

A Serving of Hope

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Oregon Intergroup of Overeaters Anonymous

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An Action Plan—A Plan for Living

“An action plan is the process of identifying and implementing attainable actions, both daily and long-term, that are necessary to support our individual abstinence and emotional, spiritual and physical recovery. While the plan is ours, tailored to our own recovery process, most of us find it important to work with a sponsor, fellow OA member and/or appropriate professional to help us create it. This tool, like our plan of eating, may vary widely among members and may need to be adjusted as we progress in our recovery.”

~From The Nine Tools of OA

This edition of the newsletter talks a lot about actions we can take to recover from our compulsive eating behaviors. One author uses prayer and meditation. Another author finds something to feel joy and delight over each day. Another reminds herself of Steps One through Three to reassure herself that she is not alone.

An important part of my action plan reminds me to be honest. I must be honest about the food I am about to eat. If I am being honest, is this food part of my food plan for today? If it is not, I do not eat it. After all, there is no lying to my HP. I am only fooling—and harming—myself with dishonesty.

So part of my action plan is to ask myself if I am being honest. And honestly—it has helped me so much!

~Ed.

Prayer, Meditation, Acceptance, Gratitude, and a Plan for Living Which Works

I woke up this morning feeling depressed and a little bit scared. I broke my foot six months ago and had surgery on it two weeks ago because it wasn't healing without intervention. I have been unable to do my normal daily activities for six months without pain and have been confined to a wheelchair for the last two weeks.

I actually have many things to feel grateful for. A dear OA friend drove far out of her way to take me to a meeting yesterday and helped me get around in my wheelchair. I'm blessed in that my spouse is the primary income earner in our family and not being able to work has not resulted in the inability to pay our bills. For that matter, I have pretty darned good employer-based health insurance to help pay for the medical care.

Many, many things to be grateful for—the most important being that I became abstinent at the Twin Rocks Retreat in March and have been granted the gift of remaining abstinent during this time. For whatever reason, however, I woke up this morning and could not talk myself into serenity and was sad and fearful. Huh, I can't change my feelings through self will any more than I can stop eating compulsively.

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Upcoming Events

August 19: Sponsorship workshop at Girl Scouts, 9620 SW Barbur Blvd., Portland.

September 2: Monthly speakers meeting, 7:00 to 8:30 PM, at Girl Scouts, 9620 SW Barbur Blvd., Portland. To attend by phone, call 641-715-3836, PIN 282586. Contact June at 503-452-3955.

September 13: Oregon Intergroup Meeting, 7:00 to 8:30 PM, at Girl Scouts, 9620 SW Barbur Blvd., Portland. Everyone is encouraged to attend.

October 1: Abstinence and a Plan of Eating Workshop, 1:00 to 4:00 PM, in Conference Rooms C and D at Legacy Salmon Creek Medical Center, Vancouver, WA, on the third floor of the main hospital building. Easy access from both I-5 and I-205. \$5 suggested donation, registration starts at 12:30 PM. Contact Karin at Karin.k.oe@gmail.com or text or call Lori at 360-921-9558 with questions.

October 13-15: Region One Convention at the Hilton Doubletree Suites in Seattle, Washington. Visit the OA Region One website or send questions to Region1.Convention@gmail.com.

How have prayer and meditation helped me find the language of my heart?

~an answer to a For Today question of the day~

Prayer and meditation help me to empty my heart and mind of "me" ...
...my self-centeredness.
...my desires and wants.
...the things and the feelings that I think I need and want.

Prayer and meditation allow me to open my heart and mind to trust that there is something better for me, better than I can imagine.

Prayer and meditation help me to open my heart and be able to say "I can" instead of "I can't." They help me focus on what is possible or what I can do in any given moment that I normally would give up on.

Prayer and meditation help me to pause and be in tune with my heart as well as my higher power.

I am so very thankful for this tool. Even though it is beyond my understanding, I know I will receive what I need.

~Laurie B.

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

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.

Looking for a meeting to try? The Thursday 7:00 PM meeting is Silverton welcomes you! Come share the experience, strength, and support of your fellow OA's.

The views expressed in the newsletter 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.

I WILL BE HAPPY WHEN...

Seems like I have said this a lot the past 10 years. Oh, who am I kidding? It has been going on most of my life. One magic thing after another should occur and then that elusive bluebird of happiness will settle down in my life.

You know the drill. If only I lost 40 pounds, then I would be happy. If only my body were fit... if only I had a different place to live... if only I had one dog instead of two cats... if only I had a computer...

Well, reality is I was given a used laptop two weeks ago. Am I any happier than I was two and a half weeks ago? Can't say I am!

Abraham Lincoln really knew what he was talking about when he said, "Most people are as happy as they make up their minds to be."

So how do I go from my natural Eyeore temperament (Oh, bother!) to being happy, joyous, and free?

First of all, I recognize that like every other character trait, it may not happen overnight. I need to trust that it will go in God's time, in God's way.

I then need to do the footwork of establishing a more positive frame of mind. What is there in THIS day to bring me joy or delight? When I start listening to the calls of the birds or looking for that one gorgeous flower rather than the potholes in the street, I find my happiness increases. I can look for ways to be at peace with my weight as it is. I can become grateful for the laptop as it is, without bemoaning the fact that it has no battery pack to make it portable.

Then I can recognize that I can truly be happy—NOW more often than not.

~Jan E., Portland

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>.

The joy we receive as we try to carry the message is a positive force in our lives today, sustaining us through good times and hard times, transforming us and our companions in recovery.

~The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Overeaters
Anonymous, p. 102

Triggers

I'm a recovering bulimic and anorexic. By the grace of my HP and the fellowship of OA, I have seven years of abstinence from bulimia and five years of not restricting food. I suffered from my bulimia for 38 years before finding my current abstinence. The triggers I've dealt with around bulimia have been plenty, and I've found with each successful triumph, it's easier to handle the next one. A couple weeks ago, I was faced with something I haven't experienced and that was a trigger in my anorexia behaviors.

I came down with pneumonia, and the medication I was put on wiped out my appetite, and when I ate my stomach hurt. I know that would feel like a blessing for an over-eater, but it was a major trigger for me.

I made friends with food five years ago, and since that time, I have welcomed hunger pains to assure that I eat what my body needs. I enjoy eating my meals now, as I make it a point to eat satisfying meals. Losing my appetite brought me back to my anorexic days of ignoring hunger pains for so long that I no longer felt them. It brought me back to my Eating Disorder thinking of calculating how much weight I could lose while not eating.

I could have easily thought of food as my enemy again, but because of my recovery, I was able to recognize this as a new trigger.

I knew I had to go back to the basics of a meal plan to assure I was eating the right amount. I also knew I had to share what I was going through to hold myself accountable.

I reached out to a fellow who is also recovering from anorexia, and together we came up with an action plan. I went shopping for food I thought my stomach could handle and that I might especially like the flavor of. I ate my meals outside in nature to help make the occasion special and relaxing. I also added more prayer and service to my day.

My appetite returned two days after finishing the medication, and I welcomed it with a joy that I never thought I'd ever feel about hunger. Not only do I feel like I'm sitting right with food again, I'm basking in knowing that I worked my program, and I did what I needed to do during a tough time.

Am I disappointed how quickly my Eating Disorder tried to talk me to relapse? Yes, but I've proven I have the tools to fight back. Am I disappointed that I still have to deal with triggers? Yes, but Steps 1-3 remind me that I have this issue, and I don't have to handle it alone. Something tells me that I will be faced with triggers again, but like all the triggers before me, this experience will make it easier to handle what comes up next time.

~Kym, Aloha, OR

("Prayer, Meditation, Acceptance, Gratitude and A Plan for Living Which Works," continued from the front page)

Thankfully, the steps have given me a design for living that works, and the fellowship has given me tools to cope with difficult life circumstances and uncomfortable feelings. I sat down to have my morning prayer and meditation, starting with readings and prayer from our literature and the fellowship. I read the serenity prayer, which asks for the "serenity to accept the things I cannot change" and the 11th step, which says others before me found recovery by "praying only for knowledge of His will for me and power to carry it out."

Next I prayed through writing a letter to God. In my letter I wrote about the pain in my foot, my frustration about how long it is taking to heal, my fears that it will never get better, and my depression over the whole situation. That is a lot of things I wasn't accepting at the moment. So, I prayed that I would be granted acceptance of the things I cannot change.

I also asked to be able to accept the feelings of sadness and fear that I have around all of this. I ended my prayer by asking for the willingness to do the next right thing in front of me, whatever that would be, as I go through my day. I was blessed not just with the willingness to do the next right thing. I heard a voice in my head say "This too shall pass."

I felt a slight lifting of my spirits. The feelings didn't completely disappear, but I did feel a little bit lighter. I went on to start my day doing the next right thing in front of me, by preparing and eating my abstinent breakfast. Then I did the next right thing, and so on.

I am so grateful to God and to the fellowship. Recovery has given me the gift of being able to deal with life on life's terms without destructive eating or resorting to character defects which damage my relationships and demoralize me. Thank you, God. And thank you, OA.

~Lisa