

A Serving of Hope

Volume 5 Issue 11

Oregon Intergroup of Overeaters Anonymous

November 2016

MIRACLES

A poem from a local member of OA

Miracles do not come
With sounding drum
Or flash of light,
Or choirs angelic.

But when I realize
That I have made a journey that
defies
My best efforts to pretend
That I foresaw the end
Or knew, before beginning,
Where I'd be lead.

Then it is, I must confess,
That I witless have gone
Not hearing siren song
And giving all followed willfully
But simply walking through a day
I came at last to realize
That where I was and where I've
been
Are both so far beyond my ken
That it would be blasphemy
For me to claim the credit.

Then I see that unbeknownst to me
I have had my serendipity.
My sweet encounter with a plan
So grand in its design
That I could only claim to be
Lead by a power I could not see,
But surely know it now to be
Greater than all of mine

~Jerry A., Portland

What is the H.O.W. Concept all About?

Several times recently someone has asked me about the role of H.O.W. Concept meetings in OA. How do they fit into the fabric of OA? Is the HOW way as tough and hard-nosed as the rumors say? Since there are four H.O.W. Concept groups meeting in the greater Portland area, these are pertinent questions.

All who desire to quit eating compulsively are welcome at all HOW meetings, whether or not they choose to follow the HOW program, since it uses the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of OA as well as other OA and AA literature, just as all OA meetings do.

H.O.W. stands for Honesty, Open-mindedness, and Willingness, key concepts discussed in OA/AA literature. Although these ideas are woven throughout the OA program, HOW focuses on them more. HOW Concept meetings are for those of us who feel we need a more structured approach to recovery.

~Continued on page 3.

Upcoming Events

November 12: Action Plan Workshop for the holidays, 9 AM to 12:00 PM, Westside Church of Christ, 5525 SW Menlo Drive, Beaverton. Bring your own beverage and suggested \$5 donation. Contact Janet at 503-747-5759 or Nancy at nancyhawk92@gmail.com.

November 24: 1:00 to 4:00 PM, Thanksgiving Open House Potluck at MerleAnn's house, 4635 NE 33rd Avenue, Portland, OR 97211. Call MerleAnn at (503) 281-8947 with questions.

December 1: Monthly speakers meeting, 7:00PM-8:30PM, at Girl Scouts, 9620 SW Barbur Blvd., Portland. Contact Cherish at 503 453-0212.

December 12: 10:30 AM to 12:30 PM 12th Step Within Workshop at the Beaverton Library. Contact Jan E. at 12thstepwithin@oregon-aa.org.

December 14: Oregon Intergroup Meeting, 7:00 to 8:30pm, at Girl Scouts, 9620 SW Barbur Blvd., Portland. Everyone is encouraged to attend.

December 25: 1:00 to 5:00 PM, Christmas Day Gathering Potluck at MerleAnn's house, 4635 NE 33rd Avenue, Portland, OR 97211. Call MerleAnn at (503) 281-8947 with questions.

Thoughts on the 11th Step

Step 11

I was one of those people who couldn't hear the "God" talk when I first came to program. I heard it, I just couldn't process it. It either made me very confused or, at times, downright hostile. This was a cult, I was sure.

It's funny what time and the Twelve Steps will do for a person if they only give them half a chance.

Today, I can say without a doubt that I have a Higher Power and that I gladly and willingly give my life over to it, one day at a time.

I consider it the greatest gift program has given me--my Higher Power and the relationship I have with it now. It's not a conventional relationship by any means, and that's okay. Like any relationship it has its ups and downs, its good days and bad, but I wouldn't trade it for the world. My life depends on it.

Learning how to communicate with my Higher Power has been a lesson in patience. I am trying to patiently learn how to talk to my Higher Power, but, more importantly, how to listen to it, too. I listen for the "voice" of my Higher Power through the chaos that is in my head.

The chaos of my disease is very loud, insistent and demands to be listened to. My Higher Power's voice is still quiet and unassuming, but I know that the more I become adept at listening and following my Higher Power's plans that its voice will crowd out the jumble and chaos of this disease. I practice this by prayer (talking to my Higher Power) and meditation (listening to my Higher Power).

I have found, over the years, that I don't need anything fancy to achieve this, I just simply have to do it.

I'm a perfectionist. I know, hard to believe for a compulsive eater, but it's true. Because of this, I have a tendency to want to do the Steps perfectly, including Step 11, but I am learning there is no such experience.

I am a perfectly imperfect human being trying my best to have a spiritual experience. There are no right or wrongs, no dos or don'ts. I simply talk, listen, and do my best to follow.

~Christina, Portland

Knowing Peace

The 11th step centers around connecting with my Higher Power. I am supposed to use prayer and meditation to do that. One of many things I love about the 12 Step program is that nowhere in the 12 Steps does it say how one *has* to do things. Since there is no way to do this wrong except NOT to do it, I have embarked in a variety of ways to feel connected.

Prayer, for me, includes frequent thank yous to my HP through the day. When something beautiful catches my eye, my nose, or ear, I try to appreciate it as a gift from HP. Before OA, I wasn't stopping to smell the roses very often, if you know what I mean.

At night, before OA, I would awaken many times (those dreaded "hot flashes"). I would stare for what felt like hours at the dark ceiling recounting my horrible eating binges, my misery with my weight and life. Now when I awaken in the night, I do a twofer--I deep breathe and, on my exhale, I think "thank you HP"--so prayer and meditation. As a wonderful bonus, I am usually back asleep in just a few breaths. When I close my eyes at bedtime, I say two prayers from my early childhood that I adapted for my life today. I spent from the time I was 4 or 5 years old saying these prayers until sometime in my 20's. It feels peaceful to have them back again in my life in a loving form.

My early morning routine is to enjoy a cuppa coffee, either out on the front balcony in the summer or sitting by the fire in the living room in the colder months, while I read program literature and write in my journal. Once my husband gets home from his Boot Camp exercise class, he joins me.

I decided to start adding meditation to my morning routine, and I invited my husband to join me *if he wished*. He knew he didn't *have to*, either. But he does join me most days. We usually treat ourselves to meditation four days a week now. We have both come to value it. It is so relaxing and calming that I wonder why I resisted it for so long. Who knew Step 11 would add yet another dimension of serenity to my life? ~Pat, Portland

ALL ABOUT OA H.O.W.

~Continued from the front page.

To relate my personal experience: about five years ago, I came into these rooms with a friend and ended up at a HOW meeting. Since it was my first OA meeting for about 30 years, it didn't seem unusual to me. They read the steps and "How it Worked," the tools, and shared. As they talked, it seemed like a very tough program, so much so, that I went home after one meeting and had a nightmare about it. The longer I stayed and attended HOW meetings, the more I realized I had nothing to fear.

Since the material read at the HOW meetings urged us to attend at least 3 meetings a week, I began attending other OA meetings in the area. Some were HOW concept; some were regular OA. Although I began to see myself in the OA 12 & 12 readings, find healing in the Serenity Prayer, and quit binging every night, I wasn't working the steps or finding complete abstinence. After a while of making no progress, I realized I needed more structure to help me learn discipline and become abstinent.

At that time, although there were many HOW sponsors, they all seemed to be unavailable. When one did become available, I got up enough courage to ask her to sponsor me. Together we worked out a food plan that suited what my health professional advised. We began working the steps on a daily basis.

The path through the steps seemed easier to me since she figuratively spoon-fed the material to me. Each day I called her with my food plan for the day, and she gave me one question to write about. Knowing that she was expecting my call made it easier to pick up the phone and call. Then branching out to call others, as we are encouraged to do, wasn't so scary. Also, the weight began coming off.

How has OA saved your life? Share your story of recovery. Email your submission to newsletter@oregon-oa.com

It took me over a month to finish the first three steps, after which we held a celebration (called "step up") ceremony at our meeting. There my sponsor presented me with a coin and a sponsor's manual, and encouraged me to begin sponsoring. The thought of sponsoring intimidated me, but after attending a sponsoring workshop which included a "meet and greet" time with potential sponsees, I felt more comfortable with the idea and began sponsoring.

Working as a sponsor with other compulsive eaters like me has strengthened my program and keeps me continually learning about myself, about others, and about living in the solution. It continually shows me that I can't do it myself, but "together and with our Higher Power, I can do what I could never do alone."

~Roseanne, Portland

The views expressed are of the person who wrote them and do not represent OA as a whole. Take what you like and leave the rest. Oregon Intergroup serves meetings from Longview to Tillamook, Salem to Portland, Silverton to Hood River, and includes Vancouver and the surrounding area. Find us online at oregon-oa.org or call (971) 317-6343.

"Today I can choose to go through problems rather than avoid them, seeing them as opportunities for growth. I recognize the world and the people in it as conduits through which my Higher Power contacts me."

*~From Abstinence, Second Edition,
p. 121*

Notes from the OA Calgary 2016 Assembly and Convention

At the Calgary Region 1 Assembly, my first, I was all eyes and ears. When we sat down to focus on what we could do to help us all in carrying the message to others who still suffer, it was an awesome experience. The board members worked hard not to waste our short, precious time together, yet never lost sight of our purpose. One powerful moment occurred when a discussion became a little heated; someone stepped to the mike and asked if we could pause to say the Serenity Prayer. That diffused the situation, and moved me to tears.

Although we discussed many serious topics, we still had a lot of fun during the sessions when we determined our focus for the coming year-- "Inspire Recovery"--and chose which Project Team we wanted to work with to accomplish it.

All day Saturday the convention ran one-hour workshops, four each hour, from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., with time out for lunch. Such a variation of topics to choose from to encourage and help us in our recovery! I was privileged to be asked to do a presentation on Steps 4 and 5. It was a great experience interacting with a group of OA members, ranging from newcomers to the very seasoned, all working together on our common solution.

The keynote speaker spoke three times. Each time he focused on a different aspect of recovery--physical, emotional, and spiritual. An engaging, fun-loving fellow with nine years of recovery and a weight loss of about 150 pounds, he was honest, articulate, and passionate about his topic. His approach included something that would be helpful no matter if one was brand new or had many years in program.

I am so glad I got to go that I'm already thinking about attending the next convention October 2017 in Seattle.

~Roseanne, Portland

Send a Rep to Intergroup!

Do you want to help strengthen OA in your area and throughout Oregon? Make sure your voice is heard by sending an Intergroup Rep to your monthly Oregon Intergroup meeting. Give your members an opportunity to serve and help all of us benefit from a strong and diverse OA organization. OIG meets the second Wednesday of every month at the Girls Scouts building, 9620 SW Barbur Blvd, Portland, OR 97219.

Young People's Phone List

Oregon Intergroup is assembling a contact list for young people in OA. If you came into program at age 30 or younger and would like to offer your experience, strength, and hope to a young person in our program, please send your contact information to youngpeople@oregon-oa.org. Include your name, phone number, email address, and the age you were when you came into OA. WSO defines a young person as someone who is 30 years or younger. If you came into program when you were older than 30 years old and would also like to be a resource to the younger members of our fellowship, you are also welcome to add your name to the young people's phone list.

Region 1 Needs Virtual Sponsors!

The Virtual Sponsorship Committee is in urgent need of more sponsors. Virtual sponsorship is a great way to get your foot in the door if your sponsor says that you're ready to start sponsoring yourself, but you are a little unsure.

This is a great way to meet people from across the region! Many people still live in areas where OA is new and not well established, so being able to bring your recovery to someone who is struggling is an amazing gift! It will enhance your recovery and strengthen the program as a whole. Your anonymity will be respected at all times. Please consider virtual sponsorship today! To apply, go to <http://www.oaregion1.org/sponsor-application.html>.