

Thanksgiving is here. Don't do it alone.
Check out the Marathon. P. 5

This month's issue is sponsored by the Saturday 10am HOW Meeting.

STEP 12

HAVING HAD A SPIRITUAL AWAKENING AS THE RESULT OF THESE STEPS, WE TRIED TO CARRY THIS MESSAGE TO COMPULSIVE OVEREATERS AND TO PRACTICE THESE PRINCIPLES IN ALL OUR AFFAIRS.

TRADITION 12

ANONYMITY IS THE SPIRITUAL FOUNDATION OF ALL OUR TRADITIONS, EVER REMINDING US TO THE PLACE PRINCIPLES BEFORE PERSONALITIES.

FRUIT OF STEP 12

SERVICE

PROMISE OF STEP 12

THEY (THE PROMISES) WILL ALWAYS MATERIALIZE IF WE WORK FOR THEM.

CONCEPT 12

THE SPIRITUAL FOUNDATION FOR OA SERVICE ENSURES THAT

- A. NO OA COMMITTEE OR SERVICE BODY SHALL EVER BECOME THE SEAT OF PERILOUS WEALTH OR POWER
- B. SUFFICIENT OPERATING FUNDS, PLUS AN AMPLE RESERVE, SHALL BE OA'S PRUDENT FINANCIAL PRINCIPLE;
- C. NO OA MEMBER SHALL EVER BE PLACE IN A POSITION OF UNQUALIFIED AUTHORITY;
- D. ALL IMPORTANT DECISIONS SHALL BE REACHED BY DISCUSSION, VOTE, AND, WHENEVER POSSIBLE, BY SUBSTANTIAL UNANIMITY;
- E. NO SERVICE ACTION SHALL EVER BE PERSONALLY PUNITIVE OR AN INCITEMENT TO PUBLIC CONTROVERSY;
- F. NO OA SERVICE COMMITTEE OR SERVICE BOARD SHALL EVER PERFORM ACTS OF GOVERNMENT, AND EACH SHALL ALWAYS REMAIN DEMOCRATIC IN THOUGHT AND ACTION.

Step Twelve - "Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to other compulsive overeaters and to practice these principles in all our affairs."

This step says a lot. Here are some of the thoughts that come to my mind as I read these beautiful words:

I need to practice these principles of the 12 steps and 12 traditions. I will never be a polished orator or teacher; all I can hope for is the willingness to continue making efforts towards the achievement of a goal I will never reach. I appreciate the compassion this step conveys - both toward myself and others in OA and outside of the fellowship. This step tells

me that I will grow spiritually as I continue, one day at a time, to grow in love for others. This step tells me that I can try to carry the message; I may not be successful and I may not deliver my message gracefully, but I can work at it.

This tradition tells me that the spiritual principles I learn in OA can - and indeed should - be practiced in all areas of my life. That is the most challenging part for me. I can look at the steps and traditions as an academic exercise, but that is too easy. The challenge is to carry what I learn in OA out into the world around me. Anon.

Tradition Twelve: "Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all these Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities."

Anonymity was a foreign concept to me before joining OA/HOW. As with so many things prior to recovery, I had little understanding of how one word/principle could change my thinking.

First, I understood anonymity to mean that only the people in the meeting know who attends OA. Then the meaning became 'what was said in the meeting stays in the room' which meant we don't repeat what anyone shares with anyone else, in or out of the meeting.

I became aware that any type of gossip without the person's participation had potential for hurt, whether about OA, family, friends or co-workers. For a while it felt stifling: "what can I talk about"? So, the focus became myself. I learned that there were endless things to write and share about recovery that taught me new ways of viewing others and myself.

Finally, "principles before personalities" caused a complete shift in my thinking. When things would arise in meetings that didn't meet my way of doing things, I would build up resentments or think that the person was wrong. CONTD P. 2



TOOL OF RECOVERY: SERVICE

Carrying the message to the compulsive overeater who still suffers is the basic purpose of our Fellowship; therefore, it is the most fundamental form of service.

Any form of service-no matter how small-which helps reach a fellow sufferer adds to the quality of our own recovery. Getting to meetings, putting away chairs, putting out literature, talking to newcomers, doing whatever needs to be done in a group or for OA as a whole, are ways in which we give back what we have so generously been given. We are encouraged to do what we can when we can. "A life of sane and happy usefulness" is what we are promised as the result of working the Twelve Steps. Service helps to fulfill that promise.

TRADITION 12 CONTD P.1

Soon, there were things 'wrong' with just about everyone in the meeting! I thank Higher Power for sponsors and OA members who gently reminded me to pray for 'those people' and write about my feelings. I came to see that my thinking was keeping me "apart from" others instead of becoming "a part of" something greater than myself.

By putting aside personal opinions and praying, a 'spiritual awakening' gradually evolved. I now look at each person in a meeting (including myself) as fellow compulsive overeaters whose primary purpose is recovery and carrying the message. Period. Amen. Anonymous

JOURNEY OF RECOVERY

I am a newcomer working Step 2 for the first time in my journey toward peace and healing. I was reflecting on this new journey and remembered from a trip to Kenya, Africa that "journey" in Swahili is "safari." While there I took several safaris to see the animals in their natural habitat and they all basically worked the same.

I was not sure what I would see, where I would be driven, or how long we would be out. I was just told to come, get in the truck, and hope for the best. I was also told to stay in the truck when it stopped because they couldn't protect me if I got out. Sometimes the guide would ask me what I would like to see but really he KNEW why I was on the journey!

So off we went, the guide telling the driver where to go, where he had last had success at finding what we came for or where he had heard something was happening. If you get

there and there are no animals, you drive somewhere else.

I was the guest, not the guide. It was best to just be flexible and trust the leader. I was not at an amusement park where I just "order up" what I want, when I want it. I had to take it as it came, knowing there was others whose job it was to make the most of the journey for my benefit.

I see how this life, abstinent life, is about trusting Higher Power to guide me and lead me in the safari. I am being flexible and letting go of calling the shots. I am letting my sponsor guide me to where she's seen success or where she thinks I'll find it. Yes, I've told HP what I want out of the journey, but I am even trusting Him with that, should He think it best to do or go someplace else.

I am the passenger and my job is to just stay in the truck, and stay alive. I am trusting HP to so I can really live this life. Anon.

SERVICE SAMPLER - DO TWO AND CALL YOUR SPONSOR IN THE MORNING.

1. Go to a meeting and share where you are and how you are using the program.
2. Be a sponsor. Have a sponsor. Use a sponsor.
3. Identify your home meeting. Do a service for the meeting, even if it is just putting away chairs.
4. Be an Intergroup Representative for your meeting.
5. Talk to newcomers after the meeting. Welcome back those returning from relapse.
6. Call someone new and see how they are.
7. Listen when others share at meetings.
8. Put up OA information at your local library or doctor's office (check first if it is ok to do so.)
9. Lead when asked and share what it was like, what happened and what it is like today.
10. Go to the "meeting" after the meeting. (Go for coffee/lunch afterwards.)

MORE ON THE TWELFTH STEP

Step 12 guides us to "practice these principles in all our affairs." And as usual, I have to ask "But what are 'these principles?'" In reading the "12 and 12", I identify the following: Humility, honesty, tolerance, service, acceptance, positive thinking /faith, interdependence, respect.

Just reading the list gives me a sense of quiet peace. What I feel when I read their opposites is quite different: Arrogance, dishonesty, intolerance, selfishness, judgmentalness, negativity/suspicion, dependence or domination, disrespect

My first experience in applying these principles was in simply getting the food out of the way. From that first application I began to feel the peace physical recovery brings. I am gradually losing the shame about my body and what I put in it that I have carried around since childhood. What I am discovering as I work through all the steps and as I begin to apply these principles in other areas of my life is that this was only the first "piece" of a much broader and deeper peace to come.

"Anonymity fosters humility and guards against reemergence of that blind self-will that leads to the compulsion to overeat. Prevented by our traditions from placing ourselves or others in a position of distinction within our Fellowship, we find it easier for each of us simply to be a part of the group."

Tradition 12, Twelve Steps & Twelve Traditions of OA

RECEIVING THE TWELTH STEP

This being the 12th month, I am reminded of how I was twelfth stepped into OA. I was in high school, where every so often my friend Polly would have a sleepover. About 5-6 girls would be invited and her mother, who was a fabulous cook, would serve us a gourmet dinner. What I remember is that a couple of us would binge all night on the snacks Polly's mother provided and I would not feel very well for days.

Close to graduation, one of these girls told me she was a compulsive overeater and that she was going to OA. I was so afraid to contemplate the fact that I might have a serious problem with food but I never forgot that conversation. That's how this step works - by someone sincerely sharing his or her story. My life would never be the same as many years later, after college, another friend of mine invited me to join her at a 12-step meeting.

Once I was twelfth stepped into the rooms, people in program continued to carry the message. I remember going off and on to a weekly OA meeting during graduate school, never saying a word, but listening to the experience, strength, and hope I so desperately needed. There were many times I would sit there in anguish and cry. After one meeting, I approached the woman in the room who was one of the friendliest, most positive people I have ever met. She radiated the spiritual awakening she had found. She was the "lady with the red hat" as I admired her for her positive energy and self-esteem, which I saw as the foundation beneath her ability to encourage and uplift others around her.

I finally had the courage to face my addiction and I approached her after a meeting, asking her if she could talk to me about program some time and explain some things to me. She enthusiastically responded with warmth and asked me if I wanted to join her at a nail appointment that Saturday. Her example of self-care was another dimension of program that was new and different and I learned as much from her example as I did from what she had to say to me that day. It took several people to twelve step me into recovery and today I have a chance to carry the same message to others. Anonymous

"...for the greatest joy of recovery comes to us when we share our OA program with others. "

The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous page 101

" SPECIAL " OCCASIONS??

**WRITING
SUGGESTIONS**

What service was given to you as a newcomer?

Have you given that same service to another?

List 10 ways you are willing to do service for your home meeting or OA in general. Do one if you aren't doing it now.

Did someone twelve step you? What brought you to OA?

SHARE THESE THOUGHTS WITH ANOTHER OAer

Many years ago, I had a blessed period of abstinence, weight loss and some recovery in OA. However, an occasion arose (at that time, a broken heart) that told me I deserved to pick up the food...just that once. Soon, my life was full of special occasions, one-time opportunities and otherwise unique situations that invariably justified taking back my will where food was concerned. This spurred many years of medicating with the food, until one day the pain got bad enough for me to carry back into the rooms 100 pounds more than I carried out years before. My shame was unbearable. Slowly through OA/HOW I learned I was powerless over this addiction, but the daily rituals, disciplines, and fellowship of HOW could protect me from this addiction.

I love holidays, vacations, and other things that take me away from my daily life. HOWEVER, using them as an excuse to cut back my recovery routine is deadly. You see, I don't have a problem with food; I have a problem with LIFE that does not stop with a change in scenery, routine, or company. My food plan must remain constant, regardless of

the "special" dish on the holiday table. If the meal is mid-day, I do not switch my "big" meal to accommodate it; I have my "lunch" as normal and am then free to enjoy abstinent leftovers – without guilt – at my next meal.

My addiction always joins me on vacation, and therefore so should the daily disciplines that make me accountable. With phone service virtually universally available and a little planning, I can call my sponsor for the daily contact and support I need, especially in new situations. For me, the only reason to not connect is the desire – always just a breath away – for a "vacation" from OA/HOW, a few days or weeks to go "freestyle" and pass as a "normal" person. It is this idea that "must presently be smashed".

Taking a vacation from any part of my program invariably becomes a vacation from abstinence, and I have learned the hard way that is a trip from which I might not return. NOTHING IS MORE 'SPECIAL' THAN ABSTINENCE.
Anon.

SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

"We who have worked the first eleven steps of the Overeaters Anonymous program have had a spiritual awakening, and we now have a message of hope to carry to other compulsive overeaters. We who once suffered from complete powerlessness to control our eating and our lives have now discovered the saving strength of a Power greater than ourselves. We have experienced the miracle of physical, emotional, and spiritual healing, just as we were promised when we began these steps."

The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous, Page 99

I really can say that I have had a spiritual awakening as a result of working the first eleven steps. It has taken me about four years to work through the steps and the changes have been gradual. Each time I completed a

step, help and inspiration would come from God, my sponsor, and others inside and outside program to help me navigate the next one. It was like climbing a steep staircase or hill. It was doable as long as I took it one baby step at a time.

I do have a message of hope to those who are willing to work the steps and use the tools of recovery. You will be able to live a life of sane, happy usefulness. The compulsion to overeat will be lifted--one day at a time.

I do believe that my saving strength does come from a Power greater than myself—whom I choose to call God. When I don't know what to do or where to turn, God is there to listen and to guide me. Working steps four through nine has cut away the barriers that have kept me from having a close relation with God. CONTD P. 5

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

SPIRITUAL AWAKENING CONTD P. 4

The more I seek conscious contact through prayer and meditation—the more available I am to hear God's message.

Healing has occurred on all three levels—physical, emotional, and spiritual. I can hardly believe how much healthier my body is today than it was four years ago. I exercise, eat right, take vitamins and am well on my way to a healthy weight. I still have emotional ups and downs—but I am more willing to sit with my feelings and I'm much better able to process them and look at the root causes. My spiritual life is much richer that before program. I turn to God in all things. I pray and meditate daily.

OA has changed my life. Thank God for OA. ANON.

"When a man or woman has a spiritual awakening, the most important meaning of it is that he has now become able to do, feel, and believe that which he could not do before on his unaided strength and resources alone." AA Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions

AN INVITATION

This is a year-round invitation to attend our 10 a.m. Saturday morning OA/HOW meeting in Alexandria. The 10 a.m. meeting is my home group. It is a strong OA/HOW meeting where all the guidelines and principles of the program are followed.

There is a sense of reverence, respect, gratitude, and serenity that invites one to participate in the program. At the same time, one is apt to feel the rich recovery process going on in the room. You will find members with early abstinence as well as many, many years in recovery.

Recently a new member came to our meeting. After the meeting was over, I greeted and welcomed her. She said, "What a wonderful meeting! I am now happy I came but to tell the truth, I was afraid to come." Why were you afraid, I asked? "Because someone told me this is a 'God meeting' where people only talk about God and I am not religious."

Our meeting is not about religion, but it is a meeting where you may sense the presence of a "power greater than your self." You may also become aware of radiant hope, a kind of guiding light, that shows one the right path to follow. And you may be amazed that you feel "a part of" the magic going on in the room. Our wish is that happiness and the special gift of abstinence be yours today and during the holidays. Kris R.

"Practical experience shows that nothing will so much insure immunity from drinking as intensive work with other alcoholics." Big Book p 89

"We sit in AA (OA) meetings and listen, not only to receive something ourselves, but to give the reassurance and support which our presence can bring. If our turn comes to speak at a meeting, we again try to carry AA's (OA's) message. Whether our audience is one or many, it is still Twelfth Step work."

AA Twelve Steps and Twelve Tradition Page 110

"If we really depended upon God, we couldn't very well play God to our fellow nor would we feel the urge wholly to rely on human protection and care. These were the new attitudes that finally brought many of us an inner strength and peace that could not be deeply shaken by the shortcomings of others or by any calamity not of our own making." AA Twelve Steps and Twelve Tradition Page 116

ARLINGTON SUNRISE OVEREATERS ANONYMOUS

THANKSGIVING MARATHON OA 12 STEPS—12 HOURS



Thursday, November 23, 2006

Regular meeting: 7:00am-8:00am

Marathon 8am (step 1) - 8pm (step 12)

LOCATION: ST. CHARLES -UPPER ROOM 3304 N. Washington Blvd, Arlington, VA 22201
1-½ blocks from Clarendon Metro stop—opposite George Mason Law School

Contacts: Joan (703) 527-6592 bob-joanhowe@verizon.net or Donna (703) 998-5364 or valdez29@verizon.net

**NOVATIONS
DECEMBER 2006**

EDITORIAL POLICY:
THE OPINIONS
EXPRESSED IN
NOVATIONS REFLECT
THOSE OF THE WRITERS
AND NOT NORTHERN
VIRGINIA INTERGROUP
OR OA AS A WHOLE, OR
THE EDITOR OF
NOVATIONS, NOR DOES
THE PUBLICATION OF
ANY ARTICLE IMPLY
ENDORSEMENT.



See us at:

oanova.org

www.oanova.org

The 10 a.m. Saturday morning OA HOW meeting meets at the Fairlington Presbyterian church, located on the corner of King Street/Route 7 access road, and Menokin Street in the Fairlington section of Alexandria. There is plenty of parking behind the church, which is also where you should enter the church to get to the meeting. Like many OA HOW meetings, this meeting last for two hours, and like all OA HOW meetings newcomers are warmly welcomed at the Saturday morning 10 am meeting.

EDITOR'S NOTE:
This is my last issue as the Editor of *Novations*. Two years ago I was in an Intergroup Meeting when the position became open. I found myself volunteering to take on the newsletter. I was surprised because I have never done anything like this before. But I felt a prodding from HP so I put my hand up and I am so glad I did. This has been a wonderful opportunity for me to do service, to delve into the Steps and Traditions more deeply and to read the amazing, beautiful, insightful articles that you all wrote.

I want to thank all of you who wrote articles, delivered the newsletters to Intergroup when I couldn't attend, proofed the newsletters and gave guidance and suggestions. This is your newsletter...you make it happen, you ALL have something to say about your journey. Thank you for the opportunity to do a service that has kept me abstinent and reaffirmed my gratitude to be a member of OA.
Everyone has a voice in OA...share your recovery--write an article!! Mary Frances

NORTHERN VIRGINIA INTERGROUP BOARD

Chair	Kitty Vitko	H. 703 892-1413 kjvitko@yahoo.com
First Vice Chair	Maria Puhalla	H. 571 332-8458 loveyalady@yahoo.com
2nd Vice Chair	Sally Underwood	
Secretary		
Treasurer	Dick Dorr	H. 703 521-1999 novadick@comcast.net

Where & When Editor	Anne Becker	H 571 203-0179 Anne.becker@cox.net
Novation Editor		
Mail Getter		
Webmaster	Bret Scales	H. 703 887-4237 bhscales@toast.net
Special Events	Diane Fernbacher	H. 703 813-6313 dfernbacher@cox.net
	Kitty Vitko	H. 703 892 1413 kjvitko@yahoo.com
Communications Within	Maria Puhalla	H. 571 332-8458 loveyalady@yahoo.com
Public Information		

Region 7 (2 year term, 5 allowed)	Dick Dorr (2) Kitty Vitko(1) Maria Puhalla (1)	703 521-1999 novadick@comcast.net 703 892-1413 kjvitko@yahoo.com 571 332-8458 loveyalady@yahoo.com
World Service (2 year term, 4 allowed)	Dick Dorr (2) Bret Scales (2)	703 521-1999 novadick@comcast.net 703 887-4237 bhscales@toast.net