

Novation

OA NORTHERN VIRGINIA OUTREACH INTERGROUP NEWSLETTER

December, 2001

20 cents



PRACTICING PRAYER

Step 11 is a skill in process and like any other skill requires practice to improve our conscious contact with God. Saint Augustine who lived in the 4th century C.E. observed that this process of spiritual development is like healing from a near-fatal wound. We are healing from all the wounds our years of compulsive sting have inflicted on our souls and minds, as well as our bodies. "It is one thing," he said, "to remove the spear, but quite another to heal the wound by long and careful treatment."

As we daily practice Step 11 our healing occurs and gradually our old ways of thinking and responding are erased and we find our spirits are being renewed. Steps 2 & 3 remind us that our renewal is not accomplished through self-effort alone but by faith that God can and will do for us what we cannot do for ourselves.

In this healing process which is Step 11 our effort and practice takes the form of reading both O.A./A.A. literature and other inspirational texts that carry personal meaning for us. But we don't just read them, we meditate upon them, we allow them to speak to us in deep and meaningful ways, in ways that we can later recall receiving comfort, strength, or wisdom as needed throughout the day.

In Steps 6 8 7 we ask our Higher Power to trans-

for us and in Step 11 we wait, confident that H. P. is working in us to accomplish our spiritual awakening. Step 10 reminds us each day of missteps and shortcomings, something we should have done or not done, and we may wonder about our progress. Still Step 11 asks us to wait and not be impatient. Though incomplete we are in process. As the Big Book, Alcoholics Anonymous, says on page 75 in regard to completing Step 5: "Once we have taken this Step, withholding nothing, we are delighted. We can look the world in the eye. We can be alone at perfect peace and ease. Our fears fall from us. We *begin* to feel the nearness of our Creator."

This is only a beginning; Step 11 is how we grow nearer to God, day by day, and by practicing prayer walk, "hand in hand with the Spirit of the Universe."

Anonymous

Getting Through the Holidays Abstinently:

This is the time of year that becomes very challenging for those of us who have issues with food. What are some of the things we can do to help neutralize the holidays? Things like calling our sponsor on a daily basis, making reach out phone calls, going to meetings, writing our food down the night before so we don't choose our meals by emotion, doing food prep one day a week so we don't have to spend so much time in the kitchen. When going out to eat, planning ahead as to when we are eating out, making a phone call to the caterer about the food being served at a function we must attend, focusing on the people during function rather than the food and doing more service. What we may be feeling is probably just like what someone else may be feeling and outreach to another fellow OAer may be just the thing to help during this time of the year.

Have a wonderful and abstinent holiday season!

Jan L., NOVA Chair



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Anonymous

As We Understand Him...

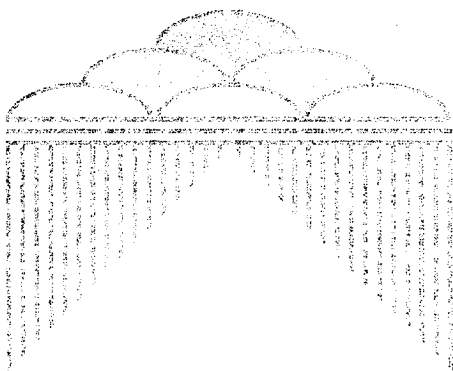
Before OA, I was filled with a hundred fortes of fear. Some of these fears were real, most were imagined. I would become so obsessed with these fears becoming frustrated and at times angry, I would resort to compulsively overeating. At times I would try to do things over and over again to get different results to the point my life would become unmanageable that would bring me right back into the food. I wanted to stop this vicious cycle, the obsessions and fantasies as the "committee" in my head would take over. This is the cunning, baffling and powerful part of the disease that pulls me back into the disease of compulsive overeating.

When I came to Overeaters Anonymous (OA) and began learning the tools of the program, my life began to slowly unfold and I became physically abstinent. I was attending meetings regularly, working with a sponsor and practicing the 12 steps honestly and to the best of my ability. I was gradually able to pray, listen and let go of my fears, real or imagined. At times these fears would return and anger over my feelings would prevail bringing me to the desire to overeat with a vengeance. It has been helpful to attend the OA Sun. 11th step meeting. Listening to those who share their experience, strength and hope on their conscious contact with the God of their understanding helps me focus on moving toward the spiritual aspect of this program and abstinence.

And how do I find that conscious contact with the God of my understanding? As I do my early morning walk, I ask God, or my higher power (HP) as I lovingly call him to help me find the healthy food that will nourish my body and soul. While I am on this journey, I bless my fears, family and friends. I humbly ask for help saying, "Thy will be done not mine." In this quiet moment I see the sun come up, and a sense of peace comes over me.

I become aware that I am not alone; that there is something greater than myself in the universe. Hope sings my heart and soul extolling gratitude to the God of my understanding. I listen to that still small voice within knowing God has spoken and I have heard. I move toward the conscious contact with the God of my understanding. I meditate to the words, "thy will be done not mine." As emotional sobriety returns, the fear subsides and the obsession with food leaves me.

BJ



PRAYER AND MEDITATION

Prayer and Meditation has really enhanced my program. Doing it on a daily basis, especially in the morning and when I'm going through a difficult time, helps me stay focus on the next 24 hours, plus it puts me in a better perspective of the situation or whatever is troubling me.

When I came into twelfth step program over 20 years ago, I was spiritually bankrupt. Everything bothered me. If something didn't go my way, somebody criticized me or looked at me funny, I would focus on that and not be grateful for the 90 or 95% that went well.

Fortunately, I always had good sponsors that were very spiritual and also humble. One of my early sponsors got me into Prayer and Meditation very early in program. It didn't sink in for a few years even though I made feeble attempts at it. The turning point was attending an 11th step candlelight meditation meeting for several years. I believe, by him sponsoring me and attending those meetings helped me learn how to pray and meditate.

Today, I wouldn't leave the house until I do my prayer and meditation and focus on God will. The day seems to go better after doing that. Even though I may choose to take my will back, which I often do, I can always go back to prayer and meditation any time of the day. I do mine around 5 in the morning during the week because I have to be at work by 7. It takes 20 minutes. Many times I wake up with fear, but after doing it, I replace the fear with faith and am ready to face the day.

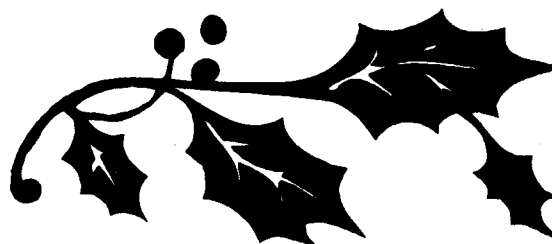
Today, my life has changed and I like myself. I don't worry who likes me or not and I don't beat myself up when I make a mistake. I don't rehash situations over and over. I look for solutions.

When I am going through emotional turmoil, I have to calm down first and then ask for help and that where Prayer and Meditation are the answers for me. That's got me in tune with God will.

Even though I'm not a religious person, I believe I'm spiritual. I like people today and try to practice love, kindness, patience and tolerance on a daily basis. I still am striving for spiritual progress. I still am sick but I have a program for living. Don't have to eat over my feelings anymore.

What I want most out of this program is the inner peace, serenity, and emotional balance that the program offers. By working the steps and having a relationship with a higher power on a daily basis, I am able to enjoy today. By just focusing on one day at a time, I am able to relieve the stress and the fear of what the future holds for me and enjoy Today.

Bill P.



From This Corner

This issue is sponsored by the Falls Church Sunday Morning 11th Step Meeting that meets at Fairfax Hospital at 11:00 a.m. It was intended to be published last month but through a set of circumstances it never came about. "Progress, not perfection" Those to all of those who contributed and made this issue happen.

The January issue is being sponsored by the HOW groups and the February issue will be sponsored by the Sunday Morning Men's Group with the topic of "Men and Prayer." What about your group for March and beyond. Why not bring this project up at your next group conscience and have someone contact the Novation editor. Remember Writing is one of our tools.

Dick D., Editor

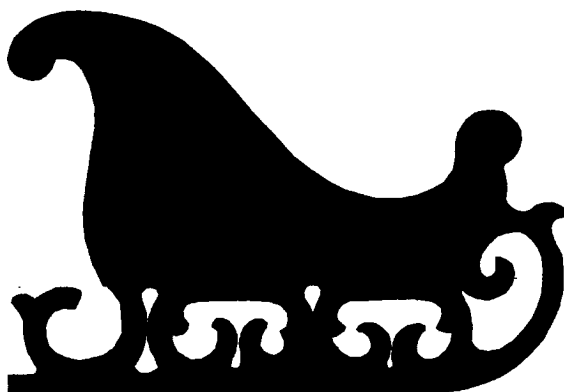
Eleventh Step Prayer
(Adapted)

Higher Power, help me to convey the peace of mind
You have given me:
Where I find hatred, I can show love;
Where I find wrong, I can show the spirit of forgiveness;
Where I find discord, I can encourage harmony;
Where I find error, I can speak truth;
Where doubt exists, I can demonstrate my faith;
When despair is felt, I can be hopeful;
Where there are shadows, I can be a light;
Where sadness exists, I can bring joy.

Higher Power, help me to be a comfort to others,
Instead of always seeking comfort;
Help me to be understanding, instead of wanting to be understood;
Help me to be loving, whether or not I am loved in return.

By removing myself from the center of the universe,
I find untold rewards in caring about others.
By forgiving others first, I find them to be more forgiving of my shortcomings.
Thus when I die, my spirit can live on in the joy and peace I have contributed to
those around me.

Amen.



11TH STEP

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.

What a surprise that I find myself sitting down on the final day of the deadline to write this article; could it be procrastination or was it perfectionism - if I cannot do it perfectly, perhaps I shouldn't do it at all? So, I prayed to know God's will for me. Should I attempt to write an article for "Novation"? If it is God's will then I will need to pray for the power to write the article as well.

When I returned to OA after an absence of 13 years I was not doing much in the prayer arena. I didn't know it but I was angry with God for past failures on my part that I had blamed on God's not answering my prayers. I did know that I didn't trust God very much; oh I still believed in God and I said I wanted a relationship with God but, much like dieting, I would begin a prayer regimen and then I would let any kind of set-back stop me from continuing.

Fortunately for me the first gift I received from my higher power was willingness. I became willing to attend OA meetings. Then I became willing to be abstinent from compulsive overeating. I became willing to make phone calls and commit my food to my food sponsor. I became willing to read some literature every day and said the serenity prayer frequently. It took six months but I finally became willing to ask someone to be my step sponsor. By the time I got to Step 2 I knew that the relationship I wanted with my higher power depended on my own willingness to believe that there was a power greater than myself! A little bit of humility began to creep into my psyche and with it a little bit of the awesomeness of God crept back into my consciousness.

I was at a tiny OA meeting one Saturday afternoon and I said I wanted to pray for the willingness to renew my prayer life. I was working Step three and was spiritually hungry. Someone shared that they never let their feet hit the floor in the morning without first thanking God for another day in recovery. I had about nine months of abstinence then and I suddenly

knew that I could do that. I could say, "thank you God for another day in recovery," each morning before I got out of bed.

That was the beginning for me. Gratitude started to become a natural way to pray and I became aware of more and more blessings the more grateful I became. I took Step three and made the third Step prayer part of my daily devotions. "Relieve me of the bondage of self." What a great way to remind myself that God was in charge. I took Steps four and five and discovered how many of my past problems and failures were really the result of self-will run riot and not a failure on God's part at all. Now, with God in charge, it seems natural to pray only for the knowledge of God's will for me and the power to carry that out, because I truly believe that my higher power wants only the best for me.

Getting honest with God, myself and another human being in Step Five allowed me to see some of my character defects and shortcomings for the very first time and to let the light of day shine on others that I thought were "secrets". In the past I could never admit I was wrong or at fault or imperfect so I could not understand Steps six and seven; they baffled me. Therefore, another part of my daily 11th Step rests firmly upon this reminder: I belong to a fellowship that demands rigorous honesty and for today I am willing to go to any lengths to be honest.

Getting honest about my own faults has enabled me to view the faults of others with more compassion and allowed me to take Step eight. Once the list was made of persons I had harmed I was able to see how justice demanded that I make amends and although it was not easy, I was willing to do it because I was not alone, my higher power and the strength of this fellowship were with me each Step of the way. It is Step 10 which lets me not regret the past of even yesterday because I can put all the decisions, interactions, and actions of today into God's hands and if I do make a mistake I can feel that little nudge that prompts me to dean up my side of the street by making amends quickly.

Step Eleven has been a process of spiritual awakening for me that was only possible as I was given the gift of willingness to work all the other steps one by one. My prayer today is that I may want to let God's will become my will because that is the great adventure of this journey.

Gail vb

INTERGROUP NEWS

New Leaders: Congratulations to the people who were elected to service positions for NOVA Intergroup for the coming year. Their names and phone numbers appear on page 8. Thanks, too, to those who served in any capacity last year. Service continues to be one of the important tools for recovery.

Throw Out Those Old W&Ws: Rob H., our Where & When Editor, points out that there have been many changes over the last few months and asks meeting to throw out back issues of the WOW. There is nothing worse than a new member showing up for a meeting that doesn't exist or that has moved location. Please help in this one.

Web-site Down: Having problems getting to the OA NOVA website? You are not alone. We are working with our service provider to get the site back up. Keep trying. Just in case you forgot it is: www.OANOVA.org

Next Intergroup Meeting: 10:00 to 12:00, Saturday, January 19, 2002. Immanuel United Methodist Church, 7901 Heritage Drive in Annandale. All are welcome to attend and join in the activities. You don't have to be an official Intergroup Representative to attend. Welcome!

AUTUMN PRAYER OF ACCEPTANCE

Autumn God, earth teaches me by her natural turning from one season to another. As she enters into the dying and rising cycle, she welcomes the changes. May I be open to the teachings in this season of autumn and turn, as autumn does, toward opportunities for my spiritual transformation.

When I accept only the beautiful and reject the tattered, torn parts of who I am, when I treat things that are falling apart as my enemies, walk me along the dying leaves. Let them tell me about their power to re-energize the earth's soil by their decomposition and decay.

When I fear the loss of my youthfulness and the reality of my aging, turn my face to the brilliant colors of October trees. Open my spirit to the mellow resonance of autumn sunsets. Brush your love past my heart with the beauty of golden leaves twirling from the autumn trees.

When I refuse to wait with the mystery of the unknown and when I struggle to control rather than to let life evolve, wrap me in the darkening days of November. Encourage me to enter into stillness and silent mystery, to wait patiently for clarity and wisdom.

When I grow tired of using my gifts to benefit others, take me to the autumnal fields where earth freely yields the bounty of her summer. Let me become aware of how she allows her lands to be stripped clean so her fruitfulness will be a source of nourishment.

When I resist efforts to warm a relationship that has grown stale by my chilly indifference or resistance, let me feel the first hard freeze of autumn's breath and the death that this coldness brings to greening things.

When I neglect to care for myself and become totally absorbed in life's activities, let me see how animals gather sustenance and provide for their winter. Take me inside the caves of those who hibernate and remind me of my contemplative nature.

When I fight unwanted and unsought changes and when I seek to keep things just as they are, place me on the wings of birds flying south for another season. Offer their spirit of freedom into my heart. Let me be willing to leave my well-satisfied place of comfort for the discomfort of a long flight into the unknown. Thank you, God of transformation, for all these lessons that the autumnal earth teaches me.

Anonymous

ANNOUNCEMENTS

NEW MEETINGS!

Monday-Friday morning OA meetings in Northern Virginia We will be meeting at St. Matthew's Methodist Church, 8617 Little River Turnpike in Room 306.

The church is between Wakefield Chapel Road and Prosperity, and it is very close to NOVA. This is very easy to get to from the Beltway (1-495), so feel free to stop in here on your way to work.

The meetings will start with meditation at 6:30 am and then with a literature meeting at 1am.

Please spread the word!

For more information, call Jim or Amy at 703.204.0181, or Diane at 703-813-6313.

PROMISES MEETING

The annual OA Candlelight Promises meeting will take place on Saturday, Jan. 12, 2002 at 7:30 p.m. at the Church of the Good Shepherd, Oakton. (2351 Hunter Mill Road.) Bring a candle & donation for 7th tradition.

ANOTHER NEW MEETING!

OA Step Meeting, Thursdays at 7:30 p.m., Old Presbyterian Meeting House, 316 South Royal Street, Old Town Alexandria. Bring your AA 12 & 12.

NEW MEETING LOCATION

At last the Sunday Morning 9:00 a.m. Men's Meeting now has a permanent new location at Alexandria Hospital. Meetings are held in Room 1 of the Health Education Center. This is at the north end of the hospital complex. For information call Rob at 202-686-2824.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS: MEN'S RETREAT

The 9:00 a.m. Sunday Morning Men's Meeting will again sponsor their Men's Retreat. Dates are April 19-21, 2002 at Bellarmine Retreat Center, Blue Ridge, PA, just 70 miles north of Washington.

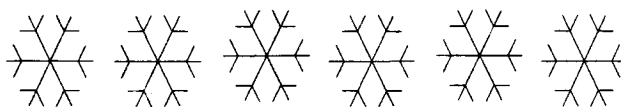
Watch for a flyer at a meeting near you.

CHRISTMAS MARATHON

The 7 a.m. Arlington Sunrise meeting is again sponsoring its annual Christmas Day Marathon Meeting. They will begin with their regular meeting at 7:00 a.m. and then starting at 8:00 a.m. they will continue with one step per hour. Step 12 will begin at 7:00 p.m.

Tuesday, December 25, 2001

St. Charles Catholic Church
3304 Washington Blvd.
(corner of Fairfax Drive and Kirkwood Road
upstairs room-enter from parking lot.)



Editorial Policy

The opinions expressed in Novation reflect those of the writers and not Northern Virginia Intergroup nor OA as a whole, or the Editor of Novation; nor does the publication of any article imply endorsement. The editor welcomes any and all contributions, and reserves the right to edit all articles. Send articles, letters, announcements, or other contributions to Novation to:

Novation
C/O Dick Dorr
3716 Valley Drive
Alexandria, VA 22302

Or email to dickdorr@aol.com

OA PHONE LIST



We use the phone as a means of contact, to help us through the highs and lows of each day without compulsively eating. The following OA members welcome your calls and are committed to helping the newcomer in any way they can. Go ahead, give someone a call!

NEWCOMER OUTREACH

Diane L.	703-813-0313	Kelsie	301-428-0562
Kelly	703-815-9775	Marla L.	202-333-8089
Ruth K.	703-206-0559	Janice	703-914-5440
Alan S.	703-370-5505	Dianna	703-425-9480
Betsy F.	703-998-7276	Doree	703-451-7604
Debbie F.	703-799-3282	Cecille	703-658-0873
Sandy B.	703-560-3951	Gail	703-793-4926
Rachel B.	703-532-1824	Gladys	703-968-8476
George J. (h)	703-978-2072	Ginny St.P.	703-998-1463
(w)	202-269-4204	Lynn B.	703-222-3279

Support Your Intergroup!

Intergroup meetings take place the third Saturday of every month at 10:00 a.m. at Immanuel United Methodist Church, Annandale, Virginia. Find out more about

Intergroup by showing up and serving on a committee or by serving as a representative for one of your meetings! Service is its own reward!

NIGHT OWLS & EARLY BIRDS

The people listed here are either up late or are early risers- feel free to call them if you need someone to talk to.

Janice	703-914-5440	`til 10 PM*
David K.	703-644-8499	`til 10 PM
George J.	703-978-2072	`til 10 PM

*anytime in an emergency

Support OA 60/30/10 -After meeting group expenses --rent, literature, etc. It is suggested that the 7th tradition should be sent 6-% to Intergroup, 30% to WSO and 10% to Region 7.

NOVA INTERGROUP BOARD

Chair	Jan L.	703-339-7773
1st Vice-Chair	Karen S.	703-536-5269
2nd Vice-Chair		
Secretary	Dick D.	703-578-1999
Treasurer	Joan H.	703-527-6592
Literature	Kristin	703-578-3485
OA Hotline Contact		
Webmaster		
Novation Edits	Dick D.	703-578-1999
Where & When	Rob H.	202-686-2824
Editor		
OA WSO Delegates	Paul B.	703-765-1465
	Betsy R	202-548-0957
	Toby	703-528-9563
Region 7 Reps	Betsy R	202-548-0957
	Toby	703-528-9563
	Jan	703-339-7773
	Dick D.	703-578-1999
	Cindy P.	703-644-6700

NOVA Outreach Web Site: www.oanova.org

World Service Web Site:

www overeatemanonymous.org

Hotline Phone #:

703-823-6682

Welcome!

Overeaters Anonymous is a fellowship of individuals who, through shared experience, strength and hope, are recovering from compulsive overeating. We welcome everyone who wants to stop eating compulsively. There are no dues or fees for members; we are self-supporting through our own contributions, neither soliciting nor accepting outside donations. OA is not affiliated with any public or private organization, political movement, ideology or religious doctrine; we take no position on outside issues. Our primary purpose is to abstain from compulsive overeating and to carry this message of recovery to those who still suffer.