



Fall Newsletter 2020

Ohio Valley Intergroup

Daily Meditation By Zach R.

"When we make a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of the God of our understanding, we begin to notice signs of growth and transition, evidence that the program is working."
SAA Big Green Book

I love the concept of gardening. Having been raised on a very large farm, gardening was not just a hobby, but a way of life. The small start of a plant, the patience and faith needed to tend to the project, and the nurture and care provided create a very powerful transformation with which I have always been fascinated. There is no better feeling than to see the first seedling or bud burst forth after careful care and diligence.

Any good gardener, however, will admit this does not happen easily. Hard soil that is not receptive to the seed, weeds, and rocks that slow growth, and poor growing conditions all can impede the process.

Step three tells us that, like these fragile seeds, our sobriety and journey in the program cannot be left unattended. If we expect to enjoy the signs of growth promised to us in step three, the same patience, faith, and nurturing is indeed necessary to combat the seemingly endless triggers, stresses, and poor conditions the world has to offer us. Connecting to our higher power, reaching out to friends and accountability partners, and utilizing the guidance of our sponsor will allow for each of us to “ground” ourselves and begin the process of healing – and that is truly a beautiful thing.

Today we commit to the work necessary to enjoy the fruits our Higher Power and the program promises us.

Upcoming Events:

- Ohio Valley Intergroup Virtual Fall Seminars Zoom ID: 832 4973 0184
 - **November 7th:** 12th Tradition and Why Anonymity is Not What You Think. Presented by Rich N.
 - **December 5th:** Help! My Sponsee is “Acting In!”. Presented by Deb W.
- Indiana Intergroup of SAA Fall Retreat: Connecting In Recovery
 - **October 17th:** If interested in being part of this virtual retreat you will still need to fill out a registration form. An e-mail address will be required to attend the sessions. The cost is still \$5 (\$8 for online form). Register at “**Indiana-saa.org**” News and events tab. To ensure anonymity and confidentiality, only those who have registered will receive the log-in details.

Meeting During the Pandemic: Winter is Coming.

The past few months of summer have allowed us all to emerge from our isolation and rejoin society. However, the possibility of another spike in COVID-19 during the winter has probably crossed your mind. It's no secret that meeting online or by phone just isn't the same. Many of us are struggling to attend tele-meetings and work the steps consistently. At the same time, we know that failure to do so is like taking that first step onto a slippery slope. Here are some gentle suggestions, both for group and individual health during this time:

- **Returning to tele-meetings:** I attended my first phone meetings back in 2016. I hated it. There was very little structure on the calls, and it caused me so much anxiety. While Central Ohio has learned to adapt very successfully, if you or someone in your group can relate to the anxiety of tele-meetings, then here are some things to consider:
 - Group consciences – Communication is key. Each meeting is autonomous, so if your group wants/needs to switch things up, then go for it. Make the tele-meetings work for you (you know, in keeping with the 12 Traditions and whatnot).
 - Meeting formats – Popcorning around the call can be chaotic. If your group would like more structure, consider sharing in a specific order. This will eliminate talking over each other, especially if you are on a phone meeting and can't see the other members.
 - Literature/Materials – Make sure you are stocked up on literature. If you are a literature meeting, does everyone in your group have access to the literature? Does a dedicated trusted servant have newcomer packets for those that join during the absence of an in-person meeting? Part of carrying the message is keeping newcomers long enough for them to hear the message.
 - Up to date contact info on website and for the meeting (both ISO and OVIG) – If you have a zoom link or call-in number, double check that it is correctly posted on the

websites. Additionally, encourage your secretary and treasurer to continue maintaining their respective servant leadership roles by updating the phone list, temporary sponsor list, and creating an electronic method for the 7th tradition.

- **Working the program:** Having a healthy meeting requires having committed members. On an individual level, here are some questions to ask yourself if you find you are stagnant or falling away from the program:
 - Do you have a sponsor? – Find someone who will keep you accountable
 - Are you a sponsor? – Best way to stick with the program is walking someone else through it.
 - Are you working the steps? – If your group is short on sponsors, maybe start a small group, or buddy up with someone. No one recovers alone. *This also may lead to small groups who can attend tele-meetings together!*
 - Are you using the tools of the program? – If your program is going stale, try something new. Which tools can you incorporate into your program? (The 12 Steps, Sponsorship, Meetings, Literature, The 3 Circles, Telephone, The First Step, Friendship, Prayer, Meditation, Writing, Rigorous Honesty. Read the *Tools of Recovery* pamphlet for an in depth look at all the tools.)

It is easy to become complacent about the program when we don't have a physical meeting to attend. It's even easier to stop reaching out to others when we don't see them on a weekly basis – out of sight, out of mind, right? Nevertheless, it is possible to have a fully functional tele-meeting that fosters real connection. Honesty, vulnerability, and intimacy are the fruits of intentional relationships, not personalities, chemistry, or chance. So, if we maintain our commitment to the program and to each other, we can have healthy meetings and stay sober, come what may with the pandemic.