

Annapolis Area of Overeaters Anonymous

Spring Newsletter

2025



Honesty, Openness and Willingness

I often share that I'm grateful that the steps in our program are so incremental. We are not asked to take large leaps in our recovery that would pose too large a risk of failure. For example, Step Five asks us to identify and share the exact nature of our defects. Step Six asks us to become ready for our defects to be removed. Only then do we humbly ask for the defects to be removed in Step Seven. Similarly, Steps Eight and Nine take us incrementally through the process of making our amends. In Step Eight we make a list and become willing. In Step Nine we take action. The processes of giving up our defects and making things right with the world comprise five of the twelve steps.

In the middle of each of these processes we pause, reflect, and get ready for the transformations that come next. In step six we become ready, in step eight we become willing.

I recently heard a member share that the answer to how it works was H.O.W, Honesty, Openness, and Willingness. Of these, willingness is the key. The words "willing" or "willingness" appear in nine of the twelve steps in our 12&12. They appear 12 times in each of Steps Seven and Eight. Overall, the words appear seventy-seven times. I'm convinced the book is

trying to tell me something!

Willingness is a close second to Higher Power which appears 98 times. By comparison, Acceptance appears fifteen times and surrender appears only twice.

The Cambridge Dictionary defines willingness as the quality of being happy to do something if needed. This surprised me when I looked it up. I knew that willingness meant readiness to take an action - but happily? Joyfully? Happy to make amends? I would have seen that as a stretch when I came into the rooms! I dutifully make amends when needed now, I am pleased when I've taken the necessary actions. But am I happy? Is anyone really happy to go to the dentist?

Maybe I just don't fully understand what it means to be happy. Page 164 of the Big Book has a hint - it says we will surely meet as we trudge the Road of Happy Destiny in our recovery. I don't think of trudging as something I do with glee. But when I do the things that I know bring recovery, I experience deep satisfaction. I look back on 25 years of recovery with pleasure. I've become a person I truly like. My work now is to reprogram my brain to connect willingness throughout the steps with joyful anticipation that something good is about to happen.

Mark V. 2025 Chairman Annapolis OA Intergroup

UPCOMING EVENTS

2025 Region 7 Spring Assembly - Virtual March 29, 2025 8:00 am

2025 Region 7 Convention November 7, 2025 8:00 pm - November 9, 2025 1:00 pm

2025 Virtual Region May 31-June 1. <https://oavirtualregion.org/events/>



*You are the
best project
you will ever
work on!*

Annapolis Area Overeaters Anonymous Meetings

Time : Sunday @ 5:00 PM
Type : Speaker/Literature
Group # : 49836
Contact : Bobbi
bobbi@rothweb.org
443-694-0292
Until further notice this meeting will be conducted via Zoom.
Meeting ID: 857 0836 2015
Password: 956705

Time: Sunday 6 PM
Type: Face to face
Woods Memorial Church
611 Baltimore Blvd,
Severna Park.21146 Room 152
Enter door on side of building closest to Baltimore Annapolis Blvd. Walk to other end of hallway.
Contact person:
Mary Kay 443-251-8507

Time : Thursday @ 11:00 AM
Type : Literature -In person meeting
Group # : 24077
Contact : Bobbi
443-694-0292
Address:
Calvary United Methodist Church
301 Rowe Blvd., 1st floor, Rm. 105
Annapolis, MD

Time : Friday @ 6:00 PM
Type : Leader's choice literature.
Step or Tradition last
Friday of the month
Group # : 17204
Until further notice this meeting will be conducted via Zoom.
Meeting ID: 710 282 660
Password: 026377

Time : Saturday @ 7:30 AM
Type Face to face
Contact : Kathy
(410)-919-8688
Group: thus far unaffiliated
164 Club
2016 Industrial Hwy
Annapolis, MD

Time : 11:00 AM Tuesday
Type: Face to face
Contact; Debby Z 301-641-0384
Fairview Library
8120 Southern Maryland Blvd.
Owings, MD
Calvert County



We Are Working the Twelve Steps

77% of survey participants have completed all Twelve Steps of Overeaters Anonymous and 67% have worked through the Steps multiple times.

88% have worked the Steps with an OA sponsor. 60% have sponsored others through the Steps.

Almost half (48%) have participated in an OA Step study group.

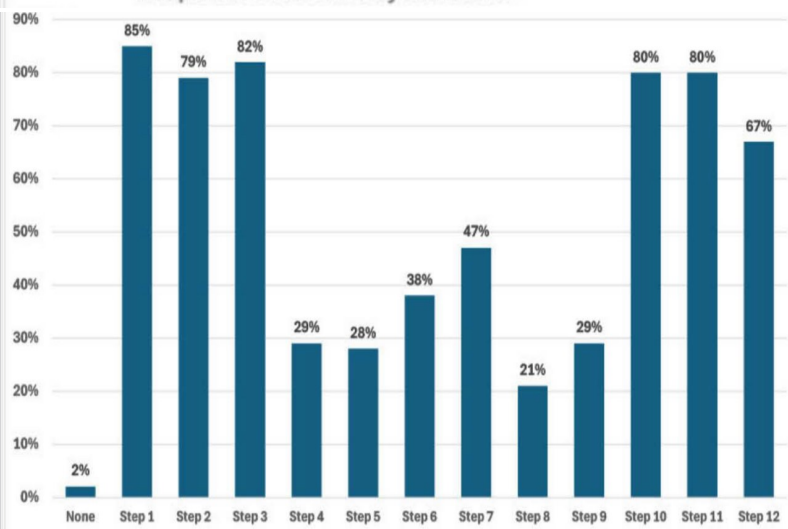
Only 4% of participants had not worked the Steps at all.

Almost all use the *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous* (89%), *Alcoholics Anonymous* (the AA Big Book), and/or the *AA Twelve and Twelve* (90%) to work the Steps. A majority (52%) have used the *OA Twelve Step Workbook*.

Most use Steps One through Three and Steps Ten through Twelve on a daily basis. Only 2% reported no daily practice involving the Steps.

“Recovery requires a lot of work today and each day, but it’s so worth it.”
–Anonymous

Steps as Part of Daily Practice



86% of participants were abstinent (refraining from compulsive eating and compulsive food behaviors while working towards or maintaining a healthy body weight) when they took the survey. 85–96% say the symptoms that brought them to OA have improved and are “better,” “much better,” or “no longer an issue.” Combined totals are shown below.

Symptom	Improvement
Eating food that is burned, frozen, or spoiled; from containers in the grocery store; or out of the garbage.	96%
Going on eating binges for no apparent reason, sometimes eating until I'm stuffed or even feel sick.	95%
Eating when I'm not hungry, or not eating when my body needs nourishment.	94%
Fasting or severely restricting my food intake to control my weight.	92%
Eating sensibly in front of others and then making up for it when I am alone.	92%
Using laxatives, vomiting, diuretics, excessive exercise, diet pills, shots, or other medical interventions (including surgery) to try to control my weight.	92%
Losing weight with a diet or "period of control" only to be followed by bouts of uncontrolled eating and/or weight gain.	90%
Reaching for food when my emotions are intense.	89%
Feelings of guilt, shame, or embarrassment about my weight or the way I eat.	89%
My eating behaviors make me or others unhappy.	88%
My eating is negatively affecting my health or the way I live my life.	88%
Spending too much time thinking about food, arguing with myself about whether or what to eat, planning the next diet or exercise cure, or counting calories.	87%
The need to chew or have something in my mouth all the time: food, gum, mints, candies, or beverages.	86%
Fantasizing about how much better life would be if I were a different size or weight.	85%

The OA Concepts

In addition to the 12 steps and 12 traditions OA has 12 concepts.

Unity

Conscience

Trust

Equality

Consideration

Responsibility

Balance

Delegation

Ability

Clarity

Humility

Guidelines

Selflessness

Realism

Representation

Dialogue

Compassion

Seventh Tradition Help

Donate to World Service at: oa.org

Donate to our region at: oaregion7.org

Donate to Annapolis Area Intergroup at: AnnapolisOA.org



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It was the darkest period of my life. Food had become an obsession, a coping mechanism for dealing with the stresses and disappointments that seemed to pile up relentlessly. What started as an innocent indulgence had spiraled into a dangerous addiction, leaving me trapped in a cycle of bingeing and self-loathing.

My struggles with overeating had always been a lifelong battle, but things really went downhill after the second of my two divorces started. The emotional turmoil left me seeking solace in the one thing that had always brought me comfort: food. At first, it was just an extra helping here and there, but before long, I found myself consuming multiple pints of ice cream and boxes of cookies in a single sitting.

The weight piled on, and with it came a crushing sense of shame and self-hatred. I withdrew from my friends and family, too embarrassed to face them in my current state. My once vibrant personality was replaced by a sullen, reclusive version of myself, consumed by the demons of my addiction.

It was during one of my darkest moments, while eating the second large pizza on a day when I was on a particularly intense binge, that I finally hit rock bottom. As I stared at myself in the mirror, I knew something had to change. I couldn't go on living like this, trapped in a prison of my own making.

It was then that I took my therapist's advice and started looking into Overeaters Anonymous, a fellowship for those struggling with compulsive overeating. With a mixture of trepidation and hope, I mustered the courage to attend my first meeting.

The warmth and understanding I encountered at that first online meeting was like a lifeline. For the first time in years, I felt seen and understood, surrounded by others who had walked the same painful path. As I listened to their stories of struggle and triumph, I realized I wasn't alone in my battle.

With the support of my newfound OA family, I began the journey towards recovery. It hasn't been easy—there have been setbacks and moments of weakness—but I never lose sight of my goal. Through a combination of professional therapy, mindfulness techniques, the unwavering support of my OA group and sponsor, and the use of the OA Tools and Twelve Steps, I am slowly but surely regaining control over my eating habits.

The transformation has been remarkable. Not only am I shedding physical weight that has been weighing me down, but I have also experienced a profound emotional and spiritual shift. I'm rediscovering my self-worth, my confidence, and my zest for life. Now, when I stand in front of a mirror, I can admire the healthy, radiant woman staring back at me; I feel an overwhelming sense of gratitude.

Overeaters Anonymous has not only saved me from the depths of my addiction but has also given me the tools to live a fulfilling, balanced life. I know that the journey will never truly end, but with the support of my OA family, I am equipped to face whatever challenges lay ahead, one day at a time.

—A.K., Wyoming

USA January 31, 2025 Copied from OA.org/lifeline

My Freedom From Bondage

At an in-person meeting on the fourth week of the month the reading is leader's choice. The last several times that week has fallen to me I have chosen one of the stories from the Big Book. As is so often the case, even when chosen randomly I find that the story has something to say to me. Last week we read: "Freedom from Bondage" (page 544). The passage that spoke to me was:

"In time I concluded that the reason I was hurt was because I loved my parents, and I concluded to that if I never allowed myself to love anybody or anything, I could never be hurt again. . . ."

"I grew up believing that one had to be totally self-sufficient for one never dared to depend on another human being" (AA Big Book page 545).

While I had the best parents a person could ever hope for I, nonetheless, developed that same mindset after a failed relationship in my early 20s and an unhappy marriage which ultimately failed when I was in my 40s. Yes, I could only depend upon myself . . . and food. I had put on weight during my marriage and

continued to do so for many years afterward. I tried some of the typical weight loss OTC drugs and programs. My similarly situated friends and I tried forming a support circle. All ultimately failed until one of that circle brought me to OA. I was not struck abstinent immediately but did finally figure it out and had a glorious few years as a smaller, healthier, much more sane person.

But as they say, while I was in the rooms my disease was doing pushups outside. Relapse is awful. I regained the entire 80+ pounds I had released and it brought along some friends. My doctors looked at the scale and said "What Happened?" I was miserable.

Finally, right before the pandemic hit I went back to my home meeting. I tried to hide in the back but, of course, that was not happening. But no one said a word about what I looked like. They just welcomed me. I have been on-line and in the rooms ever since. I believe it is possible that I don't have to rely only on myself. "There is support and encouragement in OA". While my disease is still fighting me even as I fight to let my higher power take control I am forever grateful for this 12-step program which touches every part of my life for the better..

Anonymous

Making Amends to My Body

Making amends to my body for all that I have and haven't done with, for, or to my body, is quite a massive undertaking. And yet, I am reminded to have the gift of grace towards myself and not just shift the upset, anger, powerlessness, control, judgment and hatred onto my mind and spirit instead of my body.

Hating my body did somehow serve a purpose, serve multiple purposes, and somehow helped me cope with so much more, with what was happening to me, around me, in me.

Just even recognizing my body as more than a scapegoat, a whipping post, has been a huge step of recovery. Recognizing my body as an entity with and of value instead of a barometer and measurement of worth has been a huge challenge and journey.

Ultimately or simply, I felt and experienced lots of miserableness growing up, again, in and around me. My body experienced lots of pain and upset, and I felt like I could

do nothing about the feelings plus so much was not confirmed or validated. Numbing out, detaching, disconnecting, denying, dissociating and an attempt to control my body and experience relief was what I hoped to achieve. Not consciously of course.

Now I can see this though and I can see how feeling feelings wasn't something that I seemed to have the support and encouragement to do in healthy ways. Even with counseling and lots of self-help methods I undertook, I could not and did not experience help with my eating disorder until I made it into the rooms of OA.

After many years in OA, my focus of ongoing recovery work currently centers around connecting with my body, listening to, respecting, and honoring my body, especially when and if my head is not on board with what's happening with my body.

Katrina B 2/25/25

The fear we don't face becomes our limits.



Podcasts at; Oa.org

oalaig.org/laig-virtual-speakers-bureau/

eastbayoa.org/podcasts.html

Believe in Yourself.

I DIDN'T THINK WINTER WOULD EVER END!

I am not a fan of winter. Never was! Never will be! If I could, I would be like a bear and hibernate through the whole thing.

In the days before OA, on snowy days it was an 'eatathon'. I mean, what else was there to do? Curl up on the couch, turn on the TV and eat. Food helped me stay warm. Yah, that's turns out to be a lie I told myself for a very long time. But I have made it through winter abstinent. I have people to call, service to give, and meetings to attend. Twelve steps to live.

Now, onto spring. My favorite time of year. Spring feels like a pink cloud that carries me through with hope, enthusiasm and strength. It feels great to be out in the fresh air. When I first came to OA it was like that first breath of fresh air. It wasn't long until I was on a different kind of pink cloud. Sure thought I had everything figured out and over eating would not be a problem ever again. Ah, that's turns out lovely pink cloud feeling.

Summer brings on interesting challenges. Beautiful, hot weather that wears us down. Then stepping back into the air-conditioned house or store brings us to the point of chills. The ups and downs of the environment inside to outside put a strain on us. A bit like my abstinence. I'm not foolish enough to

think I'm going along without any problems and then I step into the cold and food thoughts are screaming in my ears again. This disease of compulsive eating is full of hot times and cold times.

Autumn is often a peaceful time. Everything is turning beautiful colors. The weather is usually still temperate and we can be comfortable. I crave those peaceful times when my disease is peaceful and quiet. I think this year I'll use autumn as a strengthening time. I'll prepare for winter. I now have the strength of a year behind me. Old food habits and thoughts are much easier to recognize now that I have some seasons behind me.

Yes, Winter felt like it would never end this year. But I'm smart enough to know it will come around again. I also know that food cravings, food, behaviors, and food thoughts will come my way again. I am grateful to know that the things that brought me through all the seasons of this past are still in place to strengthen, encourage and bless my life.

Abstinence through all seasons can be a challenge, but we have a way of life that will carry us through.

Bobbi 2025

