



PIEDMONT INTERGROUP JOURNAL 2021 WINTER PIEDMONTINTERGROUP.ORG



Blessed Beyond Measure

ORIGINAL ART

I drew this as a reminder of how blessed I am to have my artistic talents and to appreciate what my God is doing in my life. Sketching is an important part of my recovery.

~ GWENDOLYN G

The River and the Flimsy Reed

Gently standing in a playful river, I slip and fall and start to drift in the water. Quickly I'm tossed along a raging and out of control river. I feel I'm nearly drowned. Large swells of water overcome me; I cannot breathe. I cannot stop. I cannot gain control. Rapidly the water thrashes me into river rocks, injuring me along the way. I'm nearly dead, I cannot breathe, I cannot do anything, it's out of control. I grab for a rock, my hand slips. I grab for a solid branch, my hand is cut, and I release it from the pain of the wound. Thrashing, crashing, out of control.

My hand brushes against a reed, I grab it so quickly, I'm out of control, but I'm concerned because the reed is so flimsy. I fear it will never hold me, stop me from drowning, it too will fail me like the rock and the branch. But it doesn't, I pull on the reed with 2 and 3 more pulls, bringing my body closer to shore. The reed is holding up. I grab a 4th time, but start to slip, this is so hard, so very hard to do, I can't do this. I mustered the strength to grab a 5th time, I feel a great sort of relief. I breathe a little. 6 and 7 more pulls, I'm feeling lighter. I'm so close to the shore now. With all my might I pull an 8th time, a 9th time. I burst into tears! God I'm so close to shore, so close. Only three more pulls, 12 in all and I find myself on the river's edge hugging the ground, worshiping it, so solid, so inviting, so nurturing.

That flimsy reed saved me; that flimsy reed saved me. But before I go, I see someone thrashing down the river, they are drowning, I watch them smash into rocks out of control, I yell to them...

GRAB THE FLIMSY REED.

Twelfth Step Within Day

Every December 12th (12/12), OA groups and service boards around the world celebrate and plan events for Twelfth Step Within Day, a day to support the still-suffering compulsive eater within our Fellowship.

Here are some actions to take on 12/12:

- Make as many outreach calls as you can by 12 noon!
- Reach out to a member(s) you haven't seen in a Zoom meeting recently.
- □ Write an article, poem, or share your thoughts on the 12th step, 12th tradition, 12th promise, or 12th principle.
- Use the day to reflect on the strength of your own recovery, write down twelve actions that will support your recovery and the recovery of others, share the list.
- Write an article for your service body's newsletter or journal.
- Did you hear someone on a meeting share something that was causing them distress, or pain/struggle? Why not reach out to them after the meeting? Ask for their number and reach out.
- Call a sponsee who is struggling with the physical, emotional, or spiritual part of recovery.

We can offer our honesty, experience, strength, hope, and encouragement to a member who is struggling in program. On December 12th, reach out and help a fellow in program who may still be sick and suffering!

~ REGION 8 TSW COMMITTEE



Winter Blossoms

I painted this watercolor a few winters ago. Today it reminds me of times gone by, especially those before recovery where seasons were cold, harsh, and lonely.

Since recovery, difficult times where growth may be minimal are still full of blossoms. OA has taught me how to trust my Higher Power's timing and not my own. It has taught me to practice program principles in every season.

~ LINDSAY F



Of all the things that make me me.
The pieces and the parts I be.
It's love of self I had to learn.
Of all the parts that I still yearn.

I look inside where these things live.
Some are close and some are far.

I will dig deeper here within to places I have never been.
It's such a scary place to be
For I may find that real me.

I learn within this program mine given us by the Divine.
It's here that I learned to love me.
Starting with the steps of three.
And then I gave it all away.
Knowing I just have today.
To love you all in every way.
Is the only thing I have to pray.

~ BURTON T

Perspectives & Principles

I came for the food but I stayed for the mood. Once the food is in its proper perspective that's when I need to do this work.

What is this work? It's application not supplication. It's really applying these principles in my life.

Brotherly love is a principle that I can lack. Compassion and empathy for myself and others is vital.

If I slip and slide and say the wrong thing, I must amend immediately. This is my spiritual work. I can be quite moody, yet now I know what to do about it.

The DOING is my recovery. Get out there and help someone.



OA Limerick

The food is an ill we know well
For us much too thin or too swelled
Too much all the time
Yet serenity finds
Twelve steps out of our disease hell

~ EDITH B

OA Haiku

I.
Fear is the problem
Acceptance is the answer
One day at a time

II.
I can't but God can
Humility is the key
I think I'll let Him

III.

No matter your faith

When you decide to show up

OA gives you peace

~ EDITH B

Vision

At a recent retreat in Kings Mountain, IT finally happened... After many failed attempts in the past, I completed my first Vision Board! Nevermind that it took 3 hours to complete. By practicing the spiritual principles of willingness, perseverance & purpose, the project got done. A beautiful walk around the lake with a friend provided the perfect pause moment for expressing my gratitude. Thank you to God, 12-step recovery, and all of you who share your recovery with others.

~ STACEY M





Encouragements

Sometimes hearing an inspirational message or acronym just when I'm ready to hear it has helped me to progress in my program. I have a little red book I write them in. I'd like to share some of the messages I've heard while on my OA journey. I hope you can find one or two that speak to you.

~ CAROLS

- * Don't leave before the miracle happens
- * Nothing happens in God's world by mistake
- Abstinence is a country whose beauty and variety I could not have imagined in my most indulgent dreams
- Don't tell God how big your problems are,
 tell your problems how big your God is
- When God wants to be anonymous he signs his name coincidence
- * The need for validation is the last obstacle to self-empowerment
- If we want to have something we've never had, we have to do something we've never done
- * Just because I'm hurting doesn't mean I have to hurt myself
- The elevator is broken, we need to take the steps
- * There are two days beyond our control tomorrow and yesterday
- * Forgiveness is giving up the resentments even when we feel entitled to them
- Focus on the weight and we lose the program, focus on the program and we lose the weight
- I don't negotiate with my food
- * These foods don't love me, why do I love them
- * I am full of God, so I no longer need to be so full of food

- * In the rooms we are all related through sponsor-sponsee relationships
- * We can't get drunk without the first drink
- * Some of the things we take for granted are the things someone else is praying for
- * I don't trigger the phenomenon of craving
- * My daily choices are made easier when I stick to routines and behaviors that serve me well
- * The key to unlocking the many gifts of recovery is asking for help
- Food is not my drug of choice it's my drug of no choice
- When the rain comes take shelter under the steps
- It's not happy people who are grateful, it's grateful people who are happy
- * Real change, enduring change, happens one step at a time
- * We don't have to attend every fight we're invited to
- * FEAR: False evidence appearing real
- * HALT: Don't get too hungry angry lonely or tired
- * NUTS: Not using the steps
- * 3C's: We didn't cause it, we can't control it, and we can't cure it
- * Doors keep opening as I work this program



Long-Term Abstinence

I came into OA March 1, 1984 and was not a 30 day wonder. It took me $10 \frac{1}{2}$ months to get abstinent. I kept my abstinence for a year and a half, slipped, got abstinent and slipped again 6 months later.

Someone who had a strong program said to me you'll never know when you'll have your last recovery. That stuck with me as it is so true. You never, or I should say "I never," know if this will be my last chance. I've seen so many people come and go, and most don't come back.

My abstinence is the most important thing in my life as without it, I am no good for myself, others and have no life except food. Before program, my life would be consumed (no pun intended) with thinking about food, figuring how to get my fix, exercising it off and feeling guilty about what I ate. Today as the Big Book says, I'm in a position of neutrality - not avoiding sugar, my drug of choice, or being drawn to it.

How did I get 35 years? One day at a time. All I have to do is stay abstinent today and wake up the next morning. I'm doing the same things today that I did when I first got abstinent. If it's not broken don't fix it.

I'm able to maintain my abstinence today by beginning my day with prayer and meditation, speaking with sponsees, my sponsor and others in the program, reading my literature, asking my Higher Power (who I choose to call God) for help when I need it, going to meetings, doing service, thanking God at night and doing my 10th step. My husband likes to say I'm high maintenance and I am. I need to do a lot to maintain my serenity and abstinence.

I am so grateful to OA, my Higher Power, and my fabulous friends I've made in the rooms. I don't have a perfect life, but I have a great and a full one. This program works if you work it and doesn't if you don't.

I hope whoever reads this will keep coming back. Don't leave until the miracle happens.

~ SUSAN W

Tradition 12: To The Newcomer

Tradition 12: Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all these Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

Anonymity, which means without name, recognition, or distinction, is the "spiritual foundation" to the OA traditions and so much more. Anonymity, for the newcomer, is an aspect of 12-step recovery that offers what almost all newcomers are looking for: relief.

Practicing anonymity puts everyone on even ground and ignores the positive and negative details that often define us. Instead, anonymity offers the safety of "a common bond" or what's shared between us as human beings. In the case of OA, we share compulsive food behaviors.

At the newcomer's first meeting, there is no obligation to speak, simply an invitation to listen. While many groups offer suggestions to the newcomer, their first taste of safety in recovery often comes with the relief of anonymity.

Cherished newcomer, no one can put the food down for you, no one can work the steps for you, no one can maintain abstinence for you, and no one can produce three-fold recovery for you. The good news is that in OA, there are multitudes who will do those things with you, one day at a time! In that light, anonymity is greatly empowering, respectfully and patiently inviting you to make a choice for recovery and take a next step toward relief.

~ ANONYMOUS

The Gift of Service

OA.org, Why Service? says, "Providing service opens up a world beyond you, while also giving you a way to carry our message to others. The best part? There's a magical thing that happens when you serve others; you end up giving yourself a gift too."

As a compulsive egoist and practicer of pride, I desperately need "a world beyond" myself. Service has given me the opportunity to learn, grow, give, and carry the message. As we start a new year, consider serving in a new way and discover all the gifts of recovery beyond your current sphere.







Piedmont Intergroup

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Piedmont Intergroup

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THANK YOU

for carrying the message.





To contribute to the 2022 Summer issue, email articles, art, or other expressions of your experience, strength, and hope to journal@piedmontintergroup.org by 5/15/22. Thank you for helping OA Members & Piedmont Intergroup share recovery and carry the message!





THANK YOU

contributors, writers, artists, and editors.





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