

Happy 1st Birthday, OA Footsteps!

4-14-2020



“We gratefully follow in the footsteps of many others who have walked this way before us, and we’re gratified to be making footprints of our own for others to follow.”

The 12 Steps

1. We admitted we were powerless over food — that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong, promptly admitted it.
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these Steps, we tried to carry this message to compulsive overeaters and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

The 12 Traditions

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon OA unity.
2. For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.
3. The only requirement for OA membership is a desire to stop eating compulsively.
4. Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or OA as a whole.
5. Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry its message to the compulsive overeater who still suffers.
6. An OA group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the OA name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property, and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.
7. Every OA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
8. Overeaters Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers.
9. OA, as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.
10. Overeaters Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the OA name ought never be drawn into public controversy.
11. Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, films, television, and other public media of communication.
12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all these Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

I am grateful that all of you were here when I entered the doors of OA. I am grateful for the founders who left the first footprints for me to follow. I am grateful for the other compulsive overeaters who were willing and happy to share their experience, strength and hope. I am grateful I didn't have to walk the path alone. Eventually, I found that I could leave footprints for others to follow. I, too, had experience, strength, and hope to share. I am always happy to share with others. We walk together on this path of recovery. We follow the footprints in the sand of those who have walked before us, and we leave footprints for those yet to come.

Voice of Recovery, April 14th, pg. 105

God,
Grant me the serenity to
accept the things I cannot
change, courage to chance
the things I can, and the
wisdom to know the
difference

There is the well known poem about a dream...

Walking along that proverbial beach with my Higher Power, I glance back behind me. Scenes of my life, flash before my eyes. Always there are two sets of foot prints... Except, I notice, during the worst parts, the most traumatic, when I suffered the greatest. There is only one set.

Dismayed, I cry out to my Higher Power, and ask, "Why would you abandon me during my darkest hours? When I committed myself to you, to this program, you promised you would never abandon me!"

And a great voice whispers from within me... "You are loved, and truly treasured, especially during your hardest moments... For that is when I held you most dearly to my heart."

This past year has been so incredibly rewarding as I walk along in the footprints of all those who have gone before me. What an amazing gift they have left behind in their wake for us all to follow. This program, and its tried and tested method of recovery is a blessing for which I will be eternally grateful. Somewhere along that line, from Bill W. to those who started the overeaters anonymous fellowship in the first place, to all the fellows who work this program and provide us with this opportunity for recovery... They figured out what worked for them and were able to share that with us, to guide our path. What a legacy that lights our way!



Today, I am just so inspired by all those who share this path with me, whose footsteps walk along side me in this community, and without whom, my own recovery would never be possible! I love that as we walk, reaching out our hands to walk together, each step is so solidly supported by the program itself, and that love that we share among our family of choice...

The Step stones that guide us and mark our way. They help keep us sane! Help us achieve a healthy body weight and sustain it! Help us deal with our angers and resentments and connect us to something greater than ourselves! The rewards are so great! Through this process our lives are healed, as we share with those kindred to us along the way! What a legacy that resides within our own hearts!

A year ago, today, three of us started this zoom room, and attended this meeting for the very first time. We were so excited to meet on Zoom, to finally see each other's faces, after meeting for many months previously in a text-chat meeting.

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The reading from that day, on April 14th from Voices of Recovery, were the words that planted a precious seed that has flourished so beautifully as a community ever since!!



NOW, we have over TWENTY weekly meetings, and more starting all the time!! We have our Whatsapp and Facebook group... We have been able to reach out and help countless sufferers and strengthen our own recovery in the process. We have an amazing team of folk working so hard in the background to make this all a viable intergroup. I am just so grateful to all their hard efforts that have kept everything running so beautifully, in ways I could never have imagined at that first meeting a year ago today!! What a legacy that we leave behind for others to follow!!! Our own footsteps in the sand... OA Foot Steps ☐

It is such an honour and a privilege to be able to reproduce the entire passage from Voices of Recovery on our website, for that date, by 'exceptional privilege' from Overeaters Anonymous, who recognized how these words have become the foundation of our community. It has become our own prescribed 'mission statement' that has uplifted every single one of us as we came through these doors! Thank you, each and every one of you, I am so grateful that you have joined us. I am so blessed to be among you.

- Alix

What was life like before OA and how is it now" - this was a topic two weeks ago in an online meeting. A few days later, I heard similar words mentioned from one of our OA daily readers. Was this my Higher Powers way of having me dig deeper and reflect on my recovery? I have been attending online meetings since July, 2016. I owe my recovery to many things and many people and of course my HP. As a mentor frequently tells me... "It Takes A Village".

So the village I have embraced includes OA.org, online meetings, some face-to-face meetings from early on, fellowship, mentors, my first and second sponsors, sponsees, recovery buddies, Intergroup service, Virtual Region Committee service and .. last but not least, the ONE YEAR old Virtual Intergroup: OA FOOT STEPS.

Seeing a Virtual Intergroup form since "close to its inception", is almost indescribable. There is an added layer of awe in watching it's birth and development. The beautiful vision, intense service and ongoing dedication from Alix, Chair and Founder of OA FOOT STEPS, April 14th, 2019 is something I will always be deeply grateful for.

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Being able to attend meetings on this video platform has shifted my recovery and deepened my connectivity to fellows and service. In early recovery, I heard at a meeting “the opposite of addiction is connection”. I understood but I didn’t feel it in my heart and soul.

My early sponsor used to say “you will see, you will make connections with others and life long friends”. Still being somewhat shy at times and a part time isolator, I just didn’t “get” it.

As time went on, I just kept coming back. I was able to connect with others in WhatsApp chats and kept going to meetings regularly. Slowly, I listened and shared when I could, both in chats, text meetings and the new virtual video meetings.

I can honestly say that my life would not be as fulfilled as it is today without the fellows I have met online and in OA FOOT STEPS. I am enriched through connection and service. My life has more purpose and I am beginning to feel in my heart and soul the “Promises” of this 12 Step Program.

It’s with immense gratitude that I thank all those attending OA FOOTSTEPS meetings and those providing service at the Intergroup level. Thank you for being part of my recovery ODAT.

~Lisa



Finding OA is one of the best things to happen to me and OA Footsteps a much welcomed addition to my program. Having the ability to virtually join more than just my local meetings and connect with people from all over the world provides me with collective strength, support, and guidance beyond my wildest dreams!

- Diana



I found OA Footsteps the last year in November 2019. I had just started my abstinence after 2 days working with my sponsor whom I found on my first day of coming to OA meetings.

I was finding it challenging to make it through the day due to my craving thoughts so I joined the WhatsApp group and posted saying that I was looking for somebody to outreach with and got a few people responses from willing people.

The support was amazing from day 1. From that day onwards I decided that I would use the phone rather than food.

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The OA Footsteps fellowship has been a place for me to practice service, abstinence and being in fellowship. The support and encouragement I receive is like no other, and I should say I am a fellow in many 12-step programs.

I believe my main support to recovery is self-acceptance and my willingness and ability to extend loving-kindness to myself. I use the phone, I share on the groups, and in meetings; I allow myself to be seen and heard, to have a voice, and that I find really helps my habit to turn to food when anything feels out of place in my life.

I am grateful for the program, I am grateful for my Fellows, I am grateful for my relationship with higher power and I am grateful for my relationship with me.

I use meetings, service, and communication in order to care of my abstinence, one day at a time

- Kadi



The night I entered the rooms was 27 October 2019. I'd spent the day stuffing down alcoholic foods and knew I couldn't stop on my own. I felt desperate, hopeless and utterly alone. I had great people around me - a loving, sweet husband and two fiercely caring and loyal sisters. But I couldn't make them understand how I felt about food and my powerlessness over it.

I grew up in a difficult home, and I was bullied awfully at school. I had no one on my side. So food became my parents, my friends, my solace, my comfort - and I learned to parent myself using sweet foods. And I kept doing this until the day I attended my first OA Footsteps Zoom meeting. I felt sick with shame, fear and worry when the meeting started. When I introduced myself, I was trying so hard not to cry that I was almost choking. Then as I listened to the leader and fellows, I knew God had just given me one of the greatest blessings of my life. I heard fellows talk about recovery, freedom from addiction and building self-love. I saw how fellows trusted one another, cared about one another and shared a loving acceptance and friendship. I wished I could belong too. Then I did - by attending meetings, working the steps, getting a sponsor, using the tools and creating a plan of eating. I wish I could put into words the utter gratitude and love I have for OA Footsteps and my fellows - but how can you describe how you feel about a miracle happening to you?

OA Footsteps and everyone in it are so special to me. I've learned how to accept myself and others, to feel good enough in my imperfect ways, and it's brought me closer to God. I thank God every day for the beautiful souls in OA Footsteps - you guys and the programme gave me a new, better way to live.

Thank you ♥ Avril

If someone had told me that I would be leading a meeting, part of a step study workshop, and surrounded by fellows who understand me without having met face to face, I might have laughed at how unattainable it felt or cried myself to sleep, feeling even more hopeless. My self hate and frustrations became my life and I figured I would die being this way. At 21 years old, I had given up. Little did I know on January 7th, 2020, my entire world would be overturned. My HP directed me to joining an online meeting. Slowly over time, my life settled, my heart wasn't so heavy and I really felt at home. Over a few months, I grew to love our OA Footsteps fellowship. My program is stronger than ever. I have been so warmly welcomed and supported every day. I thank my HP and my fellows for being here. My HP knew was was about to come (pandemic) and prepared me in the best way... Showing. my home

OA Footsteps is my lifeboat in these rough seas. And for this, I am forever grateful.

- Paige L.



I knew I had a problem with food for a long time before joining OA, but for years I just couldn't admit it to myself. I routinely stuffed emotions down with food - one night each week, I had the house to myself.

I'd stop off to buy luxury foods on my way home from work, then binge my way through them, finishing with a tub of ice cream. I ate to the point of physical sickness, sweating and shaking as my body tried to cope with the excess food. My partner at the time told me that it was impossible to have a relationship with me - because I only thought about food.

Years ago, I tried to go to OA - most of the people there were restricted and I was the only heavy person in the room. I didn't feel like I belonged, and so I didn't listen. I was horrified that people needed to phone their food in to their sponsor every day - I was in another fellowship where I didn't need to do that. I didn't have the humility I needed to work the programme, and I left.

I continued to eat my emotions for years - the pain of my father's passing, my mother's passing, and any other tragedy or difficulty were managed by numbing my pain with food.

One year, I decided to take control of my weight, not realising that this could never work, because I was powerless over food. I lost a lot of weight by restricting and over exercising, and my periods stopped. I got to a

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certain point then I picked up the food again, gaining even more weight than I'd lost

Over the past six months, a couple of people mentioned OA, and my sponsee in another programme told me she was going to OA too. On 5 February 2020, I went to my local face to face meeting. This time, I surrendered to the programme and the will of my HP.

I set up a plan of eating - three meals a day and nothing in between. I attended face to face meetings 30 miles away. My sponsee helped me download Zoom and I went to online meetings whenever I could. I found a sponsor and I text my food to her every day, phoning her each day too. I call other fellows, I do daily reflections and I read the Big Book, the 12&12, and the daily readers every day. I complete a writing exercise every day. And I've now been abstinent for 37 days.

As the coronavirus pandemic developed, I couldn't attend my face to face meetings. I found OA Footsteps meetings and started to attend. I love the Footsteps meetings and feel so safe in them. Even though we're joining from so many countries across the world, I feel connected to my new fellows and love to see familiar faces, as if I'm home. I feel so incredibly lucky to have found these meetings. I'm learning to sit with my emotions, working through them with my HP. They feel raw. But I'm not stuffing

them down with food any more. I feel so much happier, more physically able, and comfortable with myself. As I've started to work the programme, I've uncovered this hidden core of self-worth and self-esteem I didn't know existed. I still have lots to do, but by surrendering to my HP and throwing in the towel (and letting the end of the towel go this time!) I'm recovering. I needed the fellowship, and I'm feeling groovy.

-Jackie



It's no easy path, restructuring our relationship to food and to the world around us & within us. In fact, it's one carved out for a warrior and that's exactly what I find in OA Footsteps—a fellowship full of warriors. Together, hand-in-hand, we find the courage meet Life's challenges with the practice of humility, faith and love. Surely we each take our turns being on the forefront of difficulties, but there is strength in our number so that if you fall you will be helped back up again. This is how, together we will get better. And so it is that fellowship marks the beginning of Our journey Home.

- Steffania



I struggled for years and years with bulimia and binge eating, and had an even longer battle with depression and serious self worth issues. With OA (and good therapy) I finally found relief, space from the compulsion, and a strong relationship with a higher power.

I took a major leap in August and moved to another country with my partner. I left the job market I knew, my friends and family, a city where I'd lived for a decade, and moved somewhere where I didn't even speak the language. To put it lightly, I was scared out of my mind. Mostly I was terrified to leave the sponsor, meetings, and routine that gave and helped me maintain my abstinence. I was afraid of losing that community and connection with people who understood the disease. I was scared of being swallowed back up by compulsive eating.

And I had the biggest chip on my shoulder. I just KNEW online meetings wouldn't be as personal, the recovery wouldn't be as strong, I wouldn't feel connected, they wouldn't be able to relate, the technology would be an impassable barrier. And I knew that without that support, I'd lose my abstinence and have to start all over again.

Then I tried an OA Footsteps meeting. That first day I was welcomed with joyful smiles and laughter. I was too scared to turn on my camera but I still felt included and seen (which made me want to run away, of course.)

I decided to try it again. The Tuesday afternoon meeting soon became a buoy in my week. Slowly I started reaching out and tried more of the meetings. I began to feel closer and more comfortable with the community. Suddenly I looked around and realized I had real friends in this online community, that there was wisdom and recovery and compassion.

Because people showed up with honesty and openness, I related, I was inspired, I found that connection I was so sure wouldn't be there. Because of the online meetings and fellowship, I could keep coming back. Because of this community I have maintained my abstinence though a major transition and now a global pandemic. I've never been as happy to be so wrong.

-Kullan E.



A year ago...

Three OA members who knew each other only by written word decided to try an online “face to face” meeting. They had spent many hours together on a text-only meeting platform but were looking for something more personal. Much of that first meeting was spent in awe of seeing each other’s faces for the first time. Hearing each other’s voices. Seeing expressions and hearing tones...it brought the meeting to life. Literally. April 14th Voices of Recovery was read and each person shared about the foot steps they had followed on their recovery journey. This was the first OA Foot Steps meeting.

Today...

Retracing the foot steps back to that moment a year ago...I am filled with awe and gratitude for this amazing fellowship. OA saved my life almost 2 years ago but OA Foot Steps is the light that keeps me on my path to recovery. This fellowship has grown exponentially over the past year. There has been so much joy, heartache, struggle, triumph and encouragement shared with one another. True friendships have been formed. Each member has shared their experience, strength and hope with others. We have endured a worldwide pandemic together because our membership spans the globe.

Personally, this past year has been filled with many ups and downs, moments of bright light and moments of darkness...abstinence and relapse...hope and despair. I’ve struggled with periods of isolation that lasted far too long...but every single time I reach out to this fellowship, someone is there with open arms, welcoming me home. I never knew I could be a part of something so beautiful. A true family. Because of OA Foot Steps I have hope that recovery is possible. Because of OA Foot Steps I truly believe “Together we get better!” ☐

-Jenn M.

