

Fall Edition

2023



# The Sunshiner

“There is never an end to change, to growth” (For Today, October 2)

## A word from Meaghan H. - Sunshiner Co-Editor

“Change” is mentioned a lot in our literature. As I looked through our *For Today* daily reader, there were so many references to the change that happens to us in program. And for me, that change has happened on all three levels – physical, emotional, and spiritual.

When I came to these rooms, I wanted to change how I ate so that my weight would stop changing (and settle at a number *I* thought was acceptable). I think I saw myself akin to a car that needed a quick fix - I could go to OA a set time, be fixed up, cleaned up, and then sent on my merry way of life. Once I got abstinent, I quickly realized that my thinking was broken, and that my way of reacting to life (and people) needed to change. This was an inside job - one that would take more than 12 months!

Spiritually, when I came into Program, God was a vague figure I occasionally prayed to (usually with a wish list), who usually let me down. I was desperate for help, but my late-night prayers felt like they went nowhere. Today, spiritual recovery is an area where I still yearn for change – or growth. Today I have a Higher Power of my understanding who is acting in my life, though I don't always feel Its presence. I hear people in the rooms share about the constant sense that God is all around them – this is what I want. And where I have more growth to do.

Sometimes I wonder, how much have I actually changed, is it enough? Is this what recovery is supposed to look like? Today, I tell myself that I am exactly where I am supposed to be; and, that the journey is not over. OA has changed me from the inside out, and I keep returning because I have more inner work to do – particularly in my relationship with my HP. It is a relief that there is no OA graduation. I keep coming back because I'm not finished growing, and that growth is in my HP's hands.

## In this edition

- Change - Meaghan H.
- The Monkey Fist - S.M.
- Change Is the Only Constant- Danielle G.
- Whole New Me - Joan
- Poems - Anonymous
- What Role Does Gratitude Play in My Recovery - Dorit

# The Monkey Fist

Whether we are standing at the beginning of the winding path unsure of the way, have begun marching resolutely up a long hill or are comfortably strolling along abstinence boulevard, this OA journey of change has one thing in common for everyone. We cannot do it alone.



I heard the story of the monkey fist when I was volunteering for another organization several years ago. I saw a fellow volunteer using one as a zipper pull on her jacket and asked her about it. She said a monkey fist is a knot wound around a small sphere like a marble or something larger depending on what size you want. It got its name because it looks like a small, clenched fist or paw.

**Sailors used to tie large ones on the end of their ropes to add weight when they would throw lines ashore or across to assist another vessel.**

Over time the humble monkey fist has become a symbol of offering help and hope to others.

I wear a small silver one on a chain to remind myself to both ask for help and to be willing to throw my monkey fist to others in need.

When I found OA earlier this summer and was welcomed with so much kindness, openness, and willingness to help I thought of my monkey fist and how I am often the first to throw mine out but rarely willing to catch one myself.

I am still learning and working hard to accept help and I have come to understand how much true change depends on getting over that hurdle, especially when it does not come naturally.

**All my instincts tell me to say I am fine, and I don't need help.**

But I often do and just stopping in the moment to change my mind set to one of acceptance has brought about some small changes so far. Healing change is going to take a lot of work and opening up to people. So, throw your monkey fist often and start to catch the ones that come your way.

S.M. – Ottawa

ODIG 12th Step Within Committee presents:

# Exploring Sponsorship Through Steps 1, 2 and 3.

*In Person Workshop*



**Saturday October 28  
1:00pm to 3:00pm**

- **Speakers**
- **Breakout Groups**
- **'Ask It' Basket**

7<sup>th</sup> tradition will be  
collected in person

**McNabb Recreation  
Centre.**

**Community Room (downstairs)  
180 Percy Street, Ottawa.**

For more information contact  
Erica S. 8733769797

*"Just when I think I have learned the way to live, life changes."* – Hugh Prather

My life is different since my Higher Power (GOD) brought me to the OA program. I am learning to accept changes instead of avoiding them, one day at a time. I have God, steps, tools and fellowship. Before OA, I would try my best to avoid or fight change. It was so exhausting. The OA program is teaching me to be an adult, to face life on life's terms. I pray God to understand and accept: "Change is the only constant in life." –

Heraclitus

Danielle, Ottawa

The Theme for the Winter Sunshiner is

**'The Gifts of Recovery'**

Tell us about the gifts that recovery has brought into your mind, body, and spirit.

Sharing your recovery through the Sunshiner is a wonderful way to do service.

Email submissions, suggestions, and feedback to [sunshiner@oa-ottawa.org](mailto:sunshiner@oa-ottawa.org)



## Journée spéciale la joie de vivre et l'action

**October 21, 2023 @ 10:00 am – 3:00 pm:**

**Cap Santé Outaouais**

**Gatineau, QC J8Y 1S7**

**Canada**

**CONTACT: Louise C. 819-208-0207**



# A collection of poems

Author Anonymous



Enigmatic

(not automatic)

engine on contradictory truths

What do I have to lose

through new non-intuitive acts

(as if)

by listening

to the still, quiet voice

(of inspiration)

within me & greater than I

I need to put on

my own oxygen mask

before I am able to help others

and yet

I need to help others

in order to heal

ouroboros spinning wheel

twists stronger threads

to weave into my life

Waterwheel

flow of life

spinning, cyclic

power that grinds out

what I need

Returning again and again

(necessities)

A river is never the same

but has constancy, consistency

I, too, persevere

repeating the actions

that keep me well

upwelling deep strength

a source, momentum

to keep me going

another moment

meltdown

(feels cruel)

crucible

(reduced to goo)

metamorphosis

chrysalis

transform

new shape

-Shift perspective

(no secret objectives)

no keys to CTRL

+ Alt reality (fantasy)

no backspace,

turn to face

two steps forward & one step

back

is dancing

the winds change

and whips my hair

no matter if I stand still

or walk forth

weather moves in

larger forces

than whether or not I

a change in the wind

beyond me, yet surrounds me

(brings tears to my face)

facing the world as is

perhaps with shoulders hunching

braced, yet safe, within



## What Part Does Gratitude Play in my Recovery?

-by Dorit

I have a 3-fold disease. It is physical, mental and spiritual, and five years ago it almost killed me. Physically, I weighed almost three hundred pounds and was very sick from four serious medical conditions caused by my life-long cycle of dieting and overeating compulsively. Mentally, I felt that I was going insane because I was always in distress and to soothe myself, I thought about food ALL THE TIME... my life felt completely out of control. And spiritually, I lived in a reality of constant fear and self-hatred. A therapist who knew me 13 years ago said last week that she had never met someone who hated themselves as much as I did.

**By working the Steps described in the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous, I now have a daily reprieve from my misery.**

Physically, I am maintaining a loss of 150 pounds, and no-longer suffer from the four conditions that threatened my life. Mentally, I feel sane and use my clear-thinking to take care of myself and to be of service to others. And spiritually, I choose to live in a reality where a Power greater than myself loves and protects me and I am safe. I have become empowered by my connection to this Higher Power, and now feel like a worthy and powerful person.

The promises described in the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous are all coming true for me. I say that I am "recovered", because I have had a spiritual awakening and I have food neutrality, which basically means that I enjoy my food more than I ever did when I ate compulsively, but once my meal is done, I don't think about it again. And I NEVER need to soothe myself with food anymore. I no longer multiply my miseries, so I am happy. And the truth is that I am happy even when things don't go my way, even when something "bad" happens.

**The reason for this state of happiness is that I am now ACUTELY AWARE OF MY BLESSINGS and every moment of the day, I am GRATEFUL for them.**

I am very grateful for this program that has given me the tools to recover my sanity. I am incredibly grateful for my connection with a Power that I can't explain or understand, but believe is there, loving and protecting me every moment of the day. I am grateful for all the love in my life that I give freely and freely receive.

Here's an example of how it works: a few months ago, I suffered from such a bad migraine that I ended up in the hospital emergency room twice in one week. As expected, the wait was long (12 hours the first day and seven the second day) and I was very ill. But I was so happy that my friend who accompanied me was taken aback. She said: "Dorit, why are you so happy? You're ill, you're sitting in a crowded ER with stupid babies crying and people coughing, the triage nurse didn't even give you a quiet/dark room to wait in..." and she went on and on.

I looked at her with genuine surprise. I KNEW that there was a Power greater than myself that loved and protected me, and so while everything she was mentioning was true, it REALLY didn't matter! What I was aware of (and was ever so grateful for) was the fact that I lived in Canada and had access to medical help when I needed it, that I had brought all the abstinent food I needed with me, that I had a friend who cared enough about me to spend hours in a place that clearly distressed her and that there were other friends and family keeping in touch with me through my phone and so on and so forth.

**The fact that I was in more pain than I had ever been in, even while birthing my daughter, did not affect my happiness and my ability to be grateful for all the many blessings in my life.**

I'm not suggesting that my life is perfect, but when I do fall back into fear, anger, or hatred MY RECOVERY GIVES ME THE SKILLS, THE DAILY PRACTICE, TO COME BACK INTO GRATITUDE AND AWARENESS OF MY MANY BLESSINGS. That is what working the Steps has done for me. That is what it can do for you, too.

Enjoying the Sunshiner?

Please consider submitting  
your own contribution!

[sunshiner@oa-ottawa.org](mailto:sunshiner@oa-ottawa.org)

"Rock bottom is a place where change becomes a dire necessity. I must change or die."

(For Today, May 3)

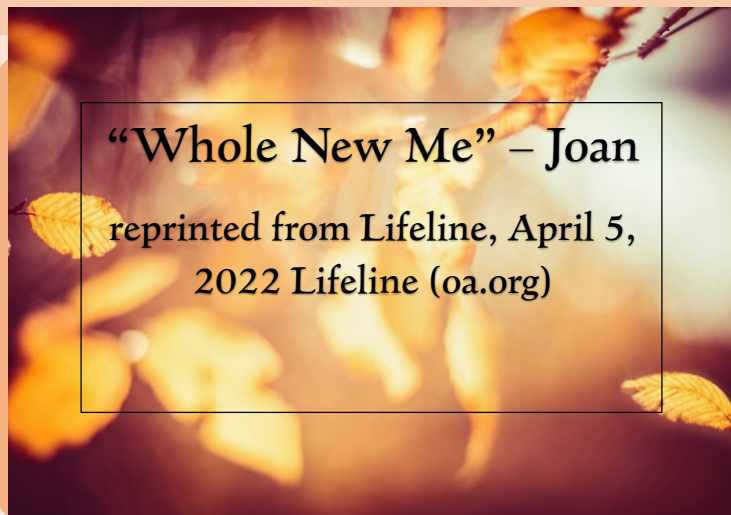
I'm Joan. If you knew me before, you'd say, "She's not the same person I knew four years ago!" and you'd be right!

**I am a new me. I am the person I hoped I would be, with a sense of confidence and purpose that had eluded me throughout my life. I am joyous, happy, hopeful, and useful.**

What changed? I let go of my past and applied my talents and potential toward satisfying my needs and straightening my priorities, with the help of my OA fellows!

When I came back into the OA rooms a little over four years ago, I was no different than other people who sat with arms crossed, warding off any light or truth from touching their hearts. I was arrogant, self-righteous, and judgmental. I sat undaunted by the wisdom before me; I was never going to admit I was a compulsive overeater – at least not in this lifetime.

I knew my life would change for the better if I just listened to my Higher Power and worked out my problems with the help of my sponsor. Then someone started a new special-topic meeting focused on the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous. We were to read and share on the first 164 pages. Over and over again, we read. It was easy to relate, and it scared me to death. I could see myself becoming fatter and fatter, sicker and sicker, with less and less control over my body if I didn't get serious about my disease.



## **“Whole New Me” – Joan**

reprinted from Lifeline, April 5,  
2022 Lifeline (oa.org)

My wake-up call came as I was driving to an OA meeting. I had to find a bathroom because I was having a diverticulitis attack. My Higher Power came through for me. I heard the answer to my problem: **“Take care of yourself and stop sabotaging your success in life.”**

Where did that thought come from! Of course it came from my Higher Power, who always guides me, although I don't always listen.

I knew my life would change for the better if I just listened to my Higher Power and worked out my problems with the help of my sponsor. A short time later, I did a Fourth Step with my sponsor and unloaded years of fear, anger, and worry. I felt 50 pounds (23 kg) lighter, and my mind was free to take on the challenges before me. I became intergroup representative for my Big Book OA meeting. I started a newsletter for our district, and I began sponsoring.

The person I am today is no longer full of yesterday's resentments. She is a person who seeks daily to be the OA message. I am forever grateful.

**“Because I trust the OA program, my whole attitude and outlook has changed.”**

(For today, Mar 12)