



September 2018

Volume 13, Issue 9

**"It's a simple program for complicated people."**

They say that this is a simple program but that it is very hard to follow. I heard this in the beginning of my recovery, but when I read the steps I didn't see why. In fact, the program seemed simple, and I confidently told my sponsor that I could get through the steps in a couple of months. I can still see his smile as he told me, "Let's take it one day at a time." When I finally started, I saw what he meant.

"How can such a simple program be so hard to work?" I quickly began to ask myself. What I found was that each step asked me to do something that I have never done before – and that was to uncover my beliefs, discover how I had twisted them to serve my own selfish ends and then discard them for God's will rather than my own. Simple, yes, but not easy to do!

Over the years, I've found that this program is much easier to work if/when I quit making it so complicated. And the way I do that is by still trying to force my will on things. I now know it is much simpler when I evaluate my motives, seek truly to be of service, and ask for God's will, not mine to be done. This truly is the easier softer way.

Today, I understand when they say this is a simple program for complicated people!

Mike Z.

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## NEXT PTI MEETING:

Friday, September 19th - 6:30 PM

Overeaters Anonymous  
Pinellas Traditions Intergroup  
P.O. Box 16582  
Clearwater, FL 33766  
www.oapinellas.org

The opinions expressed in this newsletter reflect those of the writer and do not represent OA as a whole. Serve your group by sharing your experience, strength and hope in the newsletter. Please submit your article by the 22nd day of the previous month for publication in the next month's newsletter.

Please send to: [newsletter@oapinellas.org](mailto:newsletter@oapinellas.org)

# Step 9

Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.

# Tradition 9

OA, as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.

# Concept 9

Able, trusted servants, together with sound and appropriate methods of choosing them, are indispensable for effective functioning at all service levels.

*“Every character defect we have today has been useful to us at some point in our lives, and we need to recognize that fact.”*  
-OA 12&12, page 57

As I acknowledged the usefulness of each of my character defects, I panicked. What would I become without my coping mechanisms? Surely, I would flounder! Wouldn't I become an empty, dull, non-person?

Then I realized that each of my coping mechanisms has an opposite. If I am violent, then God can make me non-violent. If I am a passive person, then God can make me active. If I ask God to replace my egotism with selfishness, then I can be sure it will be done.

So when God removes my shortcomings, I will always be able to cope. After all, what better coping mechanisms are there than non-violence, action, and selflessness? Each of my character defects is replaced by its opposite, and I am equipped with a new set of survival skills – stronger, braver, and more adventurous than the old ones. God will never leave me empty. By His grace, I shall always survive.

-Voices of Recovery, page 281

# LOVE



**Language Of Various Emotions**  
**Listen, Overlook, Value, Encourage**  
**Love Overcomes Virtually Everything**

Love  
Love  
Love

I started coming to OA in April 2018. My second meeting, someone from the Retreat Committee announced a request for volunteers for the OA Franciscan Center Retreat. I met with her after the meeting and continued on with Saturday committee meetings up until the Event.

At the Retreat, I helped with registration and over all organization. This allowed me to meet most of the retreatants at the beginning of the event. Some were familiar from the meetings I had been attending but, many were new faces. I was greeting everyone during registration but, in turn, I felt very welcomed. I chaired one of the speaker meetings (not by choice) My sponsor “thought it would be a good idea” and of course she was right. I also really enjoyed the meal times. Everyone was so open about their experiences and struggles. I met different people at every meal setting.

I really did not know what to expect from this experience. The speakers were very powerful and expressed a lot of feelings, experiences and circumstances I have had. The intimacy & body image presentation was also very powerful. They were many other aspects throughout the weekend that deeply touched me. I acquired many new friends and phone numbers that weekend.

I have already volunteered for next year's retreat committee. Thank you for this opportunity.

God Bless,  
Anonymous Friend

# Happy, Joyous, and Free

I came into OA March 1, 1984 in Miami after years of trying every diet, explored shock treatments and getting addicted to exercise. At my first meeting I heard if I believed in God (a higher power) I could get better. I was willing to try anything as what I tried on my own didn't work.

After 10½ months I finally got abstinent. Somebody in my advanced aerobics class had been in OA and told me she had been abstinent from her binge food (sugar-same as mine) for 4 years. She said I just had to give up my binge foods today. I thought I could do that-just for today I wouldn't eat \_\_\_\_\_. And, I "acted as if" there was a higher power and saw that people in the rooms became abstinent. If they could do it, I could too.

I am a very grateful relapse survivor. I had 2 relapses-1 after 1 ½ years of abstinence and another after 6 months. Each binge lasted 1 day. Someone in my home meeting in Miami used to say "you never know when it's your last recovery". Those words came to me after my second relapse. I didn't want to gamble with my abstinence again by taking that first bite. I am very grateful I was able to get my abstinence back so quickly. God willing, I will celebrate 32 years of abstinence September 9, 2018.

This is a TSW article so I want to share how I remain abstinent. I made a commitment early on to my sponsor that I would meditate for 15 minutes and pray each day. I have missed maybe 10 days over the years since I started this practice. That means whether I'm on a family vacation, slept in, out of the country I begin my day with prayer and meditation. I make many outreach calls daily. My best friends are people I have met in program. I talk to a few of the same people every day and then a wide group of others including newcomers, people struggling, members I haven't seen for a while and friends in recovery. I read my literature every day and sponsor and have a sponsor. I attend meetings weekly and have always had a home group in Miami, and for the last 8 years since I moved to Charlotte, in Charlotte.

I was encouraged to do service when I started in OA. The first service I did was bringing the coffee and later moved onto becoming the Lifeline chair and contact person at my meeting. I have also been the information line chair and the treasurer of my meeting. I recently became the Piedmont Intergroup Region 8 representative and got to go to the Region 8 conference in Miami, which was a fabulous experience. I am currently the intergroup Chair. Both of these service positions have helped me grow in my recovery. I got out of my comfort zone and met many wonderful fellows by going to different meetings. I practice the tool of anonymity. I have to say I don't use the tool of writing that often unless there is something really bothering me. When I do have a problem, I ask God to remove it and put it in my beautiful God jar, which was made by a dear friend in program.

I have a definite plan of eating, and for me that is 3 meals a day, with nothing in between and I do it 1 day at a time. There have been occasions where I'm going to have a super late meal and I will have the rare snack, which is almost always a banana. Since I've been abstinent, I'm able to go longer between meals if necessary. My abstinence has changed over the years from a food plan from Dignity of Choice back in 1984 to an abstinent food plan based on medical and dietary needs.

The last thing I do every night is my 10th step. I ask myself 4 questions (I do this in my head, but for years wrote them down). What have I done for myself, what have I done for others, what am I grateful for and what could I have done better. Since doing the 10th step for many years, I have become a happy person and a grateful person. I was very negative in the past and never thought I could change, let alone give up my drug of choice.

I am so connected to OA – I now have a higher power I choose to call God, have made the best friends in program, have 12 steps and 12 traditions to help me live my life mostly happy, joyous and free -- I said mostly as I do still have things that come up I have to give to God. I am so grateful that my relapses were very short lived, but as was said, I never know when it will be my last recovery.

Thank you for letting me share.

Susan W.  
Charlotte

## Franciscan Center Retreat - July 2018

It is with a grateful and humble heart that I am here to give this report for attending the 8th Annual OA Retreat at the Franciscan Center this past July. During the weekend, I realized it had been 3 years since the last time I had attended the retreat. I was surprised at how much time had gone by, and shocked at how quickly it went. The six months or so preceding the retreat, I had been feeling called to attend the retreat, and to do service during the weekend.

However... In April, we discovered that we were going to have to replace our a/c unit in our home. An expense we had not anticipated or wanted by any means. We also had another major expense coming up. I began to think that maybe this wasn't the year to go, that maybe I would skip it. I had thought about a scholarship, but I was filled with unworthiness, that I didn't deserve a scholarship, or we weren't in that bad of shape. I swung from the idea of going to retreat, and not going, of applying for a scholarship or not. It took a lot of talking myself into it to decide to apply for it, and I finally printed it out. But...

The night I needed to turn in my Scholarship application, was also the night I was voted in as Treasurer. I almost didn't turn the application in. I know I would not have gone to the retreat if I hadn't applied for the scholarship. Since I was just voted in that night as the Treasurer, I didn't feel that I could apply for the scholarship. Here it was again, that feeling of unworthiness and fear. It sticks to me like those stupid rubbery glue things that are placed on coupons you get, and gift cards that when you pull them off, you can't get off of your fingers! I had mentioned to someone afterwards that I was thinking of applying for the scholarship, and why I was now hesitant and reconsidering. She took the application from me, and said I was applying for it. And I'm so grateful she did, and that I didn't try to take it back!

I was given the service to talk about how I keep my garden healthy. It made me think of Step 10. I was excited about the topic, b/c I had just done Step 10. I started to read the OA 12 & 12, and the AA 12 & 12, the Big Book, and listening to podcasts of recorded meetings on Step 10. I began to feel incredibly nervous, and once again, that feeling of unworthiness and fear about speaking on this topic was now haunting me. You see, by now, I realized I really hadn't been doing my 10th step. For whatever reason, I thought I could do it at night, and I said I would do it at night, and planned to do it at night. But when it came down to it, I never did. Doing this service has helped me tremendously with understanding this step, and I hope it touched at least one other person.

Here is a review of some of the things I learned from the 10th Step and How I Keep My Garden Healthy:

- The 10th Step (and also the 2nd Step) are the two most under-utilized steps
- Develop a "God Squad" of people that I can call when I need to make a 10th Step call
- FYI: Only 1 paragraph is written on the 10th Step in the Big Book, but it is powerful, and contains many of the steps:
- When selfishness, dishonesty, resentment and fear crop up, we ask God to remove them (steps 4, 6 & 7). We discuss them with someone immediately (step 5). We make amends quickly if we have harmed anyone (step 9). We turn our thoughts to someone we can help (step 12). Love and tolerance of others is our code. Big Book, page 84
- The Big Book also says that "We vigorously commenced this way of living as we cleaned up the past." (Vigorously means carried out forcefully and energetically; Commenced means begin; to have or make a beginning.) Big Book, page 84
- The most important thing I realized, is that some weeds that creep up in my garden, may look pretty, they may seem harmless, I may think they are ok, but they are not. They are deceiving. My mind will rationalize and justify anything so that I can find the easier softer way. It may seem harmless. But those are the ones that you have to watch out for the most! (EGO = weeds)

I am forever grateful to the Scholarship Committee, and to my fellows, for the scholarship to attend the retreat, and for the task I was given to do service. It's proof that nothing happens in God's world by mistake, and everything happens for a reason. I especially see that in how I didn't utilize the 10th step during my vacation (aka "family obligation"). It was a very stressful week spent with my in-laws who I struggle to get along with. This service helped me to learn 3 important things: 1.) Just how important it is to keep my garden healthy and free of weeds by doing my 10th step; 2.) How to do Step 10 properly; and 3.) That I am worthy of receiving a scholarship whether I'm on the board or not, and how to reach out and ask for help even though I really didn't want to, and to humbly accept help when help is given.

P.S. - Our a/c was replaced in May, when we were having a relatively "cooler" week due to the rain. We got our first electric bill for the first full month since it was installed, and we paid about a third of what we have paid in years past!!!

# Intergroup Involvement

“Before I got involved in service at the intergroup level, I hadn’t given a lot of thought to intergroups and what they do. Now, I see all the services they provide and what we would miss if we lost our Intergroup. Our web page, telephone service, meeting lists, equipment, speaker lists, Fellowship-wide celebrations lie IDEA Day, communications with region and with world service, professional outreach and public information efforts – these are just a few things that could go away if our intergroup dissolved.”

“Service can be seen as a privilege, and those who give service can feel honored to have the opportunity because we receive way more than we give. In fact, the best rewards of recovery don’t come until we give it away.”

-Excerpts from “Lifeline” August 2018

**Pinellas Traditions Intergroup (PTI) needs you to participate in your recovery and carry the message to those who just come to meetings. We need to do more when we are the message, by participating in our own recovery. This is a **WE** program, not to be done alone. Please consider participating and attending PTI meetings which are held at 6:30 p.m. on the third Friday of the month at Morton Plant Hospital in Clearwater. Does your meeting send a representative?**



Let’s all work together to have some commitment to being there and in reaching out to each other. There has been a low attendance in meetings and workshops. Where is everybody? Has virtual attendance become so important that what is going on in your own community and your home groups not that important anymore? Do you really want OA to be there for you when you decide you want to see someone in person and need a hug? Then, maybe make a commitment ... Here is at last ...

## The Commitment Pledge

- I commit to reach out to a newcomer
- I commit to try a new meeting
- I commit to attending a workshop
- I commit to giving service at my group level
- I commit to giving to the 7th tradition
- I commit to calling someone who has stopped coming
- I commit to welcoming a newcomer in my meeting
- I commit to encourage people to share at meetings

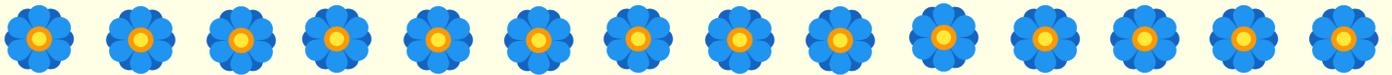
Let’s all pull together and keep this county strong in fellowship, meetings, workshops and love. Let’s give away what we have so freely been given. Keep coming back, because without us, it will not work. Be there or be square!

JR/JC

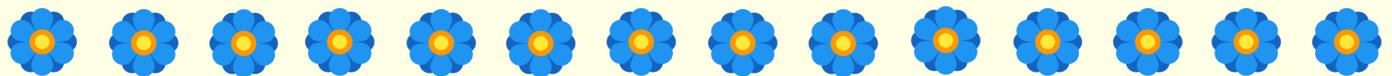
# Abstinence in Action "Adventure" Fellowship

- September 20th • 5:45 PM • The Family Afterwards • Clearwater
- September 27th • 7:00 PM • Beethoven Fellowship (*Palladium*) • St. Petersburg
- October 5th • 6 - 9:00 PM • Ceramics Fellowship • Palm Harbor
- October 12th - 14th • Fri - Sunday • SOAR8 Assembly • Little Rock, AR
- October 20th • 10:00 - 4:00 PM • Circus McGurkis (*Service needed*) • St. Petersburg
- October 26th • 6:30 - 9:00 PM • Halloween Fellowship • Seminole
- November 17th • 12:20 PM • 12 & 12 Workshop • Clearwater

ALL upcoming event fliers may be found on our PTI website ... <https://oapinellas.org/pti-calendar>



Please refer to [oapinellas.org](https://oapinellas.org) for the latest available Pinellas Traditions Intergroup meeting minutes and treasurer's reports.



## Pinellas Traditions Intergroup - 7th Tradition

The 7th Tradition states, "Every OA group ought to be fully self supporting, declining outside contributions."

Available online, local OA groups and members can send a contribution using a secure site via PTI's PayPal page.

Please click the PayPal button below or you may visit our website at [oapinellas.org/donations](https://oapinellas.org/donations) to send in a donation today.

Your donation is appreciated!!!



## Looking for PTI Members to share their Experience, Strength and Hope ...

PTI is looking for newsletter entries on the topic of **"Perseverance"** for the month of **October**. The deadline is **September 22nd**.

Also, the topic for **November** is **"Spiritual Awareness"** that must be submitted by **October 22nd**.

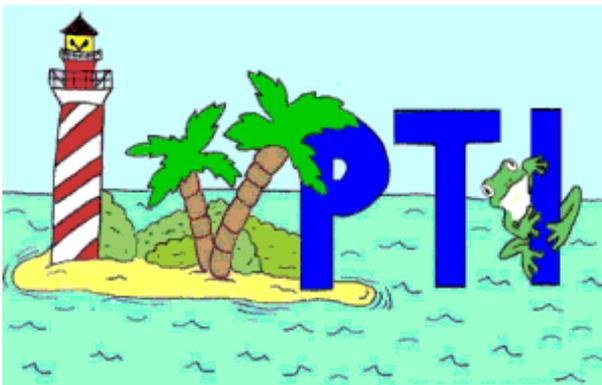
Save the dates and please consider on sharing your experience, strength and hope in our monthly newsletter. If you're not sure of what to share on the monthly topic, please feel free to send in an article of any **"recovery"** topic that inspires you.

Please, please, please consider sharing your written thoughts. We all have them. This is a thinking disease. A new editor would be a great idea, too. Time for a change!

PTI is also looking for a new newsletter editor. If you are interested, please email Joan: [newsletter@oapinellas.org](mailto:newsletter@oapinellas.org)

# Pinellas Traditions Intergroup of OA

## DO YOU NEED ANSWERS?



Looking for information on ...

- Upcoming Events?
- PTI's Monthly Newsletter?
- Who are the officers in our Intergroup?
- How can I give service?
- Where can I find a meeting around me?

Check out our local website → <https://www.oapinellas.org>

## Other helpful OA websites for more recovery :

<https://www.OA.org>

Connects you with World Service Office, the Book Store, locate an OA meeting "Find Meetings" (world-wide), podcasts, and much more.

<https://www.avision4you.info>

LIVE DAILY PODCAST → 7:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m., as well as recorded podcasts to listen to at your convenience.

<https://www.oalifeline.org>

Monthly magazine with stories of recovery and so much more ...  
Check it out !!!

# PINELLAS COUNTY MEETING LIST

# September 2018

DAY	TIME	MEETING NAME	MEETING TYPE / NOTES	LOCATION	CONTACT
Mon	10:15 AM OA#46182	Just For Today ^^	Big Book / 12 & 12	Lutheran Church of the Resurrection 1555 Windmill Pt Rd., Palm Harbor	Mary Ellen (727) 781-2597 Joan (727) 785-9208
Mon	12:00 PM OA#48303	Voices of Recovery (Candlelight Meeting)	Voices of Recovery Discussion	Unity of St. Petersburg 6168 First Ave. N, St. Pete	Ann G. (212) 399-7099
Mon	7:00 PM OA#47788	Focus on Abstinence ^^	Speaker Meeting Speaker Abstinent 90+ Days	Central Church of Christ 1454 Belleair Rd., Clearwater <i>(NW of Belleair Rd. &amp; Highland – entrance on Belleair)</i>	Mary T. (727) 593-4758 Mardie (727) 501-3949
Mon	7:00 PM OA#01530	Search Out Serenity "SOS"	Leader / Discussion Jackson Street entrance	St. Anthony's Hospital, Classroom D 1200 7th Ave. N., St. Petersburg <i>(Jackson Street entrance)</i>	Cynthia (561) 254-3642
Tues	10:00 AM OA#54726	Abstinence <b>NEEDS SUPPORT</b>	Daily Readings Open Discussion	REBOS Center 5639 54 <sup>th</sup> Ave. N., Kenneth City	Donna D. (727) 480-0865
Tues	7:00 PM OA#54697	Living In Today	Step/Lifeline/Daily Reader/ BB/Leader's Choice	Northwood Presbyterian Church – Rm #4 2875 State Road 580, Clearwater	Lee (727) 480-4821
Tues	7:00 PM OA#54346	The Mile Stretch Meeting <b>NEEDS SUPPORT</b>	Literature Meeting	St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Church 4843 Mile Stretch Rd., Holiday	Chris (727) 688-9823 Judy L. (727) 457-1053 Jeanne A. (727) 494-7994
Wed	6:45 PM OA#10359	Madeira Beach Beach Bunch <b>NEEDS SUPPORT</b>	Open Discussion	<i>On the beach in front of the snack shack</i> 15100 Gulf Blvd., Madeira Beach <i>(Bring a chair)</i>	Linda H. (727) 647-8280 Donna D. (727) 480-0865
Thur	10:30 AM OA#53015	Hope <b>NEEDS SUPPORT</b>	All Literature	Aldersgate Methodist Church 9501 Starkey Rd., Seminole <i>(Back of church near the office)</i>	Lynn E. (901) 830-1092
Thur	11:00 AM OA#40873	Key to Freedom	Big Book Meeting	First Presbyterian Church 455 Scotland St., Dunedin <i>(Downtown Dunedin)</i>	Laurie (727) 517-4137
Thur	5:30 PM OA#49784	Steps to Freedom **	Focusing on Recovery through the Steps and Traditions - 90 Days	St. Cecelia's Church, Room A 820 Jasmine Way, Clearwater	Mary Mc. (727) 319-4321 Mary T. (727) 593-4758
Thur	7:00 PM OA#46183	First Fellowship	1-Step/ 2-Speaker/ 3-Lit/ 4-Big Book/5-Lifeline	Palm Harbor Presbyterian Church 2021 Nebraska Ave., Palm Harbor	Beth P. (813) 486-9324
Fri	6:45 AM OA#54674	Fresh Start	Voices of Recovery For Today	Central Church of Christ 1454 Belleair Rd., Clearwater <i>(NW of Belleair Rd. &amp; Highland – entrance on Belleair)</i>	Phil L. (727) 754-0131
Fri	12:00 PM OA#52863	Message Carriers	Open Discussion	Metro Center 3251 Third Ave. N., St. Petersburg <i>NEW entrance on west side of building</i> <i>(closest to 34<sup>th</sup> Street)</i>	Ellen L. (727) 381-8043
Fri	6:00 PM OA#49602	Nitty Gritty	Big Book	Unity of St. Petersburg 6168 First Ave. N, St. Pete	Cora L. (813) 956-4642
Fri	6:30 PM OA#09412	Pinellas Tradition Intergroup Meeting	Third Friday Only All OA's welcome	Morton Plant Hospital, 1st Floor Tuttle D Auditorium, Clearwater	JC D. (813) 240-8572
Sat	7:00 AM OA#36776	Great Reality <b>NEEDS SUPPORT</b>	Beginners	St. Giles Episcopal Church 8271 52nd St. N., Pinellas Park	Donna D. (727) 480-0865
Sat	10:00 AM OA#45426	First Fellowship	Step/Tradition Meeting	Palm Harbor Presbyterian Church 2021 Nebraska Ave., Palm Harbor	Pat (727) 784-3375
Sat	10:30 AM OA#27235	Saturday Serenity ^^	Big Book	First Lutheran Church 1644 Nursery Rd, Clearwater	Betsey (727) 466-9277 Judy (727) 442-9234
Sat	10:30 AM OA#17950	Pasco Pioneers	1-Step/ 2-Big Book/ 3-Leader's Choice/ 4-Traditions/5-Brown Book	Unity of Port Richey 5844 Pine Hill Rd., Port Richey	Betty N. (727) 505-4562
Sat	12:30 PM OA#52497	Oldsmar Men's Group **	Men's Meeting	Community United Methodist Church 207 Buckingham Ave., Oldsmar	Lee (727) 480-4821
Sun	6:00 PM OA#32923	Clearwater Oasis **	Big Book (90 Days)	Morton Plant Hospital, 1st Floor Tuttle A Auditorium, Clearwater	Chrissy (813) 377-5332 Michelle (314) 378-9391
Sun	6:30 PM OA#49012	Beginner's Meeting Step Study	Beginners/Step Study	Gulfport Neighborhood Center 1617 49th St. S., Gulfport	Judy C. (201) 259-3924

PLEASE NOTE: All meetings are open meetings unless indicated otherwise. \*\*Closed Meetings (OA members only) ^^Children welcome

**If this is your first time attending a meeting listed, please be sure to call to clarify directions and meeting specifics.**

Pinellas Traditions Intergroup meets the 3<sup>rd</sup> Friday of each month: 6:30PM - Morton Plant Hospital, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor – Tuttle Auditorium

OA World Service Telephone: 505-891-2664 Website: <http://www.oa.org> To find telephone or online meetings,

please go to: <https://www.oa.org/find-a-meeting> Pinellas Traditions Intergroup Website: <http://oapinellas.org>

Hotline #'s – Hillsborough & Pinellas: (813) 254-4190

REVISED: June 2018