

TOGETHER WE CAN



a publication of the D.C. Metro Overeaters Anonymous Intergroup – April 2015

ACCEPTANCE IS KEY TO SERENITY

“God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can and wisdom to know the difference.” How many times a week/day/hour do I say this prayer? Countless times! When I’m feeling disturbed about something, some person or situation, I can quickly calm myself into a more neutral state simply by reciting the Serenity Prayer over and over with conviction.

When I’m facing something of greater magnitude and maybe need to make a decision, I do an exercise with the Serenity Prayer. I begin with a blank page in my journal and write across the top what the situation/problem/dilemma is. Then I draw a line down the middle of the page, creating two columns. Column 1 is “What I cannot change”; column 2 is “What I can change.” When I think about what I can’t change, I’m faced with unrealistic thoughts that somehow I can alter reality by the power of my thinking. Obviously, I am not accepting some person, place, thing or situation as it is; I am trying to effect a change by going round and round in my head, reliving decisions made in the past and living out different outcomes in my virtual world! Talk about a waste of time! This delusional pastime provides temporary escape from unacceptable realities but, needless to say, is not too constructive.

Writing down the specific details of what is disturbing me helps clarify what is in my power to change. Often what I can change involves a change in attitude on my part or some action I can take to make the situation more acceptable, perhaps a compromise or a shift in perspective. When I see in writing all the issues concerning the situation I can’t change, I can begin to work on acceptance. Acceptance becomes possible when I get clear about what changes I might be able to make. There’s a sense of empowerment here. Whereas in the past I might have confused acceptance with hopeless resignation, a kind of negative enslavement, I now can begin to live with a new sense of freedom through acceptance. Some situations (e.g, regrets over past decisions) continue to resurface from time to time. Nothing can change a decision made in the past (except magical thinking!) but I can choose to seek God’s guidance to open my mind and heart to accept what is and identify concretely what I can change from this moment on. I find it very helpful to refer back to my “serenity exercises.”

From the Big Book, page 449: “And acceptance is the answer to all my problems today. When I am disturbed, it is because I find some person, place, thing, or situation—some fact of my life—unacceptable to me, and I can find no serenity until I accept that person, place, thing, or situation as being exactly the way it is supposed to be at this moment. Nothing, absolutely nothing happens in God’s world by mistake...unless I accept life completely on life’s terms, I cannot be happy. I need to concentrate not so much on what needs to be changed in the world as on what needs to be changed in me and in my attitudes.”

Monica H.

FROM OUR LAST INTERGROUP MEETING

Nonprofit status. Intergroup is looking for someone with professional experience in helping us apply for nonprofit status. If you would like to know more, please email chair@oa-dcmetro.org.

Intergroup openings. There is always a place for you at Intergroup. You can represent your meeting or just come and find out about service above the group level that keeps OA going!

Erratum: In the last issue of this newsletter, February 2015, the article entitled “Watch Out!!!” omitted the author’s name. Deb. G. wrote that article.

We have openings for:
Assistant Treasurer
Ways and Means chair
Members for the nominating committee

Contact chair@oa-dcmetro.org for more information or just

come to.....

The next Intergroup meeting. Our next meeting will be held on **Sunday, April 12** at Holy Cross Hospital at 12:30 PM in the room at the back of the cafeteria. All are welcome! Join us! (If you want to save the date, our May meeting will be held on May 17 to avoid conflicting with Mother's Day.)

OAIG Recording Secretary

STEP 3 PRINCIPLES

Step 3 is about letting go of my will and surrendering to the Will of a Higher Power. So why don't I do that? I want what I want when I want it! I'm selfish and self-centered. I'm me-focused rather than God focused or program focused. I don't accept my powerlessness, nor do I believe that the Higher Power knows about and cares about everything.

Reading Step 3 in the OA 12 & 12 helped me identify the following principles that can guide me to find God's Will for me.

Acceptance, as shown by the following behaviors: accepting guidance received from all sources, admitting powerlessness, no longer doing only what I want to do, and practicing sincerity and honesty and asking help from a sponsor.

Belief, shown through practicing the following: attitude change, sanity, freedom from obsession, following a hunch, trusting my intuition, no longer feeling alone, listening to silence and acting as if.

Willingness as shown by taking the following actions: working the steps, living one day at a time, expecting a miracle, believing this too shall pass, using common sense, relaxing and taking it easy when making a decision, pausing to hear God's will, asking for what I need.

As I learn to follow these principles, my attitudes and my life will undoubtedly change.

Frank R.



If there were an Overeaters Anonymous App, what are the top three (3) features you would want it to have?

Please write down your ideas and send them to:
vst4oa@hotmail.com

Thank you for your suggestions!

MEETINGS AND BOUNDARIES

I recently went to a meeting for only the second time. There, in the written format of the meeting, was wording directly from the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous. Several years ago AA alerted the other anonymous programs that they did not want language from the Big Book copied into documents; that if a meeting, any anonymous meeting, wished to use words originally conceived by the founders of AA in 1933, they needed to read those words directly from the Big Book. (There is also a letter reprinted here from World Service about just that.)

Do I say something to the group? Do I really “know” better or was this just me trying to control a situation? Do I have an obligation as a member of the group to alert the rest of the members that we are in violation of a specific Alcoholic Anonymous request that was sent, world-wide? Do I risk anger and alienation from others because I am drawing attention to changes that affect us all? Do I wait and let someone know after the meeting that OA as a whole has been asked to read Big Book language directly from the Big Book?

A few years ago, I felt uncomfortably put in the position of challenging a request for inserting a specific word into the meeting format. As always, when something feels “off” to me in program, I do (and did) a significant amount of research before I sought to not put the word in. When the change was presented at a group conscience, Tradition Four was read: “Each group is autonomous except when affecting other groups or OA as a whole.” Thus this change was presented as a justification to insert the requested word. The word itself comes from a religious tradition, and so to support that supposition, I read the dictionary definition aloud. Sure, Alcoholics Anonymous began by coming from a Western concept of spirituality, with a concept of God = Higher Power. But the flavor of any particular religion was intentionally taken out of the Big Book so that the words could be universally used. The salient point that I asserted is that with the insertion of that one word, the format would become a mis-representation of Overeaters Anonymous as a whole. An agnostic or atheist newcomer to the rooms, hearing religiously-inclined words, might well leave with the belief that she didn’t belong because the group was/is religious.

Present day, after having read the chapter on acceptance between 60 and 600 times, I would either leave or sit in the situation, because this may very well be a challenge that HP has put in my path, to be patient. But I also think, in these moments, of the phrase: “with great risk, come great rewards.” One of my personality traits that I like, (and that exceedingly annoys others), is that I assert myself, whether it’s to communicate about my own needs, or on behalf of a group. I don’t mind taking a risk if I am clear that there is a violation of OA’s boundaries, even if that means a reaction against my stating those guidelines. I seek information to back-up my position, finding citations where any of us can read where that guidance is from. Any guidelines communicated to all in the OA program started with one person and a thought, one meeting’s consensus at a group conscience, the region’s honing and mulling, then approving a motion, and finally, the presentation of the idea to the Overeaters Anonymous World Service Business Conference. From one person, to a universal standard, that’s how it works.

Adhering to boundaries in a meeting and whether they are honored or not can affect my program. It can affect yours as well. What are you doing today to support healthy, knowledge-filled, involved Overeaters Anonymous members? If this is the first time you are “hearing” or seeing anything about the World Service office’s guidance about reading AA literature, how can you up your connection to OA as a whole?

Sealani

REGIONALLY SPEAKING, WORKSHOPS

OA Retreat Day: Sunday Evening OA Meeting (Apr 25)

Slipping and Sliding Workshop (Apr 25)

CJIOA Spring Marathon (May 16)

Silent Retreat: Brandywine IG (May 15-17)

Walking Thru the Steps (June 5-7)

Butterflies Are Free: Hosted By SCPOAI (June 20)

Detailed information can be found at: <http://oaregion7.org/calendar/>

2/12/2015

Dear Friend,

Numerous OA members have contacted the WSO to ask if Overeaters Anonymous has a policy regarding reading aloud from, typing, or reprinting AA literature for OA meetings. The WSBC and OA's Board of Trustees have not set a policy.

The Question of Changing Words in AA Literature

Many OA members have asked if it is acceptable to change the words "alcohol" and "alcoholic" to "food" and "compulsive overeater" when reading aloud from AA literature. The issue of whether to change words in AA's literature is a matter of respecting AA's expressed request and OA's historical relationship with AA.

Below is an excerpt of a letter from the AA General Service Office, dated January 22, 2010, that addresses this:

"Although the First and Second Editions of *Alcoholics Anonymous* are in the public domain of the United States, it has always been Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc. ("AAWS") Board's position to request the cooperation of other Fellowships based on A.A.'s Steps, Traditions, etc. in protecting the integrity of the A.A. message as conveyed in *Alcoholics Anonymous*. AAWS has historically permitted the adaptation of the Twelve Steps and the Twelve Traditions by other Fellowships. However, when it comes to other A.A. materials, the Board does not feel that it is appropriate for other Fellowships to substitute any other words where the words such as "alcoholics", "alcoholism" appear in the original text.

Additionally, to permit 'adaptation' of portions of text material would tend to dilute the credibility of our literature. As may be the case with some of your own literature, A.A. material derives chiefly from experience, and, therefore, possesses a certain sense of authenticity and sincerity. If the very same material were to be published with word substitutions, depending on which Fellowship was publishing it, anyone having occasion to read two or more of these versions would have good reason to doubt the integrity of any of them."

6075 Zenith Court NE • Rio Rancho, New Mexico 87144-6424 USA

Mail address: P.O. Box 44020 • Rio Rancho, NM 87174-4020 USA

Tel: (505) 891-2664 • Fax: (505) 891-4320 • Email: info@oa.org

Web site: www.oa.org

The Question of Typing AA Literature for Group Use

OA members have also asked about typing AA literature as written onto a piece of paper for group use, rather than asking group members to read from the published literature, such as the Big Book. An excerpt of the same letter from the AA General Service Office, dated January 22, 2010, says:

“Once again we can only request that other Fellowships cooperate by presenting any A.A. material from the Big Book in the actual context of the A.A. message.”

Two recent enquiries to AA received these responses from AA’s Intellectual Property Administrator.

In an email from September 2014 (emphasis added):

“We have no objection to your O.A. meeting reprinting brief excerpts from the Big Book for use in its meetings. Of course, we would ask that this material not be adapted, that is, this material should be ‘read (or reprinted) directly from the actual Big Book.’”

In an email from February 2015 (emphasis added):

“We would prefer that A.A. material is not photocopied or retyped, particularly large segments of A.A. material.”

The Question of Referencing AA Literature on Websites

Some OA groups have asked about including AA literature, such as the Third Step or Seventh Step Prayers, on their websites. When asked, AA’s Intellectual Property Administrator responded, in an email dated February 12, 2015, with the following request.

“We would ask that you reference page numbers **INSTEAD** of reprinting AA material on your website.”

For an example, please see the “[Program Inspiration](#)” page under *Members/Groups* on oa.org.



W O R L D S E R V I C E O F F I C E

OA-Approved AA Literature

For OA's Statement on Approved Literature, please see the *Conference Policy Manual*, Policy 2010A.

For a list of OA-approved AA literature, please see [OA Approved Literature List](#) on oa.org on the "OA Guidelines" page under *Members/Groups*.

For additional information or enquiries about reading from, typing, or reprinting AA literature, please contact Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc. (<http://www.aa.org>).

Sincerely,

OA Publications Department
World Service Office
PO Box 44020
Rio Rancho, New Mexico 87174-4020
Tel 505-891-2664
Fax 505-891-4320
www.oa.org

6075 Zenith Court NE • Rio Rancho, New Mexico 87144-6424 USA
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Tel: (505) 891-2664 • Fax: (505) 891-4320 • Email: info@oa.org

Web site: www.oa.org