

# A Serving of Hope

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Oregon Intergroup of Overeaters Anonymous

July 2016

## THE IMPORTANCE OF EXPERIENCES

*“There is no fruit which is not bitter before it is ripe..”*

*Publilius Syrus*

Experience is not acquired without bruises and pain. That’s why I say I am grateful to be a compulsive overeater. Without the disease, I would not know of Overeaters Anonymous and the twelve step program of recovery, which has been called a blueprint for a sane and happy life.

To wish for the rewards of growth without having to go through the growing pains is futile. Avoidance of pain stops growth cold, and when growth stops, regression is next. Recovery calls for going through each step, feeling all the feelings, and having the patience to wait for results.

**For today:** I accept with gratitude whatever progress I am making, however small.

*~For Today, page 312.*

## Introductions Are In Order!

I’m Cindy, and I’m a compulsive overeater. I’m also in the process of taking on the position of newsletter editor for Oregon Intergroup. It is one of the many great positions available in our region, and it seems perfect for me. You can learn about other positions on page 2 of this newsletter! But first, I’d like to tell you a little bit about myself.

*~continued on page 4*

## Going Sane – One Day at a Time

Recently I was asked, “Can I afford to have my pre-program insanity back?” I thought about it. Can I afford the eating well into the wee hours of the night seeking solace and finding none? Can I afford driving from drive-thru to drive-thru buying foods that never satisfy? Do I want to go back to a life of depression, shame, and futile havoc?

On the other hand, do I want to give up the freedom I have, the peace and serenity I have found with the program? Do I want to take back the shame and depression I had from the very apparent evidence that I was consuming way beyond my body’s daily needs? Do I want to return to receiving the knowing stares and shaking of heads and sarcastic comments of strangers as well as concerned relatives and friends?

Yet I know the pre-program insanity lurks in the corner of the attic of my mind. If I give it any attention at all, like a deceptive animal, it acts alluring and cute. It appears to be fuzzy, lovable and harmless. When it comes out to play in the light, it seems to have all these rewarding attributes, promising me delight, comfort, and love. If I am honest, I’ll recognize it for what it is – deceptive and dangerous. It will devour me totally, if I let it.

What this beast called insanity really wants to do is to lure me back into the dark corners of my former life where I’d isolate and eat and not do anything else. If I really think about pre-program activities, I realize ~continued on page 3.

## Upcoming Events

July 15-17, Serenity Retreat, Alton Collins Retreat & Conference Center, 32867 SE Highway 211, Eagle Creek, OR, Contact Vee at 503-449-6005 or [serenityretreat@oregon-oa.org](mailto:serenityretreat@oregon-oa.org)

August 6, Monthly speakers meeting, 7:00PM-8:30PM, at Girl Scouts, 9620 SW Barbur Blvd., Portland; contact Ilene 503 268-3064.

August 10, Oregon Intergroup Meeting, 7-8:30pm, at Girl Scouts, 9620 SW Barbur Blvd., Portland. Everyone is encouraged to attend.

August 19-21, The Best Is Yet To Be Retreat, Pilgrim Firs Conference Center, Port Orchard, WA, Pierce County IG, contact Laurie 541-359-8133.

September 16-18, Region 1 Convention, Calgary, Alberta, Canada. See [www.oaregion1.org](http://www.oaregion1.org).

## OREGON INTERGROUP SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE!

*Get Involved, Meet Great People, and Strengthen Your Recovery*

Many of our intergroup representatives are working hard in service positions that keep Oregon OA a strong and inviting program. From time to time, each representative must cycle out of that position and allow others the opportunity to carry on the torch.

Several Oregon OA service positions are ready for new faces--and they are a fun, satisfying, helpful way to strengthen your region's program as well as your own! Some of the open positions include Speaker Coordinator for the monthly speaker meeting, Ways and Means Chair, CD Library Coordinator, Group Coordinator, and many more. Ask your intergroup rep about these positions or visit the monthly intergroup meeting to learn more!

Remember that providing service--from helping to set out chairs at your meetings to volunteering to serve as a representative for your meeting at Intergroup--is an important part of recovery.

Here is a description for the position of Treasurer--could you give service by stepping up and taking on this fun and important role?

**Candidate needed for Intergroup Treasurer! Think the job is too hard for you? Think again!**

If you can balance your checkbook, record all income and expenses, and know--or are willing to learn--Quicken or a similar program, you can do this job!

It takes about 4 hours per month. It involves picking up the mail (or having someone do it for you), logging income and expenses, making bank deposits once or twice a month, creating a monthly Income & Expense report, and doing some once-a-year tasks. The term of office is two years and requires at least nine months of abstinence and having completed Step 7.

The rewards are: you get to see lots of interesting people, people walk up and hand you money at Intergroup and at events, and you get the satisfaction of a job well done.

Help is available from former treasurers and others!

Thank you for considering this! If you are interested, please contact Martha J. at 503-244-5080 or Dorothy at 503-520-1855.

### 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](mailto: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.

### 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.

### 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 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](http://oregon-oa.org) or call (971) 317-6343.

## Going Sane – One Day at a Time

*(Continued from front page)*

that I rarely had any lasting comfort or delight from excess food or isolation. I just felt deeper and deeper despair as more and more I feared feeling my feelings.

Now each day I go out, mingle with people, laugh, and share friendship and love without all the negative feelings I used to have. Still there is lingering residual pain from the consequences of poor choices in my past, but today I have the tools to face the pain, conquer it, and live life instead of always running from it. Daily I thank my Higher Power for bringing me to OA, and for the love and support I receive daily to keep my pre-program insanity at bay.

~Rosanne, Portland

## Christmas In the Corner

Come on now, Jan. Whatever are you talking about?

Come into my living room and it will all become crystal clear. Picture a mauve, pink, green, and cream couch. Sounds like a peaceful setting? Right! Not in my apartment. Why, you ask? Because to the left is what I call Christmas in the corner...Two tabletop Christmas tree, ignoring the fact that there are no clear surfaces to display them...even though it is July...to say nothing of the rest of the rest of the ghosts of Christmas past!

I know. Your next question will be what does any of this have to do with OA? I am glad you asked. As one OA speaker says it is not about the food until it is all about the food.

Have you found in your OA program niggling things like "Christmas" piled up in a corner that threaten your serenity, sanity, and ultimately your abstinence? You know like those nagging chores you never get around to? Don't we all have them? I think VOR page 155 may have our solution. "Any action, no matter how small, will help us to overcome deadly procrastination."

HP, what is that small action I can take today? Maybe I can find the red and green tub and clean it to prepare it for the next step. Yes, I can do that today.

PS...ask me at next Intergroup meeting if Christmas is no longer in the corner!

~Warmly, Jan

## Hope and Trust

After years of sobriety in another 12-step program, I found myself hitting bottom with my food addiction. The feeling of powerlessness was much more prominent for me with food than in my other program.

In Step 1, when I admitted that I was powerless - I truly felt powerless, I felt crazy. I had too much awareness to push down the truth about my behaviors. My life was completely unmanageable, and I was white-knuckling it. I knew I was in full blown addiction. I knew a lot of things. I knew I needed to go to meetings, get a sponsor, read the literature and follow a food plan, etc.--and I did those things.

What I didn't do was to stop and ask God for help. I wanted control. Was God going to restore me to sanity? Or were my actions going to get me where I wanted to go? What I found out is that my will power alone could not keep me sane. I needed God to give me strength to make good decisions on a regular, daily basis.

Without fail, when I don't bring God into my life and decisions with prayer and meditation, I ease right back into insane living. I have a group of people that support me; they show me my insanity and remind me of the solution. The word "hope" is defined as a feeling of trust. I trust that God can bring sanity and serenity into my life.

~Alex Z.,

reprinted from St. Louis Bi-State Area Intergroup Newsletter, 02/16.

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*It is a way of life, and the challenge contained in its principles is great enough to keep any human being striving for as long as he lives.*

~From "The Keys of the Kingdom,"  
*Alcoholics Anonymous*

## Get Involved--Service and the Seventh Tradition

*Meetings are fully self-supporting only when they contribute their share of the work that goes into carrying OA's message areawide, regionwide, and worldwide.*

~From *The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous*, p.165

## Focusing on the "Should Do"

When I originally went through the 12 Steps, I really struggled with Steps 6 and 7. My sponsor and I went back to revisit them. Although I know it's only with God that I can release my self-defeating behaviors, I also need to make changes. I understand the concept of surrender, but what does that look like in action? One behavior that I felt was important to release was judging others. I'd pray for a clean conscience in the morning only to find myself slipping by the evening. I tried placing the 12 principles in eye-view around my home and at work as a reminder of my commitment. None of these worked.

I thought back to other self-defeating behaviors that I have been successful at releasing to see how I was able to make changes. The biggest one that came to mind was restricting my food intake. When I looked at it closely, I could see that it was through focusing on eating 3 healthy meals, on time, with the intent to feed my body. I didn't focus on the "not doing," but rather what it looks like when I'm doing the right thing.

Next I thought of a situation where I'm not judging and I can safely say that would be at work. I am a manager

and I am able to treat my staff with respect and compassion. So if I'm able to treat my staff in a positive way, shouldn't I be treating those closest to me with the same grace? So now my prayer in the morning isn't to stop from doing the self-defeating behavior, but rather to be the person my HP has made me to be.

The religion of my upbringing included a long list of "thou shall not"s. As a child I lived in fear of doing something wrong and thus buying my ticket to hell. I no longer believe those things, and continuing to focus on the negative behavior no longer suits me; It puts me in shame mode. It forces me to judge myself and my behaviors, which, in turn, makes me feel unworthy. When I feel unworthy, I don't treat myself or my body the way I should.

Focusing on the positive things to do gives me the opportunity to set a goal and work towards that goal. I can see myself getting better and better instead of labeling myself as a failure. Asking my HP what I should do is much easier than what I shouldn't do.

I am very grateful that the Steps carry so much wisdom that there is always more to learn.

~Kym~Portland, OR

## Introductions Are In Order

(continued from the front page)

I came to OA a year ago in July, so it is quite fitting to me that I should be taking on a position at intergroup on the anniversary of my finding this program.

Why did I first come to OA? Because I realized I had hit a strange rock-bottom, but I didn't know what the problem was. I had screamed at my children for interrupting me while I was in the middle of a binge, but I didn't even realize at the time that it was a binge, or even a sign of compulsive eating. After thinking about it, I came to a few realizations:

- First, that my life was centered around food.
- Second, that I had been blindly eating for several months, often feeling sick, and had been doing something like this for years.
- Third, that I could not stop.

And finally, the realization set in that I was prioritizing food over my own children, getting angry with them if I was interrupted in my never-ending cycles of preparing and consuming food. I felt massive amounts of remorse. More strange behaviors around food came into focus, and by that night I began to come to the understanding that my problem was more like a drug addict's than someone who indulges in food.

It was a Saturday night, and I asked the internet about it. I was directed to an OA reading with questions, and realized I answered yes to every single question, including "Have you eaten food out of the trash?" and "Do you spend most of your time thinking about and planning your next binge?" I learned I was a compulsive overeater, and there was help. Sunday afternoon, I went to the Alano club for my first OA meeting. I didn't really understand any of it, just that I was around people who were like me, and that I wasn't the only person in the world with these behaviors. I cried a lot and felt scared and hopeful all at once.

With the help of an amazing sponsor, I learned about the steps, how to work on my behavior, and also how to improve my outlook along the way. I began to go to more meetings, found abstinence, and have not only developed a different attitude toward food, but also toward life. I learn something at every meeting that improves my life, and that, for me, is enough to keep coming back.

I chose the *For Today* quote on the front page because the remorse I once felt for my past is gone. I am here now for a reason, and I hope I can help others the same way I have been helped, one of the many reasons I am happy to be the newsletter editor and a part of Intergroup today.

~Cindy J.