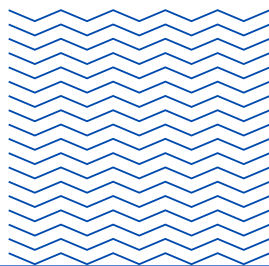
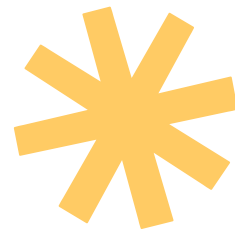




the piedmont intergroup journal

Sharing Recovery &
Carrying the Message



2023 Summer

piedmontintergroup.org

THIS PROGRAM WORKS

Voices of Recovery May 13: "Tradition Five reminds us that our recovery doesn't come from simply discussing our problems with each other. It is in the OA message—in our Steps and Traditions—that we find solutions to our problems."

Talking about my problems sent me right into self-pity. I used to do that all the time, but it didn't stop my compulsive eating...maybe it even made it worse. I came into Overeaters Anonymous and that does not work for me any longer! I found a solution in the Steps and Traditions. I learned that it is important that if I'm going to share a problem I was having, it is even more important to share the solution.

This program works. I came into OA for the first time 38 years ago yesterday, and today, 38 years ago was my first day of abstinence, and my 28th birthday. I learned that this program works when I work it, but I stopped doing what worked and relapsed in 1999 after 14 years of abstinence.

I left OA and had total OA amnesia for nearly 7 years, until one morning I went down for coffee and found my OA daily reader, *For Today* on the counter. I read some of the readings and remembered OA. I became abstinent that very morning, joined OA email loops, and found meetings in my area. That was June 7, 2006. I've been abstinent since then, and continue to work this program like my life depends on it...because it does!

Today I'm 66, and except for a few ailments from age, I'm doing pretty well. Probably one of the most amazing OA miracles for me is that I don't eat or even think about cake as a birthday treat. The most incredible gift OA has given me is the freedom from compulsive overeating. I might have food thoughts on occasion, but I have tools and a program that works so much better than the food ever did. Not indulging in my drug has never felt like I was being deprived, it has always felt remarkable and like the true gift it is!

Ginny

THAT FIRST BITE

picking up the first bite
is like picking up a loaded gun
like a russian roulette
to see if me or the food has 'won'

sometimes it works
most times it doesn't
my ability to control the food
has become redundant

stuck in the disease
eating all the time
I think I still can manage it
that this disease is benign

loving the food
just doesn't work anymore
never thought I'd be here again
addiction ripping at my core

who thought food could have
such a hold
to be so controlling....and ruining my life—
how bold!

from an intellectual point
it seems so logical
put down the food dammit
and act more responsible

the food tells me again and again
the power of addiction
cunning baffling and powerful
that causes all this friction

I pray to you, higher power
with all my might
you are in charge
is this my last binge night?

I need to find the life
that is waiting for me
free of obsessive thoughts in my head
and all that debris

a life of abstinence
is how it needs to be
with you, HP, and fellowship
to help set me free

Karin D



PI INTERGROUP WORKSHOPS

UNITY DAY

What an exciting year to serve as the Events Chair of the Piedmont Intergroup!!! Let's look back at the first of four events held in February.

On February 25th, 2023, the Piedmont Intergroup hosted Unity Day over zoom with the theme titled, "Cornerstones of Unity". Unity Day is a World Service suggested event occurring worldwide on the fourth weekend in February. The purpose is to recognize the strength of our worldwide fellowship where over 50 countries in our OA family celebrate the importance of unity. We are not alone!

At our Unity Day workshop, we were blessed with 75 fellows in attendance zooming in from all over the country. We enjoyed hearing the experience, strength, and hope of three compulsive overeaters. Our guest speakers, all of whom regularly attend at least one meeting hosted by our Intergroup, each shared a few Cornerstones of Unity. Our first speaker from Wisconsin shared on Love & Acceptance. Our second speaker from Texas shared on Anonymity, Faith, and Humility. Our final speaker, from Raleigh NC, shared on Unity vs Uniformity. Following our three guest speakers, we heard amazing shares from many fellows.

Thank you to those who gave service at Unity Day & who attended with us! You helped to make this virtual workshop a success.

Stacey M



PI INTERGROUP WORKSHOPS CONT.

SUMMER SOCIAL

Coming up on Saturday, June 10th from 1:30–3:30 pm at Grace Presbyterian Church, 2955 SC-160 in Fort Mill, SC (near Charlotte, NC), we will host our second workshop this year. The theme of our in-person Summer Social is *BODY IMAGE*. It is sure to bring both recovery and fellowship to those who can attend.

The event will feature a "Recovered Treasures Boutique" so come ready to find a treasure and recover some previously loved Items with a monetary donation to the Intergroup. If you have items to donate prior to event, contact the Event Chair OR simply bring your donated items at 1:00 p.m. to add to the Boutique.

Doors for shopping, fellowshipping & getting your seat will begin at 1:30!

There is no suggested cost for this workshop. This is a service to you from our Intergroup. For those who can, there will be an opportunity to give a 7th tradition donation at the event.

There are just a few volunteer needs. Please reach out if interested. I hope to see you there!

Stacey M, Event Chair | 626-354-2334

SAVE THE DATES

8/19 SPONSORSHIP DAY

Date: Saturday, August 19th

Time: 1–3 pm

Community in Christ Church

7621 Norman Island Dr.

Cornelius, NC 28031

11/18 I.D.E.A. DAY

Date: Saturday, November 18th

Time: TBD

Location: TBD (aiming for SE
Charlotte)

SOMETIMES MY HIGHER POWER DRIVES A SILVER CAR

I wish Ruby wasn't here. I hate when my kids see me sick. Ok. She's 20 now so I guess she isn't technically a child anymore, but she's my child. She's been away at school, but still, she and her brother have seen me sick a lot in the last couple of years... But this time is supposed to be different, I'm home. I invited her to come see me because I was discharged from the hospital yesterday after what I thought was my 4th and final surgery and I thought I was all better. No more Ostomy bag, no more IVs, no more vitals every four hours, no more surgeries. I'm supposed to be better.

But something is really wrong. When I'm in the hospital, the nurses always make me rate my pain on a scale from 1 to 10, with 10 being the worst pain I've ever felt. This is a 10. But maybe not, maybe I'm being a drama queen. But I'm not imagining the vomit or the fact that I can't stand up or even sit up straight. I only get off the couch to shuffle to the bathroom, throw up and shuffle back to collapse. Ruby is watching me, but trying not to look like she's watching me. I can barely open my eyes, the pain is so bad. I don't even have the strength to fake it for her like I usually do when she FaceTimes me.

I wait and wait and wait until the vomiting stops to call Dr. Phatak, my surgeon. I've had to call her so many times before, and I know what she is going to say, "Come to the ER."

I hate the ER at Boston Medical Center. Every time I'm there, and I've been there a lot, there's a prisoner and guards. To protect them or us? There is no privacy, just curtains between the beds that don't block sounds or even go all the way to the floor. But that's if you're lucky. If the ER is busy or there's a gunshot wound or something, they leave me on a gurney in the hall.

But the pain is really bad, worse than it was the day after major abdominal surgery when I came to and the drugs wore off. I don't care if I have to listen to a crazy man pee in a bedpan or wonder what the guy in the orange suit did to land him in prison. It's always a he. They're never female prisoners and they are usually people of color which sends me into an internal rant about racism and inequality in the justice system. But it's not time for these deep thoughts on social justice. I tell Ruby we have to go to the ER and she looks scared. She's seen me in the hospital before but she hasn't had the pleasure of accompanying me on the rush to the ER that always proceeds the admission.

"How are we going to get there?" Ruby doesn't have a car and I no longer drive.

"I don't know, Rube. I'm not worried. I know it will work out." And I do know. It always works out...

SOMETIMES MY HIGHER POWER DRIVES A SILVER CAR CONT.

"First thing first, I need to wipe the puke out of my hair, change my clothes, and grab my phone charger." I knew I should probably brush my teeth but I thought it might set off the puking again.

While I'm doubled over walking back from the bathroom, she asks me if I know someone with a silver car. I have a lot of friends and get a lot of rides so I just say, "I know a lot of people with silver cars."

"It's a guy with white hair and he's walking to the door. OMG, he's ringing the bell." Her expression reminds of the time we went to a haunted house on Halloween. By now, I've collapsed on the couch again with my feet on the floor but the rest of my body is just slumped sideways and my eyes are closed.

I managed to say, "Well, you should probably answer it."

Ruby opens the door and invites the man inside. It's Dan, a group member. He's never been to my house before. He gave me a ride home after a meeting once and he must have remembered where I live. He's holding a gift bag. He tells me he saw my post on Facebook about how I was discharged from the hospital and how I am all done with surgeries.

"How are you?"

"Not so good, Dan," which seems kind of obvious since I saw myself in the bathroom mirror and I'm the color of cream of wheat. "I have to go to the ER. Something's wrong."

"How are you getting there?" he asks.

I attempt a smile and say, "You."

In the backseat of the car, Ruby looks shell-shocked and really confused. "What just happened?"

I answer without even hesitating, "My higher power happened."

Julie B



HONESTY - SERIOUSLY?

Living is a lot of hard work. Everyone, and in this case, especially Sponsors, expect you to be honest in ALL my affairs. For me, that's a mighty big hill to climb. At the bottom of page 13 in the Big Book, Bill writes the formula for how to recover from this insidious food addiction in one sentence: *Belief in THE power of God, PLUS enough willingness, honesty, and humility to establish and maintain a new order of things, were the essential requirements (emphasis mine).* He goes on to say, in the very next sentence: *Simple, but not easy; a price had to be paid. WOW!*

When I was told at the beginning I needed to be willing, I thought, "I was. I mean, I was eager and enthusiastic and ready to pull out my cheerleader uniform from high school, isn't that willingness?" Nope. Willingness is the "readiness or preparedness to do something."

OK, how was I going to ready myself to embark on a program of recovery as described in the rest of the Big Book? I was told to look at honesty. Seriously? I am honest. I mean, I tell the cashier when I get too much change, or when I was short-changed (of course), or when I tell you something that I know you absolutely need to hear, especially when it needs to be heard from me. Isn't that honesty? Nope. Honesty is the "act of not hiding the truth."

OK, so, tell me, what do I have to do to prove I'm an honest person? Well, I have to act with humility. Seriously? I mean, I feel shame, guilt, and humiliation all the time, isn't that humility? Nope. Humility is "the freedom from pride, arrogance, and ego."

Freedom, the act of "releasing something unpleasant." Now that's a word I can hang on to. It is unpleasant for me to live with my own arrogance, self-knowledge, and manipulation. It is only through action that I can be honest, it seems. The action for me is in using all the tools of the Overeaters Anonymous recovery program, especially sharing the hardest part of my recovery - being honest about my food. Though, when I do that, I, in turn, receive the gift of FREEDOM from the food obsession that dominates my life as a food addict. I can live at peace with myself and my fellows and, most of all, I can be of service to the still-suffering compulsive eater.

Kelly P

CONSCIOUS CONTACT

These are two photos of a book that I created: designed, made decorative endpapers, and bound with hand sewing. It serves as my "conscious contact" book. It is here that I write out some of my meditations and conversations with GOMU (god of my understanding).

Anne M



HAIKU

the light of OA
heals the empty place within
hunger satisfied

each trusted servant
gives pure willingness to all
fulfilled tradition

a share in right time
is sweeter than any sweet
savor fellowship

the trustworthy one
God as I understand Him
one day at a time

Lindsay F



2023 RETREAT

RELATIONSHIPS: THE HEART OF RECOVERY



The Piedmont Intergroup is sponsoring the Mountain of Miracles Retreat September 22nd – 24th in Black Mountain, NC. This will be the third time I have been at an OA sponsored by the Piedmont Intergroup. I have been to many more hosted by the Triangle OA intergroup over the 33 years I have been involved in OA.

I love retreats. What have I gotten out of going to OA retreats? Love! Connection! Inspiration! Serenity! Wisdom.

The retreat is a time to be with other OA people in a beautiful setting and to focus on the basics – three meals a day that someone else cooks. I have time to listen to the strength, experience, and hope of other OA members. It's my chance to let go of pain I have been clutching, to play with people that understand, and to listen deeply without the distractions of my everyday life.

When I return from a retreat the peace and hope sustain me. The sense of belonging I experience during the retreat lingers long and becomes a fertile ground that continues to enrich my growth long after the retreat. I make new friends and strengthen relationships. It's a place where I see HP in action.

The retreats I have been involved with are not rehearsed performances with all the details worked out. It's a group of fellow compulsive eaters getting together and learning to trust whatever HP brings. The trust that comes from moving out of isolated disordered eating to being part of a community, a community that is "reaching out our hands for power and strength greater than our own and receiving love and understanding beyond our wildest dreams."

This year we are going to explore relationships. We will look at how the steps, traditions, concepts, tools, slogans, and fellowship can help guide, heal, and improve our relationships. I am so excited to see what I will learn during this retreat.

Click to learn more: piedmontintergroup.org/retreat-registration

Alice S



VIRTUAL VS. IN-PERSON MEETINGS

Three years ago when our in-person OA meetings vanished with the requirement to stay home to avoid the spread of Covid, a new-to-many style of meetings blossomed... Virtual meeting attendance through zoom or phone became a lifeline. Many of us took to zooming around the country to find the meetings that worked with our schedules and interests. And for fellows who had to drive 30 min to attend the only in-person meeting held each week with two or three other fellows, the recovery offered from around the globe became an excitement and blessing to behold. Many fellows began taking sponsors from coast to coast, getting abstinent and sharing their program with compulsive overeaters across the globe. No more driving (gas & time savings), hearing lots of recovery, having the availability to attend a meeting nearly every hour, 24/7. Who wouldn't want to continue having Zoom meetings? I think they will be around for a long time, thank you HP!

But what about all the in-person meetings where you could go and give/receive a warm hug, spend time fellowshiping one-on-one before and after the meeting, connect with a sponsor/sponsee to share step work, or go out and grab a meal together? The simple pleasure of looking in the eyes of another in recovery and feeling the kindred spirit as we end a meeting holding hands (or locking arms or doing a fist-bump) for the OA promise.

If you live in the Piedmont Intergroup area (Charlotte, NC metro area), there are 18 current meetings to choose from every week.... 16 are virtual over zoom or phone and 2 are in-person. The Shelby & Lincolnton meeting alternates its Saturday location at 10:30 am and the newest in-person meeting, which just started in March, takes place on Thursdays between 1-2 pm in Rock Hill at Aldersgate United Methodist Church (2115 Celanese Rd - 1 mile from I-77). This Rock Hill in-person meeting has been attracting both newcomers and returning fellows. Whether you can attend in-person or just offer your contact info, sponsors are desperately needed to take the newcomers & returners through the steps (several attendees are full as sponsors).

Many positive comments about starting an in-person meeting have been shared but more in-person meetings are needed, especially ones that are centrally located in Charlotte. Let's work together to bring back the experience, strength, and hope we see, feel, and hear at more in-person meetings.

Together, we get better.

Stacey M

SERENITY IN SERVICE

I was just meditating and all these thoughts came to me that I'll share. It just gave me a new appreciation for being able to do service at intergroup, Region, and World Service.

I was honored to be asked and loved being a part of the business end of OA. I learned so much and found there is so much I still don't know. I met fabulous people, grew in my recovery, and felt like I was a grain of sand in the universe contributing my little part.

Unfortunately, I have some health conditions and I needed to cut back on service. I have FEAR but with the help of my Higher Power, my program, and all of you, I can stay in the present and enjoy today.

I have gotten to ACCEPTANCE that I cannot do as much service as I have in the past but I can still be of service. I can sponsor, make phone calls (which I've always made a ton), I can lead a meeting, be an intergroup rep, write an article, be a speaker, share at meetings, get speakers, and, *most important*, stay ABSTINENT.

I can concentrate on my GRATITUDE for all I have in my life, what I can do, and the wonderful opportunities I had to do service at the group level.

Yesterday was our first intergroup meeting with our new officers. I was beyond happy to see the new and younger people stepping up and doing service—being the Chair, being a Region Rep, and Co-Event Chairs. As an old timer, we say the newcomer is the most important person in the room as we can't keep it unless we give it away. This is proof that many sponsors have given the program to newcomers and now those newer people can have the opportunity to step up and strengthen their programs.

Part of my disease is I have felt responsible and thought if I didn't do something, nobody would and what would happen then...? This thinking goes further than OA—I carried that on in my outside life. So far, in spite of me, somebody has always been willing to do the service that needs to be done. It's a reminder once again GOD is in charge!

Susan W

LIKE ANY OTHER DAY

Today is like any other day
Hectic and busy from the very start
I wake up, get the kids ready for school
Take the dog out
And, finally leave the house.
While driving to work
I stop for fast food
I eat in the car
I throw the wrapper out the window.
During the day,
I eat my lunch and went out for lunch
I eat leftovers from the community breakroom
I socialized with everyone who has candy on their desks;
I feel miserable afterwards.
The evening is like any other night
I eat, the kids get to bed late
I eat, the dog messes in the kitchen
I eat, and go to bed.
In the middle of the night,
I eat two pints of ice cream,
I go back to bed crying, feeling shame, guilt, and remorse
What happened? I was going to be 'good' today
I realized I didn't practice the OA program
There is no such thing as being 'good or bad'
If I have my HP in my life daily,
I don't have to judge my eating;
Today, I didn't invite my HP into my life
I didn't Read 'On Awakening' in the BB
I didn't commit to a Food Plan
I didn't reach out to other Overeaters
I didn't call my sponsor
I didn't do service work for the next suffering fellow
I hear the slogans as I give my will to my HP before the day starts:
There is hope. Keep coming back.
Don't give up five minutes before the miracle,
Don't pick up no matter what.

Kelly P



The opinions expressed herein are those of individual OA members and do not represent Piedmont Intergroup or OA as a whole.



Thank you contributors, writers, artists, and editors.



Thank you readers for carrying the message.

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