

A Serving of Hope

Volume 5 Issue 6

Oregon Intergroup of Overeaters Anonymous

June 2016

THE message

"People only see what they are prepared to see."

~Ralph Waldo Emerson

What words will convey to the practicing compulsive overeater that life can be far better than imagined? God gives me the words, I carry the message. The results are not up to me. It takes what it takes, I tell myself, and turn to the next newcomer.

Perhaps I need to look at my attitude. Do I come on too strong? Do I use words and concepts that only experienced OA members would understand? Do I give the impression that I want the newcomer to do it my way or else find another sponsor?

For today: Those to whom I carry the message may be more likely to listen if I remember that ours is a program of attraction.

~For Today, page 123.

Benefits of Abstinence

- Waking in the morning free from the aftereffects of a binge.
- Functioning with new clarity and focus.
- Feeling free of obsessive preoccupation with food and diets.
- Being open to a power greater than myself.
- Letting go of circumstances over which I have no control.
- Regaining the capacity to experience joy and satisfaction.
- Having motivation and energy to persevere in spite of difficulties.

~C.W., Wisconsin, Lifeline, 10/2000

Reflections on "Before You Take That First Compulsive Bite"

I am relatively new to OA, but the changes in me feel like something that would need a lifetime to develop. I reflect on those changes regularly, taking time to be grateful for the gifts that OA has given me. One of those things is hearing the words of wisdom included in the literature *"Before You Take That First Compulsive Bite."*

I arrived at my very first meeting a few days after realizing that there might be something more wrong with me than being "someone who indulges," and only a few hours after learning that OA existed. I spent the car ride to the meeting full of dread and fear and doubt. I was doubtful that anyone had a solution to my problem with food. But I knew that I had reached a dangerous point in my relationship with food, and I had to try something different than the cycle of starvation and binges.

I cried through my first meeting, but some of the tears came from a place of relief. The other people at the meeting were not hysterical or desperate or crying the whole time. In fact, they were hopeful and talked about what has worked for them. And they were just like me--I was not alone in my problems.

At the end of that first meeting, we read "Before You Take That First Compulsive Bite." And at that moment, a large part of my doubts about OA and its possibilities were lifted.

~continued on page 3.

Upcoming Events

June 11, 2016, A Picnic in the Park, Tualatin Community Park, 8515 SW Tualatin Rd, Tualatin, OR, Contact Jenice, 503-705-5599. To join the painting fundraiser contact Beverly Beverly.m@frontier.com.

June 24-26, Sunlight of the Spirit Retreat, Suttle Lake, OR. Central Oregon Intergroup, contact Mary, at 541-408-5945, or Terri, at 541-390-1097

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

July 13, Oregon Intergroup Meeting, 7-8:30pm, at Girl Scouts, 9620 SW Barbur Blvd., Portland. Everyone is encouraged to attend.

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

September 16-18, Region 1 Convention, Calgary, Alberta, Canada. See www.oaregion1.org.

Life on Life's terms, Augmented

I went to the 2016 OA World Service Business Meeting. As a New delegate, I wasn't sure what to expect. I knew I was there to give service but knew I would be experiencing something new. I went with excitement and some fear. I was lucky enough to go with other wonderful people but I had a fear of not getting down time. I need my down time, but at the same time I also tend to isolate. Balance was my motto for the week, but HP had a new version of Life on Life's Terms for me to learn.

My days were filled with OA meetings, workshops and business meetings. Everyone was so welcoming and any questions I had were welcomed with helpful answer. I was matched up with a mentor ahead of time and I met her in person on my first day. We hit it off and a friendship was developed. I was also introduced to other Region 1 delegates not from my Intergroup. Again, we hit it off and friendships were made.

The first few days I worked hard to keep my Balance goal in place. The higher altitude played havoc on me and I found myself getting to bed early and sleeping very heavily. The third day I learned that life goes on while you're at WSBC when I received heart breaking news from one of my daughters. My mother instinct kicked in I wanted to be home to comfort her. But Life on Life's terms means I was there and she was in Oregon. The only good part of the news was that if I had to receive bad news away from home, I couldn't have asked for a more supportive place than with 198 other recovering OAers.

This experience opened me up to trusting that HP is in control and I had to believe I was there for a reason.

As the week rolled along and the meetings/work-shops got interesting, my room turned into the place to gather for lunch, dinner and evening conversations. My normal need for down time was diminishing as I became involved with conversations, debates and merry making. My normal introverted patterns were challenged and a part of me that I don't show often, emerged. I was having fun despite losing my downtime.

I've always thought of "life's terms" as a reference to negative things happening, but my lesson here was that "life's terms" is whatever HP is giving you at the moment. This week gave me opportunities to make friendships that I normally would have shied away from. It gave me opportunities to discuss opinions that I normally would not have put my energy in. It gave me opportunities to discuss experiences which I normally would have avoided. And it gave me the opportunity to laugh and enjoy others which my isolating patterns would have kept me from. I followed my HP's prompting to let loose, go with the flow and learn lessons that come with being social. I learned there are gifts to gain in getting out of my comfort zone and truly being part of a group.

I am grateful for the opportunity to give service to OA, specifically through WSBC and I am grateful to HP for giving me so many fun lessons while doing it.

~Kym, Portland

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.

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 or call (971) 317-6343.

My Experience at WSBC

WSBC was an amazing experience. The amount of time and energy that is being put into OA is huge. For instance, I take for granted the literature. Each piece, whether large or small, jumps through many hoops before it is published. And then there is the literature that does not end up passing all the steps and is never published. Luckily, I have been appointed to the Conference Approved Literature Committee, so I will get to see some of how it works from the inside.

The 199 delegates represented 19 countries. It was heartwarming to hear the Serenity Prayer said in 5 languages in addition to English. I was expecting more diversity in terms of color, but that was probably not surprising considering the cost of travel.

It was also an opportunity to see how small my world view is. When the motion about changing the date of Idea Day to June was under discussion, the issue of weather came up and it was pointed out that while June is summer here, in other places it is winter. That motion did fail.

WSBC is run in a most formal manner. Elections in particular are stringent. The doors are "locked," tables cleared, precise step-by-step instructions are given and one mustn't charge ahead. Also, if a member does not have at least 1 year of abstinence through the time of the election, that member does not get to vote. I was also most impressed by the chair's ability to keep her ego out of the process.

Outside of meetings, some highlights for me were seeing a roadrunner (running, of course), wiggling my toes in the Rio Grande, and savoring the aroma of Russian Olive blossoms.

Also, it was a gift to have such a wonderful roommate and get to better know her.

Thank you to all of you for making it possible for me to have this experience.

~ MerleAnn, Delegate

Reflections on "Before You Take That First Compulsive Bite"

(continued from front page).

Here was a concrete tool this program offers--a list of options and solutions to help me control my compulsive behavior with food. This was not the normal list I would read in women's magazines that offered advice such as "chew gum" or "eat celery." This was a list geared to people who suffer the same compulsion I have, and they were useful tools to start working on a problem I have had as long as I can remember.

I have suffered with this problem my whole life, and now I have the tools and support I need to help me manage the issues I face in my relationship with food and the world. I am grateful for the reading that day, and at this point, I only need to think of the title and smile when I feel the urge to take that first compulsive bite. More often than not, it is all I need to calm my compulsive behavior.

Literature alone is not all that works in this program, and that is what is wonderful. These words, and the words in all of the books and newsletters and pamphlets, are only a part of the support and guidance I have received since that first meeting. It has all been an enormous help.

Sometimes I am so grateful for that help that I want to reach out to every single person who suffers with compulsive overeating and give them the soothing news that there is a program for people like us. My wish is that anyone reading my reflections learns or is reminded that there is hope--you are not alone, and there is a program that can give you wonderful ways to end your suffering. That's what I have learned, and that's what I reflect on every day.

~Cindy J., Portland, Oregon

Silence is the language God speaks and everything else is a bad translation.

~Thomas Keating

Give Service a Chance

As a Delegate to WSBC and a Representative to Region 1, I spend 12 days per year of my vacation time away from my family. With three kids at home, it sounds like a lot of time away, but they are some of the most important days I spend working on my recovery. Taking care of the business of OA ensures the program will be here for years to come. And for me, without OA, I would have died of this disease years ago.

When I first came to OA, this disease was physically killing me and I was powerless to stop it. OA literally saved my life. My first sponsor strongly encouraged me to give service as a way to get my thoughts out of the obsession and focus on how

I can help others. This simple direction was and remains the key to my abstinence. And staying abstinent is the key to staying alive. After 19 ½ years in my disease, I celebrated 20 years of abstinence this year.

If you are struggling to stay abstinent, work the steps with a sponsor. If you continue to struggle, get involved in the service opportunities OA provides. Get your mind off of your own problems and actively look for how you can help OA grow.

Give service a chance to work the miracle of abstinence for you. I know it works for me.

~Alice W.

World Service Business Conference, 2016 - My Experience

This was my fourth and last World Service Business Conference (WSBC) as I will be rotating out of the Delegate position for Oregon Intergroup (OIG) this July. It has been a fabulous experience, getting better each year. There were over 200 people who love OA there from all over the world - 199 delegates and trustees, and numerous OA volunteers. 19 countries were represented. The atmosphere was full of love and recovery. I met people of all ages, shapes and sizes, diverse experiences, cultures and languages. There is one important thing we DO share -- our compulsion.

We conducted the business of OA and spent many hours together learning and sharing on "Carrying the Message." OA is strong, but not growing in response to the need. I remember reading that our founder thought OA would be bigger than AA one day. Health statistics tell us the diseases related to compulsive eating have increased markedly all over the world, but the number of OA meetings are down in almost every region. The exceptions are our international meetings where the number of meetings are growing slowly, and virtual meetings, which are growing steadily. So we are not reaching many of the still suffering compulsive eaters out there. We OAer's have work to do.

That's the big picture, but what about my personal experience? I had a very visceral experience of the hand and heart of OA being extended to me. This WSBC I experienced a miracle, something I have never been able to do on my own... I remembered names! Now this might not sound like something so dramatic since at WSBC we all wear name tags after all, but I knew these names before I could read the tag. This has been a basic social skill that has eluded me my entire life, so to me it is no small thing. It is as if I crossed a divide between myself and the rest of the people in the world,

and they became significant individuals, every one. I had so many experiences of warmth and love from all kinds of folks. In my committee (Professional Outreach), there was wonderful commitment. Members stepped up right at the get go, from note taking to formulating ideas and taking personal responsibility for the ideas that spoke to their passion and love of OA. It was great! One sub group committed to get their piece done right there at WSBC while they were together, and did!

My OIG roomie and I had a chance to get out in nature and we took it. The Rio Grande Nature Park was beautiful to behold but the scent of the blooming olive trees is a sweet memory I will always cherish. My OIG delegation provided love and respite with "in room" dining. We had groceries and ate at least lunch in our rooms. That was often a shared experience with a larger group extending out to our green dots (first timers) and others in the Region One delegation. There was a real sense of friendship and support. There was also a wonderful evening after the Banquet. Business was finally a wrap after a very busy week. We could totally relax. We had one of those special nights when the camaraderie seems to exist in its own precious space of light and laughter.

I can't say thank you enough to Oregon Intergroup - all of you - for sending me to WSBC four times. It is so right that this service rotates. (OIG allows at most two consecutive two year terms). To paraphrase the Big Book - "this is an experience you must not miss". My recommendation: go for it!

~Pat O, Outgoing Delegate

Using My Tools

7:30 a.m. I got a text asking me if it was okay to call around 9 a.m. My immediate, knee jerk reaction was oh no! What have I done now? Did I say something wrong? Did I text too much? Did I email too much?

Calming, cleansing breath. Remember how not more than 5 minutes ago you said "Whatever God"? This is part of that whatever. Okay. If I made a mistake, I will own it. If someone thinks I did but I didn't, that will be their problem and not mine. Whatever God.

Okay, what is the next step in front of me? I need to finish breakfast. Worry and anxiety builds back up. I also prayed the Serenity prayer this morning. If something needs changing, I can't change it until I know what it is.

So I release this worry. What is the next thing? Well, I was only a chapter away from finishing my fun mystery. I could finish that. Did so. Now what? I can read in my Big Book. Think I'll do that until I get a call.

Ring. Ring. (or in my case Adele singing.) Call comes. Friendly, just to talk call. Laughed about commonality of catastrophizing! But each time anxiety threatened, I did what I was learning to do. I was using my coping new mechanisms. I was using my tools. Plus I was free enough of anxiety to enjoy my phone call.

Yay God! Way to go!

~Warmly, Jan