

The pieces I was missing

I sought out OA because I struggle with compulsive eating, particularly during stressful periods, and I had just entered such a period by becoming a caretaker for my gravely ill father.

I had heard of 12-step groups and searched online to find one, but I didn't really know what it was. I started by identifying a few different types of meetings to try, including Traditional, Men's, LGBT, and Secular. I attended my first few meetings and heard various bible verses and religious references. I had the impression that these were religious gatherings, which I found surprising and distracting. I immediately felt more relaxed in the secular meetings. I related to participants' shares and felt a sense of connection and camaraderie that was moving.

Over the following weeks and months, I availed myself of the various tools and programs offered through secular OA, including an 8-week workshop on building a personal program of recovery. I developed my action plan, and refined my food plan. I was invited into a recovery circle, and found an accountability buddy. I've developed a strong rapport with some members and I've found a sense of connection with a diverse set of people.

I had spent years learning about nutrition and making incremental habit changes, but I feel that the community, support, and insight I find in secular OA are the pieces I was missing to maintain a stable program of intentional eating.

I have been eating more consistently and intentionally during the past year than ever before in my life. My eating is not perfect and I don't have the illusion that it will be at all times, but I feel so much more supported now.

I am grateful that secular OA exists because I don't imagine having stayed in OA for long otherwise.

- David I