

Dayton Area Intergroup
Overeaters Anonymous
P.O. Box 1919
Dayton OH 45401-1919

CONTACT INFORMATION

Intergroup Officers

Chair

Becky C. 937/299-1732

Vice-Chair

vacant

Secretary

Linda S. 937/832-3148

Treasurer

vacant

Region V Representative

vacant

Newsletter Editor

Linda S. 937/832-3148

SanctuaryEditor@aol.com

International

www.oa.org

Region V

www.region5oa.org

Dayton Area Intergroup

www.region5oa.org/dayton

937/252-6766

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Faith and Courage

Over 2005, *The Sanctuary* is featuring the 12 Principles of OA as they align with the 12 Steps. This month, we are considering the 3rd and 4th Principles, Faith and Courage.

Step 3: Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.

The 3rd Principle is FAITH. By turning our will and our lives over to a greater power, we are seeking guidance and strength from a source outside ourselves. That source can be any power or set of beliefs that can support us in our recovery.

Sometimes this can mean a leap of faith. The term "leap of faith" literally means to plunge forth into the unknown, trusting that what we need will be there for us.

In the movie *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid*, there is a well-known scene in which the two heroes are chased by a gun-slinging mob to the edge of a cliff with raging rapids below. Sundance, afraid that he cannot swim, wants to shoot it out with the posse, but Butch persuades him to leap.

In many ways, we are like Sundance when we come to Step Three of the program. We are hounded by our obsessions but, being afraid of the unknown, we fight to return to what we have trusted in the past – our willpower – even though it has failed us repeatedly. The 3rd Principle, Faith, tells us that help will be there if we surrender our will and trust in a Higher Power.

It has been said that faith is like the bird that sings long before the sun rises. At this time of year, when the winter darkness still shrouds the early morning, we can sometimes hear birds chirping, faithfully preparing for the spring. If they can trust, maybe we can too.

Step 4: Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.

The 4th Principle, COURAGE, asks us to honestly look into our hearts in order to identify and understand the flawed beliefs and wrong behaviors that have shaped our lives. For some, this is a painful experience. But, like the pain of childbirth, it is necessary to have the courage to take this step so that we can move forward in our journey.

Courage leads us to face life honestly so that we can strengthen ourselves against pain and despair rather than become overwhelmed by it. Courage makes the 4th Step possible.

