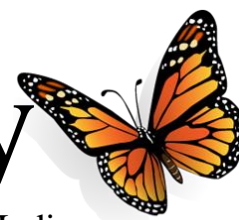




August 2021

Recovery from Relapse

Monarch Monthly



The Three Rivers Intergroup of Overeaters Anonymous Serving Northeast Indiana

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No Intergroup Meeting Was Held in July	

The tools were instrumental in working through the Steps. I saw them as a safety net as I listened to relapsers talk about abandoning meetings, phones calls, journaling, prayer/meditation, plan of eating, literature, sponsorship, and service. There were Two Steppers doing a lot of service while spouting details of the latest binge. There were those who used one or two tools, but it did not include interaction with other members. I envisioned myself in a swimming pool with only one arm to propel myself. I was understanding the value of Fellowship, an essential complement to the Twelve Steps.

Slogans at the time were “Walk the talk, not talk the talk” and “Win with the Stickers.” Relapse does not have to be a part of the recovery journey, but those who have survived and thrived have strengthened my recovery. I believe you only fail when you quit trying. Don’t Quit Before the Miracle!

— N.J., Illinois



Safety Net to Avoid Relapse

Everything I learned about relapse, I learned from those who suffered through it. I determined early in my OA journey to listen carefully to members who experienced relapse (soft lesson), rather than experience relapse myself (hard lesson). As a newcomer, it was scary to see people gaining weight and leaving program for varying periods of time. I recognized an answer to my prayer at my first meeting and did not want to fall off the track on route to the serenity and peace I saw in recovery. I wanted freedom from “mind chatter” and was assured one Step at a time would gift me with a spiritual awakening. The Alcoholics Anonymous Twelve Steps and the Twelve Traditions was my ticket to freedom, and I did those Steps again and again, looking at a fourth Step Four by the end of the year when an inaudible voice said, “Whoa, Girl, we’re going to do something different.”

Thinking About Relapse



My last abstinence break was 18 months ago. I went to a family gathering and it happened there. I should have known that these types of gatherings are extremely difficult for me. The lack of emotional connection to anyone there. The lack of interest of anyone to talk to me. My own feelings of disconnection from my HP. This is the prescription for disaster. I didn't pick up the phone and reach out for support. I didn't ask my HP for help. I used food to comfort myself and that is relapse for me.

I came home and wrote about what happened. I talked to several program friends about what happened. I looked at where I got off track. I picked up my plan of eating and action plan. I forgave myself. And I started again. I learned more about myself and my needs and

my weaknesses. And starting again is the most important thing. Not giving up. Start again and keep coming back. That's the prescription for me to recover from relapse.

— Debbie H



I Never Left OA

I am not a poster child for long term back-to-back abstinence. My time in OA has been punctuated by more relapses than I can remember. But one thing I did do right was to keep coming back. In my 32 years in OA I never stopped coming to meetings. That is the only reason that I am 90 pounds less today than when I first came to OA and why I have maintained most of that weight loss for 32 years.

Sometimes it seems like I have to relearn things I already knew, repeatedly. I guess maybe I'm learning them on a deeper level than last time. The last time I was trying to regain my abstinence, I couldn't quite figure it out. I tried doing all the program things I did before. No luck! I kept slipping into relapse. Then I tried praying to God turning over my abstinence every day. Still no luck. Finally, I asked my sponsor what he would suggest. He responded "abstinence". I was kind of irritated at him. I was trying to get abstinent! I was asking him what things I needed to do to make it happen. I sent him a snarky email. He gave me a call. He explained that for himself, he got and stayed abstinent by not eating any of his binge foods no matter what. There weren't any OA tricks that suddenly took his desire for excess food away so he could then be abstinent. The program helped him to continue being abstinent but he had to start the ball rolling by being willing to be abstinent.

The light began to dawn on me. Did I really want to be abstinent? Well, yeah, as long as I could continue to have a little sugar now and then. Duh.. no, I guess I wasn't really willing to be abstinent. I definitely didn't want to give up my binge foods!

Then I went to an OA meeting on willingness. Suddenly I started to remember all sorts of things I had temporarily forgotten. My first sponsor told me it was much easier to stop at zero than at one. What a revelation that was for me when I was new to OA. I had never thought to just stop eating my binge foods. It was amazing how much easier that was than stopping at one. Next my first

sponsor told me I didn't have to want to do the things that OA suggested. I just had to be willing to do them.

Did I want to give up all my binge foods again? Hell, no! Was I willing to give them up in exchange for abstinence, recovery and all its benefits? Well, yes, I guess so. I do want those benefits and I want to be free of the consequences of compulsive overeating. So yes, I am willing to give them up today, to be abstinent today. That was the beginning of a new block of abstinence.

-K.G.



Willingness to Act

As I've said before, I am no stranger to relapse and recovery from relapse. You'd think it would be like, "I've done this before. I just need to do what I did last time to get out of relapse." But the reasons I have relapsed have been different so it seems what I need to do to get out of relapse changes each time as well.

I remember finding myself in relapse once. That's the way it seemed at least. I was working my program one day. Things weren't working as well. It was like I had gone to sleep and suddenly woke up and realized, "Hey! I'm in relapse." Not only didn't I see it coming but I was in it for quite a while before I woke up and realized where I was.

This particular relapse had something to do with willingness. (Maybe they all do in one way or another.) I remember looking at what was left of my recovery. Then I thought about what it was like when I was in good recovery. Then I thought about all the things I had been doing to support that good recovery. Then I despaired. There was no way I could go from where I was back to where I had been when my recovery was strong. I gave up recovering from relapse that day.

Another day comes along and I find myself thinking, "Maybe I can make a phone call to someone in program?" But as I thought about it, the call was such a small thing. It wasn't going to make me recover from relapse. I gave up recovering from relapse that day.

A number of days later, I had another thought. I could do some writing about where I am at. But as I thought about it, the writing was such a small thing. It wasn't

going to make me recover from relapse. But I went ahead and did it anyway.

The next day I had another thought. I could do some writing and read my favorite story in the Big Book. As I thought about them, they seemed like such small things. They were not going to make me recover from relapse. But I went ahead and did them anyways.

Each day after that, I found myself willing to do one more, small thing for my recovery. It didn't make me recover that day. But since I was willing to act on that small bit of willingness that had evidently come from HP, the next day I would receive just a little more willingness to work my program. And those were the first baby steps out of that relapse.

— K.G.

Breaking Out of Relapse

Check out the **Breaking Out of Relapse** video created by the Twelfth Step Within Committee.

Here is the direct link:

<https://vimeo.com/391023802>



From Slip or Relapse to Recovery

This action plan for reclaiming and retaining our abstinence is now available as a free download from the WSO website at <https://oa.org/app/uploads/2019/12/From-Slip-or-Relapse-to-Recovery.pdf>

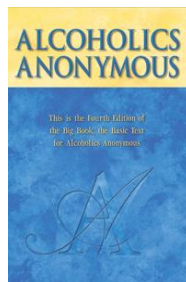
12th Step Within Initiative

For the Twelfth Step Within this month, it would be good to consider each of the following practical ways to prevent relapse or support those in relapse. Please take some time to consider how these may be applied in our own recovery or at meetings.

1. No abstinence requirement for sharing at meetings.
2. Keep attending meetings no matter what. Going one step further, keep attending face to face meetings.
3. Encourage members to share their full story, even speak of relapses they may have had. For example -

don't leave out the "What it used to be like" part of your story or discuss struggles you are currently having. (A member recalled at one meeting hearing another member share of some behavior in the disease with the food and the desperation of it, they had never heard her share like that and thought, wow – she was that bad too and this was such an encouragement).

4. Ask God for an easy day – Pray, "I clearly can't handle anything more".
5. Remember that if you're struggling, give up the struggle. If you are fighting, get out of the boxing ring. It isn't about winning the battle, but being free of the battle you are never going to win. Remember that our High Power can only show strength if we are willing to admit our weakness.
6. Keeping it really, really simple. Remember the saying, "Good Orderly Direction" as a definition for a Higher Power. If the only thing I can do today is be abstinent - that is enough.
7. Remember that it's all about practice.... life IS a rehearsal ... just keep practicing - practicing abstinence, practicing talking to God, practicing working your program.
8. Remember that we are meant to get it wrong, example - step 10.... "When" (not "if") we get it wrong.



Big Book Quotes Needed!

Do you have some favorite quotes from the AA Big Book? We now have a section in the newsletter for people's favorite Big Book quotes! Please include the page number and a little about why you like it, if you are willing. Send them to: newsletter@3riversOA.org and keep them coming.

Share Your Favorite Slogans!

Please share your favorite slogans with us along with why you like them. Send to: newsletter@3riversOA.org

September Newsletter



Using the Traditions Outside OA

Slogan: Anonymity is our spiritual foundation.

The September Monarch Monthly will be "Using

the Traditions Outside OA." How does tradition one apply to your marriage or primary relationship? Can tradition five be applied to your work environment? What does tradition four mean as applied to those I disagree with? What does tradition eight say about my wanting to be a know it all?

Write about the main topic, the slogan or both. **Articles are due Thursday, August 26th.** Thanks for making our newsletter great! Send articles to: newsletter@3RiversOA.org

Need Help Finding a Sponsor?

Having trouble finding a sponsor? Now you can request help from Region 5 OA. Just go to the following link and enter your information. :region5oa.org/request-for-assistance-in-find-a-sponsor

Would You Like to Check Out Our Intergroup Meeting?

We meet on the last Tuesday of the month (except December) at 7:30pm via Zoom. All in our Intergroup area are welcome! Just click [Zoom Meeting](#). If prompted for an ID or password use ID: **970 5024 1729** and Password: **198390**.

Email chair@3riversOA.org ahead of time to ask for the documents that will be used in the meeting.

Three Rivers Intergroup Meeting List

Instead of including a meeting list that may be out of date before it is sent out, we recommend you rely on the master meeting list on our website for meeting information. Please go to: 3riversoa.org/meetings .

Donations to the Three Rivers Intergroup

You can make online donations with a credit/debit card to the Three Rivers Intergroup by going to: 3riversOA.org and clicking the "Donate" link. You can also mail a check. Go to: 3riversOA.org and click the Contact Us link to get the mailing address.

Region 5 Website: Region5oa.org

OA World Service Office Website: OA.org

Three Rivers Intergroup
intergroup@3riversOA.org
www.3riversOA.org
(260) 203-1199

Disclaimer: The Monarch Monthly is the Three Rivers Intergroup publication for compulsive eaters. Opinions expressed here are not those of Overeaters Anonymous as a whole. In most cases, if material is edited in some way, it will be for grammar/typos. Permission to reprint articles in the Monarch Monthly is granted to all OA groups and service bodies.

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WHAT'S YOUR STORY?



We would like your help **reinventing** ways to tell our stories. Want a **Blog** that will feature stories, podcasts, and multimedia (videos, art, and photography)?

Wanting to write? Get your **write on** with us on at one of these 3 repeating sessions.

Friday July 30 | 10pm - 1:30am EDT UTC -4/GMT -4

or Sat July 31 | 2-5:30PM EDT UTC -4/GMT -4

or Sunday, August 1 | 9am - 12:30 EDT UTC -4/GMT -4

Wanting to Video? Get your **video on!** Tell your story in a multi-media way. Collaborate on ideas to create videos without breaking anonymity.

Hate to write, but have a story to tell? Record your story and upload it as a podcast. Actors are also needed to read the stories for podcasts.

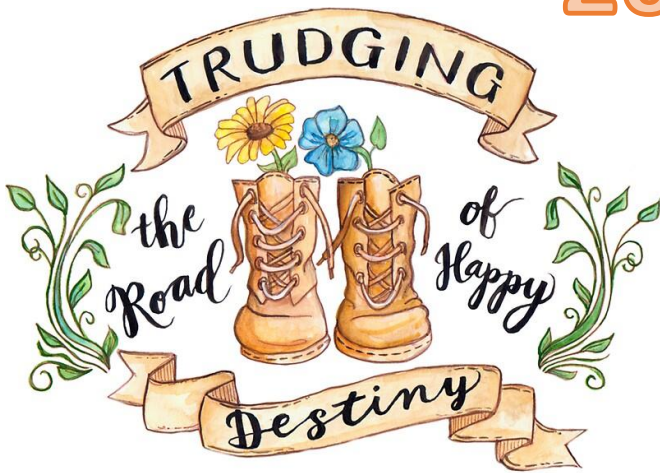
Registration opens on July 12

WHAT'S YOUR STORY?



Contact retreat@oavirtualregion.org to do service or if you have any questions.

Ohio Day of Sharing 2021



Leads, Panels, Tools,
Ask-it-Basket all focused
on Perseverance

August 7, 2021, 9:00am – 3:00pm
Registration begins at 8:30am

Suggested
Donation \$5.00
(voluntary)
Pack your own
lunch or go out
with friends.

Location:
Scarlet City Church
114 Morse Road
Columbus, OH 43214

Hosted by Cincinnati/Cleveland/Columbus/Dayton/Youngstown
Intergroups of Overeaters Anonymous

Questions? Contact Cleveland Intergroup at – ccioa@onebox.com
or 800-511-9610.

Overeaters Anonymous 2021 Fall Retreat at the Port

September 17-19, 2021

SEEDS OF RECOVERY

Sponsored by Chicago South Suburban Intergroup/Hosted by Wednesday Kankakee Meeting



Where: Portiuncula Center for Prayer (the Port), 9623 W. St. Francis Rd., Frankfort IL 60423

When: Friday, September 17-Sunday, September 19, 2021

OPTIONS /COSTS- (INDICATE CHOICES IN BOX BELOW) **SPACE IS LIMITED**

Full Weekend DOUBLE ROOM \$171 SINGLE ROOM \$191

REGISTRATION WILL BE OPEN UNTIL 9/7/21 (or FULL)

Questions? Call **Patti B. (708-307-9717)** or **Arlene A. (708-712-6638)**

Return with payment to Patti B, 20252 S. Indian Ct., Frankfort, IL 60423

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

DOUBLE ROOM \$171.00 SINGLE ROOM \$191.00

Roommate (only double) _____ (if applicable)

Amount Enclosed: _____ Home Meeting _____

Add me to the contact list _____ Current abstinence (optional) _____

Available to help _____ Special Dietary Needs _____

CHECK PAYABLE TO PATTI B. 20252 S. Indian Court, Frankfort, IL 60423



OA Region 5 Convention

Saturday 10/2 8:30 AM - 9 PM EDT
 Sunday 10/3 8:30 AM - 12:15 PM EDT

- Dancing
- Fellowship
- Entertainment
- Keynote Speakers
- Panels
- Workshops

Hosted By Central Ohio Service Intergroup
 via Zoom

Service Opportunities

- Speaker/Panelist Hosting/Hospitality
 Zoom Aide Available Sponsor Other

Suggested Donation

- \$15 \$20 \$25 Other

Convention Preview

- Many Voices** Our experiences
One Solution The 12 Steps of Overeaters Anonymous

This engaging event will celebrate recovery across the diversity of compulsive eating behaviors, disease manifestations, personalities, and beliefs.

The virtual format allows us to explore the following topics through speakers, panels, and workshops:

- 12 Steps of OA
- Abstinence through Action
- Acknowledging and Accepting Emotions
- Diversity in Lifestyle and Community
- The Principles
- Sponsorship
- Many Journeys to Recovery
- Experience, Strength and Hope

Register

OARegion5.regfox.com/region-5-2021-convention
 Registration closes September 30, 2021

Payment can be made at time of registration or mail a check along with your name and e-mail address to:

Central Ohio Service Intergroup-Convention
 PO Box 14268
 Columbus, OH 43214-4268 USA

Questions: (614) 636-1554
treasurercosig@gmail.com

