

The Sunshiner

Overeaters Anonymous - Ottawa District Intergroup
Spring Edition 2015

Topic of this edition:

Step 3 – Desire to stop eating compulsively (faith)

Made a decision to turn our will and our lives to the care of God as we understood Him. p.59 of the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous, 4th Edition

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Note from the Publications Chair

Hi, my name is Danielle G. and I am a compulsive overeater. I am the new publications chair of the Ottawa District Intergroup. My responsibilities are to publish **The Sunshiner** and update the Ottawa District Intergroup OA web site. You can contact me at oaweb@oa-ottawa.ca.

Thank you for your service by providing articles, pearls of wisdom, crossword puzzle related to your experience with God / Higher Power. I wish also to thank Chantal G. for her first-rate proofreading skills.

- UPCOMING EVENT -

**Annual weekend retreat
June 12 – 14, 2015**

FREEDOM THROUGH THE 12 STEPS

CHANGE OF VENUE

Centre de l'amour, Plantagenet, Ontario

Registration fee: \$180.00

Registration deadline: June 2, 2015

Registration forms are available at many OA meetings
or refer to Ottawa District Intergroup – OA web site

www.oa-ottawa.ca

EDITORIAL POLICY

The Sunshiner is the newsletter of Ottawa District Intergroup of Overeaters Anonymous. All submissions to the publication chair must be signed, and when published will appear with first name and last initial unless otherwise requested. Names will be withheld upon request.

Describe your OA experience. The focus should be on OA. References to other Twelve-Step programs and outside support are considered outside issues and cannot be published.

The opinions expressed are those of the writer, not those of Ottawa District Intergroup or OA as a whole. Please address all submissions and correspondence to **The Sunshiner** via email to:

sunshiner@oa-ottawa.ca

Can OA Work for Atheists or Agnostics (Without Being “Converted”)?

I just looked up the word “faith” in my Funk & Wagnall’s.

Faith (fāth) n. 1. Confidence in or dependence on a person, statement, or thing. 2. Belief without need of certain proof. 3. Belief in God (...). 4. A system of religious belief (...).

Before OA I thought faith only meant believing in a god or religion. When I first got to OA I was angry about religion. Whenever someone mentioned “God” or Higher Power”, I was so furious parts of me would pucker. Also, the founding text (the Big Book (BB) of Alcoholics Anonymous) that we use in meetings was too religious. The circular logic in the chapter “We Agnostics” was insulting. It was also anti-feminist. The whole book clearly needed updating – and guess who would nominate herself to be on the international editing committee? Over the years, however, I have let go of a lot of my anger. I can now listen to different opinions and see what I can learn. I now love the BB – warts and all.

Here are some of my random thoughts on finding a Higher Power (HP) for me in OA:

- I already had a blind faith in numerous higher powers before I reached OA. Food was my main higher power. This was definitely putting my faith in and dependence on a “thing”. Therefore, if I could believe in these destructive HPs, if I already had a god, then I must be capable of finding a new OA higher power. [BB, p.54] “In one form or another we had been living by faith and little else.”
- My HP is cobbled together: my gut instinct, Mother Nature, the moon, an 80-year-old version of myself who is wise, and the fellowship of OA. I still have no god.
- I heard this on a phone meeting this week: a higher power is whatever or whomever you turn to in difficult times and situations.
- To live a happy life, I now know my “God”/HP cannot be: me, my intellect, food, unhealthy computer use, video games, workaholism, napping excessively, or any single human (including Oprah!).
- Prayer and being on one’s knees is not exclusive to religious rites and it works for me. Humility ≠ Humiliation.
- I did not require a bolt-of-lightning-God-spiritual-awakening to work this program. My spiritual experience is slow, godless, and of the ongoing “educational variety” [BB, p567].
- I can “(...) only be defeated by an attitude of intolerance (...)” [BB, p567].

In my experience, OA can work for atheists and agnostics. I have had physical, emotional, and spiritual recovery – I just had to “[cease] fighting anything or anyone – including [food].” [BB, p84]. I have also (mostly) stopped arguing with the now-deceased men who wrote the BB in 1935.

Today I try to “turn [my] will and [my] life over to the care” of the HP of my understanding each morning and throughout my day. I certainly still use my brain, but left alone to make decisions it propels me forward with guilt, shame, and fear. When I consult my higher power beforehand things are easier and life turns out better than I ever could have planned using logic alone.

Anonymous in Kitchissippi

PEARLS OF WISDOM

From My Sponsor

This column features simple pearls of wisdom which have been imparted to me over the years by various sponsors. They are in no particular order in my recovery or of importance. The gems that follow are in keeping with this issue's theme: Faith, the principle of Step 3.

Ask God for help. His help is there for the asking.

Ask Him/Her to remove the fear.

Surrender them (your loved ones) to God. Put them in the God box.

Everyone is spiritually connected to God.

Are you putting them (other people) in the God spot?

Pray for the willingness.

Use the Serenity Prayer.

Say the Step 3 prayer:

"God, I offer myself to Thee"

There is a God and it's not me.

God, as I don't understand Him!

God has a plan.

H.P. is in control. You have no control over it.

Don't try to take care of it. You're not that powerful.

Let go and let God.

Let God guide you in what you are to say.

He sees the person that you are (not just the body).

Feeling that you're God; that the world revolves around you.

That's your ego talking, not God.

EGO = Easing God Out

God sometimes lets us be unhappy about things.

When fear knocks, answer with faith: God is taking care of me – I don't have to.

Realize that it's but for the grace of God.

We're all human.

God gives us the freedom to choose.

Trust God.

Call your sponsor! And stay tuned for more!

Dawn-Marie

A Non-Religious, Non-Anthropomorphic Higher Power

My HP, or rather, my relationship with my HP, is a work in progress. These ideas are not entirely of my own creation. They represent my adaptation of the accumulated wisdom of many in the rooms here in Ottawa and via online meetings.



HP= My HP is not an anthropomorphic superhero. It won't swoop me out of the way of danger in any magical kind of way. Instead, my HP is like a True North Compass that glows with divine love, light and energy. I know I am in its presence when I am feeling peaceful. In my opinion, this compass is like an indicator on the dashboard of a car, when I remember to look at it, it points me in a "Good Orderly Direction" that will guide me to be strong and free. The key is that I always need to be the one to reach out to it, and when I do it energizes me. By reaching out, I actually mean reaching in, because the compass on that dashboard actually resides in my heart. So I need to look/listen inward to sense where it's pointing (and need to get over the baggage of resentment that HP-connection is always my own choice). I've learned that I can't make that connection well when my life gets too busy/noisy. Like any magnet (which a compass is), it can be grossly distorted by stronger magnetic forces around it, which may not be entirely positive for me or others. Therefore, I need to take certain steps daily to keep aligned with my true north compass, and keep it closer to me regularly, so that the noise/competing magnets can't distance me from it too much.



Faith = I'm not really ready to take my hands off the steering wheel of my life completely. But I am working at developing a routine of sufficient humility whereby, with sincerity and humility, I remember to daily take a moment to loosen my tight grip on the steering wheel of life, and check in with that compass on my dashboard to see how it might advise me. I "Let Go & Let Good" by inviting the "Light of Love" (which shines from this compass) into any difficult situation. I do this via journaling and gratitude lists and stepwork -- by asking for my normal and often defective mental habits (inc. interpretations & opinions) to be superseded by a different, gentler mode of perception (i.e., "Loving thoughts"). I also use any other tools available (prayer, meditation, reading spiritual literature, talking to my HP's reps on earth in the form of people I know, etc). Meditation in particular helps me to remember that I am not my small negative emotions (fear, anger, etc), and that I am connected to something larger. And working on this "faith" is about progress not perfection: Not doing everything on this list, but doing at least one thing sincerely each day.



God = God is just the broader energy field -- the mysterious force for Good in this world -- that connects everyone's HP. Our size/shape/colour doesn't matter, we are all connected to one another through our HP's connection to it. So, like a real candle, this light and energy of peaceful loving compassion never diminishes by being shared. The reality is that the energy of Love is a real eternal creation, it's always there for us when we turn to it, and nothing can destroy it. I've learned that waiting with cynical resentment of God's abandonment, makes me part of the problem, not the solution. Although some human cells may have no awareness that they, too, are a part of a larger loving body (e.g., Just visualize how sunbeams may not realize they're part of the sun), that doesn't change the reality of our interconnectedness. But when we come back to focusing on this reality of interconnectedness, we return to the light. Lamps without electricity cast no Light, and Electricity without Lamps cast no light either. Together, however, they cast out all darkness. When everyone strives to be connected to their HP, you can really feel it in the rooms of our meetings.

Martha G.

GOOD IDEAS HEARD AT SPECIAL EVENTS

I like going to OA Retreats, Conferences and Minithons. I get the opportunity to hear different speakers from my regular meetings. Variety is good. A different vision and outlook is good. I hear different messages or the same messages in a different way. My addict's selective memory needs reminders. Sometimes what I hear speaks to me in a new way, as if a new outlook gives it a different twist or a different meaning or maybe it's just because I was ready to hear that message that day. Either way, I always get "new" ideas when I go to those special events- either from the speaker or through thoughts of my own, inspired by what I've just heard. That is why I choose to bring a "special thoughts" book with me to these events so that I can record those ideas down.

Here are some thoughts and ideas I wrote in my book at the Region 6 Conference in Niagara Falls, autumn of 2003 , that relate to Step 3 (*yes, you read correctly- and it is still all true today!*)

- I have become a whole different person since I chose to rely on God, one day at a time (ODAAT). I owe my recovery to this change of attitude. I owe it to myself and to those I love to renew this commitment every day.
- We ask God for willingness.
- Ask God, ask anybody, anything for help: sponsors, sponsees, OA buddies, music, walking in the leaves, in the snow, wind in my face...Whatever they tell you, do it!
- I'm not in charge anymore.
- It's OK to ask for help
- Ask for willingness but take action
- To be willing is like: Ready...Set...Go!!
- Worry ends where faith begins.

Here is a list of some of those good thoughts on Step 3; I got from the 2003 Christmas Minithon:

- Ask for help and be ready and open to receive and accept that help which may come in any way or fashion, usually quite unexpectedly
- Keep it simple. Easy does it. First things first.
- I do not have to do it on my own. (*Funny how I keep getting that message, even today!*)
- Failing to plan is planning to fail.
- I have a new employer: God. My paycheck is abstinence.
- Keep everything as simple as possible.
- Keep time with your HP a daily priority.
- If you ask the question "Why?" it may mean that you are trying to control.

Micheline

Step Three

“Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.”

In step one I admitted my powerlessness over food and the unmanageability of my life. In step two I came to believe that a Power greater than myself could restore me to sanity.

Now, in step three I decide that the God of my understanding can and will care for my will and my life.

No longer am I in charge. God wills me to be sane and that I abstain from compulsive overeating. He loves me and does not want me to binge, or under-eat or behave like a crazy person. So I lean on God to care for me.

Sometimes I hear people shortening the wording of this step (and I have too!) to say that it is the step in which I turn my will and life over to God.

An important missing word is the **CARE** of God.

To me that means that not only can this Power greater than myself restore me to sanity, he CARES for me – he loves me and he wants the best for me.

I could say the same about my husband, my best friend, my sponsor – but only God has the power to arrest my compulsion to overeat – because let’s face it – it took a miracle for me to eat sanely, mend relationships and feel useful and peaceful and whole. A miracle. Where do we tap into miracles? Not from any human power.

And so, in step three I surrender my will and life to the care of the One who loves me unconditionally- and it soon becomes apparent that no one – including myself – can look after me the way that my Higher Power does. I ask, I receive. Profoundly simple.

Teresa B

Intergroup positions available

Ottawa District Intergroup is still looking to fill the following positions:



- **Region 6 Representative**
- **Literature Committee Chair**
- **By-Laws Committee Chair**

For more information, access www.aa-ottawa.ca, refer to the Intergroup information pamphlet on the *Home* page.

The application form can be found under *About OA / By-Laws*, page 20 – Appendix B.

Bring the completed form to the next Intergroup Meeting. They are held every 4th Saturday of each month (except December) from 10:15 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. at McNabb Community Centre.