

A Serving of Hope

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Oregon Intergroup of Overeaters Anonymous

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A Room Full of Strangers

“Great perils have this beauty, that they bring to light the fraternity of strangers.”

~Victor Hugo

Before finding OA, I could not have imagined entering a room full of strangers and telling them how it feels to be a compulsive overeater. Feelings may be freely expressed in group therapy, for example, but if I am the only compulsive overeater in the room, I am a stranger to the others. The great peril I face is something they do not share and can never understand.

That is why, in their divinely inspired wisdom, the founders of Alcoholics Anonymous struggled to keep AA for alcoholics. As Bill W. pointed out, all we have to share is our experience; what we have not experienced, we cannot share.

For today: The great peril of compulsive overeating makes sisters and brothers of all of us in Overeaters Anonymous.

~For Today, p. 82

You Are Not Alone Anymore

A room full of strangers just may be the solution to your compulsive eating habits. Whether you are a compulsive overeater, anorexic, bulimic, or suffer from any other compulsive food behaviors, an Overeaters Anonymous meeting can provide you with help, hope, and a sense of belonging. This is something that newcomers and those in the program for years need to know! Meetings are a big part of recovery. Get to a meeting! A meeting offers you:

- Acceptance of you as you are now, as you were, as you will be.
- Understanding of the problems you now face—problems almost certainly shared by others in the group.
- Communication that comes as the natural result of our mutual understanding.
- Recovery from your illness.
- Power to enter a new way of life through the practice of the Twelve Step recovery program, the belief in a power greater than yourself, and the support and companionship of the group.

~From “What to Expect at an OA Meeting”

Upcoming Events

March 4: Monthly speakers meeting, 7:00 to 8:30 PM, at Girl Scouts, 9620 SW Barbur Blvd., Portland. Contact Mikki at 503-747-7769 or mikkimc@gmail.com.

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

March 17 -19: Twin Rocks Serenity Retreat. Email serenityretreat@oregon-oa.org or call Loriann at 503-704-8571 or Marie 503-639-0149.

Rescheduled due to Weather:

June 24: Off The Scale Recovery, 9:30 AM to 3:00 PM. Registration is at 9:00 AM, St. Vincent's Medical Center, 9205 SW Barnes Road, Stanley Family Room 20. Contact Kym at literature@oregon-oa.org or 503-544-5955.

How A Plan of Eating Helped Me

When I first came to Overeaters Anonymous, I had no idea what to expect, except for one thing...I was expecting a diet. The only thing I was sure of about the program before I stepped into the room for the first time turned out to be wrong!

I was absolutely amazed when I realized no one was going to hand me a booklet with the diet I was supposed to follow or spaces for me to enter my calories, fat, and sugar intake. What was even more amazing was when a member shared that she was still working on her plan of eating. I couldn't believe that one person's plan could be different from another.

I asked about this plan of eating after the meeting, and a member shared with me that it is a process, one where you are honest with yourself about your compulsive food behaviors and you work to find a plan of eating that addresses what you discover. She mentioned that many people follow a plan of "three meals, no snacks."

Now I was certain that this would not work for me. No diet could possibly let you choose your own foods for your three meals. No diet could possibly let you have three meals without meticulously counting your calories. No diet would ever work if it didn't require you to avoid gluten, or dairy, or fat, or something—anything! There is always something!

But I shortly realized that it wasn't about dieting at this point. I had tried all the diets that avoided fat or dairy or gluten. I had counted more calories than there are stars in the sky. I had followed page after page of recommended meals. It had never worked. What if—and this was crazy—what if I just needed to stop eating compulsively?

If I only ate three meals a day, I would be cutting out every compulsive bite I had every single day. And I realized that this was a huge breakthrough for me...because I was scared. I was scared of letting go of the late-night bingeing, the morning hunt through the kitchen, the early afternoon visit to a drive-through.

I was scared because my personal beast became clear in that moment. If I only ate at mealtimes, I would not be eating compulsively, which is what I did all day. I had never admitted that to myself before. I had never really seen that eating regular meals is what normal people do. I was like these people in this room full of strangers, and I had to listen.

I received the pamphlet, "A Plan of Eating" at that meeting. I realized that this was no diet club. Some people ate only three meals a day. Some people cut out their binge foods. And some people had a plan to stop restricting foods. We are all completely different, except for one thing—that compulsion. So we all develop our plan of eating to help us recover.

I still have the three meals/no snacks plan of eating, and it is amazing how different my life is. It's not a diet. It's recovery, and I am so grateful.

I'd like to share something from "A Plan of Eating": "Reducing the time we think about food clears our heads of the ongoing conflict between our self-will and the disease." It's the opposite of a diet where we focus food all the time, but it is the answer that many of us need.

~Ed

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.

You Can Write for *Lifeline*

When you read a story in *Lifeline* and get to the very end, what do you see? You usually see either a name and a location, or the word, Anonymous. This tells you that *Lifeline* is member written. No professional group of writers has been hired to bring you *Lifeline's* stories.

Someone like you and me wrote that article. It was birthed out of hard experience, and delivered because someone found some hope, serenity, freedom and/or a program that is working for them. They want to share what worked for them in the hopes that it will help someone else, and perhaps save them some hardship, heartache, or relapse.

You too, have a story to share. Only you can tell your story, and there are those who desperately need to hear it.

Maybe that person is living in the area of Oregon Intergroup, or perhaps they are on the other side of this globe. In either case, your story may be the one they need to read.

There is healing in writing and sharing, both for the writer and the reader. *Lifeline* is looking for stories all the time. On the OA website, oa.org, are listed *Lifeline* guidelines for writers and the topics they are looking for.

If you want to test the waters, or if the idea of writing for *Lifeline* sort of intimidates you, why not write for this newsletter? Then later, rewrite the article and submit it to *Lifeline*. You can send your newsletter articles to newsletter@oregon-oa.org.

~Rosanne K., *Lifeline* Rep OIG

Start 2017 with a recovery boost from *Lifeline*. Register on oalifeline.org and get immediate access to **hundreds of stories of real recovery** from *Lifeline* magazine. Plus, you can read on your smartphone, tablet, or computer, just like your favorite websites!

When you subscribe, you'll get **full, unlimited access** to every *Lifeline* story published in 2016, plus **new stories every month** beginning today. You can even search a topic or browse a category to read the experience, strength, and hope that you need most.

For **current e-*Lifeline* subscribers**, our new website replaces your e-*Lifeline* PDF subscription. You have been automatically registered with oalifeline.org and can use your e-*Lifeline* login and password. New subscribers can go to the website and click on any story to register. **A one-year subscription is \$23.** Subscribe to oalifeline.org today!

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

Honesty = Integrity + Humility

I have been active and abstinent in Overeaters Anonymous for almost four years, and in my working the 12 Steps, I have experience that one of the most important components of my recovery is honesty, which is my willingness in thought, word, and action to be truthful and transparent, open and obvious, straightforward and sincere.

This honesty, however, has for me two distinct components: integrity and humility. Integrity is primarily, but not exclusively, an interior dimension. Humility is more an exterior dimension. The two aspects are blended or woven together to form what I call honesty.

Integrity, to me, means that my outside (words and actions) conveys what is actually in my heart and that my insides (gut feelings and opinions) are not afraid to express themselves to others. For so long, I lived in fear—and without integrity—a fear that froze me in time and situation into an icy silence, a fear of moving away from the comfortable, a fear of being completely candid and revealing the image of my true self, a fear of being criticized and put down. This fear led me to anger and sadness, which sealed me in a fortress of isolation in which I craved companionship.

I was miserable! But the fortress wall of fear was cracked when two events happened almost simultaneously. On one hand, I could no longer deny and had to admit that I was powerless over my situation, that I was not able to manage my life, and that I was trying to maintain insanely a “front” that everyone saw through. On the other hand, as I surrendered to my HP and opened myself to others’ love and concern, I began to trust and to share and to be vulnerable. I was beginning to experience integrity.

Humility, for me, is a necessary aid to my survival because it positions me to stand in truth before others and before my world.

It is the result of striving for peace with myself and with other people, and it is the catalyst for me of “living life on life’s terms.” Humility helps me realize that I am not the master of my universe; rather, for the sake of not only survival but also thriving, I readily accept suggestions and opinions from others, I embrace pain and learn from it, and I am willing to learn to be still and to surrender to the care of my HP. I am teachable, I am malleable, I am able to surrender.

The word “humility” has the same root as the word “humus,” which is “dirt” or “ground” in Latin. Humility, however, does not mean that I am dirt, but rather that I have my feet on the ground in reality, truth, and genuineness. In other words, I am who I am, nothing more and nothing less, without gloss, without mask, without an alibi. And it’s none of my business what others think or make of me!

Abstinence in humility means for me to take on a food strategy and an action plan that curb my food allergy and mental/emotional obsession, to willingly let my HP guide me to know and do his will, and to eagerly seek the support of others as sponsors, as fellow sojourners, and as groups in fellowship.

For me, honesty expresses itself as humility and integrity, which in turn lead me to be completely willing to surrender and relinquish resentments, defects, and the “me-isms” of living, which ultimately brings me to serenity.

~ BF

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