Inner Voice

Newsletter of New Freedom Intergroup of OA



February 2024

Step 2: Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.

• Spiritual Principle: Hope

Tradition 2: For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority — a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.

• Spiritual Principle: Trust

Concept 2: The OA groups have delegated to World Service
Business Conference the active maintenance of our world services; thus, World Service Business Conference is the voice, authority and effective conscience of OA as a whole.

• Spiritual Principle: Conscience

Promise 2: We will not regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it.

I'm A Sponsor" vs. "I'm Available To Be A Sponsor"

The Twelve Step Within (TSW) Committee is committed to helping the still suffering compulsive eater who is already a member of OA. We have members who continue to struggle with abstinence, completing the steps and general recovery. Some members have difficulty finding sponsors.

In response to this, we have a Sponsor Coordinator who can help members find sponsors. (Contact Hailey at sponsor.nfig@gmail.com.) Another way to find a sponsor is to contact individuals who identify themselves at meetings as sponsors. Some members have reported that they have been frustrated because they contact these individuals only to find out that they are either "full" – have all the sponsees they can accommodate, or are, for various reasons, not taking on new sponsees at this time.

The TSW committee suggests that if you are a sponsor, but are not taking sponsees currently, that you state that when you identify yourself as a sponsor in meetings.

You can say something like, "I'm a sponsor but not taking new sponsees at this time." This way, you will not attract a newcomer or the longer-term member who is looking for a sponsor. While this may seem like a small detail, it comes up among the membership often.

Current meeting formats include the line, "Will all abstinent sponsors please identify themselves?" The issue of availability is not addressed at that point. OA has recently added a Suggested Online Meeting Format, and the text reads, "Will all abstinent sponsors please identify themselves by raising their virtual hand and putting their contact information in the chat?" It does, however, add in the Suggested Guidelines for Sharing: "Please limit chats to providing your contact information and **sponsorship availability**." (Our emphasis.)

The new formats can be found at https://oa.org/news/new-suggested-online-meeting-format-revisions-to-all-meeting-formats/ where you can find the following variations. Of, course, members may suggest altering the format(s) regarding the availability issue.

- Suggested Meeting Format
- Newcomers Meeting: A Leader's Kit
- Suggested Telephone Meeting Format
- Suggested Reading and Writing Meeting Format
- Suggested Step-Study Meeting Format
- Guidelines for a Group Conscience Meeting
- Suggested Online Meeting Format (New!)



Step 2: Through to Hope

Step 2: Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.

They say we all worship something. I worshipped food. It was always on my mind. The "who/how/what/when and where" of food was my God. I spent a lot of time there. I did not do anything without considering how/what/when and where the next communion with food would be. I went on food pilgrimages late at night. I made donations of my hard-earned cash on food that hurt me. For the god of food, I sacrificed my spiritual, physical, and emotional health.

Was I insane? Well, I would say someone who ate off the floor, out of the trash, off other people's plates – someone who ate without feeling the food going into her mouth, without being able to recount truthfully at day's end exactly what was eaten – someone who kept eating after burning the skin off of the roof of her mouth, after her protruding stomach felt like it might explode – someone who would suck out the contents of a large frosty cup by holding it up to her face, covering her eyes so she couldn't see the road while driving...Someone who would swear she would never...EVER...participate in this painful, shame inducing, demoralizing behavior again – and then get up the next day and hit "repeat." Yeah. I think that is insane.

I can be functional in many parts of my life and still be insane with food.

What did I need to stop the insanity? POWER. A power greater than myself. Once I took that first compulsive bite, I did not have the power to stop. And unfortunately, as I have stated above, I have a sort of insanity of obsession that drives my mind toward that first compulsive bite again and again, despite the negative consequences. I acknowledge my powerlessness over food in Step One. In the chapter titled *How It Works* in the big book I learned that the root of my problem is selfishness/self-centeredness. x

In Step Two I "come to believe" in a power that will help me with my self-centeredness. What does my self-centeredness look like? In Big Book jargon it's like the "bondage of self"...that I feel everyone is focused on me whether I am the center of attention or hanging out in a corner – whether I'm the hero or the class clown – whether I am martyring myself to help someone else, or guilting someone else into doing something for me...it's all about me – even when I've convinced myself it's all about someone else...it's still all about me. It's about how I look, or how I don't look. It's about how competent or incompetent I am. It's about how fat or skinny I am, how appropriate or inappropriate my conversation is, how much I'm exercising, how much I'm eating, how much I'm doing – how much I'm not doing, and on and on...all about me. The HOPE of Step 2 is that as I develop conscious companionship with my Creator/Source/Power, I become someone who is no longer wrapped up in myself. I can take care of my own needs (work the rest of the steps) and have time and energy to engage in the service of helping others, to care how others feel. I believe that I have power from the God of my understanding to help me let go of the food problem and join my fellows in recovery.

Lucy

More on Step 1 From Our Region

When I attended my first OA meeting in Cambridge, Massachusetts in 1989, I had no clue about the concept of power-lessness. I mean, I knew that I could not control the weather, but food? I thought I should be able to control that! I walked through the doors of OA at a normal weight, but totally food and body obsessed. My usual method of compulsive exercise had stopped working. I was left with myself, the food, and major depression. Despite my best intentions to try to put down the sugar in OA, I found I just couldn't do it. Naturally, I beat myself up for my repeated failures.

It was then that my fellow OAs presented some novel ideas to me: I was suffering from the disease of compulsive overeating – it was NOT a moral issue. I had permission to stop beating myself up! I came to learn that I was powerless over food because some foods created the phenomenon of craving within me. It was this physical allergy (in my case, to sugar and flour) coupled with a mental obsession that kept me returning to the idea of eating as a solution to life, which



caused me to no longer have the power to control my eating. I was so grateful to have finally found a community of people in OA who not only understood and related to my dilemma but also provided me with a solution – a way to live free of the craving for excess food and the misery that accompanied it. Just as my disease is at once physical, emotional, and spiritual, the solution encompassed these three aspects as well.

The solution to my powerlessness came through applying the twelve steps to my life. This produced a personality change that enabled me to stay on a healthy food plan devoid of my binge foods while living a peaceful and useful life. In working the steps, I relied heavily on building relationships within the OA fellowship by attending meetings, making phone calls, and doing service. The nine tools of recovery gave me the structure and support that I needed to rigorously work the twelve steps and apply the twelve traditions in my life.

My journey in recovery these past 35 years has been anything but linear. I have many setbacks and multiple bottoms with food and depression. As it is often said in the rooms of OA, the one thing I did right was to "keep coming back" and work the tools and steps to the best of my willingness and ability. A friend of mine said that in this program there are no failures, only slow successes, and I wholeheartedly agree! Admitting and accepting my powerlessness over food has changed my life. Today, I know that whenever I struggle with anything at all, including food, it means that there is more work to do, more to surrender, more to learn. Thanks for letting me share. May you have an abstinent and surrendered day!!!

- Tina S., Florida

Tradition 2: Guiding the Group's Choices

Tradition 2: For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority — a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.

How does an atheist with a spiritual life accept this tradition? Easily. The words can be translated into my own higher power, which I call the harmony of the universe. What these words mean is that no one of us is able to boss all the others, no matter how much we may want to. Were a democracy where the majority does not rule. Instead we talk and talk until we reach substantial unanimity by hearing everyone's point of view. We don't get to dictate food plans, who can speak at meetings, or "louse this thing up," as Dr. Bob said to Bill W. "Overeaters Anonymous has its share of compulsive complicators. They lard the program with mandatory procedures and other distractions." to quote January 9 in *For Today*.

When we have a group conscience and decide on something through substantial unanimity, it can be a mistake. We find this out through living with the new decision, and if it was a mistake, we'll see it because the new thing will die of disuse. People just won't remember to use it. We can correct it if we see it and learn from our mistakes.

The other traditions and each person's HP will guide the groups choices.

This tradition frees us from the domination of people who know the ONE RIGHT WAY, whether they are food planners, people who don't need any OA literature because they have the Big Book, sponsors who boss and so on.

In my opinion it is very easy to transfer addictions from food to telling others how to live and being right about it. It is important to remember that the program works differently for different people and is open to everyone who wants to stop eating compulsively. It is also open to people who want to lose weight, but that is not our primary purpose. If you are eating every feeling every imperfection, every forbidden thought, every need for help, at some point a food plan will fail you and you may think OA didn't work, but you have not worked the OA program, which is the Steps.

The Steps teach us acceptance of ourselves and others and lead us in exploring our experiences and beliefs which have kept us stuck in compulsive behaviors around food. Working and reworking them will eventually free us from the bondage of food and self which will never come from following the food plan of someone else. At least not in my experience.

- Patience M., Gainesville FL



Promises: Built In Forgetters

Promise 2: We will not regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it.

After we put down the food, we enter into a new reality unclouded by the fog of overeating. Especially as our systems separate from sugar, flour, salt and other "red Light" substances, we begin to meet life on life's terms — without the crutch of food to blunt our feelings.

As our heads clear, and we begin working the steps, past negative memories will flood back. Without the ability to medicate these negative feelings with food, we are extremely vulnerable to our disease. Thankfully, if we are half-way through our Step 9 amends, we will also be benefiting from the previous eight steps.

For me, working Steps 1-8, and engaging in the amends process in Step 9, was vital in my ability to "not regret the past, nor wish to shut the door on it." Through work with my sponsor, especially by turning my will and my life over to my Higher Power in Step 3, I was able to see how I had to go through what I went through to reach my bottom. I was once reminded that pain is the touchstone of all spiritual progress. And those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.

I remember my past transgressions – lying, cheating, stealing, manipulating, gossiping, etc. – but I do not stay in morbid reflection. These memories are there to remind me that the old John will always eat compulsively. My past validates my powerlessness and unmanageability in Step One. However, my past negative memories and "not shutting the door on my past the memories" will not keep me "sober."

I love this promise because it shows me the reality that I can turn liabilities into assets. This spiritual program provides me with the tools to become a new person. The new John is on a food plan. The new John prays. The new John engages in service to others. And, the new John has cleaned his side of the street through Step 9 work.

But, as with most aspects of our 12 steps, there's a catch. As stated on page 14 of the AA *Big Book*, "Simple, but not easy; a price had to be paid. It meant destruction of self-centeredness. I must turn in all things to the Father of Light who presides over us all." And while my memories may be painful, I would never wish to forget them. I would not wish to shut the door on them as they stand vigil against the built-in forgetters of my disease.

John K.

And More Promises

Here are some *other* promises in *Big Book* order with a few comments (see last month for the first installment). Note that the promises are generally conditional. One needs to work the program for the promises to come true in our lives.

The Doctor's Opinion

"You may rely absolutely on anything they say about themselves." How many times have we been unreliable in the midst of our compulsions? Living to eat, vs. eating to live.

"They believe in themselves, and still more in the Power which pulls chronic alcoholics back from the gates of death." How's that for a promise? Believing in myself vs. believing I'll have another piece of... And since we're in February, this coming to believe in a Power will bring us back from suffering if not the gates of death.

"...once a psychic change has occurred, the very same person who seemed doomed, who had so many problems he despaired of ever solving them, suddenly finds himself easily able to control his desire for alcohol, the only effort necessary being that required to follow a few simple rules." Note that the psychic change is a prerequisite.

"From a trembling, despairing, nervous wreck, had emerged a man brimming over with self-reliance and contentment." I don't know about others, but I have trembled from ingestion of sugar in the past. I have felt despair and been



a nervous wreck. I disagree with Dr. Silkworth about the "self-reliance" part of the promise; after all, he was not himself an alcoholic. It is reliance on the Higher Power of our understanding.

Mark W.

Trusted Servants and Committee Chairs (New emails)

GENERAL INFORMATION	Secretary will for	ward as needed	oanfig@gmail.com
Chair	Echo G.	561.704.2917	chairnfi@gmail.com
Vice Chair/Bylaws	Barbara C.	352.474.1366	vicechairnfi@gmail.com
Treasurer	Carly B.	303.710.0589	nfitreasury@gmail.com
Secretary	Sandi JC	912.464.4231	oanfig@gmail.com
Delegate	VACANT—Consid	der doing service	delegatenfi@gmail.com
Newsletter/Meeting List	Mark W.	904.527.3433	innervoicenfi@gmail.com
Public Info/Prof. Outreach	Nancy K.	516.286.1888	piponfig@gmail.com
Young Persons	VACANT—Consid	der doing service	youngpeoplenfi@gmail.com
12th Step Within	Georgette P.	352.870.4454	ghabanero56@yahoo.com
Sponsor Coordinator	Hailey	404.797.5586	sponsor.nfig@gmail.com
Website	Brian B.	904.616.0608	websitenfi@gmail.com
Ways and Means	VACANT—Consid	wandmnfi@gmail.com	

Upcoming Service Rotations for 2024:

Per our bylaws, this year will see official elections for the following positions, with nominations opening in October for a December election:

- Vice Chair
- Secretary
- Delegate.

The Chair will also be looking to appoint committee chairs for the following committees:

- Bylaws & Electronic Documents
- Newsletter
- Website

Currently, we have incumbents in all those roles except for Delegate. Per our bylaws, no one may serve more than two consecutive terms (total of 4 years consecutively), which means that we have two positions up for election/appointment that cannot continue to be fulfilled by our current volunteers as they will have hit the 4-year mark by the end of 2024. These positions are:

- Vice Chair Incumbent: Barb C. This is an elected position that supports the intergroup through a variety of services, conducts business meetings and otherwise fills the position of Chair if the Chair is absent, maintains the meeting lists and event calendar, and performs other duties as assigned by the Policy and Procedures manual. She has also been serving as the interim Bylaws & Electronic Documents committee chair.
- Newsletter Committee Chair Incumbent: Mark W. This is an appointed position that prepares our monthly *Inner Voice* newsletter. This can consist of collecting articles from NFI members and OA approved literature, editing documents, overall organization of the newsletter, and working with the secretary for distribution.

If you are interested in giving service in any of these positions, I highly recommend reaching out and requesting to shadow the incumbent member and otherwise working with them to understand what the role entails and requires. Also be sure to review our bylaws and policy and procedures manuals, as they are the official guides to what each position requires and what the duties therein are.











Highlights of the January NFI Business Meeting:

(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 January 13. Each meeting is welcome and encouraged 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, February 10 from 10:00 am to 11:30 am by Zoom. (Meeting ID: 872 7218 1719, Password: 883350).

Highlights of what was covered at the January business meeting:

Service Opportunities:

- We need to fill the following service positions: Delegate, Parliamentarian, Young Persons subcommittee chair, and Ways and Means chair. Other committees also need volunteers to provide service.
- We'll be hosting a Big Book Retreat at Marywood on November 1-3, 2024. There will be many opportunities to give service as we plan for this event and at the event itself. If you are interested in being a part of the planning committee, please reach out to Nancy K. Expect more details soon! And please continue to be on the lookout for more announcements and information about this!
- In August of 2025, the World Service Convention will be held in Orlando, FL. While NFI is not officially sponsoring or hosting this event, ANYONE is welcome to give service for it! If you are interested in helping with planning or otherwise volunteering, please contact Susan B. by email at chair@oaregion8.org

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.
- NEW PO BOX!!!!!! The PO box for NFI is now: PO Box 31072, Savannah, GA 31410
- The intergroup voted and unanimously agreed to move forward with signing the contract to reserve and rent space at Marywood for a Big Book Retreat to be held November 1-3, 2024. Expect future updates from the planning committee here. For now, please save the date!
- Welcomed two new intergroup representatives from St. Augustine's Face-to-Face Monday meeting, and the
 intergroup is going to work to get literature and materials to them (we had a new meeting startup kit that was
 never used, so rather than buy a new one, we will transfer this one). Make sure to look for the article in this
 month's Inner Voice highlighting this new meeting!
- Discussed the possibility of NFI holding our own Zoom security workshop, but at this time we do not have someone who is available to lead this. If you are interested in taking the lead on such a workshop, please let Echo G. know at chairnfi@gmail.com

NFI NEW Mailing Address P.O. Box 31072 Savannah GA 31410

Please update your meetings and other records



Events from All Over

Meet the Virtual Region Chair



12 PM ET (4 PM UTC) & 8:30 PM ET (12:30 PM UTC)
The Fourth Friday of Every Month

Join the DISCUSSION

Learn about UPCOMING EVENTS



Zoom Link: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87080400598?pwd=TnhOQm1EN1R1WWQ0N2xVbEJQQmtuQT09

Meeting ID: 870 8040 0598. Passcode: 120912

933



Always to extend the hand and heart of OA to all who share my compulsion; for this I am responsible.









Great for Newcomers or LongTimers!



OA Central Ontario Intergroup Presents a:

Quick Step Study

- TUESDAYS (Five sessions)
 Feb 20, 27, Mar 5, 12 and 19, 2024
 2:00pm 3:30pm Eastern Time
 (Toronto/New York time)
- By Zoom or phone
- Free 7th Tradition
- Session Format: Write on the step, share on the step. (Read the step ahead of time.) Day 1 = Steps 1, 2, & 3, Day 2 is steps 3 – 4, etc.
- You don't have to attend all the sessions

Registration

- Registration required 24 hours ahead of the start date or individual session.
- Register by emailing: coiquicksteps@oaontario.org

CHECK YOUR JUNK MAIL if you don't hear from us.
 Email again if that doesn't work. And email again!



"This workshop has been all and more than I could have hoped for."

-former workshop participant



You Are Not Alone

Quarterly Region 3 Relapse Prevention

Workshop

Saturday, March 16, 2024 Time: 1:00 pm - 2:30 pm CT

Hear speakers share their experiences with relapse/relapse prevention

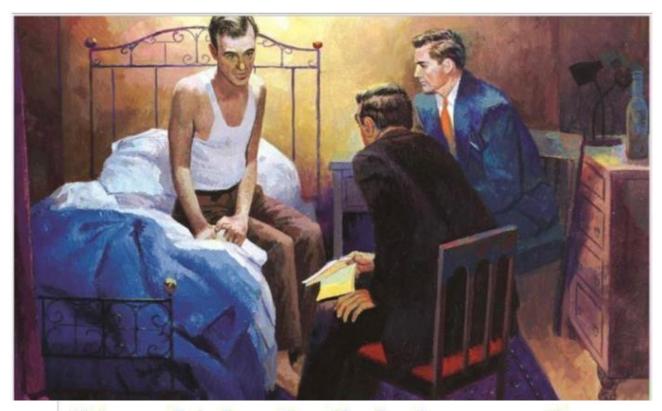
ZOOM ID: 963 218 9907

Password: Recovery

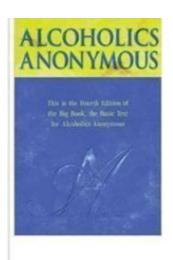
Questions? Email r3tswregister@oaregion3.org Sponsored by Region 3







Using scripts based on the beginners meetings in the 1940s: a focused introduction to the 12 step program in 4 weekly sessions.



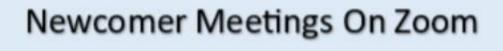
OVEREATERS ANONYMOUS
BACK TO BASICS
EVERY SUNDAY
7:30-9pm UK
2:30-4pm EST
11:30am - 1PM PST

ZOOM ID: 853 4685 2850 PASSWORD:121212









(Saturday Night)

7:30 PM MST

ID: 890 7562 4047

PW: ODAAT

6:00 PM PST

ID: 934 6772 5942

PW: 172301

More from Region 8

A new way to carry the message!

Region 8 announces an excellent resource page with links to valuable OA information to benefit newcomers, returning and current members. Maybe even the "old timers."

Have you read the appendices to *Overeaters Anonymous, Third Edition*? They include writings on The Role of a Plan of Eating, A Disease of the Mind, A Disease of the Mind, A Disease of the Body, A Disease of the Spirit and more.

People may scan this QR code (point your smart phone's camera at the QR code and it will pop up a link) and connect to the Region 8 resources page. Please feel free to print this information and pass around in face-to-face meetings or insert into a visual format for virtual meetings.

Check it out — Pass it on!







DONATIONS REPORT 2023		Jan	YTD TOTAL
General Fund / no meeting # specified		\$162.64	\$162.64
Jacksonville Groups	Grp#		
Mon: Shepherd of the Woods Church	00774		\$0.00
Tue: Lakewood United Meth Church	36763		\$0.00
Tue: 7pm Jacksonville (virtual)	800028		
Wed: Step Study Mandarin	51223	\$64.09	\$64.09
Wed: JAX Beach-Wisdom at the Beaches	54507		\$0.00
Thur: Jacksonvile 9am - Our redeemer	57370		
Thur: Newcomer, Lakeview Health	47756		\$0.00
Fri: Orange Park - 10am	03654		\$0.00
Sat: Saturday Steppers-Ponte Vedra Bch	51693		\$0.00
Sat: Super Saturday Lakeview	20025		\$0.00
Sat: Believe in Recovery First, Mandarin	32773	\$28.64	\$28.64
Gainesville Groups			
Mon: Big Book Study (Alachua)	51137	\$25.00	\$25.00
Thu: Unity Church(Acceptance)	50421	\$9.22	\$9.22
Wed: Gainesville Unity Church	57568		
Sat: 9:30 AM Welcome Home	48324		\$0.00
Other Florida Groups			
Mon: Palm Coast-St Mark by the Sea	38320	\$62.00	\$62.00
Tues: Lifesaver - Palatka	38464		\$0.00
Wed: Palm Coast - 10am	56604	\$62.00	\$62.00
Thu: Fernandina Beach	49101		\$0.00
Thu: Flagler Beach	15171	\$11.00	\$11.00
Sat: St. Augustine Serenity	00235		\$0.00
Sun: Palm Coast/Flagler Beach	56072		\$0.00
Southern Georgia Groups			
Tue: Jesup	54175		\$0.00
Wed: Douglas, GA	57445		
Wed: Savannah - 5:30 pm	50301		\$0.00
Thur: Brunswick	51988		\$0.00
Sun: Savannah - 5pm	54362	\$28.64	\$28.64
Totals		\$453.23	\$453.23
Don to WSO		\$135.97	
Don to SOAR8		\$45.32	

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 9, NFI tallies the group donations and sends 10% of the total to Region 8, with an additional 30% to the World Service Office.

Donations sent directly to World Service Office do not reflect in our group donations total.

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.

