

Fall 2019

SOAR 8

Southeast Overeaters Anonymous Region 8



Alabama
Arkansas
Florida
Georgia
Louisiana
Mississippi
North Carolina
South Carolina
Tennessee
Puerto Rico
South America
Central America
Caribbean Islands

The Big Book Comes Alive for OA!

A long term recovered compulsive eater from Canada will be presenting this multiple session program.

Alternate Programs Include:
Newcomers,
Relapse & Recovery,
and Higher Power

Join us and share your experience, strength, and hope with other OA members while strengthening your own commitment to recovery. Whether you are new to the program or an “old-timer,” we invite you to a weekend full of recovery and fellowship in the **River City in Memphis TN.**



Schedule

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 11

12-7 pm Registration in Hotel Lobby
4:00 pm Recovery convention begins
7:00 pm Business Assembly convenes
8:00 pm Welcome and Presentation and Discussion

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 12

7 am-noon Registration in Hotel Lobby
8:30 am Business Assembly reconvenes
9:00 am Recovery Convention continues
12:00 pm Luncheon and speaker
2:00 pm Business Assembly reconvenes
2:00 pm Recovery Convention continues
6:00 pm Banquet and speaker
7:30 pm Entertainment -
Recovery Repertory Theatre

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 13

9:00 am Recovery Convention continues
10:00 am Closing speaker

Hotel—Holiday Inn Memphis Airport

2240 Democrat Road
Memphis, TN 38132
901.332.1130

Check in 3 pm
Check out 11 am
FREE AIRPORT SHUTTLE

Hotel Rates

Standard Room \$93 + tax per night
(sleeps up to 4)

Use group code **SOR**
Tell Hotel you are with
Southeastern Overeaters Region 8

Discounted rate valid until Sept. 27.
Discount valid 3 days prior/3 days after event.
Refrigerator/Microwaves. *Complimentary refrigerator or microwave. Please make request when reserving and again at check-in. Limited quantities available. First come, first serve.*

**SOAR8
Regional
Assembly
October 11-13
Memphis, TN**

Recovery Story

I came into my first Overeaters Anonymous Meeting on November 29, 1971. I weighed well over 200 pounds. I was crazy and miserable. My marriage was falling apart and I had two small children.

I thought I had come home because I related and identified with the speaker. She was thin, a teacher and told my story. I immediately asked her to be my sponsor and my journey began.

Little did I know what process was ahead of me. It was a strict, rigorous food plan based on guilt and shame. If I slipped, back to day one. I immediately got abstinent and became compliant.

As I put down the food and started navigating the steps, a flood of repressed feelings and emotions took over. I didn't know what hit me and although I wanted so desperately to eat, I listened to her and followed her directions. Today I know this was the mental obsession.

After a few months my physical cravings disappeared, yet the emotional upheaval was still difficult to handle. At that time I found a 12 step therapist and utilized her services as part of my recovery plan.

I reached a normal weight dropping 95 pounds and I thought I had arrived. They called it the "Pink Cloud" in those days. I didn't realize that my ego was out of whack because I didn't have awareness. I didn't have "Entire Abstinence."



In those early years, the meetings I went to focused on steps 1-3, yet didn't continue actively working on the rest of the steps. My food was arrested and I was flying high. I spoke at meetings and did a lot of service but I lacked humility

I believe that God led me to a person at my meeting who was also in another fellowship. I started studying the Big Book with this dual addicted sponsor and the focus was on the nuts and bolts of recovery and the steps. As she took me through the process I began to develop a program of depth and weight. Now I had something to give away.

As the years progressed, I have found many resources and people who became my support network, however I still felt unsettled and a lack of serenity. Something was missing and although I was doing everything "Right" I was still at a loss.

A few years ago, I found a phone meeting where I heard a lot of discussion about the spiritual malady. I took a sponsor who led me through the steps focusing on spiritual enlargement. As I began to collaborate and communicate with my personal higher power, I felt peace. It came in ebb and waves and still does. I believe that this is lifelong work. I am committed to it.

Each day presents different challenges, yet with the steps I have my higher power who comes with all solutions. I also have a set of tools and strategies to problem solve.

Today I am continuing this quest for enlightenment. Each day I actively work the steps by attending meetings, sponsoring, taking inventory when things come up, doing an 11th step daily, making outreach calls and receiving them, praying and meditating and asking for guidance and direction.

For today, my food is neutral, I'm at a healthy body weight and I'm seeking solutions. This program has helped me grow up and mature not only chronologically, yet spiritually. I've self-discovered, uncovered my shortcomings and am recovered one day at a time. For this I am grateful.

Linda R

OA and the Lobster

In April I attended the Region 8 assembly in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. There were many memorable moments, but one that sticks out is an encounter I had with a fellow OA member. I was shopping in the "Boutique" for bargains and came across a pin in the shape of a lobster. I had to have it. See, I grew up in Maine, "Lobster Capital of the world." I thought I knew a lot about lobsters, but I was about to get schooled.

My fellow OA member asked me, "You know about the lobster and OA, right?" I think she was reacting to the excitement I was displaying at the find. "I know about lobsters," I replied, "I'm from Maine." So I thought. She began to tell me of the amazing story I need to share.

A lobster is a salt water crustacean that lives in a hard shell. But the shell does not grow along when the lobster grows. Therefore, the lobster must shed it's shell whenever it has growth. How does the lobster know when it's time to shed it's shell, you may ask? When the lobster has had enough pain and discomfort and can't tolerate it any longer. During this process of change the lobster will be more exposed and vulnerable until the new shell has hardened. The lobster will hide in its burrow or under rocks for protection during this process.



Like the lobster we humans will wait until we cannot tolerate our environment as it is before we are willing or able to make changes to it. Also, like the lobster, during the process of shedding our old shell and developing our new, we become vulnerable and exposed. We often isolate and hide from the outside world. Dr. Abraham Twerski, a psychiatrist and Rabbi presents a wonderful explanation of this on You Tube 12/23/15.

Lobsters will go through the painful shedding process more frequently when they are young, just as we have a lot of emotional changes throughout our growing in recovery. As we mature, like the lobster we have fewer painful experiences and feel much more at ease in our own skin.

I was so able to relate to this because I knew about lobsters shedding each year. But I had never made that analogy to my own changes. As I now reflect, I can see the common denominators. I had often heard of OA members going from a caterpillar to a butterfly, but I can identify with the lobster so much easier.

Shirley Q., Holiday FL

**Mar 20-22, 2020 in Baton Rouge LA
Region 8 Spring Recovery/Business Convention**

**August 20-22, 2020 in Orlando FL
World Service Recovery Convention**

**Mark
your
calendars!!!**

Recovery Story

Being born to a first class southern cook and a candy salesman, I was 110 pounds by the time I was seven years old. My weight became an intense symbol of my shame.

Thus began my life long struggle with food and weight, trying to settle to a perfect balance between my craving for food and shame about my weight.

I came into OA recovery in March of 1987. The battle continued, but with spiritual support I reached a healthy body weight and have maintained that since. In spite of my healthy body weight I did not feel at peace with the relationship I had with food, eating, and weight. Over the years I have realized that food is not my enemy but paradoxically a spiritual tool to reach the necessary deep and effective spiritual experience required for recovery.

Food and eating have been spiritual tools for mankind for millennia. Examples include such things as religious sacrifices and communal meals to connect with various deities. True recovery required that I begin utilizing food and eating in the traditional manners that made them a spiritual tool. Abstaining from compulsive eating was merely a beginning that opened the door.

The word “weight” has no positive meaning to me as a spiritual term because it has been a lifelong symbol of my shame. I could not use my problem to solve my problem. However, it can be utilized as an honesty meter for my recovery and honesty is what I term a spiritual quantity.

Abstaining became a symbol of deprivation. Therefore I have transitioned from “abstaining from” to achieve a certain body weight to “pursuing a positive” which I call spiritual eating as a bridge to the

Spiritual Eating—Food Is Not My Enemy

spiritual progress that is necessary for my continued recovery.

What is spiritual eating? Spiritual eating includes the practice of mindful eating. I am especially mindful for my food’s source and the idea that it is not a possession but a gift from my higher power. It comes from the earth through the efforts of many people and not just from packages, containers, cans or drive-throughs.

The mental discipline to maintain mindful focus during eating is sometimes difficult. Therefore I have adopted certain actions that help me maintain mindfulness. I sit down when I eat; I use utensils for my food; I do not eat while I am preparing food; I do not eat while I am putting up food and cleaning up after a meal.

Spiritual eating also includes sharing my food with others. When I am able to share a meal with others, it enhances my sense of gratitude for what I have been given. Connections with others, with food as a interpersonal glue, connects me to the power that is greater than myself.

Utilizing these two awarenesses I am able to make a plan for how and what I eat. When I used to try to stay on a diet, that was an exercise of the self. I was exerting self control over my impulses and compulsions to eat. My self could never control my compulsion.

Today I do not use self control. Today I “follow” a plan for my eating. Being a

follower to me means I am a disciple. This plan, being a spiritual tool, is a bridge to my higher power. Thus I am a disciple of my higher power through my plan of eating and receive power to follow my plan. In other words I make a covenant with my higher power about my food and eating. This makes me much less likely to break my covenant. I see the word disciple as being related to discipline which is what I am practicing following my plan.

How do I know that I am on track with my spiritual eating? **Compulsive eating feels emotionally, physically, and spiritually unhealthy and painful.**

Spiritual eating feels enriching to my emotional, physical, and spiritual condition. My compulsive eating is shrouded in secrecy while my spiritual eating is always open and honest. Compulsive eating is always a source of shame but spiritual eating enhances my sense of self-esteem. Compulsive eating generates fear, possibly related to the fear of shame, discovery, or loss of my possession of food. Spiritual eating is much more peaceful which is a bridge to the experience of serenity. Compulsive eating makes me more likely to withdraw into myself, practicing my isolation. Spiritual eating, on the other hand, is the practice of sharing and engaging in a fellowship with gratitude rather than an isolated relationship with the food alone. Spiritual eating can never be perfect, but for me it is a symbol of my spiritual progress which eliminates the feeling of chronic shame I have had. I envision the sharing of food as being one of the earliest spiritual acts that mankind pursued. Finally, compulsive eating generates chronic feelings of emptiness and spiritual eating creates a sense of genuine fulfillment.

Anonymous

Perfectly Imperfect

Perfectionism was a deeply held character defect of mine. In fact, a reasonable argument could be made that this one character flaw above all others was the catalyst that caused my compulsion to take priority in my life above all else. With this defect in place, I “knew” that even when doing well, I could always do better. I felt I could always do more—or less—and my attention focused on these perceived deficiencies. Never satisfied, I’d seek avenues for relief from these negative labels I believed about myself.

Reading about perfection in OA literature made me reflect on my Universe and how nothing in it—absolutely nothing—is perfect. There is always a flaw and this is also a critical component for the evolutionary process. It is perfectly normal to not be perfect. You know how there is the old saying that “no two snowflakes are

alike,” well...the truth of the matter is because of natural imperfections no two potatoes are alike either. Or bananas or leaves or birds or...fill-in-the-blank. In addition, it is vital for me to recognize that there is no board or chart or checklist for what “perfect” is. **Perfection is completely a human construct of my diseased mind.** As if there was some Standard Universe Perfection Law that I could measure myself against! Once I honestly faced this truth it seems remarkable that I held onto perfectionism for as long as I did.

I found it incredibly difficult to release this character defect over to my Higher Power. I would take diligent action, release it, only to find it slowly seeping back into my sphere of existence. And so I would repeat. Eventually, my Higher Power nudged me into a different direction suggesting that

instead of releasing it, I adjust my perception of it. Redefine it. So, after a time in reflection, I have come to accept perfection as: **Doing the best that I can and being satisfied with the result.** The “best that I can” includes gentleness with myself...the resources I have today and the situation I am living within today. Maybe tomorrow’s “best” will be different, but for today I did the best with what I had. The last part of my definition “being satisfied with the result” is truly a partnership with HP. It is only through acceptance of doing the best that I can that I find peace and harmony with my perfectly human imperfections.

Today may we rest comfortably in our normality and love ourselves just as we are. Perfectly imperfect.

Michelle D – Region 8 Treasurer



Hello/Hola/Olá Region 8

My Name is Andi
and I am compulsive overeater!
Mi nombre es Andi
y soy un comedor compulsivo!
Meu nome é Andi
e comedor compulsivo!

I am so very grateful that you have selected me to be Region 8 Trustee. Since our WSBC this year I have been given the opportunity to work with so many of you. Answering questions about OA, our Traditions and our Concepts.

It’s really been wonderful hearing about your Intergroups upcoming conventions and retreats that will be going on between now and the end of

the year. We are truly blessed to have 55 Intergroups and Service Boards in our region. 730 groups meeting all across our region.

Speaking of Intergroups and Conventions, have you made your reservation yet for our Fall Assembly/Convention. “River City Recovery” in Memphis, TN USA October 11-13, 2019. “The Big Book Comes Alive.” Come and take part in your Fellowship and share recovery with us. The Assembly is a great way to get new ideas to take back to your Intergroup and meetings as well as sharing what your groups have done with others. If your group needs help with funding

you can contact IGOR (Intergroup Outreach committee)for information.

In case you haven’t heard World Service Convention 2020 will be at the Renaissance Hotel at Sea World, Orlando, Florida USA, August 20-22, 2020. We are working on making this an experience you really don’t want to miss. More to come as we get closer.

Looking forward to seeing you in October at our Assembly. Please come up and introduce yourself to me as I really love getting and giving hugs and handshakes.

Blessings of light
Andi S., Region 8 Trustee

Recovery Story

I have been a compulsive overeater all my life. Thinking back, I can remember that food did something for me that it did not do for others and this was confusing because I swam competitively until college-I was in great shape!!! During this time, I weighed about 160 and on a 6' 3" frame, I looked normal. During college, I began the climb; I weighed about 225 my first two years and over 300 by the time I finished college. I married young, worked full time, and went to school full time. I began to work nights and I would consume my biggest meal before bed, not a good idea. I continued to gain until I found OA a little over 4 years ago and I was 410+ at my highest weight.

I was one of those that never heard about program until my first day of program. I heard about AA of course but, that was for weak people. I had a childhood friend with an addiction, he lost everything to his addiction and I only reconnected with him because I had heard the news. During our talks, I opened up to him about my problems with weight and I remembered him saying that he wished there was a step program for me just like he had found. A week later, I was talking to another childhood friend who was an alcoholic. Since we all grew up together and since I love to gossip, I mentioned I wished there was a program that could help me. This alcoholic friend, by God's grace, knew about OA and quickly pulled up the OA website on his phone. Sure enough, there was a meeting that day and I decided to go.

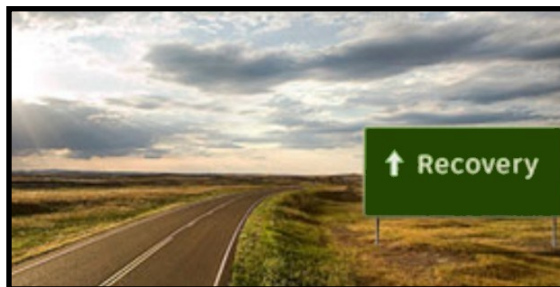
Is it odd or is it God? On that very day, scheduled a month in advance, I had an appointment to see my family doctor about getting the gastric sleeve done. Over the years, I had seen him about my weight. The last time was 2 years prior, I was put on the identical program that is

required for the gastric sleeve, but I would do the program, not the surgery. I was too good for that. Unfortunately, I wasn't too good to develop bulimia during that exercise. I remember the nutritionist telling me if I ate too much I would throw up. My insane brain said: "Hey, you can do that without all the trouble!!!"

There I sat, looking at my Doctor as he explained everything to me, reminding me of all the previous attempts at weight loss. He ended with: "We can do this but, I'm not sure this will help you long term." To which I replied "I don't have any reason to doubt you but, I don't know what else to do." I left the office with weight loss pills, a plan, and the promise of cognitive behavior therapy at a well known hospital. On to my first OA meeting! I remember feeling nervous, ashamed, and confused about my condition. How could I be successful in other areas of my life and continue to fall flat with the weight?! I remember hearing things in that meeting that I didn't know other people thought. I almost cried in front of a room of strangers! I left that meeting and never looked back!

After 4 years, I am closing in on 100 pounds. I would like to say that I never relapsed but, that would not be true. What I have learned is there is a God personal to me and a program of people just waiting for me to reach out. My favorite line in the Big Book is: "There is a vast amount of fun in it all!" I have found that to be true!

Chuck K



Attending the Region 8 Business Assembly

Is your intergroup going to be represented at the Business Assembly in Memphis, TN in October 2019, or in Baton Rouge, LA during March 2020? We ask that every Intergroup send at least one representative to our Region Assembly. There is much work to do and we need **you** to get this work done. Your voice is needed. Not only will your Intergroup be represented and thus, have a voice concerning important decisions, but also you will be helping the hosting Intergroup. Costs for the weekend include registration fees, travel expenses and hotel nights; all of which are paid by the Intergroup.

If your Intergroup is financially unable to send at least one Representative to the Assembly, perhaps Region 8 can help you for a future assembly. Funds are available. You can submit the Representative Funding Application located here <https://www.oaregion8.org/documents/Representative-Funding-Application.pdf> on the SOAR8 website. Save the form to your local computer, fill it out, save it again then send to the Intergroup Outreach Chair igorchair@oaregion8.org

Another option is to attend VIRTUALLY. Although there is no comparison with attending in person (meeting the other representatives, feeling the love, engaging in spirited debate, etc.), the virtual option allows your Intergroup to engage in the proceedings and vote on the motions. You must complete a Virtual Representative Application and submit it to the Secretary, plus complete the registration form and send a small registration fee. You log in through ZOOM on your computer or phone, and listen to the proceedings of the Assembly. If your credentials are on file, you may VOTE when each motion is called. The Business Assembly begins at 7:00 PM Friday night and ends at 10:00 PM; resumes Saturday morning and continues until 5:30 PM or so, with a break for lunch.

With all this support available, EVERY intergroup should be represented!

Barbara C, Tech Web Chair

Recovery Story

My introduction to OA was from an old retired nurse who paddled slowly up and down the pool at the YMCA in Willimantic, CT. I thrashed up and down, but it was Rita Abby who always had a peaceful smile on her face. Finally, I asked her about the smile—OA was her reply.

That was 45 years ago and I still remember her name, her face and her smile. That is the impact each one of us can have as we move one day to the next.

I attended meetings for a while but then switched to another 12-step meeting. Throughout the years, I stayed in a recovery program, but I did not return to OA until perhaps 10 years ago, where I heard something I had never heard before: **“I do not have a normal relationship with food or body image.”**

Now in Wilmington, NC—since 1991—I have a small but tight family of compulsive overeaters that keep me between the white lines. To date, I have never been obese but “normal” eaters don’t consider eating candy from the sidewalk. **But they were wrapped!**

It took a long time for me to get ready to recover...to be honest, open and willing to look myself in the mirror and see who was there. What had happened in my life to explain why I ate compulsively? I wrote my life story, an autobiography essentially, and patterns of behavior leaped off the pages: needing a man to take care of me; needing to be right; raw cold fear that kept everyone at a distance; inability to work with anyone.

Two marriages and 8 times fired should have told me something was wrong, but nothing changed until I was ready. Ready is a magic word.

I did all the things that are necessary for recovery: sponsor, meetings, literature, writing. It took time, but I finally embraced what I said above: I do not have a normal relationship with food or body image. Compulsive eating doesn’t fix anything.

So, years later, I attend my weekly OA meeting and an Al-Anon meeting. My AA meeting just disbanded so I am in the market for a new one. I live in steps 10, 11 and 12. My life is peaceful...not perfect, but peaceful. My Higher Power has me covered and I have nothing to fear.

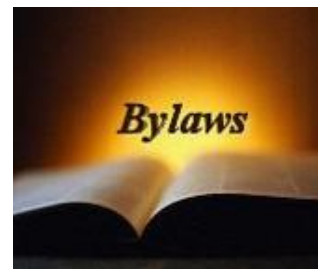
My Higher Power used food to get my attention and I am grateful.

Anonymous

GREETINGS FROM THE BY-LAWS COMMITTEE

The Bylaws Committee has been busy since the last Assembly. We incorporated all the changes from the last couple of assemblies into the Bylaws and Policy & Procedure Manual. You can download an updated copy from the website.

We continue to review the Policy & Procedure Manual to be sure it has the latest information. Motions will be submitted for the Fall Assembly.



Susan Berland, Bylaws Committee Chair

OA Group Inventory and Strong Meeting Checklist Updated

OA Group Inventory and *Strong Meeting Checklist*, both available for download on oa.org, have been recently refreshed—see how they can help you check in, both with yourself and your fellow members, at your upcoming meetings. These checklists are intended help foster a focused and supportive group environment to help carry the message to all attendees as we work our program together.

The revised *Strong Meeting Checklist* and *OA Group Inventory* are now posted online and are available for free download.

Find both online at What’s New (oa.org/whats-new) or at oa.org/documents “Group Secretary Materials.”

Here are the direct links:

Strong Meeting Checklist: <https://oa.org/files/pdf/strongmtgchecklist1.pdf>

OA Group Inventory: <https://oa.org/files/pdf/oagroupinventory.pdf>

Recovery Story

Small Changes...Big Results

When I first came to an OA meeting over two years ago, I was out of control. It wasn't just my eating. It was anxiety, my health, and spending money I didn't have on a fast food habit or grocery store bakery. I was morbidly obese. I knew if I wanted to live to see all the wonderful things my adult son was going to do in life, I needed to make a change. Change, however, does not come easily for me.

I loved the people I met at my first meeting. They were (and are) the most non-judgmental group of people I had ever met. There was nothing I could say about food that someone couldn't relate to. I didn't have to be embarrassed or fearful that someone might find out about my eating. The cat was out of the bag, and it was freeing. I knew I was where I belonged.

I got a sponsor right away, and she is amazing and inspiring. As soon as I had to send her a food plan and be accountable for what I was actually eating, I dropped the fast food and bakery. Having to look at and tell someone how much I was eating, and how much I was spending on food I did not need, was a real eye opener. It has taken a long time for me to be able to keep and follow a food plan, but now, I don't know how I ever lived without one.

I also started on step work. The best thing to happen in OA for me

was not the weight loss, though it is awesome. The best part for me was repairing my relationship with my Higher Power. We hadn't been on speaking terms for years when I entered the program. When working steps 4 thru 9, I found that God was someone I had harmed. I found out this willfulness was hurting me more than God. God and I talked, and having Him back in my life has taken away my anxiety almost completely. I give Him all my worries, and I know He is handling them.

I've made a lot of changes, slowly and one at a time, to eat healthier. I had to replace lunch and dinner desserts with fruit or fat free yogurt. I've had to admit that there are foods I have no control over and therefore cannot eat at all. I have gotten mad and stomped my feet and cried and prayed. I've had to learn to read food labels, especially the serving size. I started talking to myself when I have cravings and saying, "It's not worth

it," or "This is just PMS, you don't need that." I have become very creative with recipes. I started seeing a nutritionist to learn what to eat and how much. I just recently started counting calories, and next I will count fat grams. I'm always on the lookout for one more little change that can make a big difference.

I remember one of the first meetings with my sponsor when she asked about my goals for this program. I hadn't really thought about it, so I just told her the craziest goals I could think of, knowing I would never reach them. I wanted to weigh under 200 pounds and be able to shop for clothes not in the plus size section. I am happy today to say I weigh 196. I have lost 66 pounds in OA and 103 from my highest weight. It has been a slow and mostly steady process and well worth the effort. I am very proud of myself, and also my son who has lost 83 pounds since I have been in recovery. I feel successful, and I haven't felt that way in a very long time. I am so much more in control of life as a whole. Making a lot of small changes has kept my recovery progressing, but the biggest change has been my willingness to give up my willfulness.

Sahra A., Wilmington, NC

Small Changes...

**Big
Results**

Recovery Story

My diseased thinking often revolves around a fear of scarcity. Not having enough food, of course. I also often feel afraid of not having enough will power, enough conscious contact, enough patience, enough knowledge, and...enough time.

I came to the rooms of OA and learned about the tools: a plan of eating, sponsorship, meetings, the telephone, writing, literature, actions plan, anonymity, and service. Hello anxiety! How was I supposed to do all that? Thank HP for the recovery slogan, **“Do the next right thing for the next right reason.”** I was guided by the gift of desperation (aka g.o.d.) to ask a fellow who was willing to sponsor to sponsor me, and it was suggested first thing that I commit my food plan to them in the morning, so that helped prioritize which tool to incorporate first. I had been listening to podcasts about how fellows who have been able to achieve and maintain abstinence often get up early in the morning to read, write, and meditate. Sleeping less is one way of making time to do more and I was willing to try it. I also was over-exercising and knew social media was a huge time warp for me, so I put a limit on the time I exercised and set a boundary to not get on social media until after breakfast... sounds kinda like an action plan, right? I got the For Today daily meditation book and began reading it in the mornings, and

writing a bit about what thoughts it inspired, a gratitude list, and my food plan, then used my cell to immediately send it to my sponsor. Hey! That’s almost all of the tools and before I’ve changed out of my pjs!

I’ve been abstinent over two months now, and another miracle has been occurring. I have a tendency towards road rage...yes, “other drivers” is on my Step Four resentment list. No matter where and when my destination, someone driving in front of me is a barrier to be overcome. I didn’t realize until being in this process that I think I am manipulating others into thinking I am a valuable part of whatever we are coming together for by being early! As I have become more aware of what I’m feeling because those emotions are RIGHT THERE without food to stuff them down, I have become less willing to be impatient or angry in general, and especially with strangers in other vehicles. As my surrender to HP deepens, I am finding a sense of self-worth that enables me to be more patient with others and myself... I have more to offer than being punctual, and if HP wants me a few minutes slower behind this tractor, I have more time to listen to OA podcasts and appreciate the farmers that grow the food that is abstinent for me!

Maybe you thought I was going to talk about prioritizing Program activities

over other events occurring at the same time? That I was going to lecture about the dangers of procrastination or of not using all the tools and doing Stepwork? Another essay about “just for today?” Nope. I am writing to share my experience of a miracle—time is not fixed or finite—time has gotten bigger for me. I don’t have to sacrifice any activity, deprive myself of sleep (did you know if you go to bed earlier you can get up earlier and still get the same amount of sleep haha), or stress more to do the things that are relieving me of compulsive eating and compulsive food behaviors while I am progressing toward a healthy body weight. Somehow, when I do the next right thing for the next right reason, everything that I need is taken care of, and I still get most of what I want. I am abstinent, I pray and meditate, I create, deepen, and maintain relationships with others, I am learning so much about life and myself, and I’m accepting myself and others—life in general—exactly as it is more often with less effort. I have a long way to go...but have time to get there. Time—a gift of recovery!

Anonymous in TN

“Do the next right thing for the next right reason.”

REGION 8

TRUSTED SERVANTS

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Twelfth Step Within (TSW)

As a member of the Region 8 Twelfth Step Within (TSW) committee, I'd like to relate how doing service with my other committee members has enhanced my recovery.

First and foremost, PARTICIPATING in committee work keeps me involved with OA on a different level than just my group or inter group. Thankfully, these wonderful folks are active in their programs and mentor to me what recovery looks like! And since (to quote one of my earliest German OA friends) "I have a disease of forgetfulness," I am given frequent recovery updates and reminders through them.

Second, THIS IS A "WE" PROGRAM. The TSW committee is specifically endowed with a member to member mission—carrying the OA message of recovery to prior or current OA members. Hopefully each of you has, or will, discover one of the lovely paradoxes of program: when I reach out to help another, I always get helped myself! ALWAYS. This is part and parcel of why service work enhances my recovery.

And lastly, I NEED YOU AS WELL! I'm convinced beyond a shadow of a doubt, that this disease, just as "cunning, baffling and powerful" as alcoholism in its own insidious way, is right next to me, especially when I am participating in any OA recovery work. It's doing its own PE routine, hoping to break down my progress. And yours. So, share your recovery TODAY. Together we get better.

OA hugs, Chris J, Huntsville, AL

REGION 8

