along on my journey.

The people in my local meetings (and my sponsor) have been placed in my life by my Higher Power, to be witness to my journey, to help me renew my strength and commitment, to rejoice in my ups and encourage me in my downs—just as I am to do with them on their journeys. My HP also has been stressing lately that this fellowship can’t be just once or twice a week at my meetings—it needs to be outside of the meetings as well.

I have never been good at using the tool of telephone, except to text a few people on occasion. Lately, my HP has me (and the other people in my meetings) making outreach calls a couple times a week and I can see the good that has come from that. I’m in a better

My Higher Power/ 12th-Step Within

How do I know my Higher Power has my back?
How do I know my Higher Power cares about me?
Where do I find my Higher Power whom I know as God? Do I recognize God's power and goodness in the beauty of sunsets and sunrises, in soaring music or delightful dance, in the giggle of a toddler or the soft skin of a baby? Do I recognize God's love when I'm with a couple who have been married 68 years and still enjoys each other's company with never a harsh word?

But how have I experienced God's love for ME?
How has that love become real for me? In my long

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place in my program when I’m reaching out and others are reaching out to me. I feel closer to the people in my meetings than ever before as I’m getting to really know them. In OA, I have such a beautiful gift of knowing people who share my struggles, who have been there, who understand.

Before OA, I was alone in my pain, but now, through OA, I never have to be alone in my struggles again. I can reach out my hands for power and strength, whether through a hug in person at a meeting or by a phone call during the rest of the week. I am so grateful to this fellowship and to my HP.

~Anonymous

The Next Right Step

Worry. Call it a character defect, a habit, a lifelong pattern, a pain in my . . . head. It’s not one of God’s gifts to us. When we turn our will and our lives over to the care of God, *as we understand God*, why worry? What I find works better, is to stop and ask God, “What’s the next right thing?”

If we can stay in the moment, there’s no need to worry. And, for planning purposes, we can work the tool of action plan, with our sponsor, if we like, and again, remove worry from the equation.

They say the 12-step program is a simple program, although I’ve never heard anyone say it was easy. Follow the directions. Work the steps. Turn our will and our lives over to God as we understand God. Do the next right thing.

As long as I ask God what’s the next right thing and do that next right thing, my life works. I find I am happy, joyous and free. I find gratitude in what I see and what I can do. I focus on all I have and there’s little time or energy to focus on anything else. I love my life and I love me. Although the simple things of program may not be easy, I say they are worth it.

I lovingly agree to do the next right thing.

~Jane D.

Shame versus Guilt

The words shame and guilt...

- Both are uncomfortable.
- Both may have unhealthy consequences.
- Both are a part of the human experience.
- Both are a part of my story and possibly yours.

Shame is “a painful feeling of humiliation or distress caused by the consciousness of wrong or foolish behavior.” Synonyms include humiliation, mortification, and embarrassment. I certainly have been in all of those uncomfortable feelings. Shame is how others make you feel about yourself. “You can do better.” “I am so disappointed in you.” “I thought you knew better.” Another OAer said shame is when you know people are talking about you and you don’t want to face them. Many of us have been fat shamed or so shamed in childhood, that all growth ceased. Shame is crawling back to a meeting 150 pounds heavier. Hiding is my go to solution. Hiding in food, hiding at home by myself. Hiding in everything is just fine. None of those are helpful or healthful ways of handling it. Rather, airing it, admitting it, and turning it over to God are much better choices.

Guilt on the other hand, is me knowing I am screwing up and still doing it anyway. Then having to live with that choice. Guilt is “The fact of committing a specified or implied offense or crime.” A lot of my guilt is the implied kind. I think I screwed up and therefore must punish myself for the next forever. Food of course, is quick and socially accepted. Chances are the others involved thought nothing of it. Making amends, changing my attitude, forgiving myself and moving on is a much better solution.

Hoorah for OA allowing me to grow up and move beyond shame and guilt!

S Same old sickness

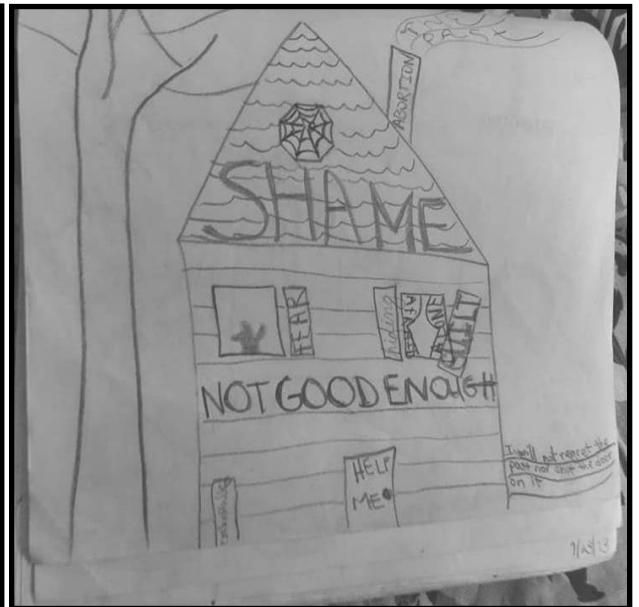
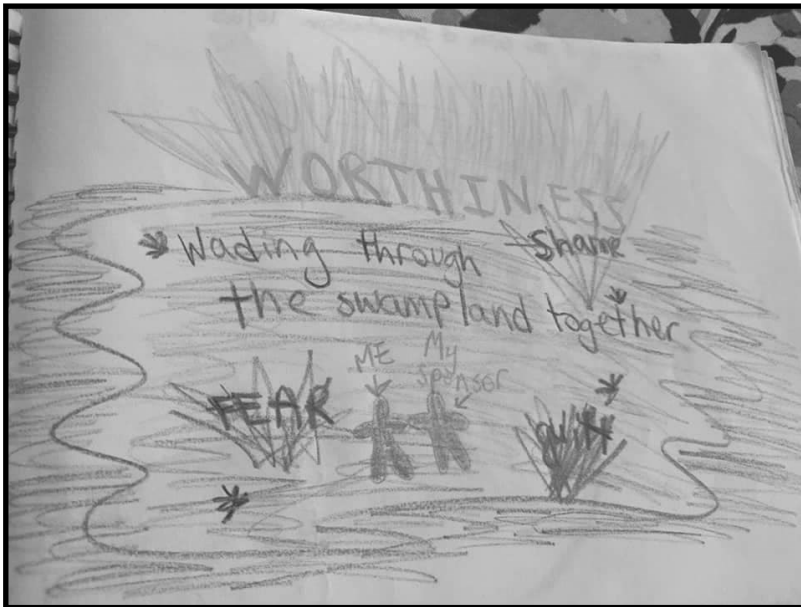
H Harmful, holding me back

A Angry at myself

M Making me feel bad

E Enough!

~Annonny Mouse



I Lovingly Agree

From front page

me, “If you hear something three times, you need to pay attention.”

I was going to be spending time with my family over the weekend. I went to a meeting before I headed out, reaffirmed my abstinence guidelines and turned the trip over to God.

I was wondering about the surrender word coming up so often. I pondered. I released my full-time job at God’s urging to use other gifts. I committed to God to be the best Jane possible and was eating healthier and exercising regularly. I was wondering what to look for that I might be tempted to control. When things go well in my work, I tend to want more of the same; that can kick in my control. Hmm ... I called a program friend and asked if she thought this could be what I needed to surrender.

“Everything,” she said.

“Everything?” I questioned.

“Everything,” she repeated.

I kind of thought I was, yet if I had to question, everything? Clearly, I wasn’t.

I spend a significant amount of my time writing and reading. I work at keeping my energy level high and staying in a positive frame of mind. One author suggests writing a one-page personal statement to read multiple times each day that gets you so happy and emotional about your life, you weep tears of joy. God put it to me as, “Jane, are you willing to let things get infinity good?” (Yes, infinity. He’s playful and fun like that!) Believe me, this is not where I was

First Quarter 2020 Theme

The theme for the first quarter 2020 *Cocoon* is “How You Use the Literature.” OA provides us with many pamphlets, books, podcasts, and a website of resources to help us through our program. What literature do you use and how do you use it to increase your recovery? Deadline: Monday, Dec. 16, 2019.

when I started program, yet it is how I get to live my life now.

I titled my personal statement *My Life Love Story* because I love my life. I learned gratitude in the program. As I was writing my personal statement, in the present tense, of all I have, whether it is currently here or not, the surrender word came up again.

I write to God regularly. He gives me support, encouragement, direction and faith. I know everything is going to work out. Then why do I hesitate at the word surrender?

I looked up the word surrender in an online dictionary. I found “Cease resistance to an enemy or opponent and submit to their authority.” Other words offered included concede, submit, relent, succumb, quit, crumble. We’ve been taught surrender is about enemies, opponents, conceding and quitting. No wonder I hesitate. Surrender is depicted as a negative thing, associated with loss, *not* all I’ve gained.

God and I are on the same side. He wants me to succeed. He wants me to accept the infinitely good He and the Universe have for me. So you see, I *needed* a new definition for surrender. Now it is simply, “I lovingly agree.”

Would this definition have worked the day I walked in the door to my first meeting? I don’t know. It does now. I know God and the Universe love me and I do, too. The way I found this love was through the program. If surrender works, great; I lovingly agree.

I am happy to share a few lines from *My Life Love Story*: “I lovingly agree to God’s plan for me, letting things be infinitely good, accepting the gifts, people, spirits and energy provided for me to fulfill my potential. Thank you, God and Universe, I feel abundantly blessed. I have all the tools, skills and abilities I need to succeed. I use these gifts and I am successful in ways so much better than I dreamed or imagined. My universe is ever expanding, and God is with me every step of the way.”

So glad to be here with all of you -

~Jane D.

Encouragement for the Holidays with Reading, Writing, Sharing

I normally take some passage from the daily page of *For Today* to write about. Sometimes it's the top quote but sometimes it's not. However, I always choose something that the author says that fits my experience, strength and hope and go from there. I normally write first thing in the morning and then send it out to several OAers. This way I connect with the program and members as soon as I'm awake. The following are writings from some upcoming days when many OAers struggle because of their being "holidays," family food days, or have other triggers.

* * * * *

Nov. 28—Thanksgiving Day

"If you have decided you want what we have and are willing to go to any length to get it, then you are ready to take certain steps."

I've learned through my own experience that there isn't an easier softer way for me to maintain my abstinence and my recovery. I have to work at it, be focused and utilize my action plan every day.

Nearly 32 years ago when I joined OA, I went through the steps for the first time and I began to utilize the tools. Since then, I've amped up my program to attending four to seven meetings a week, and I've progressed through the steps many times. I'm happy to say, as a result of using both the steps and the tools, I've grown up in OA—been relieved of character defects, fears and obsessions. These changes are beyond my wildest dreams and nothing short of miracles. Thank you, Higher Power, the OA program, and all my OA sisters and brothers, including each of you. Progress not perfection, one day at a time.

* * * * *

Dec. 25—Christmas Day

"If it were not for others sharing their experience, strength and hope, where would I be?"

At the first OA meeting that I attended, I met one of the nicest women I've ever known. When she shared, I listened, and I knew she had what I wanted—freedom from food and body image obsessions. At that time, I

was hooked on commercial dieting and was hopeful that OA could help me overcome my habit. She, on the other hand, was maintaining her weight by following the program and not dieting.

I asked her for guidance, and she was happy to comply. And three weeks later, when I succumbed to signing up at a commercial diet, with great shame I told her about what I had done. Her kind words kept me in program. She told me that I could continue attending OA, and that however I attained my abstinence was not a concern in the program. Just keep coming back.

I was so touched by her kindness and caring that I cancelled my check to the commercial diet and kept coming back to OA. Gratefully, now it's my turn to share my experience, strength and hope, by the grace of God and the OA program, one day at a time.

* * * * *

Jan. 1—New Year's Day

"But the best time to give up my will, my old ideas, my defects is any time I am ready to grow."

When I first joined OA, I was desperate to be relieved of my habit of signing up for commercial dieting, along with food and body image obsessions. I hated these burdens so much, I couldn't wait to get rid of them.

Now, 30-some years later, I am in a recovery that is nothing short of miraculous. Through following the steps and utilizing the tools, my obsessions are practically completely gone. And I don't diet. Instead, I put my faith in my Higher Power for guidance. Never did I expect all of these results to materialize, but they did.

I've learned that I must be willing to turn my will and my life over to the care of my Higher Power, as I understand Him, everyday. No one particular day is more important than the rest. "Expect miracles."

Hugs,

~*Bobbi*

Final Stop...A Life of Recovery and Serenity

World Service and Region conventions are hosted in different places each year. This year Milwaukee Area Intergroup hosted the Region 5 convention. There were people who were attending their first OA event and there were those who had attended a few World Service events, and recovery time in between. More than 200 people from different areas of the region gathered in downtown Milwaukee to share their own experience, strength, and hope and to hear from others. Some people attended a few hours and others stayed from before the doors opened until the last hug. Each person, no matter how long or short they were in program, came to support their program.

The following writings are about specific memories some members took away from the convention and wanted to share with other OA members:

My first Region 5 Convention was a special day.

- I liked the way the Region 5 introduced themselves. (Each of them took a few minutes to share their story.) By the time they were done, I felt like I knew them.
- The morning keynote speaker was inspiring and naturally funny.
- Memories from the panels included getting so involved in discussing the questions about sponsorship that no one wanted to go to the mic and share. So we stayed at our tables and kept talking. Ways to sponsor, can you say no and relationships between sponsors and sponsees were hot topics.
- Making a Vision Board was a new experience for me. Mine focused on gratitude and faith. The

session enabled me to focus on priorities in a fun and creative way.

Thank You, Region 5, for coming to Milwaukee and all you do. Thanks to all who volunteered.

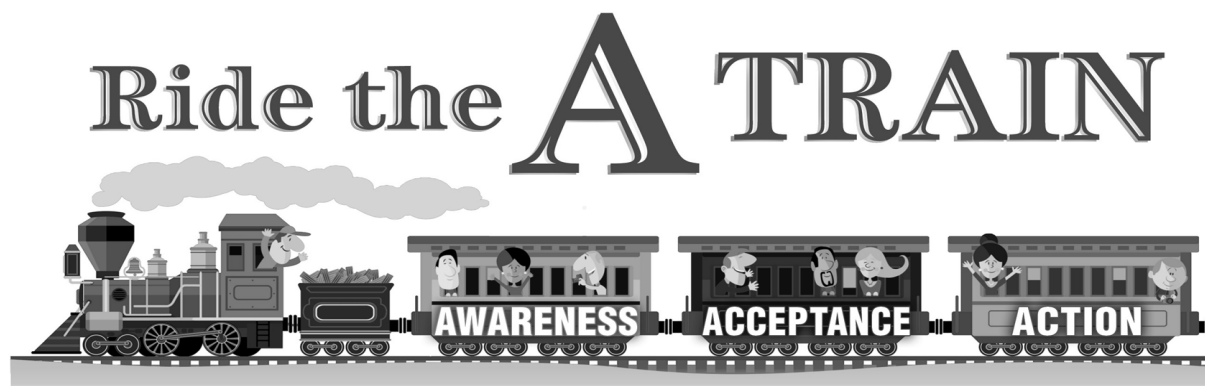
~Chris B.

The phrase that came to my mind as I left the Region 5 Convention was "Wounded Healer". Each speaker I heard had lived through the pain of being caught in this disease with no way out until OA gave them hope and a solution. Now they were offering that same hope and healing to us. They shared themselves honestly and with humility, giving all credit to their Higher Power for being able to do this service. As they quoted inspiring words from the Big Book, I felt they were modeling for us letting go of "selfishness, dishonesty, resentment and fear." They were practicing selfless service and giving their will and life over to their Higher Power.

It wasn't the speakers alone who were inspiring, however. Every OA member who gave up time and their own lives to create this wonderful experience for us was showing us, by their service, what it means to put oneself into God's hands, to let Him lead us, and to give us the miracle of recovery.

~ So grateful for this Convention

Whether you were one who was able to attend the Region 5 Convention or not, you are welcome to regularly "Ride the A-Train: Awareness, Acceptance, Action." You then will find the final stop to be...A life of recovery and serenity.



My Higher Power/12-Step Within

From page 3

healing journey in OA, where do I encounter God's forgiveness and acceptance and care for me?

The answer is, when I have received that care, acceptance, and even forgiveness, from other human beings. My husband and family are generous with their love, but next to them, Overeaters Anonymous has gifted me with love. OA helps me know with certainty that my Higher Power loves me with an unconditional unending love, forgiving and accepting me just as I am. I experience this love when I share with my sponsors who know me through and through, and when my sponsees share themselves with me. When members share their stories and their feelings so honestly in meetings, it is there. When I witness the selfless service of so many members as I did at September's Intergroup meeting that I came home from the meeting just in awe, I see it. When members say "YES" if someone needs a sponsor, I witness it. When a member has the courage to ask for a sponsor, I hear it. And finally, when someone calls to see how I am doing, or I call someone and they share their life, both the happy and sad occurrences, the love is evident.

And this is where 12th-Step-Within Committee comes in. The committee was formed to reach out to members within the fellowship who still suffer. We all know what it felt like to suffer when we were in our disease. Because we know this, because we had to wait for our own miracle to happen, we understand as no one else can. As chair of the 12th-Step-Within Committee I was wrong when I thought I was a committee of one. You are ALL members of this committee. And you can give the experience of our Higher Power's love to members who may be struggling, who may be feeling too embarrassed or ashamed, or simply too tired or overwhelmed, to come to meetings anymore. Making an "outreach" call to a member on your phone list whom you haven't seen for a while is such a caring thing to do. To say, "I've been thinking of you lately and thought I would call. I hope you are doing okay," or "I've missed you. I hope to see you soon. Would you like to get together?" Our handbook reminds us that we must be sensitive to people's feelings, never

judgmental or critical or full of advice. It also suggests we let go of expectations. What we are trying to do is to be loving and compassionate, so a prayer to our Higher Power is where we can begin; then we can trust and just make that call.

12th-Step-Within Day is Dec. 12—the 12th day of the 12th month, a day we are encouraged to reach out and call members we haven't seen for a while. But there is no reason why we need to wait until then. We can start making one or two encouraging calls weekly. People who are struggling need to know they are not forgotten. We recover together, one day at a time.

~Clarice

Comparisons Be Gone

Before Overeaters Anonymous, I would compare myself to other people. I would think they were either above or below me. I thought I could control how they felt or how they behaved. I blamed them for holding me back, but in reality my own choices did that.

With OA, I learned if you hate a person, you hate something in him or her that is part of yourself. When I started going to meetings, reading literature and talking to others in the program, I found it was I who had the problem. I had character defects I was not willing to accept, so I criticized those around me.

When my self-image is low and I am feeling depressed or less than, it means I have separated myself from God. In the same way, when my self-image is grandiose, prideful or better than, I place distance between God and me. Pride puffs out her chest, shame hangs her head and hides. Pride seeks to be seen, shame seeks to be avoided. Pride says you are too good for God, shame says you are too bad for God.

Today, I strive daily to let go of comparisons. The only person I should compare myself to is the person I was yesterday.

~Connie W.