

# THE PIEDMONT INTERGROUP JOURNAL



*Sharing  
Recovery &  
Carrying  
the Message*

**OVEREATERS  
ANONYMOUS®**  
Piedmont Intergroup

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## THE ONLY REQUIREMENT... (THE THIRD TRADITION)

When I was new in OA, I found the traditions so boring. I couldn't wait for them to be over to get on with the meeting. So, I didn't know the third tradition, what it said or what it meant. Perhaps it was a good thing because I didn't have a desire to stop eating compulsively. I might have thought I did, but what I really had was a desire to lose weight and with that, have all my problems solved.

As the years went by and I struggled to stay abstinent, the third tradition began to have new meaning for me. In those days, in Los Angeles, they asked for people to raise their hand if they were in their first thirty days of abstinence. It became embarrassing to have to keep raising my hand.

The last time I raised my hand, I remember being shunned by people in the meeting. Maybe they thought relapse was contagious. After all, we were told to "stick with the winners." I prefer sticking with the stickers and the winners. But I knew I had a right to be there, by virtue of the third tradition.

The third tradition states "The only requirement for OA membership is a desire to stop eating compulsively." That word requirement is tricky. I've always thought it meant, "a thing that is compulsory; a necessary condition." While that is the second definition of requirement, the first makes more sense in light of this tradition. It states, "a thing that is needed or wanted." I definitely wanted and needed to be abstinent.

The first definition has me envision someone being kicked out of a meeting because they didn't meet the requirements. We've always said we have no requirements. OA is open to anyone who has a desire to stop eating compulsively. It doesn't say how strong that desire has to be or that they have to actually stop eating compulsively. In *The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous*, second edition, it states, "The purpose of Tradition Three is to ensure that the road will always be accessible to all who wish to travel it." (p.108)

I'm grateful I've kept coming back. I did find the recovery I was looking for and wanting. The third tradition allowed me to keep coming back when there was no where else to go.

*Susan B*



# After the Miracle

Before OA, food overfilled and expanded my body.

Now food and exercise nourish my body.

Before OA, food covered a hole in my heart.

Now people fill my heart.

Before OA, food filled my time.

Now service, friends, and relaxation fill my time.

Before OA, food covered a hole in my spirit.

Now grace fills my spirit.

Before OA, food covered my feelings.

Now I feel my feelings.

Before OA, food masked my low self-esteem.

Now I believe I am worthy just because I was born.

- Lifeline



## ON MY WAY HOME

From the moment we can distinguish what is good and what is bad, we begin to lose our innocence and courage. We then begin to hear labels. As society creates these labels, we then begin to believe them. As people cast these black spells on us, we begin the journey of self-destruction and perfectionism.

Let me ask you, "who were you before the world told you who you should be?" For the longest, I thought I was broken and needed to be fixed because I was never able to fit into the world's standards. I am here to tell you that every tear, every heartbreak, every slip, every relapse, was a brick on my yellow brick road.

Everything I needed was, has, and is inside of me. I was never really lost; I was always on my way home to my OA family. I took many wrong turns, hit many red lights, and hit many stop signs, but I am determined to keep going. I will never stop trying, I will never stop going, and I will never stop moving forward. Furthermore, there was nothing ever wrong with me. I never needed to be fixed because I was never broken to begin with, I was just unfinished.

José C

## STEP TEN

I have found such joy in reflecting and filling out a *Daily Journal* put out by Region One. I was on retreat and someone recommended it. This keeps me looking forward to reviewing my day and working my 10th step. I have been very unsteady about doing a 10th step up until now. In the past when I was a lot busier I would just take a calendar square and put a word that reminded me of the incident or person and put a + or a - next to it to indicate how I felt about it. Truly this journal does not take that much longer and I am getting so much more out of it. I especially like the section on *Freedom from Bondage*. This section helps me get specific on what I hope to change through working the program. Being willing to focus on a daily inventory helps me keep the baggage from building back up too high so I can be the best version of myself, be true to myself and of value to God and others.

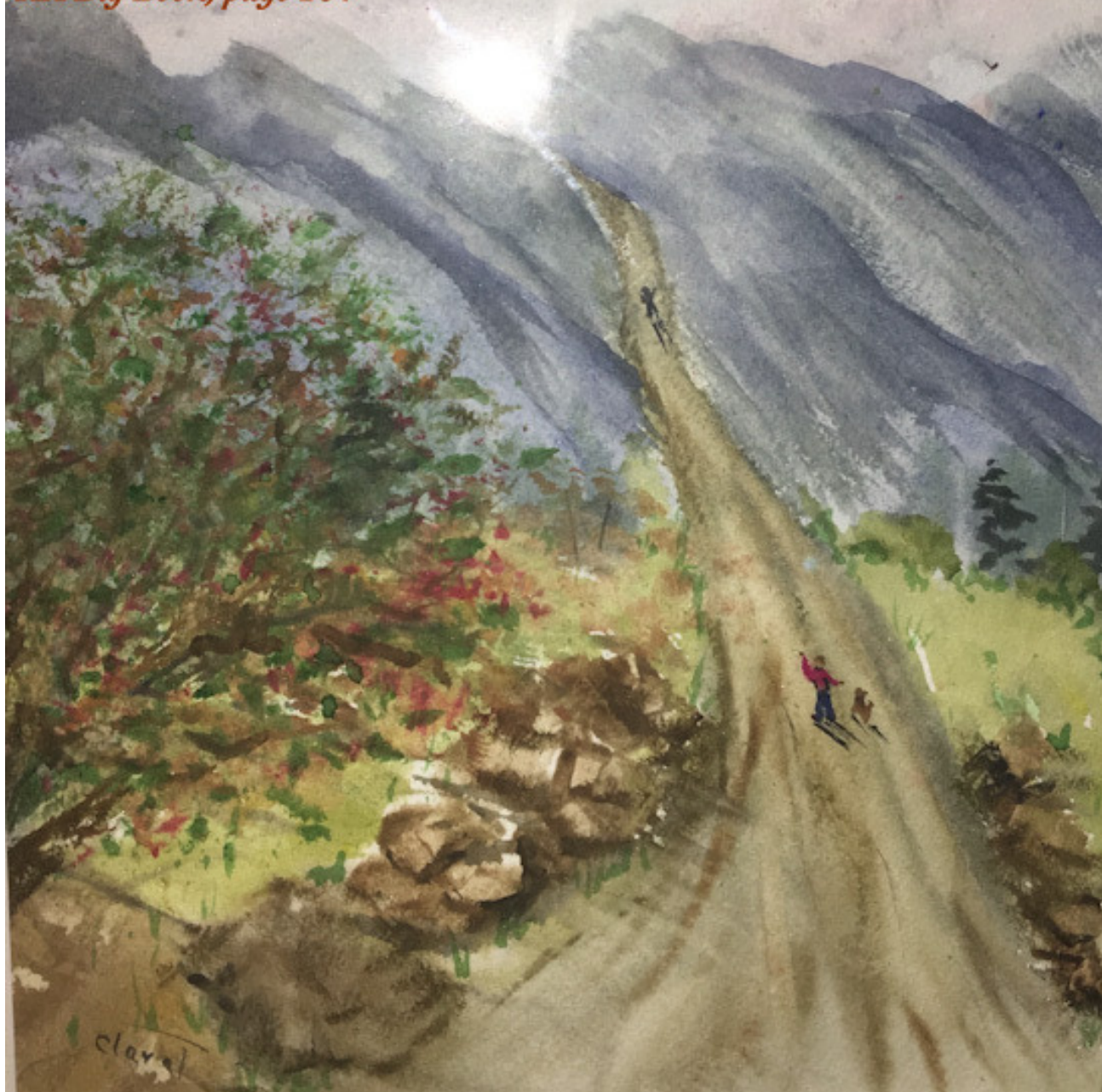
Linda L



*Abandon yourself to God as you understand God.  
Admit your faults to Him and to your fellows.  
Clear away the wreckage of your past. Give freely  
of what you find and join us. We shall be with you  
in the Fellowship of the Spirit, and you will surely  
meet some of us as you trudge the Road of Happy  
Destiny.*

*May God bless you and keep you - until then.*

*AA Big Book, page 164*



*Clara I*

## JUST FOR TODAY

I am sitting at the pool deck by Croatia waiting for a meeting of Friends of Bill W. I am very fortunate that I've been on many cruises and for the past 30+ years meetings are listed in the daily program.

I always go to the meetings the first and second days they're listed. Sometimes as many as 8 people show up—mostly AA members and sometimes I'm the only one who comes. Today is the first meeting that was announced and I'm the only one who came to the meeting. I brought my Big Book and read several pages in *How it Works* and checked my emails. I noticed a call for articles for our next PI newsletter and thought that would be a great use of my time to write an article.

This is a lesson to me on willingness. I am always willing to go to meetings on board ships and willing to do anything to maintain my abstinence. I have met wonderful people and exchanged cabin numbers. It's always comforting to me to know if food is a problem I have people I can reach out to. I love running into other fellows on the ship that are in a 12 step program. It's a reminder to me to stay abstinent and don't eat no matter what. Believe me I could eat 24 hours a day and gorge myself at each meal.

Today was one of those days—it was me and my Higher Power attending the meeting. It was very peaceful time overlooking the sea. Just for today I have no desire to pick up and I know God is with me. I'll try again tomorrow with no expectations but will have my Big Book and my Higher Power with me and who knows—another fellow may come, but if not, I will be given another day of abstinence.

PS. There is a lady up on deck who was here for the meeting. She came late and after I wrote this! Thank you God. I guess I got another lesson in patience, perseverance and courage. I approached her and asked her if she was here for a meeting and she was! Another miracle of the program! We met for the next 3 days and had meetings and then our schedules conflicted but I remained abstinent. Just knowing I wasn't alone and could always call her if I needed to, and ran into her several times was just what I needed. I am so grateful!

*Susan W*



## OA HUMOR

When auditors have a working breakfast, that's number crunching.  
But missing a meal during tax season could be a cereal killer.

*Andy S*

### *The OA Promise*

*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.*



## MY TICKET TO SERENITY STATION

Step 4 is about a searching and fearless moral inventory. Well, that's easier said than done for most of us. When I came to recovery I was unpracticed in authentic self-searching. On top of that, I certainly was unpracticed in fearlessness.

As I spent time in the safety of the OA rooms, I leveraged the principles of Steps 1-3: honesty, hope, and faith to find the "courage" to dig deeper into who I am and how I am.

One of the biggest fears that came up in my searching was the fear of being wrong. I find this ironic because my mind says, "Of course I'm wrong, I'm imperfectly human and there's nothing wrong with that." But...my heart says, "I'm wrong, I'm imperfectly human and..."

- That disqualifies me from love
- My brokenness is shameful
- I'm guilty of being less than perfect

Some people talk about the 18-inch journey from the head to the heart. While head and heart alignment is really important, first thing's first: what do I really think/believe?

If I can fearlessly search out the truth of what I think/believe, I know I'm on the path to recovery. After all, it's said that the truth sets us free, even if it stings at first. When I have thoughts that lead to feelings that lead to compulsive food behaviors, Step 4 helps me reverse engineer a path to peace in the midst of my shortcomings. It's good to search out my current truth, give it voice, challenge it with the guidance of my Higher Power, and practice courage to change the things I can. Here's how I follow my thought train all the way to serenity station:

1. What is my thought or belief?
2. Is my thought true, helpful, or consistent with my Higher Power?
3. Where else does that thinking show up for me?
4. What needs to be voiced, acknowledged, accepted, and cared for that hasn't been?

*Lindsay F*




## **MY KEY TO SUCCESS IN WORKING THE TWELVE STEPS: CONSISTENT COMMUNICATION WITH MY HIGHER POWER**

The journey of recovery from compulsive eating is one that requires a spiritual experience through which a Higher Power of my own understanding is able to transform me from the bedevilmments that plague me both night and day (p.52, AABB), to a complete renewal of my mind (p. 57, AABB). It is often said in our meetings that this is a simple, but not easy program. The Steps are explained thoroughly for me in the Big Book yet applying these Steps to my daily life takes persistent and devoted practice. The help of a recovered sponsor is vital in guiding me through working the Steps, beginning with the Doctor's Opinion for a good, foundational understanding of my disease through Step 12 and the importance of providing service.

One crucial lesson I have learned through Step 11 is that developing my relationship with my Higher Power takes time and dedication. I had to be willing to make my program and time with God fit around my life, not my life fit around my recovery. My diseased mind loves to tell me I am cured from my obsession the exact moment I begin to put any outside issues before my program of recovery, especially my time with God. It doesn't take long after this for my familiar compulsive food behaviors along with the food cravings to begin appearing which signals me that I need to go back to Step 1 and revisit my powerlessness over this disease. I have learned that the more time I spend working the tools which includes plenty of quiet time with God, I am able to gain the strength, courage, and guidance I need to maintain my recovery journey. My abstinence and walk with God go hand in hand as I cannot possibly have a relationship with God that is open and honest if my mind is clouded over from food. My abstinence and a solid relationship with God must be in sync which allows for there to be freedom, sanity, and joy in my life.

*Sandi JC*





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contributors,  
writers, artists, and  
editors.*

*Thank you readers  
for carrying the  
message.*

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