

This month's issue of NOVATIONS is sponsored by the Sunday Morning Men's Meeting.

NOVATIONS

STEP 9

Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.

TRADITION 9

OA, as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.

FRUIT OF STEP 9

Self Discipline

STEP 9 PROMISE

Fear of people and of economic insecurity will leave us.

CONCEPT 9

Able, trusted servants, together with sound and appropriate methods of choosing them, are indispensable for effective functioning at all service levels.

NINTH STEP EXPERIENCE

For my ninth step I was instructed to first write a letter to all the people on my list. I was to explain the harm that I had done. The purpose of this was so that I could feel the wrong through my own words.

I then was told to tell that person or persons or company or establishment that I was going to make amends for my actions followed by an acknowledgment that I am praying for this person or people. Of course within the amends was a sincere apology for my harm and an offer to extend myself anyway I could in recompense.

Shame and guilt melt away and the positive responses to me from others is electrifying. My relationships are excellent, my business has skyrocketed. In the AA Big Book it says that people will be attracted to you like they never have been before. This is great for all areas of one's life because relationships are really all we have.

p.s. How is your relationship with God if it is not OK with your neighbor? Terry

WHY A MEN'S MEETING?

Tradition three tells us that the only requirement for OA membership is a desire to stop eating compulsively. At the same time, the OA 12 & 12 tells us that "special interest" meetings focused on the issues of some subset of OA's membership can be useful. Balancing these two values sometimes involves judgement calls.

I come from a background that makes me nervous about anything that suggests exclusion of women. Yet I find myself quite comfortable with the Sunday Morning Men's meeting (and the regular men's retreat it runs). I could count on one hand the negative comments I've heard about women in ten years of regular attendance at the meeting, and even those very few comments did not receive a particularly welcoming response. The meeting is anything but a roped-off, reactionary Good Old Boys' Club.

For me, the meeting's preamble says it all: "Some of us have found that in the presence of women we may censor our sharing or try to impress them. Since most meetings have more women than men, this Men's Meeting was started to enhance the quality of sharing and support we men can offer each other." The men's meeting was born out of an honest recognition of our own weakness. I really hope that the meeting's existence does not cause confusion or offense for any of our fellow recovering compulsive overeaters. A lot of really good things happen there (as they do at the mixed OA meetings almost all of us also attend.) *Rich R.*

ABSTINENCE AS A BEGINNING OF RECOVERY

Overeaters Anonymous has a book titled *Abstinence*, as well as various other publications for recovery. What I am experiencing in OA is that abstinence itself, however defined, is only the beginning of recovery. It is not the end or the goal. It took me quite some time in OA and a developing recovery before I realized this point.

Abstinence is necessary and is helped by the other aspects of the program, especially the twelve steps and use of the tools of the program. For me the goal is spiritual growth, which is facilitated and developed by my use of these essential aspects of the program. Without them my abstinence is like a “dry drunk” in alcoholism.

The twelfth step begins, “Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps....” To recognize that truth requires that I have worked all the steps. And that is still just a beginning for “practicing these principle in all our affairs.” That, then, is a lifelong path for recovery from compulsive overeating as well as other addictions. *Anon.*



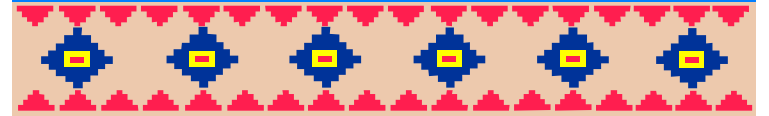
How Making Amends Has Changed My Program

This is my first time through the Steps and it has taken me 6+ years to get to this point. While I’m working on Step 11 at the present time, it was only a few months ago that I did the last of my amends as a part of my ninth step. I have to admit that it has changed my program. I’m certainly looking at life differently. Just today I had a misunderstanding at work. I immediately apologized. While I recognize that the reaction from the other person may have been disproportionate for the wrong, I’m now learning that I can only “work my side of the street.” I can apologize and did. I know that I can’t figure out what is going on for the other person or what may be the drivers for the other person. As one of my wisdom figures says, “Why?” is not an appropriate program question.

Because of doing my ninth step amends, I find it easier to understand how the remaining steps fit into my recovery. In short, doing my amends strengthens and nourishes my program and my recovery. *Dick*

TOOL OF THE MONTH: TELEPHONE

The telephone helps us share on a one-to-one basis and avoid the isolation which is so common to us. Many members call other OA members and their own sponsors daily. As a part of the surrender process, it is a tool with which we learn to reach out, ask for help and extend help to others. The telephone also provides an immediate outlet for those hard-to-handle highs and lows we may experience.



“I Put my hand in yours..

..and together we can do what we could never do alone.” Each week as we end our meeting with Rozanne’s Prayer, also known as the OA Promise, I look around the circle of hands and give a brief word of thanks for how true that opening line is and how wonderfully this short prayer encapsulates the program. The very act of joining hands is a surrender -- we break the isolation which characterized our lives as compulsive eaters. By saying together the words of the founder of OA we vow to move forward in tandem.

“No longer is there a sense of hopelessness... “ In our meetings, in our literature, in our fellowship, we come to see that there is hope for recovery. We see recovery unfolding every day in ourselves and others as we work the program. We feel a part of the fellowship as we take on service.

“no longer must we each depend on our own unsteady willpower.” Willpower isn’t the issue. We have tried harder and harder to control our compulsive eating to no avail. In fact, the harder we tried, the more we ate.

“We are all together now...” Miracles of miracles, at some point we have all made the decision to take the radical step of walking through the meeting room door. That event marks the beginning of recovery for each one of us, no matter how tortuous our individual recovery paths might turn out to be.

“...reaching out our hands for power and strength greater than ours...” In the beginning, we join hands politely because that is the way the meeting ends. As time goes on, however, that hand clasping takes on greater significance, as we share at deeper levels and strengthen our commitment to service. The final hand holding is a promise of ongoing support. *Anon.*

Step Nine: Having an Amendable Mind

Tolerance is a cheap emotion. Comfortably perched on my moral high horse, I can tolerate a person I find irritating. A while ago I was having dinner with friends. I noticed my friend Alice periodically jotting something in a note book while I was talking with her boyfriend Doug. "What are you doing?" I asked.

"Oh, I'm just writing an "x" every time you use the word hate," she answered with her usual wry smile. "So far it's twenty-seven."

"Make it twenty-eight," I snapped. "I hate people who spy on me."

It was far too early in my recovery to stomach criticism without reprisal. But the observation stuck in my craw. Twenty five or so years later I can still remember the incident. My reaction at the time was to the word "hate". Stop hating? Let's say I wasn't ready for accurate self appraisal. We often hear the quip in meetings that nothing happens in God's world by coincidence. How many times have I complained to a program friend only to hear a chipper, "You're right where you need to be!"

Do I really need to work for a boss who can drive me to drink, eat or any of my cherished addictions? Did I need to be raised by a high strung mother with a rapier tongue? Do I really need the clerks at CVS? You get the picture. Life hands us a raft of irritations that make serenity seem more remote than hitting the Power Ball.

(Amendable Mind Cont'd)

My default reaction is to suffer these fools with lock-jaw tolerance. I've trained myself to say yes or no to my boss. Whenever I am disturbed the problem is with me. Continual disturbance develops a defective character.

Amends—I've made a few. I made a general amend to my mother just under the wire, two weeks before she died. I paid my father money I owed him six months before he passed away. For years I thought I didn't owe a lot of amends because I never really did anything to overtly harm anyone. One of the residual effects of years of addictive behaviors is the ability rationalize almost anything. The simple fact is that my mind is a hamster wheel of irritation. Although this irritation is, well, irritating it does give me the warm glow of superiority. And who doesn't like to feel a tad better than the great unwashed? The upshot of this emotional state is a mind not prone to penitence. I've had to revisit my definition of amends. It's not just a verbal rubber stamp of apologies. It's an honest, often Herculean effort to change my way of thinking. Is it possible that I too have behaviors that others find objectionable? I need to aim not to making amends but making my mind amendable.

Tim C. OA, AA



INTERGROUP CORNER: RECOVERY IN ACTION

Hello out there! We had a great meeting this past July. It was productive AND fun at the same time. Who would've thunk it?

Spreading the Word...

Five members of the Communications Within Committee are visiting groups without IG Reps. Now is your turn- come join us the 3rd Saturday of the month.

Service Marathon INOVA Alexandria Hospital- Aug. 27

Be there or be square...service really IS slimming.

Abstinence Thru the Holidays Nov. 18th

We'll have tricks of the abstinence trade and we'll build a phone number tree for support. We do it together...a day at a time. (after the Intergroup Meeting)

The Speaker's Meeting

It's set to begin the third Saturday in September. Please help share in the recovery.

Wanna Know More?? Join us! We all look forward to seeing you at Intergroup the 3rd Saturday of the month (10A-12N)

Hope Lutheran Church 4604 Ravensworth Rd. Annandale VA

NINTH STEP TO PARENTS

As we know, "the purpose of step nine is to clear away guilt and ill will so that we may establish better relations with people. . . ." (*The Twelve Steps of Overeaters Anonymous*, p. 76) And these better relationships extend well beyond the individuals to whom we are making amends.

By the time I was in recovery, both of my parents were deceased. I thought initially that the best way to make amends to them was to live a better life, one that they would be proud to know. One sponsor advised me to write them a letter, and have them write a letter back to me. Perhaps this approach would help fulfill the purpose of step nine.

Dear Mother and Dad,

I was a very selfish and self-centered only child. None of this attitude was your fault. I developed it on my own. I always had to be right, and I had no qualms about telling you that you were wrong. I even demanded to pick out my own clothes to buy by the age of nine. When I was a teenager, I had no respect for either of you, especially you, Dad. I felt superior to both of you and let you know it. I wouldn't ride in the same car with you, Dad, to go to church. I would walk two steps ahead of you, Mother, in town because I didn't want to be considered a mother's boy, and I felt you were too fat to walk with me. I continued to feel that neither of you had any understanding of me, although I knew that both of you loved me unconditionally. I didn't know enough to realize how wonderful that love was. I always turned to you every time I was in a crisis, especially when I needed money and wanted to avoid taking responsibility for my own actions and life. I knew that because you loved me unconditionally, you would give me anything I wanted that you could find a way to give. Not until I was in my early thirties did I begin to appreciate all that you did for me, and I didn't express my gratitude appropriately.

I finally realized that your way of expressing that total love for me was giving and giving. I have learned as I continue to grow up and be in recovery what amazing, wonderful parents you were. Not many people can provide unconditional love.

And you did that for me regardless of anything I said or did. You told me repeatedly as I succeeded in education how proud of me you were. You had total faith in me. That is still amazing to me. So now I can't tell you face to face how much you mean to me and how much I love you. I can only try to live my life in continuing recovery in recognition of what I have learned and that should make you happy.

Love Your Son

Dear Son,

We always knew you had to go through all the growing pains you experienced. And we believe that is what they were, growing pains. We very much appreciate what you have said. Our love for you has never stopped or diminished. We are very happy that you have made such progress in finding your way and hope that you can live the life you have said you want. In death, as in life, we will always love you. Love, Mother and Dad Anon



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

NOVA INTERGROUP SERVICE WORKSHOP

Sunday, Aug 27, 1:00 – 5:00 pm

Alexandria Hospital

Health Education Center

4320 Seminary Road, Alexandria, VA

Contacts: Bret 703-887-4237 bscales@toast.net

Diane 703-813-6313 dfernbacher@cox.net

ON THE JOURNEY TOGETHER

Central Virginia Intergroup

Fall Retreat at Richmond Hill

October 6-8,

Contact: Susie 804-565-3786

RECOVERY KICKS IN 2006

REGION 7 Convention Ocean City MD

November 3, 4, 5

Contact: Peggy R 301 530-8540 peggyodat@mindspring.com

Dan C 202 588-1785 drcostello@comcast.net

OA/HOW RETREAT

BON SECOURS SPIRITUAL CENTER

Nov 10-12

Contact: Heidi G. 703 471 0866

Maria 571 332 8458

11TH STEP SUNDAY AM MEETING RETURNS!

Start Date: Sunday, Aug 20 11:00A

Location: Alexandria Hospital

Health Education Center

4320 Seminary Road

Contacts: Diane F. 703-813-6313

Jacklyn W. 202-641-3268



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