

The Stepping Stone

Spring 2015

Vol. 5 No. 2

Overeaters Anonymous is a fellowship of individuals who, through shared experience, strength, and hope, are recovering from compulsive overeating. We welcome everyone who wants to stop eating compulsively. There are no dues or fees for members; we are self-supporting through our own contributions, neither soliciting nor accepting outside donations. OA is not affiliated with any public or private organization, political movement, ideology or religious doctrine; we take no position on outside issues. Our primary purpose is to abstain from compulsive overeating and to carry the message of recovery to those who still suffer.

For More Information About Overeaters Anonymous and its Program of Recovery,
Visit santacruzoa.org or Call Our Hotline, 831-429-7906

SPONSORSHIP TOGETHER WE GET BETTER

Getting to that first OA meeting is a tremendous leap of faith. Then at that first meeting, or soon thereafter, we are encouraged to take *another* leap: “find a sponsor.” For some of us, this is an even more intimidating prospect. As newcomers we are not really sure what a sponsor is supposed to do or be, and we are definitely not sure we want one! Even when we hear other members expressing gratitude for their sponsors, we may still wonder, “Why can’t we just do the program on our own?”

Like everything in OA, getting a sponsor is a choice, not a requirement. However, when we look at other members who are getting the results we want, we can’t help but notice that they are using the tools of recovery, among them, meetings, literature, a plan of eating, and *sponsorship*.

Why is sponsorship considered so important? It serves many purposes, and it means different things to different people. But there are a few aspects that most of us agree are fundamental.

Escape from isolation. Compulsive eaters often isolate socially, emotionally and/or physically. Connecting with another individual in the program is the beginning of the end of isolation.

Guidance in working the 12 steps. It will take a willingness to go to any length, and to persevere. Almost all of us need help with the process from time to time. Working the steps is not a journey we can effectively make on our own. Working the steps is just that – WORK – sometimes frightening, sometimes confusing, sometimes just plain painful. Having a sponsor to guide, encourage, and comfort us can help us stick with it when the going gets rough. They can also help us decide when we are complete and ready to move on to the next step.

An objective perspective. Our sponsors can reassure us when we are down on ourselves and can remind us of the program principles when we get cocky or start rationalizing. Many of us have a “blind spot” when it comes to looking at our character defects. Sponsors can help by sharing their own experience with similar problems through the steps (step sponsor), to help the sponsee become and stay abstinent (food sponsor), and to help the sponsee learn to use the tools of the program.

Who should be our sponsor? “Find someone who has what you want, and ask them how they achieved

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it." It's probably best not to ask a close friend, though the sponsor may become our friend. It's better not to choose a relative or intimate partner, or anyone who might become an intimate partner. Preferably find someone local when possible, so that you can meet in person, at least occasionally.

For some of us, it can be really difficult to ask someone to be our sponsor. Perhaps we fear being rejected, or we believe we have to do everything ourselves. Whatever our obstacles, we can be pretty sure that others in the program have experienced something similar, and that our isolation, fears, and self-destructive beliefs are in fact not *true*, but symptoms of our disease. Once we recognize this, we realize that simply sharing who we are with another person is the beginning of healing. It may feel risky, but if we want recovery, we will take that risk.

- Carol F.

Young Persons Meeting

Come join us Sunday evenings at 7:00 p.m. for the new OA Young Persons meeting! I am so grateful OA welcomes people of all ages and backgrounds. As many of us know, this disease can grip us at an early age. The new meeting is a space for young people to learn about OA through the Steps, create relationships with other young people who are new to program, and get hope from members who are abstinent and have been in program for a longer time.

The meeting is an intimate and sacred space. We focus on a Step each month. On the first Sunday, we have a speaker who speaks about their experience with the Step; on the second and third Sundays we read the Step from the OA 12 and 12 and share on each paragraph. On the fourth Sunday, we invite another speaker to share their experience, strength, and hope. So far, it has been amazing!

I want to thank everyone who helped to make this meeting possible and who has attended the meetings.

If you want to meet some awesome young people, if you are struggling with food or confused with the Steps, or, if you wish to carry the message of OA, we would love your support. Together we get better!

- Catherine

Obstacles to Looking for a Sponsor

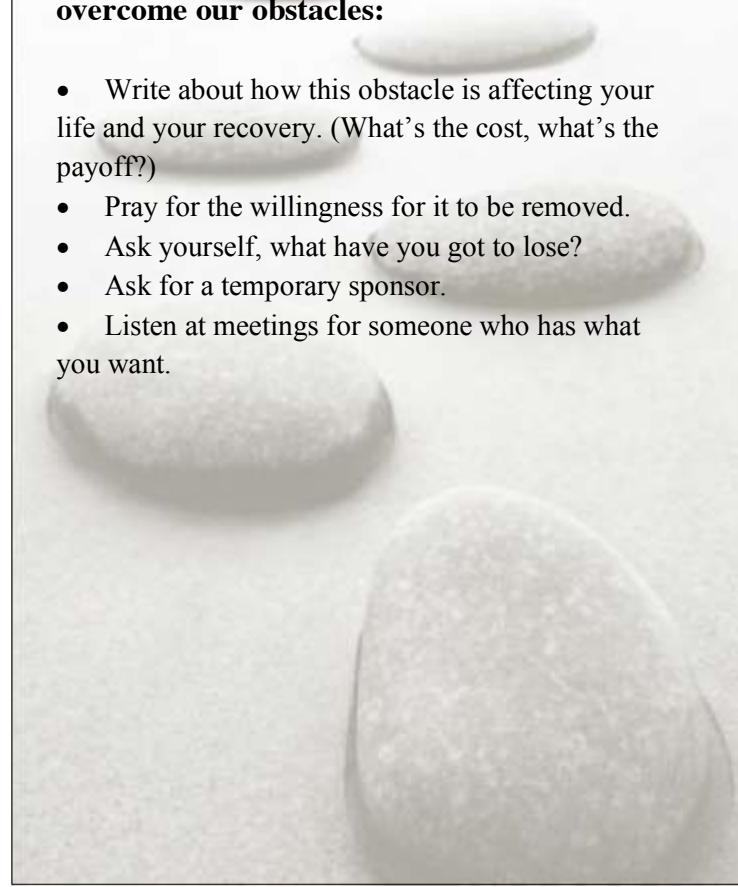
There are many possible obstacles, but they are all motivated by an underlying fear that our needs will not be met:

- Need for safety: fear that the sponsor will require us to do things we're not ready to do.
- Fear that we don't deserve that kind of support.
- A strong need to hide our eating and food behaviors out of shame.
- Fear that the steps will be too hard, or too shaming, for us to bear.
- Fear that no one can understand our problem(s) except ourselves.
- Reluctance to fully acknowledge we are powerless and need help.
- A belief that we need to do it all ourselves.
- A belief that we don't need help; we're fine on our own.
- Feeling that we are too busy with work or family obligations to really "work" the program.

Identifying our obstacles is half the job.

Here are some suggestions for how to overcome our obstacles:

- Write about how this obstacle is affecting your life and your recovery. (What's the cost, what's the payoff?)
- Pray for the willingness for it to be removed.
- Ask yourself, what have you got to lose?
- Ask for a temporary sponsor.
- Listen at meetings for someone who has what you want.



Giving Service

A CELEBRATION OF OA AND EACH OTHER

I feel so overcome with happiness that OA members worked together to create a Thursday meeting on December 25th. There was also a splendid holiday celebration that followed. It meant so much that people worked together to provide something so compelling for those of us who have issues during or on a holiday.

The atmosphere of the meeting was festive with decorations and music that turned a conference room into a party room. Listening to the speaker, I felt reassured that I am not alone in my current and past experiences with food. Her honesty was amazing grace. She talked about an eating disorder truthfully and she was motivating in sharing her experience, strength, and hope.

It is moments like these that draw me into making my own effort to be honest about the insanity I have experienced over the years with food and my body. Much of my own eating disorder and food obsession was done in secret, with manipulation, dishonesty, and ego. I was so ashamed of being a health risk that I ended up suffering.

During this part of my life I regressed more than I grew with the inevitable result of my feeling like a victim and a failure. It is so good to walk through these doors and to know that there is help on the way. The reality of it is that there is a force of recovery. There is hope and promise for one who is willing to face the truth and to take the steps to the best of his or her ability.

A heartfelt thanks to everyone in this program, from one who is experiencing the love.

- Peggy



SANTA CRUZ COUNTY OA INTERGROUP PRESENTS
A SPONSORSHIP WORKSHOP

Together We Get Better

**LEARN ABOUT BEING A SPONSOR
OR SPONSEE**

Saturday, March 28, 2015

2:00 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Vintage Faith Church

Fireside Room

350 Mission Street, Santa Cruz

The Literature Table

When the calling to become a sponsor came up for me, I felt the need for some support in being a good sponsor. In a God moment, I was thrilled to find a Sponsorship Kit at a local meeting. In that packet, I found the pamphlet, "A Guide for Sponsors," to be very helpful in understanding and setting up communication and other guidelines for a healthy sponsor/sponsee relationship, and in understanding different sponsorship styles. Feeling perhaps a little concerned about "doing it right," I was also calmed when I read, "We each take it one day at a time, relying as always on God." The other pamphlet, "Sponsoring through the Twelve Steps," also helps me in an ongoing way with its concise examples of questions to use in discussion and writing assignments about the Twelve Steps.

For more information on sponsoring, check out these podcasts on www.oa.org:

"Our primary purpose: How to Sponsor"; "Our primary purpose: Sponsorship – How to Pick? Why have one?"; "OA Literature: A Guide for Sponsors"

- Anne



At the Thanksgiving Day meeting, we asked the question, "What are you grateful for?" Here are some of the responses:

I am grateful for the unconditional love I have received in OA from other OA members and from developing a relationship with my Higher Power.
- Leslie

I am so grateful for the OA fellowship that supports me as I am today and every day. Hope, faith and recovery to all!
- Marlynn

I'm grateful for abstinence from sugar. I'm grateful for the pamphlet "Before You Take That First Compulsive Bite." I'm grateful for a loving Higher Power.

I am grateful for the ability to live life without constant fear, thanks to OA and for all the people in my life and my ability to show up and be me.
- Marsha M.

Find A Meeting

Meetings are drop-in and open to all.
see santacruzoa.org for up-to-the-minute changes

SUNDAYS

9:05-10:15 a.m. Speaker *Fragrance Free*
Sutter Maternity & Surgery Center, Sutter Room
2900 Chanticleer Avenue, Santa Cruz

4:00-5:15 p.m. 90-Day *Fragrance Free*
Church of the Nazarene, 115 S. Morrissey,
Santa Cruz *green door to left of main entrance,*
off parking lot

7:00-8:00 p.m. YOUNG PERSONS
PAMF Main clinic, 2025 Soquel Ave.
2nd Fl. Conference room, Santa Cruz
(Use Urgent Care Entrance)

MONDAYS

12:15-1:15 p.m. Lifeline *Fragrance Free*
Trinity Presbyterian Church, Library
420 Melrose Avenue, Santa Cruz *through yellow gate*

7:00-8:00 p.m. Book Study/Speaker *Fragrance Free*
Soquel Congregational Church
Anne Hutchinson Room, 4951 Soquel Dr., Soquel

7:00-8:00 p.m. Literature
Mars Hill Coffee House, Community Room
610 San Benito Avenue at 6th Street HOLLISTER

TUESDAYS

12:15-1:15 p.m. New focus - The Tools of Recovery
Trinity Pres. Library
420 Melrose Avenue, Santa Cruz *through yellow gate*

WEDNESDAYS

10:30-11:30 a.m. Voices of Recovery
Bayside Baptist Church *across from the Gault School*
1335 Seabright Avenue, Santa Cruz

6:30-7:30 p.m. Writing
335 Spreckles Drive, Suite A, Aptos

THURSDAYS

1:00-2:15 p.m. Focus on Abstinence
New location, new focus
Trinity Presbyterian Church, Youth Room
420 Melrose Avenue, Santa Cruz

FRIDAYS

12:00-1:00 p.m. 90-Days, AA 12&12 study
Live Oak Family Resource Center *Fragrance Free*
Community Conference Room
1740 17th Avenue, Santa Cruz

12:15-1:15 p.m. For Today book study
Quaker Meeting House, Social Hall
225 Rooney Street, Santa Cruz

SATURDAYS

9:00-10:10 a.m. Speaker/Discussion
Calvary Episcopal Church
531 Center Street, Santa Cruz

11:00-12:00 p.m. Speaker/Literature
Watsonville Hospital
Sequoia Room, Watsonville *Fragrance Free*