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OAsis

Spring 2023

OA Infoline:
(201) 528-3398
www.njioa.org

The quarterly newsletter of NJIOA — Northern Jersey Intergroup of Overeaters Anonymous



Acceptance Is The Answer

UPCOMING EVENTS

APRIL 2023

April 8 — Cherry Blossom Stroll,
Branch Brook Park 9:00am

April 13 — NJIOA Intergroup Meeting 7:30pm

April 30 — Workshop — Breathing New Life into the
Neglected Chapters of the Big Book on Zoom 2-4pm

MAY 2023

May 11 — NJIOA Intergroup Meeting 7:30pm

JUNE 2023

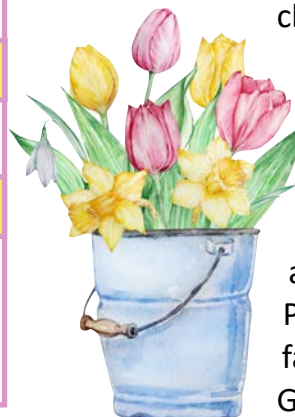
June 8 — NJIOA Intergroup Meeting 7:30pm

June — Body Image In-Person Workshop-TBD

All event flyers and further info will be posted on our website: www.njioa.org

“**A** cceptance is the answer to *all* of my problems today.” I love this Big Book prayer. It reminds me that people and situations are exactly the way that God intended for them to be, and that when I try to change them, I am playing God and taking the focus away from changing myself. The only person I can

change is me and, with God’s help, I can do this one day at a time. This is definitely the easier, softer way, as opposed to constantly swimming against the current and trying to be anyone’s Higher Power. To state a quote from my favorite movie *Rudy*, “There is a God — and I’m not Him.” — **Beth A.**



Learning Acceptance

It's been a struggle for me to learn to accept things as they are. Like so many of us, I learned early on that I needed to control things to be comfortable. And comfort was what it was all about for me. So, yes, control is a key default for me. Acceptance is the opposite of control. And there's so much I can't control and have to learn to accept. This is where much of my program work lies. I work with my Higher Power to learn to accept:

- ▶ What my loved ones do or don't do, say or don't say.
- ▶ The health, safety, and status of the people I love.
- ▶ What other people (those I know and those I don't) do and don't do.
- ▶ Whether plans go as I want them to or not.
- ▶ The state of the country and of the world.
- ▶ My health and aging.

These last two have been a recent and substantial challenge. Without my permission and contrary to my expectations, my body and mind are aging and my health is not as good as I think it should be.



The tremendous fact for every one of us is that we have discovered a common solution."

There Is A Solution, Big Book, page 17

This isn't how I wanted it to go. And that, I think, is the crux of the matter — How I wanted it to go.

How to accept my powerlessness over my health and aging? Here are some of my thoughts on that: be grateful for what I do have (such as the ability to hear, to see, to walk. The friends and family I have and the many comforts I have the privilege to enjoy.) Focus on the positive rather than my natural inclination to think negatively. Actively work to see the small miracles in my life daily. Live life fully now. As the Big Book (page 86) says in Step 11: "...were we thinking of what we could do for others, of what we could pack into the stream of life?" And, finally, get out of my own head and help others.

"Most of us sense that real tolerance of other people's shortcomings and viewpoints and a respect for their opinions are attitudes which make us more useful to others. Our very lives, as ex-problem drinkers, depends upon our constant thoughts of others and how we may help meet their needs." (Big Book, pages 19-20).

None of this will stop or change the aging process one bit. But it will help me to age with grace and serenity. And amen to that.

— BF

Acceptance brings Serenity

Page 417 of the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous says that acceptance is the answer to all my problems today. For me, acceptance is the only real source of serenity and peace. Initially, I thought that acceptance meant that I could do nothing about a situation, person, place, or thing and that it had to do with me - my control. What I have learned is that my response has to be tied to my spiritual fitness. If I use my will, I make a conflict. If I accept it and respond with



a solution-based response, I am peaceful. If I'm feeling disturbed, it comes from not accepting God's will " 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 "Today I have a faith in a higher power. I accept that I am, and will always be a Compulsive Overeater. I stay focused on the 12 step philosophy. I place my trust in my HP and I accept that I cannot have authority over circumstances. I do this in order to stay free of the bondage of my disease. I live by this statement "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 my attitudes."

— Estelle

SPRING

Acceptance of A Daughter

There are some things that are much easier for me to accept over others. For example, I accept that I have an eating disorder and I will have it for the rest of my life. I accept that my husband can be totally oblivious when things are staring him in the face. I accept that my mother passed away almost 11 years ago and I will never be able to see her in the flesh again. That last one was actually not easy and took a while but, yes, I do accept it. I may not like it, but I accept it. It is fact reality.

The summer before the start of middle school, my daughter confided in me that she thought she was gay. I was taken back. I mean, she had a little boyfriend in pre-kindergarten! How could this be? That is not what I envisioned for her. I envisioned her as an adult with a husband and lots of children. Will she be able to have children? MY grandchildren? I want to become a grandmother! I can't let this happen! I'm handing over my life and my food to my HP in order to get healthy so I can live long enough to meet and love my grandchildren, and now because of this, I may not have grandchildren? Will she have to fight adversity for the rest of her life?

As I'm typing this, I am of course reminded of the story on page 60 of the Big Book of the actor that tried to run the whole show. The above paragraph is riddled with self-centeredness, self-seeking and pride — all defects of mine. What I fail to remember is that I CAN'T run the show here,

because it's HER show, not mine. Next month my daughter will be 15 years old. Old enough to make important life decisions such as what college she's interested in, if she even wants to go to college, deciding on a career as well as what type of person she would consider spending the rest of her life with. That last one might seem a bit premature, but, I met my husband at 15 and by 16 I did have a strong feeling that I wanted to spend the rest of my life with him. I'm not saying that she will find her mate as early as I did, but I'm sure it's crossed her mind.

On the outside I have been 100% supportive of her, especially when she confided in me about possibly being gay. I would NEVER want to lose her. My daughter is my first born. She is my rainbow baby. I am so blessed to have her. I will not let my insecurity get involved in our relationship, or God forbid, lose her because of it. My "vision" of her adult life is not a fact or reality. It is her life and she deserves to be happy. What makes me happy may not make her happy or what I envision for her may not make her happy. She needs to make this decision for herself and I cannot try to sway her one way or another. She is the director of her own show.

Whatever happens, I will always be there for her, love her and guide her when she asks. As for accepting this, believe it or not, writing this article has gotten me a bit closer to acceptance. It may not be "my way" but I will accept it and I work towards this acceptance every day through my HP and the 12 Steps.

— Anonymous



"Almost none of us liked the self-searching, the leveling of pride, the confession of shortcomings which the process requires for its successful consummation.."

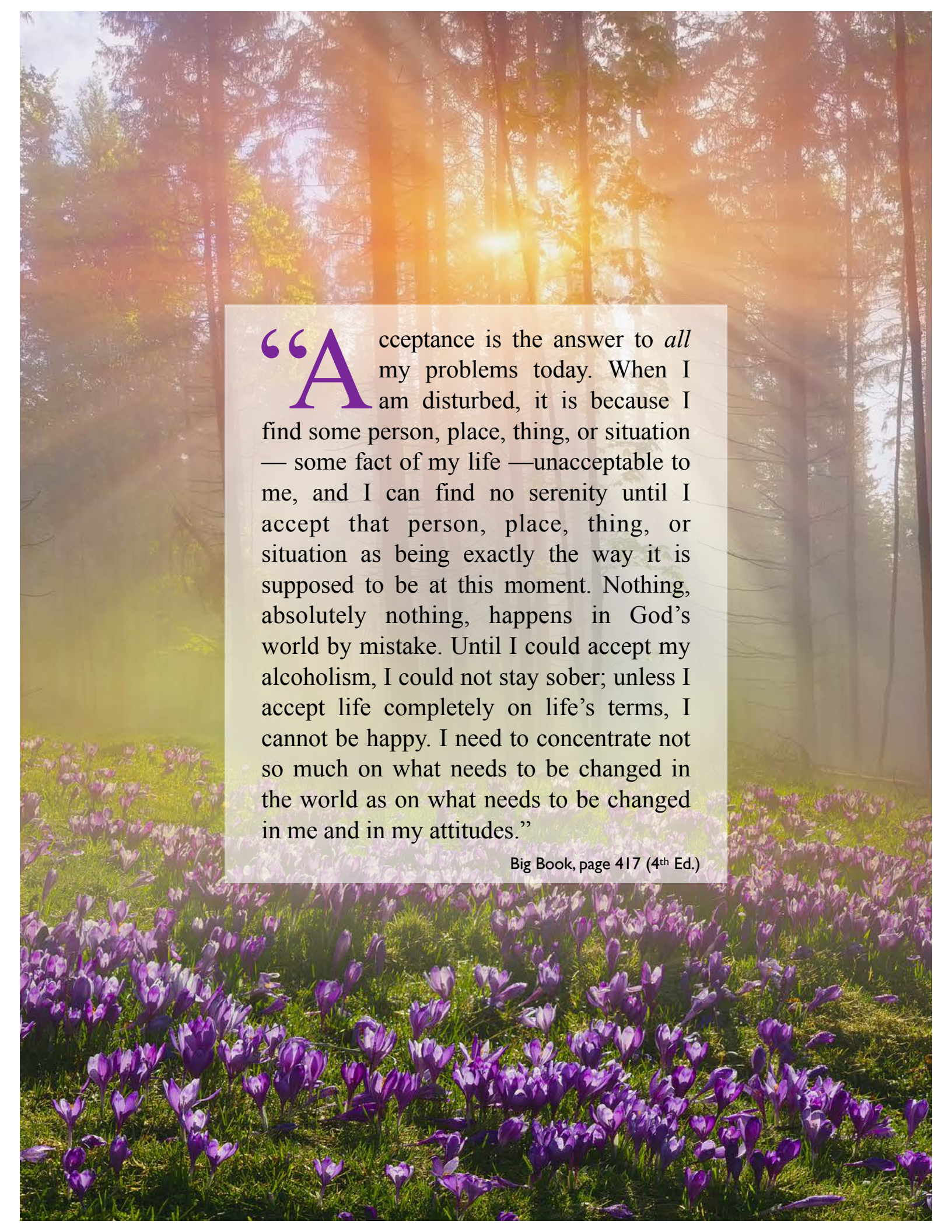
There Is A Solution, Big Book page 25



"We learned that we had to fully concede to our innermost selves that we were alcoholics. This is the first step in recovery. The delusion that we are like other people, or presently may be, has to be smashed."

Big Book, page 30





“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. Until I could accept my alcoholism, I could not stay sober; 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.”

Big Book, page 417 (4th Ed.)

Acceptance Is The Key

“At last, acceptance proved to be the key to my drinking problem.” (pg. 416, BB) This has proved to be the case with me too. For decades, in and out of OA, I was a chronic dieter and relapser. Sugar is the main substance to which my body has a physical “allergy”/addiction/reaction, but compulsive overeating and bingeing is the mental obsession that was the insanity that kept me locked in this disease of attitudes.

For many, many years I could not accept my powerlessness over food and compulsive overeating because of my ability to “muster the strength of character” and strong will to diet and control my food intake. When I would fall off the wagon of dieting I would lose all perspective and blame what I believed to be my inherent wrongness, my weakness, my lack of conviction, life problems, other people, stress, the holidays, etc. When these excuses didn't beat me up enough I would berate myself with insults: “You're a fat slob and disgusting human being”. I hated myself for the way I ate, looked, and for my lack of control. As painful as the return to bingeing and the out of control eating would be, the belief in these excuses gave me a sense of control.

Be Kind

“Be kind — everyone is fighting a difficult battle.”
(Italian proverb)

I have read this quote many times in my life: It's a truism. I do my best to remember everyday to treat people kindly because, like an iceberg, I can only see a small portion of their lives. I am as complex and broken on my best day as those I share my life with. In all my encounters I want to be genuine, real — but mostly kind. I don't need to eat sugar or be completely recovered to be kind. It's a byproduct of spending time in the Presence of the Most High Power.

— Anonymous



“If you are an alcoholic who wants to get over it, you may already be asking—“What do I have to do? It is the purpose of this book to answer such questions specifically.”

There Is A Solution, Big Book, page 20

I lied to myself with the belief that all would be well once I could again muster up the strength to control my eating...which I always could do, sometimes for days, or weeks, maybe months, or a year. I gained and lost probably two hundred plus pounds in ten, fifteen, twenty, thirty pound increments. But I could always do it...until I couldn't. I am a compulsive overeater. The day finally came when my disease had progressed so much that I could no longer diet or control my eating. I could not get even one meal of abstinent eating. I ate continuously and I bingeed on sugar/sugar products. I wanted to stop and I tried with all my will, but I could not control it. Finally the day came that the food was not even relieving the craving....and it definitely had ceased to quell my emotions. My eating became the insatiable craving and the source of intense emotional pain at the same time. There

was no release and no relief; food had ceased to be the solution to uncomfortable emotions and the sugar cravings were not satiated no matter how much I ate. I was stuck. Until I wasn't. I called out to my Higher Power in tears, accepting on a deep spiritual level that I am a compulsive overeater and that my life was unmanageable. For me, this was a spiritual experience and I am grateful that the day stays in my head, heart, and soul like it's tattooed in place.



Because of the grace of acceptance (for which I take no credit), I am a grateful compulsive overeater in recovery ODAAT. Thank you OA, my sponsor, and mostly HP. For the struggling and suffering active COE there is hope for recovery from compulsive overeating: “... Acceptance is the key...”

— Nancy

Acceptance of Where I am and What I Need To Do

I have been in OA for a long time, well in-and out of OA for a long time. The first thing I think I accepted was the fact that I had an issue with food. It was that issue that brought me in to the OA rooms to begin with. I thought that I had a little problem with food however the rest of my life was ok. As I stayed around the OA rooms for a while, I came to believe that I must need a bit more acceptance. It was more than a little issue with food, and I definitely had more than a little problem with food. I wasn't sure what I thought about this higher power stuff, quite frankly it made me a bit nervous. I was told I could use other people's Higher Powers to start with. I accepted that I had this issue with my HP... saw that other people seemed have some peace, serenity,

some recovery from compulsive overeating, and that seemed to start when they had some acceptance of where they were and what they needed to do about it. In my estimation, at that time, so many years ago, they seemed to know that they needed to work out this acceptance of who they were and what they were doing in regards to their food and move forward.



"It was only a matter of being willing to believe in a Power greater than myself. Nothing more was required of me to make my beginning."

Bill's Story, Big Book, page 12

As I continue to work this program a day at a time, the same things hold true. I need to check in each day, many times with my HP, I need to ask him/her to open my eyes to what may need to be accepted each day, what may need to be worked on, and then have the ability to move forward and work on that acceptance. It is the only way to make progress each and every day.

— Anonymous

Accepting My Perfectly Imperfect Recovery

Acceptance, I'm sure a lot would agree, is one of my favorite and most important topics. This includes for me, acceptance of my always-changing journey since I first came to OA over 30 years ago. I was not struck abstinent like others. It actually took me several years before my first clean abstinence. Then I lost weight very fast. That lasted – maybe about two years. Since then it's been a journey of ups and downs – literally – throughout the past years. But I am still here and I don't plan on going anywhere. I now accept that this is part of my journey. I will never have perfect abstinence. Maybe it's just that perfectly imperfect abstinence that I've heard

shared in the rooms. But I am okay with that. I hear and I learn and I keep coming back. Approximately 10 years ago, I reached my "goal weight" for the first time at the age of 58. After a couple of emotional life events I gained some back – more than once – gratefully not all of it, but definitely a couple of "relapses." About two years ago, I reconnected with my sponsor – which is key for me to get back on track. I am almost back to that "goal weight" again – but I also know it's not about the numbers. It's about my physical, emotional and spiritual recovery. For this Senior Citizen(!) – that's why I keep coming back. That's why I need OA. That's why I am still here and don't plan on going anyplace.



"When I am willing to do the right thing I am rewarded with an inner peace no amount of liquor could ever provide. When I am unwilling to do the right thing, I become restless, irritable, and discontent. It is always my choice."

My Chance To Live, Big Book, page 317



— Agnes

TWELFTH STEP WITHIN

Hi everyone! My name is Robin I. and I am the new chair for our Intergroup's Twelfth Step Within Committee (TSW). In my 20+ years of program, I have heard about this committee but did not always have a full grasp of the goals and work of this very important group. The good news is that our World Service Office (WSO) has a LOT of information and I'd like to share a bit with you.

First, the statement of purpose is this:

- To carry OA's message of recovery to those who still suffer within the OA Fellowship;
- To deal with relapse and issues of membership retention, offering the message of hope;
- To encourage OA members to maintain a recovery and prevent relapse.

— (WSO "Twelfth Step Within Handbook," p.2)

How do we do that? "We can all help carry the message of recovery through abstinence & working the Steps by:

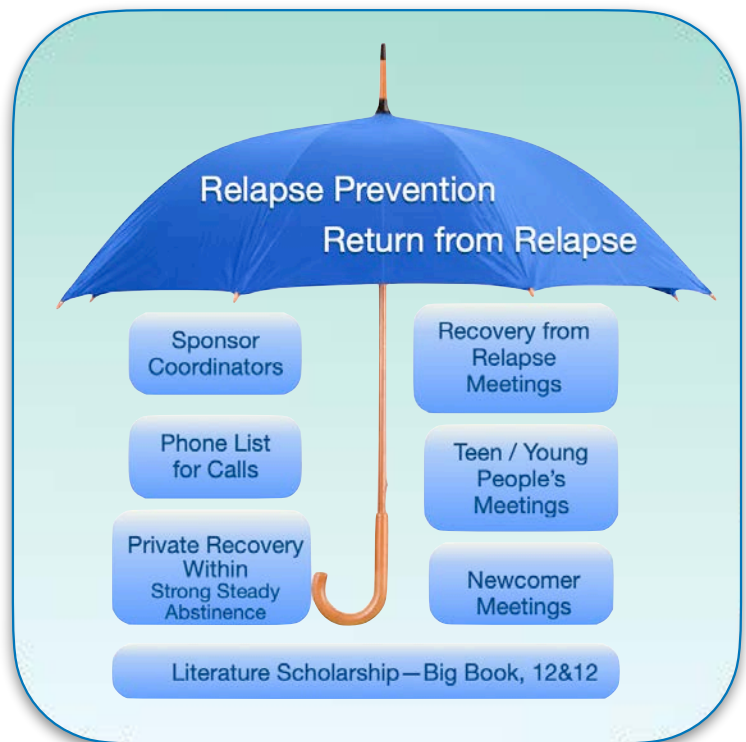
- ✓ being well ourselves;
- ✓ giving service, sponsorship & friendship;
- ✓ encouraging membership retention;
- ✓ attending meetings & OA events."

— (WSO "Twelfth Step Within Handbook," p.2)

For me, this means attending my home group meetings as well as relapse recovery meetings, making phone calls just to check in with fellows, remembering "what it was like," and not being afraid to ask a fellow how their program/food is doing.

Relapse is not inevitable, it is not contagious, but it can be a part of anyone's recovery journey. Sharing my own past relapse experience with others helps me remember that I am not immune to relapse, and that I am granted a daily reprieve from my compulsion as long as I am "in fit spiritual condition." (Big Book p.85). Again, this comes back to working the steps daily, especially Steps 10, 11 & 12.

More good news...you do not have to "be on a committee" to help another fellow however, since this is a "we program," giving service to a committee is actually a wonderful way to energize your own program — and someone else's!



I like to think of our "TSW" committee as an umbrella which covers a number of activities that can help prevent relapse and offer support to anyone returning from a relapse. These include:

- ★ Sponsor Coordinators who 'match' fellows looking for a sponsor with those who are available to sponsor
- ★ Newcomer meetings — starting or continuing meetings
- ★ Recovery from Relapse meetings - starting or continuing meetings
- ★ Teen/Young people's meetings - starting or continuing meetings
- ★ Literature scholarship — providing a Big Book or an OA 12&12 to someone who needs one, as a gift from NJIOA
- ★ Encouraging fellows to use our meeting phone lists to call those we haven't seen or to check in with other members who might be struggling
- ★ Personal, private recovery, strong steady abstinence, and carrying a message that has depth and weight.

As you can see, each of us is already a part of TSW. The love of our fellows is at the heart of TSW. Find someone who needs what you have freely received and share it..."I put my hand in yours & together we can..."

In loving service,
— Robin I.

12stepwithin@njioa.org



“If you think you are an atheist, an agnostic, a skeptic, or have any other form of intellectual pride which keeps you from ACCEPTING what is in this book, I feel sorry for you. If you still think you are strong enough to beat the game alone, that is your affair. But if you really and truly want to quit drinking liquor for good and all, and sincerely feel that you must have some help, we know that we have an answer for you. It never fails, if you go about it with one half the zeal you have been in the habit of showing when you were getting another drink.”

Dr. Bob's Nightmare, Big Book, page 181

PAST EVENTS

Unity Day

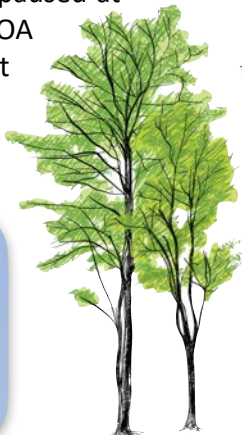
Sunday February 26th was Overeater's Anonymous' Worldwide Unity Day. Fellows all across the world paused for a moment of silence at 2:30 PM EST and then recited in unison, the OA Promise, formerly known as Rozanne's Prayer. I put my hand in yours, and together we can do what we could never do alone. No longer is there a sense of hopelessness, no longer must we each depend upon our own unsteady willpower. We are all together now, reaching out our hands for power and strength greater than ours, and as we join hands, we find love and understanding beyond our wildest dreams. Here in New Jersey, we had an All-Jersey Zoom event starting at 1 PM and ending at 3 PM. We had three wonderful speakers—one from Central Jersey, one from North Jersey and one from South Jersey, followed by open sharing. We paused at 2:30 and after a moment of silence recited the OA Promise together before resuming open sharing. It was a very inspiring day with attendees joining from all over the country, as many as 107 at one point. What a great experience of unity!

ac·cept·ance

/ək'sept(ə)ns/
noun

1. the action of consenting to receive or undertake something offered.

Definition, Oxford Languages Dictionary



PAST EVENTS

Winter Retreat — Star Lake 2023

With gratitude, we would like to report that the our 28th annual Winter Retreat — Star Lake Lodge — held on Zoom on Saturday February 4, 2023, was a HUGE success!

We gratefully announce that we received registrations from a total of 170 people — making this year the largest attended Star Lake retreat on record. As we all know, it takes a village to organize and sponsor a retreat of this size and depth. We acknowledge and thank the Winter Retreat Committee who worked and planned for months; and the 60+ volunteers who gave service, contributed their time, skill, talent and effort to make this wonderful event happen. We welcomed speakers from, literally, all over the country, and one speaker even Zoomed in to give service from Athens, Greece! The retreat was rich with topics and inspired us with its strong speakers. The day's schedule was divided into 2 workshop tracks. Track 1 hosted guest speakers who presented an extraordinary Step study (from 1 to 12!) across six incredible workshops. The Track 2 workshops

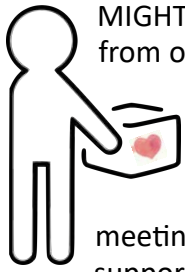
each hosted a panel of 2 guest speakers who shared on our favorite topics and offered their experience, strength and hope in dealing with the issues and challenges that we face every day, as we 'live life on life's terms' in recovery. It was a tremendous schedule and we were grateful to hear the speakers who generously gave their time to our retreat. Podcasts of the workshops will soon be posted to our website. One lucky registrant won the day's raffle, which was \$50 of their choice of literature from OA.org. It was a completely marvelous day! Our 29th Annual Winter Retreat will be held in January 2024. We'll see you all there!




“Shakespeare said, “All the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players.” He forgot to mention that I was the chief critic. I was always able to see the flaw in every person, every situation. And I was always glad to point it out, because I knew you wanted perfection, just as I did. A.A. and acceptance have taught me that there is a bit of good in the worst of us and a bit of bad in the best of us; that we are all children of God and we each have a right to be here. When I complain about me or about you, I am complaining about God's handiwork. I am saying that I know better than God.”

—Big Book, page 417 (4th Ed.)

CARRY THE MESSAGE



MIGHT YOU KNOW someone who could benefit from our program? Bill & Dr Bob said the only way to stay clean is to work with others. You could tell others about our program. Maybe send someone a newcomer packet. Invite them to a meeting. We have beginner meetings, newcomer meetings and meetings to support members coming back in from relapse. 

INTERGROUP MEETINGS

THE NJIOA INTERGROUP BOARD meets on Zoom, once a month, at 7:30pm, on the second Thursday of the month. Find the link on our website www.njioa.org. Everyone is welcome to attend these meetings, where NJIOA topics are presented for discussion, Board business and finances are discussed, and events are planned. If you would like to get a topic on the next meeting's agenda, please email our Intergroup Chair, ToniAnn A., at chair@njioa.org.



YOUR TRUSTED SERVANTS

Effective January 1, 2023

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BRENDA W Telephone Hot Line	info@njioa.org 973-704-5082

RECOVERY HELP LINE

Are you struggling and need to speak to someone? Do you live in a remote location and need contact? Please call our friendly volunteers below to remind you that you are not alone! **PLEASE try all the numbers until someone answers your call**

NAME	PHONE	AVAIL TIMES (ET)
ANDREA P	973-985-8169	4PM-6PM weekdays
ANDREA P	973-985-8169	8AM-6PM weekends
AUDREY C	201-819-5575	Please text first. 
JANET B	201-248-8001	Until 9PM
MARCY E	973-694-1274	ANYTIME
SUSAN L	973-704-6345	4PM-6PM weekdays
SUSAN S	201-960-1995	11AM-7PM
TERRY P	862-812-4467	9AM-11PM
TONI ANN A	973-945-0233	Before 11PM



OUR 7th TRADITION

Please make a donation

Donations help our meetings, our Group, our Region, and OA World Service.

Venmo or Zelle:

treasury@njioa.org

By Mail: To NJIOA

**551 Valley Rd, PMB 206
Upper Montclair, NJ 07043**



EDITORIAL NOTE

The **OAsis** is the quarterly newsletter of NJIOA (Northern Jersey Intergroup of Overeaters Anonymous). The opinions expressed here are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of OA as a whole. The theme for the next issue is: **"My Program is Portable."** Deadline for copy is JUNE 1, 2023. Please email articles, poems or photography submissions to the OAsis Editors, at this email address: oasis@njioa.org