

OA Desert Recovery

Tool: SERVICE

September 2024 | Issue 9



By Rhonda S

I remember the first time I heard anything about doing service. Marilyn said, "Anyone who does service gets back hundred-fold." I couldn't imagine why everyone did not raise his or her hand. It had nothing to do with what I was going to give to others but what I was going to get out of this.

I took the key commitment. That seemed easy to do. I had to go to meetings in all kinds of weather because I had to open the door for the meeting to happen. It was not easy to do this commitment but what I learned was to talk to everyone when they entered the room. That meeting became my home group because I was doing service. I felt part of and not separate.

I have done service for a long time, and I always get a feeling of gratitude for what I can give to others. I also found out that I can't give to others unless they ask for what I have. I also love that I can do service wherever I am.

I used to hold doors open for people and when they did not thank me, I would say, "You're welcome" in a sarcastic way. I heard at a meeting that if I do service I don't need to get a thank you. I am doing it to be thoughtful and kind. What an amazing concept! I will always be grateful to Marilyn for her pitch for service. She was absolutely correct.

By Becki B

I was that lonely person, taking a first step through the door, not sure this OA thing would work, but terrified it wouldn't. And, someone reached out a hand to say hello, gave a name, a smile. So, this frightened person dared to come all the way in and stay to listen.

Showing up at meetings, talking to other OAs, sharing my experience, strength, and hope, all that is service. Service has many rewards. A service position keeps me coming back. Being a responsible member helps my sense of worth. Joining with others in decisions makes me feel a part of, and necessary. Without being aware, communications break my isolation.

How much is that service position worth? My health concerns lessen – my sanity becomes apparent – so much camaraderie to enjoy – spiritual growth, peace, comfort, guidance. The rewards of service keep giving and giving. Every time I do inventory, I look at the rewards of my defects. I need to look at the rewards of my positive actions too. Yes, service makes me feel good about myself.

With a service position, there are published duties and expectations. It is best to match one's talents with these duties. But, also, the spirit of rotation lets us savor service as an opportunity in growth, humility (the good kind), and fun.

“The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in service to others.” (Mahatma Ghandi)

By Michelle S

My first sponsor encouraged me to say “yes” to service whenever I could, and to be honest, in the beginning, I said “yes” to everything because it would have been too easy to rationalize why I could not do something. I said yes to putting out chairs and literature, putting away chairs and literature, leading meetings, and handing out tokens.

Once I had a little abstinence under my belt, my sponsor suggested I start reaching out to newcomers (even when I sometimes still felt like one). When I finished making amends, I was nudged to start sponsoring. My sponsor helped me celebrate my first year of absence by telling me I could look at a bigger role, like attending group conscience meetings, taking a key, and being treasurer. I liked giving service and it kept coming back.

Then my intrepid sponsor pushed me towards serving at the Intergroup level - first as a group representative, then as the newsletter chair, and Twelfth Step Within chair. Even during Covid, when there were no face-to-face meetings, I found ways that I could give service.

When I moved away almost three years, though, I missed giving service. There are no in-person meetings in Mississippi and no consistent online meetings. I tried to give service in other ways, like still writing articles for the Southern AZ OA newsletter, taking phone calls, being a speaker, and working with my sponsees.

Then about six months ago, I met people from the southern Louisiana OA groups. One of those weekly telephone meetings became my new home meeting and, somehow, I found myself as a speaker at an event. That quickly morphed into me agreeing to be the vice chair of the COLA IG, which is not what I was expecting because the vice chair here not only helps run the meetings, but they are also responsible for the website and the newsletter, too! It’s a lot, but I love to help and give back what I was freely given.

This past month, I was elected to be our Region 8 Representative, which is a new level of service for me. I am both nervous and excited but understand that service is a vital part of recovery for me.

By Judy G

I joined OA early on but was a revolving door member. There was always a “good reason” for why I had to drop out...starting a new business was one example: “I can’t commit myself to both OA and a new business”. The decision to drop out was always unwise. My disease never took a holiday! About ten years ago, I decided to come back for good, no matter what! I decided to immerse myself in program as a defense against making another bad decision to leave. Service was the answer. If I am committed to “showing up,” I believe it sends a message to others that persistence pays dividends. Any time I have provided service, the pay-off has been remarkable: abstinence, new friends, a sense of self-worth, and more. Yes, service keeps me here and I am grateful!

By Patti S

How important is service? Omigosh, just think about it. Service is so important in this miraculous OA program, to our Higher Power. It comes in many forms! Starting a meeting, setting up, sponsorships, sharing our experience strength and hope, making phone calls, introducing ourselves to newcomers, Websites, Conventions, whew, the list is extensive! I know for me, sometimes just smiling at a meeting, or on Zoom, can be the ultimate form of service. Why? Because it works, it really does! Service is just one of the many joys of recovery.



By Jody M

I am a grateful, recovering compulsive overeater and food addict...recovered from a seemingly hopeless state of mind & body by the power & grace of God through working and living this program one day at a time, one meal at a time. I keep an attitude of gratitude with God's help and I'm abstinent today, Yay! Thank You God, Amen!

The topic of Service is especially dear to me; it is one of our beloved tools. Any service I can do gets me out of my disease of "self" and allows me to think of others and of how I can be of help to them. "I can't keep it unless I give it away" and every act of service—such as sharing or chairing a meeting--solidifies my recovery. Making outreach calls, sending emails or texts blesses me beyond measure. Sharing encouraging words of gratitude or setting up meetings is much needed service. Being an Intergroup rep serves both you and the meeting you represent. Service helps us stay in the middle of the herd, safe, loved and protected. Prayer is a special service for all involved—You can never pray too many prayers! Loving newcomers until they can love themselves brings much needed hope to us all. Keep coming back; it's a "we" program and it works if you work it...not giving up before the miracle! Thanks for allowing me to be of service!



Call someone. Reaching out
is SERVICE you can do.

By Brenda W

Service has brought me a sense of community since joining OA. During my initial three years, it was all I could do to attend one meeting per week and try to work the program, much less help others. However, the past two years have changed significantly for me. I've recently realized that I have become a bigger part of our community by participating in a more active way. I have grown and become a better version of myself. Making new friends, seeing solid examples of strength, hope and wisdom from members and sponsors, and helping out have given me benefits that I hadn't anticipated before joining OA.

How can doing service be all of these magical things? When we are present and actively assisting others, it brings us enlightenment and hope. I didn't have a lot of hope when I was doing the minimum, but as I practice the program with others, my serenity has increased significantly. Thank you, OA and HP. Give it a try - it works!



By Joy V'M

Back when I first came back to OA in 2009, my idea of service was showing up on time for a meeting and then putting away a few of the chairs at the end of the hour. I remember the meeting leader would refer to business meetings, but I was always in a hurry – I was working full-time, I was teaching full-time, I was a single mom, and I didn't have a moment to spare. Little did I know of the benefit of service to the one serving. How my life has changed with sponsorship, Intergroup work, region representation, and serving as a delegate at the World Service Business Conference! I've met people beyond my local circle of friends, and the impact they have had on my life, my program, and my abstinence has been beyond measure! By serving, I have a stronger program and a much better life!

Editor's Note: The focus for the October newsletter will be the OA slogan, "Let go and let God!" Your submissions will be gratefully received when you send an email by October 15th to newsletter@oasouthernaz.org. ~Judy

Sponsored by *Southern Arizona Intergroup of Overeaters Anonymous*
WEBSITE: oasouthernaz.org. EMAIL: info@oasouthernaz.org