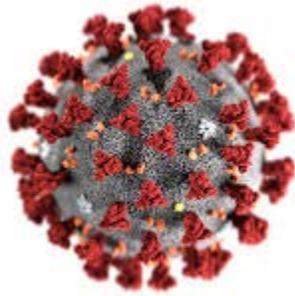


# **Life on Life's Terms: Connecting to Recovery in a Changing World**



**Members Share Experience Strength & Hope  
For the 2020 Region One Assembly Notebook**

## **Topics:**

Heard at a Meeting

And Now a Word from Our Sponsors

Principles of the Program

2020 - Facing a Difficult Year

## HEARD AT A MEETING ...

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- ❖ As we evolve in the program, our plan of eating and definition of abstinence will change.
- ❖ When we go to a nutritionist, pray to our HP that the words we need to hear come out of her mouth.
- ❖ The difference between a diet and a plan of eating is working the tools.
- ❖ It's insanity to base my happiness on someone else changing their bad behaviors.
- ❖ On the fourth step, finding "my part" in childhood abuse: My part was not my abuse—I was a worthy child and God loved me. My part was continuing to act as the poor victim and expecting everyone to make it up to me.
- ❖ The slogans have been my handrails.

*Carrie A., Pierce County Intergroup*

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Just a little change projected out over time can make a huge difference. *Annie H, Peninsula INTERGROUP*

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I treat my abstinence like a newborn baby. It needs attention all day every day.

I keep my abstinence on one hand, my life situations on the other and I never clap!

*Pat O'C, Oregon Intergroup*

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The desire to change has to come from within and be stronger than the fear that holds us captive.  
*Rosanne K., Oregon Intergroup*

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THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS A SLIP; IT IS ALWAYS A DECISION \*\*\* BEFORE I SPEAK: DOES IT NEED TO BE SAID? BY ME?  
\*\*\* KEEP YOUR TEETH TOGETHER — SMILE \*\*\* RESENTMENTS ARE LIKE STRAY CATS, THE MORE YOU FEED THEM, THE  
LONGER THEY STAY AROUND \*\*\* OA DOES NOT OPEN THE GATES OF HEAVEN AND LET ME IN, OA OPENS THE GATES OF HELL  
AND LETS ME OUT \*\*\* YESTERDAY'S SHOWER DOES NOT KEEP ME CLEAN TODAY \*\*\* FOOD IS NEVER THE ANSWER \*\*\*  
WHY DO I PUNISH MYSELF WITH FOOD? \*\*\* AAA = AWARENESS, ACCEPTANCE, ACTION \*\*\* FOCUS ON WHAT IS GOING  
RIGHT \*\*\* COINCIDENCE IS HP'S WAY OF STAYING ANONYMOUS \*\*\* ASK EACH MORNING: WHAT DOES HP WANT ME TO  
DO TODAY? LISTEN FOR HP TO TELL ME HOW TO PROCEED. \*\*\* RECOVERY IS A PROCESS — A WAY OF LIFE \*\*\* GOD DOES  
NOT NEED INSTRUCTIONS FROM ME \*\*\* SURRENDER TO WHAT WORKS \*\*\* I MAY THINK LIKE AN OVEREATER, I DO NOT  
HAVE TO ACT LIKE ONE \*\*\* I MAY NOT BE WHERE I WANT TO BE, BUT I AM NOT WHERE I WAS \*\*\* THE PROGRAM  
ALLOWS ME TO EXPERIMENT \*\*\* FIRST I MUST CARRY THE MESSAGE TO MYSELF \*\*\* FOCUS ON THE SOLUTION, NOT THE  
PROBLEM \*\*\* UNPLUG FROM THE FOOD, DO NOT UNPLUG FROM LIFE \*\*\* A GOAL WITHOUT A PLAN IS A WISH \*\*\*  
ACCEPTANCE IS LIVING IN THE ANSWER \*\*\* I KNOW BETTER THAN GOD — NOT!!! \*\*\* ACCEPTANCE BEFORE  
UNDERSTANDING \*\*\* HUMILITY IS THE MAIN KEY TO SOBRIETY \*\*\* I GET TO TAKE A VACATION, BUT MY DISEASE NEVER  
DOES \*\*\* GOD CANNOT GET BEHIND A DECISION I HAVE NOT MADE \*\*\* WHEN I HAVE SOMETHING TO SAY: SAY WHAT I  
MEAN. MEAN WHAT I SAY. DO NOT SAY IT IN A MEAN WAY. \*\*\* ABSTINENCE IS SERVICE TO ME \*\*\* I ABSORB GOD LIKE A  
SPONGE — WHEN I GET “SQUISHED”, GOD COMES OUT \*\*\* SHAME — I AM A MISTAKE; GUILT — I MADE A MISTAKE \*\*\*  
TIME TO FLEX MY “GOD MUSCLE” \*\*\* OA IS A GRADUATE COURSE IN SELF-CARE \*\*\* I HAVE AN HP BIG ENOUGH TO  
HANDLE THAT \*\*\* HERE WE “GROW” AGAIN \*\*\* THIS IS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR GROWTH \*\*\* STRETCH BEYOND MY  
ABSTINENCE \*\*\* INTENTION FOR TODAY — CONNECTION BETWEEN MY HEAD AND MY HEART \*\*\* BE THE VICTIM OR BE  
THE ACTION \*\*\* IT IS THE ANTS THAT GET ME, NOT THE ALLIGATORS \*\*\* FIND THE SWEETNESS IN LIFE, NOT IN THE  
FOOD \*\*\* BLESS THEM, CHANGE ME \*\*\* COE — COMPULSIVE OVER EATER \*\*\* ADDICTION MINUS THE “DDI” = ACTION  
\*\*\* THE WORLD JUDGES ME BY MY ACTIONS \*\*\* I HAD THE LENSES IN MY GLASSES BACKWARDS \*\*\* WHAT I FOCUS ON  
- I GET MORE OF \*\*\* NOTHING HAPPENS IN GOD'S WORLD BY MISTAKE \*\*\* IF I AM WRONG, I STAND CORRECTED \*\*\*  
PAUSE & PIVOT — CHANGE TO THE DIRECTION THAT HP DIRECTS \*\*\* ACT MYSELF INTO A NEW WAY OF THINKING \*\*\* MY  
SERENITY IS PROPORTIONATE TO HAVING A LOWER EXPECTATION OF OTHERS \*\*\* GLANCE BACK AT THE PAST, DO NOT  
STARE \*\*\* GOD'S WILL FOR ME IS NOTHING I CANNOT DO \*\*\* BEFORE ANY DREAM CAN COME TRUE, THERE MUST FIRST  
BE A DREAM \*\*\* I COULD NOT HAVE TODAY IF I HAD NOT EXPERIENCED ALL THE YESTERDAYS \*\*\* END OF STORY = DO  
WHAT I OUGHT TO DO BECAUSE I WANT TO CHOOSE THIS WAY OF LIFE \*\*\* *TERRI R., CENTRAL OREGON INTERGROUP*

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## Thoughts from a Big Sky Intergroup Coffee Gathering

- I thought I had to get good to get God...
- Fear is foreseeing the future without the presence of God.
- The Tools are the handrails to the Steps.
- Things I can't give up: Ask God to just hang onto them for a while.
- Pray to God, but continue to row to shore.
- When I want to eat more or use an old behavior: "I don't do that anymore."
- Nothing tastes as good as abstinence feels.
- God, bless them, change me.
- I can't recover and don't get better in my comfort zone.
- The kitchen is closed!
- Another name for my morning prayers and gratitude: "My opening ceremonies."
- MAGIC: **M**e **A**ccepting **G**od's **I**n **C**harge

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GOD: GIFT OF DESPERATION >><< EAT OUT OF SELF-LOVE >><< THE DIS-EASE LIVES IN MY MIND, NOT IN THE  
FOOD >><< CONNECTION IS THE OPPOSITE OF ADDICTION >><< I'M SORRY YOU'RE NOT GETTING THE RESULTS  
FOR THE WORK YOU'RE NOT WILLING TO DO >><< WORK THE STEPS, DON'T JUST ADMIRE THEM >><< SHARE  
LONG ENOUGH TO INSPIRE, BUT NOT SO LONG AS TO CAUSE RESENTMENT >><< MY SPONSOR IS MY ACTION BUDDY  
>><< EACH DAY WE LIVE WELL, WE ARE WELL >><< MY COMPULSIVE OVEREATING WAS A LOT BIGGER THAN  
ME. MY HP IS A LOT BIGGER THAN MY OVEREATING. >><< WE HAVE NO MORE POWER OVER FOOD TODAY THAN  
WE DID AT OUR VERY FIRST MEETING >><< HOW DO I SHOW UP IN THE PROCESS RATHER THAN TRYING TO CONTROL  
THE OUTCOME? >><< FEAR IS FORESEEING THE FUTURE WITHOUT THE PRESENCE OF GOD >><< I CAN EITHER  
PROGRESS, OR REVERSE, THERE IS NO "PARK" IN MY RECOVERY. >><< ANONYMOUS

## AND NOW A WORD FROM OUR SPONSORS...

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Before I speak, THINK...Is It:

- T** Thoughtful?
- H** Honest?
- I** Does it have integrity?
- N** Necessary?
- K** Kind?



*Laurie M. Big Sky Intergroup*

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Honesty is the purpose, love is the intent. *Pat O’C, Oregon Intergroup*

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- ✚ Are you willing to pray for willingness?
- ✚ Would you rather be right or be happy?
- ✚ ...and how is that working for you?

*Annie H, Peninsula Intergroup*

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### **Thoughts from a Big Sky Intergroup Coffee Gathering**

- ❖ When making a decision: “Why wouldn’t it be ok?”
- ❖ The same thinking that got me into the problem is not the same thinking that will get me into the solution.
- ❖ The best thing I’ve done in program is to be gentle, loving, and kind to myself.
- ❖ On selfishness: “Life is so much easier when you don’t have to behave the way I want you to.”
- ❖ One minute on the problem. Two minutes on the solution.
- ❖ About being in meetings: “I’m so grateful to be around people I feel good around.”
- ❖ Willingness is anything my actions can confirm.

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## THE SLOGANS ARE STILL WORKING...

BUT FOR THE GRACE OF GOD, THERE GO I ☐☐☐☐ KEEP IT SIMPLE SWEETHEART! ☐☐☐☐ ONE DAY AT A TIME ☐☐☐☐ LIVE AND LET LIVE ☐☐☐☐ FORGIVENESS IS THE WILLINGNESS TO GIVE UP ALL HOPE FOR A BETTER PAST (EVEN IF THAT PAST IS JUST FIVE MINUTES AGO) ☐☐☐☐ YOU CAN START YOUR DAY OVER ANYTIME ☐☐☐☐ ANONYMOUS, SOUTHEAST ALASKA INTERGROUP

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- ❖ It's about the food until it's not about the food.
  - ❖ Easy does it!

*Lesley K., Southeast Alaska Intergroup*

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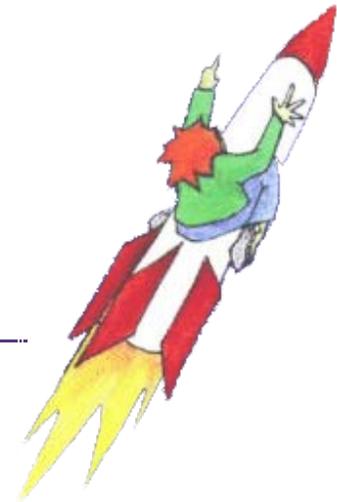
When you are stuck and need a boost, remember – you are being rocketed into the 4<sup>th</sup> Dimension!

*Mary S., Southeast Alaska Intergroup*

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- ❖ This too shall pass.
  - ❖ If not now, when?

*Karen W., Southeast Alaska Intergroup*

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<b>When my sponsor said:</b>	<b>She was teaching me:</b>
"That's not yours..."	To let go of control, trust, take care of my OWN side of the street
"I want you to know what it feels like to do the things you say you're going to do."	Integrity, responsibility, love and respect for others, self-esteem
"You need to go apologize..."	To take responsibility, be respectful in relationships, clear away guilt and ill-will,
"Of course you did that...your life up to that point led you to that." <i>(after a 5<sup>th</sup> step)</i>	Humility (self-esteem), kindness to myself and others, forgiveness and compassion
"Isn't it wonderful that you're <u>striving</u> to be a better person?" <i>(after a perceived failure)</i>	Hope, humility (self-esteem), trust in the process of recovery, patience, perseverance, to see my progress
"Addicts only like to feel terrific – anything less isn't ok with us. What if you did the footwork and then just felt what is yours to feel today?"	Perseverance, acceptance, to take action to change the things I can, to live by the Serenity Prayer
"You're up to that..." <i>(when I was afraid to make a move because of what might happen next and how I would feel)</i>	Hope, self-esteem, I can feel my feelings without breaking, fear doesn't have to run my life, to give myself credit...I'm stronger than I think, perseverance, fear is unnecessarily limiting.
"You can call me any time...preferably before you eat." and "Call me at 7am every morning."	I am worthy of someone's time, I matter, my recovery matters, I am not alone unless I choose to be, I am responsible for my recovery
"I want you to start doing affirmations."	Humility, how to live Step 7, love and acceptance for self, positive thinking, how to make living amends to myself, how to affirm others, to let go of self-criticism
"Show me that you love OA – I want to see it."	Service, to do my part, 7 <sup>th</sup> Tradition is more than money, love is a verb, self-esteem comes from esteem-able acts, to be a contributing member of a group, I can put myself "out-there" and be ok, my contributions have value

<b>When my sponsor said:</b>	<b>She was teaching me:</b>
<p>“I still struggle with that sometimes, too” and  “Welcome to Humanity.” <i>(when I felt like a failure)</i></p>	<p>Honesty, humility, that I am safe, compassion, trust, I’m not alone, it’s ok to be human, to let go of perfectionism</p>
<p>“If you’re going to eat cake, put it on a plate, sit at the table, put a napkin in your lap and eat it.” <i>(when I was sneak-eating cake with my fingers every time I passed through the kitchen)</i></p>	<p>Acceptance, honesty, self-esteem, trust, that I am safe and have permission to find my own way, that compulsive behaviors matter and guilt doesn’t serve me</p>
<p>“If you really need to know if that was a break in abstinence, we can decide that in six months. What I want to know is what are you going to do this afternoon to point your feet in the right direction.”</p>	<p>Acceptance, perseverance, to do the next right thing, humility, how to make amends to self, love for self, positive action changes everything, live in the day, it is safe to be honest</p>
<p>“What if OA was never really about food...what if recovery is really about learning how to not hate ourselves?”</p>	<p>Acceptance, love for self, humility, I matter, self-hatred is not ok, recovery is about peace...including with ourselves</p>
<p>“Ask HP a hundred times a day what the next right step is.”</p>	<p>I am not alone, God is in the pause, I am worthy of spiritual connection and help, I am responsible for asking, spiritual connection is available to me at any moment, recovery is a daily action, live in the moment/in the day, Good Orderly Direction is a powerful thing!</p>
<p>“Have you put that through a 10<sup>th</sup> step?”</p>	<p>Perseverance, focus on the solution instead of the problem, take positive action, accountability, love for self, how to maintain my recovery</p>
<p>“You need to start sponsoring.”</p>	<p>I have something to offer, I can “show up” for another person, I am responsible for carrying the message, the importance of giving back, my experience can benefit others, I need to take the focus off of ME, I am capable of loving others, my service matters, I am not in control</p>

Beverly M., Oregon Intergroup

# PRINCIPLES OF THE PROGRAM...

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Being in recovery has taught me that it is all about love. Not the fruitless searching for love, but the decision to attentively and unconditionally give love to all the people that God has invited to share my life. *Annie H, Peninsula Intergroup*

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I did a values clarification exercise. Write your top 3, 4 or 5 values on post it notes. Rearrange them until you have them in an order of priority in your life. For me they were HONESTY, CARING and USEFULNESS; which are three Principles of our program for Steps 1, 8 and 12. If I always combine them, I end up with a free and joyous life of happy usefulness! *Pat O'C, Oregon Intergroup*

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I was told early in program that I was being offered a design for living. I really did not know what that would mean or entail. As I started working the steps in their entirety with a sponsor, I began to understand.

The design for living, the Principles of this program HAD to be used not just around my food, my cravings and my behaviors, but daily in my life and the problems that arose.

This became very clear to me—as I was recovering one day at a time, my food thoughts and mental obsession were decreasing, but my emotions were loud and clear. I was faced with my unsatisfactory marriage, my feelings of inadequacy at my job and my role as teacher clinician, my judgments of my body and self-image and not feeling "good enough."

Although I felt amazing from releasing the weight and clearing my mind, what was I to do about these other issues? Then I thought, "The Principles of this program have to be used in ALL my affairs in order for me to stay recovered."

STEP ONE: I had to be **honest**. I did a 10<sup>th</sup> Step on my issues. I had to admit powerlessness, give away all my control and opinions and ask HP for help. Prayer and acceptance on my knees remove the powerlessness.

STEP TWO: I had to have **hope**. If I already stated that I believed in a HP then I will have to believe that HP could help in ALL of these other issues too.

STEP THREE: I had to use and develop my **faith** with HP. Grow in understanding that if he were sought, then HP would be the one running the show. No longer acting in MY opinions, or MY way, or in MY time.

STEP FOUR: I had to have **courage** to face the truths of my behavior, my part in these issues. Where was MY part?

STEP FIVE: I had to have **integrity** to reach out to others and share with them my part, ask for advice and guidance, ask what would HP want of me, and what actions I could take. It was hard to see my part, as I truly believed I was not the one with the problem.

STEP SIX: I had to be **willing** to let go of my character defects. I had to be willing to see them for what they were, accept my part and trust in the process.

STEP SEVEN: I started to understand **humility**. I had to believe in patience, in the process. That although growth was hard and not always easy, there was a plan and my HP had me protected and was holding my hand. I started to see the ways I was acting towards these issues and realized that by focusing on my side of the street, I could relax. The problems that before seems too large and impossible were manageable, and some disappeared, as I looked honestly at how I was perceiving things.

STEP EIGHT: I had to be **forgiving**. I began saying the sick man's prayer to the people in my life that have hurt me, including myself and how I viewed myself. If I was to be forgiven then I had to forgive. The Saint Francis prayer took on a new meaning and a new strength.

STEP NINE: I had to lead with **love**. I looked at my part and went to the people. I listened with love, I approached with love, and I started walking on the same side as these people, not above them or below. As I started changing my behavior, the situations became easier to handle and my problems were not as extreme.

STEP TEN: I had to **continue** with daily practice of all of these Principles, regardless of how busy I was at work, or how tired I was at home. Daily in my knees, daily thinking of HP's will, not mine, daily humbling myself, daily growing and working on my defects to reflect love and patience.

STEP ELEVEN: I had to continue being **spiritually aware** and lead with HP's strength, and not MY power or MY opinions. When I was restless, irritable or discontent I reached out for spiritual guidance and support.

STEP TWELVE: I had to do **service** and carry the message. So I continued to work with fellows, with sponsees, I reached out to others that could guide me and offer guidance. Getting outside of MY problems and MY mind reminded me that I was not alone, that my problems were not unique, and I had a solution.

This was and is my design for living.

REBECCA T ♥ Peninsula Intergroup

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Abstinence means many things to me, including the following:

**Willingness:** the willingness to choose to be abstinent each day.

**Freedom from indecision:** removing the areas of indecision about what I am going to eat each day, as a general rule, by making these decisions well in advance of the time I am going to eat. This also frees me from the obsession of thinking about what I am going to eat.

**Choice:** freely making choices about what I am going to eat. It is never about deprivation for me. There is nothing I “can’t have,” or that I “am not allowed,” etc. There is only free choice.

It is a **health issue, not a moral issue.** Choosing to see my food choices as healthy or unhealthy, not in terms of good or bad.

**Let go of guilt:** freedom from guilt over anything I have eaten, including unhealthy choices. Rather than seeing these choices as mistakes; I choose to see them, after the fact, to have been absolutely necessary learning experiences, to hopefully learn whatever it is I need to learn from them, so that I do not have to keep having them.

**No diet mentality:** for instance, not associating the word “reward” with any food choice I make, because it implies that I have been depriving myself of what I really wanted to eat, and that because I have been “good” with my food, I am now entitled to a reward.

**Abstinence is received, not achieved:** it is always about surrender, never about struggle.

**Abstinence is a collaborative effort:** we can do together what we could never do alone.

Looking beyond the “gift” of abstinence (aka **Step Two**): remembering to look beyond the gift of abstinence to the Giver of the gift, and saying many times throughout the day (especially when passing my binge foods) “Thank you, Thank you, Thank You, God.”

**Giving is the proof** of having: remembering that maintaining my abstinence depends on my sharing it with others. This accomplishes three things:

- Makes me aware more than otherwise possible, that I have indeed received a very special gift, and one that can be shared, and
- Removes any fear that it will be taken away.
- Unless you share it, nothing really exists.

**If I rush, I lose:** being willing to go to any lengths not to rush when I eat. This requires giving a very high priority to the time I set aside for meals, and sitting down. Eating is not a minor matter that I squeeze into a very busy schedule.

**Plan-of-eating:** No overeating, undereating, dieting, restricting, purging. No impulsive, compulsive, spontaneous, or random eating.

**I eat what I like, I like what I eat, I do not eat compulsively.**

*Pat H., Missoula, Montana*

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The Principle that's made the most difference to me is being rigorously honest. It's not my default and I don't do it perfectly but definitely that is the Principle that's made a beautiful and meaningful big difference. *Laurie M., Big Sky Intergroup*



## FACING A DIFFICULT YEAR...

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For me, not isolating during difficult times is essential. But here we are with stay at home orders, social distancing and inability to gather as a group. Working my program becomes more difficult when people are not readily available to me.

So I have hopped on the Zoom bandwagon and attended more meetings a week than I ever have in my life, including meetings out of my area. I talk to my sponsor as needed, and sometimes that means a Zoom call. I do not take my husband's physical touch for granted and when I need to be touched, I ask for what I need. I am diligent in keeping up with my 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> Steps daily and when a negative thought enters my mind, I think about who I can reach out to or what service I can do. Prayer and meditation seem even more essential.

And, with all of this, I still sometimes fail to be loving and generous and I must practice self-acceptance, as I am just another bozo on the bus doing the best that I can, remembering that God loves me just the way I am.

*Annie H., Peninsula Intergroup*

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Thank HP for Zoom! I have learned how to be useful on Zoom and to be of service. I treasure my Zoom meetings as I do not feel so all alone. I thank HP that this pandemic hit us at this time in history when these technological means of connecting are available to us. I think OA will be forever changed, and for the better, by all of us being forced to make this leap into connecting in new ways and building our comfort in it. *Pat O'C, Oregon Intergroup*

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### Thoughts from a *Big Sky Intergroup Coffee Gathering*

One gal commented that she was trying to think about something useful she could do for others while at home during Covid. She felt her Higher Power giving her an intuitive thought of writing little notes to those she loved. So, every morning she wrote a letter to her friends in and out of OA, and to her family members. She wanted to let them know what she appreciated about them in her life, and the qualities in them that she loved. Every morning, writing a note was part of her morning recovery routine. She ended up writing 44 notes in all. What it did for her recovery, and the comments she received from those on the receiving end, was priceless!



I think it's most important to give program more time. If I normally do 15 minutes, do 20. Just a few more minutes to pray/meditate/journal/reflect—whatever—stay in program just a few more minutes at least. More time, more better. Use as many tools as possible every day. We should do that on a regular basis, but it's even more important through a trial.

More intentional self-care is also important. Whether it is a long bath, a walk, or just sitting in the sun listening to the birds, it helps. Reach out to more fellows. We're all having a tough time - reaching out for ourselves often truly saves another.

*Laurie M., Big Sky Intergroup*



*Thank you to all who shared their experience,  
strength and hope for the “special focus” section of  
our 2020 Region One Assembly Binder!*