

A Serving of Hope

Volume 6 Issue 1

Oregon Intergroup of Overeaters Anonymous

January 2017

It's 2017!

"Before OA I lived in grief, depression, disappointment, guilt, shame, and despair over past events. I decided I had to work the Steps because I wanted the pain to go away."

~Abstinence, 2nd Edition, p. 121

It's a new year!

It's time for those of us who are new to OA to find out that the past is past, and no matter how much we try, we will never change the past. That includes a mistake we made a few minutes ago. It is in the past, and we do not need to give in to the grief, depression, disappointment, guilt, or shame we associate with it. The OA program can help!

It's time for those of us who have been working the Steps for a while to examine how far we have come in letting go of the past and to strengthen our resolve to live one day at a time ourselves. The OA program can help!

It's the best time—right now, as you are reading this—to let go of what may have happened last year, or the year before, or any moment in time that had a negative effect on us. We can ask our Higher Power for help, read literature, rely on the fellowship of meetings, or whatever tool works best for us at this moment.

It's a wonderful time to remember that recovery happens one day at a time. We have a whole new year of 365 days to strengthen our recovery and live a life without worrying about the past!

~Ed.

The Freedom of Abstinence from Compulsive Eating

It feels great to be abstinent from compulsive eating through the Overeaters Anonymous program! It is possible to be free of bingeing, restricting, and other compulsive behaviors around food.

You can enjoy:

"How good it is to be free of guilt, remorse, and self-condemnation.

How good it is to be free of fear of the consequences of a binge just ended, or a coming binge you have never before been able to prevent.

How good it is to be free of the fear of what people have been thinking and whispering about you, free of their mingled pity and contempt.

How good it is to be free of fear of yourself."

~Before You Take That First Compulsive Bite, Remember...

Upcoming Events

January 14: 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.

February 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.

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

February 8: Last day of early registration for the Twin Rocks Serenity Retreat March 17-19. Email serenityretreat@oregon-oa.org or call Loriann at 503-704-8571 or Marie 503-639-0149.

TBD: Alyssa in North Portland is planning another 12 Step Workshop that will meet from 6:30 to 8:00 PM every other Thursday. Call Alyssa for more information at 516-527-8293.

Finding My Own Grace

I recently started going through the 12 steps again using the 12 step study guide. During my first homework, I read from page 1 of the OA 12 X 12, "none of us decided to have this disorder, any more than we would have decided to have any other disease." I struggle with that because I feel I did make the choice, at least this last big relapse.

I had anorexia and bulimia 19 years ago. I was able to get myself stabilized, and despite on-going purges, I wasn't doing too bad. Then 8 years ago I became depressed. It appeared on the outside that I had a wonderful life. I had just changed departments at work and it was all good. I was in a healthy relationship, and overall, my life looked good. But inside I was hurting, and I didn't know how to get help. I feared no one would believe I had real issues given my successful life.

While part of me decided that if I could lose weight I'd be happy again, I believe that was my cover story. I felt the only way to legitimately get help was to become very sick. I remember changing my walking playlist to sad, depressing music because I knew it would make me more miserable so that I could carry out the rest of my plan. I increased my purging and starting restricting in hopes that I would become underweight again, and someone would reach out to help me.

Many times I've heard that anorexics do it for attention, and while that may not usually be the case, I feel for me it was. I didn't want to have to reach out for help just to be rejected because I was doing well on the outside. So this was my way to get attention. I allowed myself to become gravely depressed and hopeless as part of my attention plan. I did get attention with the weight loss, but not the kind that would get me the help I needed.

My logical mind can say to me, "But you weren't mentally healthy enough to make a healthy decision, so you didn't really choose the eating disorder," but it feels like I did. I've carried this secret through the 12 steps and many years of recovery and abstinence, and it is time to acknowledge it and let it go.

I spoke to my sponsor, and I've upped the self-care because it is time for me to give myself the grace that I would give to a sponsee if they told me this story. I need to accept step one at a deeper level and understand that it was the eating disorder who told me I didn't have any other choice but to choose this for help.

I've never seen it said in OA literature that help is only available to those who didn't choose their ED. Nowhere does it say that I need to beat myself up for unhealthy decisions, even if I knew it was an unhealthy decision. It actually doesn't matter if I feel like I chose this or not...my HP is there ready to offer me grace, and I need to offer myself grace also. I have to trust that I did the best with what I knew back then and trust that I will make better choices in the future, and if I don't, I again need to give myself grace. I need to let my OA fellows love me while I learn to forgive and re-love the person I was when I turned to my ED for help.

~Kym, Beaverton, OR

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.

Using *Lifeline* at a Meeting

Has your group ever had a *Lifeline* meeting? Try it sometime. Use a copy of *Lifeline* for most of the elements of your meeting; it should fit into your format very well.

Inside the front cover is the OA Preamble, and inside the back cover are the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. Toward the back of each copy are articles written about the step of the month and the tradition of the month. The rest of the magazine has articles written by other OA members about how the program has helped them work through difficult problems, work the steps, use the tools, sponsor and be sponsored, and other facets of working this program that will help others and provide good topics to kick off a profitable time of sharing.

The next time your group is deciding about meeting format or meeting topics, suggest a *Lifeline* meeting. You will be glad you did.

~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!

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>.

10 Years and Still Counting!

On a Thursday in March 2006, I entered an OA meeting and found home. I weighed 236 pounds, and my life was very unmanageable. I had no idea how much so at the time, but it was. I had tried everything I knew to lose weight, short of surgery. I was in an unhappy marriage, I was in an unhappy job, and I was depressed for a (thankfully) short period of time. Life sucked.

But I still came in with one goal—to lose weight. As far as I was concerned, my only problem was that I was fat, so the only solution was to get thin.

Well, I have gotten thin. I took an “after” picture four years ago, and miraculously, I am still at that weight. The foods that I built my life around, that were my higher power, don’t call me anymore. I have met so many wonderful people that I can’t even begin to mention them all. Some are still in program, some aren’t, and some aren’t even alive anymore. Two people who were in the first meeting I ever went to are still the most important people in my life. Some people came to one meeting and I never heard from them again. I love each and every one of them.

Each person in those rooms, each person reading this email, is a part of the chain that binds me to Bill Wilson, Dr. Robert Smith, Dr. Silkworth, Dr. Jung, Rowland Hazard, Ebby Thatcher, Rozanne, and the lady who started our local OA.

The fellowship can’t keep me recovered, but it definitely kept me coming back until the miracle could occur. And it has definitely been more than one miracle.

I’m not perfect. I am human. I still struggle with surrender and powerlessness and the behaviors surrounding my disease.

But the people in OA have never given up on me. They’ve never voiced judgment or disdain. Everyone in OA—no matter who—is my logical family. I believe I would be dead, at least spiritually and emotionally, if it weren’t for this program.

I was thinking of posting pictures and some of this writing on social media, but it occurred to me that the non-12 Steppers are going to congratulate ME on my weight loss and tell ME how good I am doing and how much they admire ME.

Those are kind thoughts and certainly ego-boosting, but they don’t get it. I didn’t do any of this. My brain is the problem. And no matter how much I struggle at times, I really do believe something bigger than me is at work. Something bigger than me led me here and keeps me here. May your Higher Power bless you and keep you as WE trudge this road of happy destiny together.

~ Shannon

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