

Inner Voice

Newsletter of New Freedom Intergroup of OA

Step 11: Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God *as we understood Him*, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.

Tradition 11: Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, films, television and other public media of communication.

The Moment It Clicked

A Longtimer Checks In: 47 Years After "The Moment It Clicked," Overeaters Anonymous Does Indeed Work for a Lifetime



In 1993, when I was 44 years old and 16 years abstinent, I thought I knew everything there was to know about recovery in OA. I was in awe of the fact that I was still abstinent, still the same size, still free from the weight game. At the time, 16 years was almost longtimer (and back then, we used to say "old timer"). OA had put a call out for submissions for a new piece of literature titled "Abstinence." Why not? the voice in my head said. So I wrote my story down as best I could, but when I tried to describe the day I "got it," all I could think of was that it was like a light switch had been turned on. The editors of the book titled my story "The Moment It Clicked" (*Abstinence*, pp. 46–47; *Abstinence*, Second Ed., pp. 55–56).

Once again, a call has gone out for Abstinence submissions and it seems only appropriate, whether the editors are interested in this for the next edition or not, that I check in to let you know that this program does indeed work for a lifetime. I am now a 75-year-old retiree, and as of today, November 13, 2024, I am celebrating 47 years of abstaining from compulsive eating, overeating and compulsive food behaviors.

In my real life, the children became adults, marriages ended, new marriages happened, friends and family passed on, grandchildren were born—in other words, life happened. To be there for all of that is a blessing of this OA program. The Spiritual Principles of the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions have provided wisdom and guidance in my decision-making and general conduct. The Fellowship has provided opportunities to be of service and to give and get support. And it all started with one phone call to a woman who would become, and still is, my sponsor and friend. On November 13, 1977, I made a commitment to her that I would not take that first bite no matter what. Abstinence would be the most important thing.

And abstinence remains the single driver of my continued recovery. Guarding my adherence to a committed way of eating has required doing everything this program asked me to do. It drove me to a working relationship with a Higher Power that could relieve the obsession and fear, which it still does. Our literature says that food thoughts may never leave me entirely, but the good news is they no longer control my behavior; I have a choice now. Our literature also promises that this will happen sometimes quickly and sometimes slowly, but it will always happen if we work for it. Once we take the Third Step, we cannot fail to recover.

With age and time in the program also comes a deeper understanding of what this is all about. In the 1970s, abstinence was a food plan, and it was all about the weight . . . until it wasn't. In current times, abstinence has become more about how I live my life.

Abstinence with a capital A, our version of sobriety, starts by putting down the food (tears are allowed) and continues for the rest of our lives. Abstinence is not dependent upon people, places, feelings, or relationships. Abstinence stands



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alone. It is ours for the asking if we are willing to fight for it. To give up all that I have been given for one impulsive bite of something would, at this point in my life, crush my soul. No bite is worth selling one's soul. I gave my word to my sponsor. I intend to keep it!

— Chris Q. (Reprinted from *Lifeline*)

NFI Meeting Highlights:

(Note: These are NOT the official minutes; they are only a recap of what was discussed. Official minutes are released after changes and approval in the next month's business meeting.)

New Freedom Intergroup business meeting was held October 11. Each meeting is welcome to send two voting members, and as many observers as desire to attend. The meeting is always the second Saturday of the month (unless otherwise decided) and runs for one and a half hours.

Thus, the next business meeting is Saturday, November 8 from 10:00 am to 11:30 am by Zoom. (Meeting ID: 872 7218 1719, Password: 883350).

Highlights of what was covered at the October business meeting:

Service Opportunities:

- **WE HAVE A CRITICAL NEED FOR SERVICE AT THE INTERGROUP LEVEL!**

- CURRENT VACANCIES:

Elected positions:

- Vice Chair – Serves in the absence of the Chair, assists with coordinating special events, maintains the meeting list, and serves on the bylaws committee.
- Delegate – Attends the World Service Business Conference annually, attends the Regional business assemblies (2 per year), and provides reports to the Intergroup about the actions of the conference/assembly.

Appointed positions:

- Parliamentarian – Ensures that we are operating the meetings fairly and following the Bylaws and Policies and Procedures manual.
- Newsletter Chair – Creates the monthly newsletter by collecting articles from membership and OA resources.
- Ways and Means Chair – Researches, reviews, and develops ideas for fundraising on behalf of the intergroup. These funds are used for carrying our message.
- Young Adults Subcommittee Chair – As part of the Professional Information/Public Outreach committee, the Young Adults subcommittee works to increase awareness of OA among the young adults in our area, and welcomes young adults who come to OA.
- Sponsorship Coordinator – Maintain a list of available sponsors and help people seeking sponsorship to be connected to a potential sponsor.

UPCOMING ELECTIONS:

- Nominations opened for the following positions:
 - Chair – Leads the monthly intergroup meetings, maintains meeting information on OA.org, works with NFI committees, attends regional meetings on behalf of NFI as first alternate for the delegate or in addition to the delegate.
 - Nancy K. was nominated
 - Treasurer – Maintains the bank accounts for NFI, tracks donations, maintains the budget and other financial documents (ex: liability insurance) required for NFI business operations.
 - Augusta L. was nominated
- In December, we will also be needing to appoint a new Public Information/Professional Outreach Committee Chair – Engages with the public to provide information about OA through attending events such as health and wellness fairs, researches and implements opportunities to spread the message, and also works with professionals (ex: doctors and medical facilities) to spread information about OA (ex: provide professional outreach packets and pamphlets to a doctor's office for their waiting room or to hand out to patients).



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- Want to give service, but you're not sure where to start? Consider volunteering for one of our committees! We can always use help, and it's a fabulous way to start giving service beyond the meeting level.

Other Items of Note:

- All meetings are to let Chair know about changes in format. Thank you to those who sent us updates this month! They should be reflected on the website and meeting list.
- TSW Committee put on a workshop on October 4th with a focus on the **Freedom of OA**. The event was very well received, and it was requested that the workshop be repeated in the future!

Step 11: Meditation as an Alternative to Compulsive Eating

Step 11: Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.

When I Began Using Meditation as an Alternative to Compulsive Eating, I Was Able to Overcome My Childhood Trauma

Like many in OA, I found that my compulsion to overeat originated in childhood. I came from a broken home with absent parents, and my happiest memories were of family visits to buffets and gatherings with large meals. I was praised for my "healthy appetite," which invoked feelings of love and acceptance around overeating. I had a fast metabolism, so there were no obvious repercussions.

In my teens, I adopted a plant-based diet that, while healthy, masked the emotional nature of my eating. I'd often say, "I love to eat, and being plant-based allows me to eat to my heart's content without becoming unhealthy." I further became involved with food professionally, importing vegan products from Europe. I thought about food incessantly.

Everything seemed great until my late 20s, when I began developing digestive, skin, and depression problems. Eliminating sugar and gluten provided relief but not recovery. From a series of tragedies in my 30s, I turned to food for comfort, spending hours at buffets almost daily. This induced a depressive episode that led me to therapy and, after much initial hesitation, to consider the Twelve Steps.

I'd thought it a joke that I might have a disorder and was convinced I had control of my eating habits. So I decided to create restrictions concerning the frequency, amount, and types of food I would allow myself, and I committed that if I failed, then I would explore OA. Two months later, I attended my first meeting. It was an Eleventh Step meditation meeting.

Meditation was not new to me, but what I discovered through OA was a new application. Previously, I'd regarded meditation as chore-like, scheduling time to get it done. Instead, I began using it as an alternative to compulsive eating. Through self-awareness of my urges, I opted to meditate rather than eat and discovered that I'd been compulsively eating both to avoid experiencing the repressed trauma caused by my childhood abandonment and to relive the love and acceptance I'd felt through family bonding over food.

Once I was no longer eating as a remedy, much pain arose within me, triggering extended episodes of emotional release. But by adhering to meditation, I've been able to overcome these episodes, thereby bringing me to the Twelfth Step: the experience of a spiritual awakening. It is from this state, with a message of hope, that I wish to share my account with those who are still suffering, as I once did.

— Steven K. (reprinted from *Lifeline*)

The Spirit of Tradition Eleven

Tradition 11: Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, films, television and other public media of communication.

My earliest memories are of me playing in front of the mirror. The game I played consisted of me pretending to be famous and answering questions from an invisible interviewer. I remember what a blast it was, mimicking TV commercials, award ceremonies, and entertainment shows. Twenty years later, I found myself in a public relations and marketing career, getting paid to promote, persuade, and motivate.



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Discovering Tradition Eleven (and frankly, all the Steps and Traditions) was like encountering a foreign language. No promotion? No celebrity endorsements? No film at eleven? I initially rationalized Tradition Eleven's anonymity Principle this way: We in OA have a disease that we should be ashamed of. Keep it secret.

As I continue to bring my sick body and mind to meetings, however, I also heard such concepts as "we are as sick as our secrets." I figured it was important to share honestly at meetings, but nowhere else. OA meetings were islands of safety and respite, like the island of Molokai was for those with leprosy.

Higher Power has given me many opportunities to understand

Tradition Eleven in the spirit that it was written. In recovery, we in OA are not ashamed of our illness. We want to carry the message to those who still suffer. The vehicles we have chosen to carry this message, however, are not promotion based. They are attraction based. But what does this mean? In both my career and my childhood fantasies, to attract always meant to promote aggressively and competitively.

Today, I understand that promotion of OA with spokespersons or advertising rollouts would harm individual members and the recovery community. Our "advertising" has a different look and feel: It is in the quiet of a newcomer's abstinence that I feel hope. It is in the humility of a relapsing longtimer that I experience gratitude. It is in the perseverance of members who are in pain that I know recovery. It is in giving anonymous service that I feel rewarded. I am deeply moved and attracted by these authentic experiences.

Though I still love makeover shows that transform individuals in thirty minutes, I don't trust them as real. I do trust Overeaters Anonymous because I have learned over the years that humility is the best public relations policy, and carrying the message can be done over time, with love rather than ego leading the way.

— Anonymous (Reprinted from *Lifeline*)

More on Step 10 from our Region

Prior to joining Overeaters Anonymous, whenever life got too 'loud,' I used the food to turn down the volume. I learned very early in life to turn off my emotions and food helped me do just that. When the volume of life would slowly rise again, more food provided the solution.

Step 10 gave me a tool for daily living that turns down the volume on my negative emotions and helps me consider other perspectives. Working Step 10 is an essential action that I take to preserve my emotional and physical sobriety. The best part is that the process of doing a 10th step is clear, simple, and sets me free!

First, I watch myself and notice when I am disturbed. Take, for example, a situation where I'm standing in the express line at the grocery store and the person in front of me has 18 items. Some days, I'm peaceful and others, I'm not. If I'm not, I can do a short spot-check inventory by asking myself how I am being selfish, dishonest, self-seeking and frightened. Why do I care? Am I truly in a rush? Am I judging him? Is my time so much more valuable than his? Am I full of self-pity? Step 10 directs me to ask my Higher Power at once to remove my disturbance. I can look at the truth that I am not really in a rush. He may be helping me by delaying me for a few minutes. I trust that my Higher Power is big enough to handle this situation and I then relax and let go, knowing that I am well loved and taken care of by the Higher Power of my own understanding.

If I am still angry, I phone an OA buddy and walk through the process aloud with them, asking for help to see my part. If I have harmed anyone, I make amends promptly. Then I quickly turn my thoughts to someone I can help. I might call or text someone to say hello. Or I put my shopping cart away neatly and take someone else's back too. Or I smile and wish a stranger a good day. The book *Alcoholics Anonymous* on page 84, suggests living by a code of "love and tolerance." These are strong ideals to live up to, but the 10th Step helps me make this way of life a reality. This design for living works far better than the code I lived by before OA.



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The spiritual principle of Step 10 is persistence, and I am sure I'll need to keep using this tool to help me grow in effectiveness for the rest of my life. It keeps me in sync with my Higher Power and the other people around me. It shines the light of truth on my emotional reactions to situations, and it sets me free to be a better person today.

— Submitted Anonymously by a member of OA Region 8

Trusted Servants and Committee Chairs (New emails)

GENERAL INFORMATION

Chair
Vice Chair
Treasurer
Secretary
Delegate
Newsletter/Meeting List
Public Info/Prof. Outreach
Young Adults
12th Step Within
Sponsor Coordinator
Website
Ways and Means
Bylaws

Secretary will forward as needed
Echo G. 561.704.2917
VACANT—Consider doing service
Augusta L. 912.508.4777
Lucy B. 786-351-0472
VACANT—Consider doing service
VACANT—Consider doing service
Nancy K. 516.286.1888
VACANT—Consider doing service
Cynthia H. 404.788.8089
Cynthia H. 404.788.8089
Brian B. 904.616.0608
VACANT—Consider doing service
Barbara C. 352.474.1366

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piponfig@gmail.com
youngpeoplenfi@gmail.com
TSWnfi@gmail.com
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Articles printed in this newsletter reflect the opinion of each individual OA member and do not represent OA as a whole. Intergroup meets on the 2nd Saturday of each month. The deadline to submit articles is the 20th of the month before the Intergroup meeting. Articles may be edited. When submitting articles, please include your name and phone number and whether or not you would like your name printed. This newsletter may be reproduced and enjoyed by other 12-steppers without written permission. If you would like to submit articles and/or comments, or if you would like to receive the Inner Voice in color as a pdf, send your email address to the Newsletter Chair at innervoicenfi@gmail.com.

Problematic Numbers

Dear Region 8 fellows:

The board has been working on the budget for the coming fiscal year. In reviewing the budget from last year, we have discovered some substantial discrepancies.

The 2024-25 budget indicated a beginning balance of almost \$81,000. We cannot determine where this number came from. It appears the previous treasurer proposed a budget based on amounts not in our accounts. Our current balance is approximately \$57,000 and that is where we will start from.

We are having to make significant cuts to the 2025-26 budget. What this means is that there is not enough money to fund the board and committees (including travel) as we have in the past, nor will we have the funds to assist intergroups in sending representatives to Assembly or delegates to the World Service Business Conference.

I'm writing to 1) inform you of this situation and 2) to ask for donations. Anything you, your group or intergroup can contribute will help us a lot.

We are diligently working to ensure this will not happen again in the future. An audit will be completed. We appreciate your understanding and anything you can do to help.

If you have any questions or concerns, please let me know. I will do my best to address them.

In OA love and Service,

Susan B., Region 8 Chair

Phone: 415.987.3194, chair@oaregion8.org



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Events from All Over



**OA Region 7
Convention**

Balanced In Recovery
A Virtual Experience

Physical
Emotional
Spiritual

SATURDAY NOV. 1, 2025

9:00 AM - 4:30 PM ET



*of Overeaters
Anonymous*

<https://oaregion7.org/calendar/registration/?uts=1758393599#checkout>



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**Thoroughly
Follow
Our
Path...**



A Step-Per-Month Virtual Study Group

**6:30 PM-7:30 PM
Eastern Time**

**Speaker - 20 min
Journal Session- 10 min
Share Circle - 20 min**

The first
Friday of
every month

1/03/2025	*7/03/2025
2/07/2025	8/08/2025
3/07/2025	9/05/2025
4/04/2025	10/03/2025
5/02/2025	11/07/2025
6/06/2025	12/05/2025

**Zoom meeting number 864 1518 6652
Password 305305 Security measures enabled.**

Seventh Tradition encouraged. Visit www.oaniami.org/contributions

*July is on Thursday due to holiday.



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DONATIONS REPORT 2025		July	Aug	Sept	YTD TOTAL
General Fund / no meeting # specified		\$37.38	\$563.74	\$140.38	\$1,010.83
Jacksonville Groups	Grp#				
Mon: Shepherd of the Woods Church	00774				\$0.00
Tue: Lakewood United Meth Church	36763				\$50.00
Tue: 7pm Jacksonville (virtual)	800028				\$0.00
Wed: Step Study Mandarin	51223				\$28.16
Wed: JAX Beach-Wisdom at the Beaches	54507				\$100.00
Thur: Jacksonville 9am - Our redeemer	57370				\$0.00
Thur: Newcomer, Lakeview Health	47756				\$0.00
Fri: Orange Park - 10am	03654				\$0.00
Sat: Saturday Steppers-Ponte Vedra Bch	51693	\$200.00			\$400.00
Sat: Super Saturday Lakeview	20025				\$0.00
Sat: Believe in Recovery First, Mandarin	32773	\$28.64	\$78.64	\$28.64	\$457.76
Gainesville Groups					\$0.00
Mon: Big Book Study (Alachua)	51137	\$25.00	\$25.00	\$175.00	\$359.22
Thu: Unity Church(Acceptance)	50421	\$9.22	\$9.22	\$159.22	\$232.98
Wed: Gainesville Unity Church	57568			\$340.00	\$340.00
Sat: 9:30 AM Welcome Home	48324				\$180.00
Other Florida Groups					\$0.00
Mon: Palm Coast-St Mark by the Sea	38320				\$12.00
Mon.	32609		\$18.00		\$18.00
Wed: Palm Coast - 10am	56604	\$35.00	\$17.00		\$64.00
Thu: Fernandina Beach	49101				\$25.00
Thu: Flagler Beach	15171				\$46.00
Sat: St. Augustine Serenity	00235	\$50.00			\$97.58
Sun: Palm Coast/Flagler Beach	56072			\$150.00	\$150.00
Southern Georgia Groups					\$0.00
Tue: Jesup	54175				\$0.00
Wed: Douglas, GA	57445				\$0.00
Wed: Savannah - 5:30 pm	50301	\$340.00			\$508.00
Thur: Brunswick	51988				\$153.00
Sun: Savannah - 5pm	54362				\$9.16
Totals		\$725.24	\$711.60	\$993.24	\$4,241.69
Don to WSO		\$290.10	\$284.64	\$397.30	
Don to SOAR8		\$72.52	\$71.16	\$99.32	

Where are your donations going?

According to our Seventh Tradition, we are self-supporting through our own contributions. To donate directly to Intergroup, write a check made payable to 'NFI' and mail to: OA NFI, PO Box 550842, Jacksonville, FL 32255; or log onto oanfig.org and scroll down to the 'donate' button. You may pay by PayPal or credit card.

When you contribute your 7th Tradition donations, if you indicate your group number, the donation will be recorded for that specific group. When we do not have a group number to work with, we may include the donations as unspecified.

Each month, NFI tallies the group donations and sends 10% of the total to Region 8, with an additional 40% to the World Service Office. Donations sent directly to World Service Office do not reflect in our group donations total.



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