



The Sunshiner

Winter Edition 2025

The theme of this edition is Hope

Hope – what I needed as a newcomer, and as a member in relapse. It was the small light that kept me coming back to program when I was neck deep in the food. Sometimes it was so dim I didn't see it, but then I heard it through the voice of from my sponsor and other abstinence members.

“It doesn't have to feel this way ever again.”

“Don't leave 5 minutes before the miracle happens.”

“We celebrate to give the newcomer, or someone still struggling, hope.”

“If this program worked for me, it can work for you.”

We share it when we keep going to meetings, in abstinence.

It is embodied in the promises.

It is free to give, and priceless to those who need it.

- Meaghan H.

In this edition

What I needed as a newcomer– Meaghan H.

What is Hope – Shari K.

Hope in the Mess
- Carol R.

Daily Hope - Paula C.

Have a plan for newcomers – Susan P.

What is hope?

The Merriam Webster Dictionary provides several definitions for the word hope.

The following two are my favorites:

- To want something to happen or be true.
- To desire with expectation of obtainment or fulfillment.

When I first attended an OA meeting, over 20 years ago, I went because I felt like I had run out of hope. And yet, according to the first definition listed above, I must have had a little hope because I wanted OA to work. I wanted the ideas that OA members were espousing to me, to happen and be true. I wanted that with all of my heart and soul. I had absolutely nowhere else to go. I weighed 200 pounds; I was in physical pain; my marriage was in jeopardy and I was angry and upset all of the time.

I listened in that meeting as if my life depended on it, because it did, and I attended six different meetings, as recommended. By the end of that sixth meeting, I was abstinent and I had a new kind of hope, the kind expressed in that second definition above: I desired with expectation of obtainment. Hallelujah! It was the first time in years that I felt encouraged that something could be done about my compulsive overeating, and the first something that I did was admit that I was powerless over food and that my life had become unmanageable.

By Shari K
Montreal

What a relief! It wasn't my fault as I had always been made to believe! There was a plan I could follow that absolutely guaranteed my success if I followed it completely, with faith and humility.

From that moment on, and to this very moment today, my life has been full of hope. As I write this little article, I am at a healthy body weight, my marriage is exquisite, and I can swim and run and play with little or no pain. Anger has been replaced with acceptance and joy. I maintain an evolving and growing relationship with my Higher Power who has helped me survive two relapses and come out the other end stronger and more dedicated to this program than ever. The sparkle in my eyes is hard not to see.

If you are reading these words, no matter how discouraged you feel at this moment, you have some spark of hope. I encourage you to follow it right to the open doors of a meeting. I hope to see you there.



“Hope in the Mess” – Carol R.

OA gives me daily hope

H= happiness

O= open mindedness

P= peace

E= excitement

For all of these I am truly grateful and blessed!!

- Paula C



Congratulations to Tish on celebrating 41 years of abstinence in January.

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

The Spring theme is Sponsorship

Email submissions, suggestions, and feedback to:

sunshiner@oa-ottawa.org



Have a plan for newcomers.

Susan P.

At this time of year many newcomers arrive at our meetings. Here are some suggestions for welcoming and retaining newcomers.

Our Responsibility Pledge:

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

We are all responsible!

- Have a greeter to welcome the newcomer and to follow up after the meeting.
- At in-person meetings, hand out the "Where Do I Start?" pamphlet.
- At virtual meetings, share the link in the chat to the "Where Do I Start?" pamphlet free download.
- Have a phone list that is up to date and offer it to the newcomer, either in person or by email.
- Let the newcomer know they may share or just listen during the meeting.
- Let them know that they are no longer alone; they are in a safe place, and life can get better if they work the Steps.
- If newcomers are present, consider focusing shares on your experience as a newcomer.
- Do not pressure them to speak.
- Do not ignore them.
- If the newcomer is willing to share contact info, follow up with an email, phone call, or text message.
- Accept them as they are.
- Suggest your intergroup run a workshop on retaining newcomers so that all groups will know how.
- Use suggested meeting formats that contain wording specifically for newcomers:

"To the newcomer, we suggest attending at least six different meetings to learn the many ways OA can help you. There are many diverse types of meetings, all of which are available to support your recovery from compulsive eating. You will find hope and encouragement in Overeaters Anonymous."

- Read "Our Invitation to You" when newcomers are present.
- Share information about available sponsors.
- Have retaining newcomers as part of your intergroup's strategic plan.
- Be creative and share your ideas and successes with other groups.
- Invite them to come to the next meeting.