

July 5, 2018 – Region One Conference Call - FOCUS MENTORING IN OA SERVICE & AVOIDING SERVICE BURNOUT

Members were asked to share their experience, strength and hope on the following questions:

1. What got me involved in OA service, and what is the most fun I've ever had in service?
2. How can those in service positions maintain balance and enjoy the service they are giving?
3. How can I assist those giving service in my meeting, intergroup, region and OA as a whole?

Here is a summary of their shares:

1. When I came into OA four years ago, I saw an example in others who were doing service. They seemed to have strong programs, and that made service very appealing to me.
2. I was asked to do something, and it was hard to say no! That got me in the door and started with service.
3. What got me involved? My first service at intergroup was event coordinator, which I took because I wanted events. At first I said no because the job description was very intimidating, but the intergroup chair invited me to “write my own description” and email it to her. I did, and she accepted what I offered. That was my first intergroup position, and from there it seemed I learned more all the time and service took on a life of its own. I really enjoyed the job of event coordinator because I like things that are concrete -- I put in time helping a workshop happen, and then got to see it help people. That felt good to me! The most fun I've ever had in service? I could name a lot of things, but helping create a funny, space-themed skit for our 2013 Convention was a total blast!
4. Balance has been important in my; service. Sometimes I will say no. Some of us have always heard that when you're asked to do something, you should say yes, but sometimes I will say no. Service does play an important role in my recovery, but I need to honestly look at how my recovery is going, and part of that recovery is having balance. There is a lot of joy in service, but not if I am consistently feeling overwhelmed. What energizes me about in service is getting to play any part in assisting others in becoming happy, joyous and free. And to see the light bulb turn on when people are beginning to recover and their lives are being transformed.
5. A phrase I've heard is “stick with the winners.” I really like to be around people who have what I want, and often I find that those people involved in service. Service is a good way for me to connect one-on-one with people while doing service tasks. This is helpful. Co-chairing convention is the most fun I've had in service – getting to know people in service has been really important to me.
6. For years, I was a person who said yes to everything, and I had to learn to say no sometimes. But, I've learned a better way to avoid burnout, and that is by taking service positions for a specific length of time. Too many of us, especially at the meeting level, will go on being secretary, treasurer, or intergroup rep year after year. We step down when someone comes forward to take the job.



I've found that by stepping down, people do step up. If I keep doing the job, it can take a long time for someone to step forward.

7. I'm in a small intergroup, where we basically rotate positions among five people. It's difficult to avoid service! It became necessary for me to say no, and for several years we didn't have a full board. One thing I've had to do for myself to maintain balance is to take on no more than one service position at any one time. If you're not doing service at all, YES is the answer, but if you are already doing service, it's important to maintain balance.
8. If someone hadn't *asked* me to do service, I wouldn't have started doing service.
9. I discovered recently that I had replaced my spiritual program with a service program. I felt like I was doing the "program" because I was doing "service." I am challenging myself to not try to find my worth in volunteering for everything so that people will "like" me. I'm learning boundaries, choosing how to spend my time, and checking my motives before taking on new service.
10. Maintaining balance is difficult for me. I have a million great ideas and limited capacity. It's easy for me to get excited about new projects, but better for me to be focused. When I come up with a new, great idea, it might be better for me to see if there is someone else who is interested in taking on that project. I can also struggle with not asking for help. I'm capable of a lot, but that doesn't mean I shouldn't be asking for help. I should be sharing service with others. Service can be broken down into pieces that can be shared with others. That helps me, and it helps another person get involved.
11. Procrastination can make it so I don't enjoy my service. I need to work my program around this, and ask for help. "Slow and steady" helps me maintain balance in service and helps me enjoy what I'm doing.
12. A lot depends on my attitude, in service as well as the rest of life. I'm grateful to OA and want to give back, but I can get busy and crabby sometimes. I can work my program around my involvement in OA service. What attitude am I bringing to my service?
13. I was recently feeling that I was "spread too thin." I had more than one service position, and knew I should give up something. I realized that pieces of one service really fed my soul. I needed to hold on to that service and let go of the other. It felt good to make that decision based on what is best for me.
14. I've held many different service positions over the years. I believe lots of OAers can do positions they aren't sure they can do, and I've spent a lot of time over the years mentoring people so that they can see they can do particular jobs.
15. It's important to know when to let go. Sometimes it's ok to leave a position open. Sometimes we are surprised that people *will* step up and help.
16. I have to remind myself that I alone am not running the show. Sometimes I get a wild notation that if I don't do something, nothing's gonna happen! But my Higher Power is always there, working with me. That means to me that if it's my HP's will that a meeting continue after I've stopped a particular service, then it will continue. If it doesn't, that's my HP's will. It's been helpful for me to let go of the results in OA service.
17. Why I got into OA service? I wanted to know how OA worked, and to be around committed members.
18. Balance? I keep reevaluating my priorities. When I feel burdened or resentful, I think of some way to re-balance my tasks.

19. How to help others in service? I watch for overworked members and support them if they tell me they can't keep up. I ensure members know what is expected of their role, especially in terms of time, and get help for them wherever possible. I encourage members who are fearful of service to try it out in "baby steps."

Thank you, everyone, for your shares on this topic!

More ideas on SERVICE??? Please email me at chairr1@gmail.com. I would love to hear from you, and I want to collect shares on this topic to use as a resource in Region one.

Please let me know if there is a topic you would like to hear about on future conference calls.