

# A Serving of Hope

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Oregon Intergroup of Overeaters Anonymous

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## KEEPING AN OPEN MIND

*“There are, it may be, so many kinds of voices in the world, and none of them is without significance.”*

*The Bible: I Corinthians*

A man who is maintaining a large weight loss and is abstinent and sober in both OA and AA tells how he came to accept the gift of abstinence. Finding his way to OA after he became sober in AA, he was dismayed at being the only man in a roomful of women. “I didn’t hear what they were saying,” he admits. “I secretly ridiculed them for not understanding what the program is about.

“One day, one of the women I was especially critical of got up and shared about the need to detach herself from one of her children, who had a drug problem. That was exactly the situation my wife and I were facing. What that woman said showed me I hadn’t been working my AA program half as well as she’d been working hers. I made my amends to the whole group, took a sponsor, and became abstinent.”

**For today:** I listen to all who speak at meetings because I can never know in advance when someone will say just what I need to hear.

*~For Today, page 53.*

## IMAGE, REALITY, ACCEPTANCE

I stood in front of my bathroom mirror and surveyed my bare torso. “The years have not been friendly to me,” I thought.

Then the mental accuser said, “You haven’t been good to your body.” I began to feel badly and berate myself over past decades of bad eating habits and lack of exercise. Negative feelings kept growing; I felt like giving up. Then my Higher Power intervened with program thoughts.

I can’t change what has happened, neither the old surgery scars or the effects of losing 50 pounds since joining OA and becoming abstinent over two years ago. Also, I’m not in the market for body sculpting or other cosmetic surgery to make my body look more like I wish it did.

I had to come to peace with who I am, not what I don’t look like, and not obsess about it because obsessing would turn me to a regimen of diet, exercise, and as daily weighing and staring into the mirror wanting to change myself farther and quicker than was realistic under any circumstances. Not to mention that I’d turn into an unhappy shrew.

*(Continued on page 3)*

### Is OA for You?

Only you can answer that question. No one else can make this decision for you. We who are now in OA have found a way of life which enables us to live without the need for excess food.

We believe that compulsive overeating is a progressive illness, one that, like alcoholism and some other illnesses, can be arrested. Remember, there is no shame in admitting you have a problem; the most important thing is to do something about it.

If you decide you are one of us, we welcome you with open arms. Whatever your circumstances, we offer you the gift of acceptance. You are not alone anymore. Welcome to Overeaters Anonymous. Welcome home!

Go to <http://oregon-oa.org/meetings/> to find a meeting and learn more about recovery from compulsive eating.

## I AM ENOUGH, I DO ENOUGH, I HAVE ENOUGH

When is enough enough? Is there EVER enough? I remember reading in our literature about a person who prayed, "May this meal be enough." I try to adopt that prayer as my regular practice either before, after, or during a meal.

This short, five-word prayer has sparked the above questions in my heart and mind, as well as many more. What will it take to satisfy me? I can remember my Mom saying to me as at lunch I would ask what we were having for dinner, "You are not finished with one meal, and you are already worried about the next meal."

I have heard the disease of compulsive overeating as the "disease of more." How I could identify with that! And it applied in all areas of my life: food, spending, books, fun...on and on I could go. You get the picture.

So my heart cries--what will it take to satisfy me? I saw satisfaction as always coming from the NEXT book, the next person, the next magic bullet. Again my mother's question of 'aren't you ever satisfied' haunts me.

Perhaps you share this deadly disease with me.

This same attitude can spill over into what we think of ourselves. Do we so want to change, to be better, that we ignore areas that HAVE changed? I know I fall into this trap many, many times. It often takes someone reminding me that this or that HAS changed in my life. No, maybe I am not perfect, but isn't that bar a little too high for me?

Then do we truly believe we DO enough? Again, never satisfied with right now, we look forward to the time we do bigger and better things.

So, what is our solution? What are our remedies? How can we wholeheartedly KNOW we are enough, we do enough, we have enough?

I see a few different ideas. First of all I would ask us the question, "Are we appreciative of the things we have?" How often have I, for example, seen someone else wearing a purse just like mine, but maybe in a different color. Rather than thinking, boy would I love to have a purse like that, what if I thought--I am so grateful for my purse. I have a bit of money to put in it. It goes with so many of my clothes. Wanting more, when what I have is just what I need.

Then the question comes to me--am I living in the future or the past? I once had a Yukon Denali just like that one, or I will never have one again keeps me from fully experiencing what I have right here, right now. A meal, a new car, a fancy hairdo will never fill the inner hunger we all have inside us. A hunger for purpose, for connections, for strength beyond our own...for a Higher Power, you might say. We need to remember in Higher Power's eyes we are enough, we do enough, we have enough. May we have eyes to see it that way, as well!

~Jan

### 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.

### 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>.

## IMAGE, REALITY, ACCEPTANCE

(Continued from front page)

Slowly I began to pray the Serenity Prayer, and then mused on the principle of acceptance. Sanity eventually returned. There are certain actions I can take today to help change what I see, like abstinence and using an action plan that includes exercise, and attending meetings.

Later, when I went to a meeting and shared my struggle with body image and what actions I took, someone quite younger than I said, "I didn't think older people worried about body image."

You better bet we do--very much so. Of course, when I was a lot younger, body image had a lot more to do with sexuality. Anytime I began to lose weight, I thought about attracting the opposite sex. Part of me craved the attention, but part of me feared it. The overeating had built a defense around those feelings that losing the weight uncovered.

Now that I have lost weight, once again I have to come to terms with those feelings. These feelings are normal and show up now that I'm out of the food. One day at a time, I am learning about realistic expectations and setting boundaries.

I'm learning to laugh at myself as I accept what I look like today. Once my weight reached a healthy body weight, someone asked how I felt about myself. I said, "I'm just an older person whose skin no longer fits, but at a healthy body weight, I'm also much happier."

Another bonus OA has given me about accepting myself as I am now--I am more willing to speak at events and participate in activities at an Intergroup level. By following the principles of the program and not worrying about my body image, I know that, in time, my body will look a lot better and feel a lot better than it does now, and I'll have serenity, too.

~Rosanne K., Portland, OR

How has OA saved your life? Share your story of recovery. Email your submission to [newsletter@oregon-oa.com](mailto:newsletter@oregon-oa.com)

## Upcoming Events

OA Region 1 Convention at the Coast Plaza Hotel & Conference Centre in Calgary, Alberta, Canada  
Contact [calgaryconvention2016@gmail.com](mailto:calgaryconvention2016@gmail.com).

September 25: Special one-time meeting focused on night eating from 4:00 to 5:00 PM at MerleAnn's house, 4635 NE 33rd Ave., Portland, OR 97211. Those interested but unable to attend may contact [darcynmexico@gmail.com](mailto:darcynmexico@gmail.com).

October 1: Monthly speakers meeting, 7:00PM-8:30PM, at Girl Scouts, 9620 SW Barbur Blvd., Portland. Contact Ilene at 503 268-3064.

October 12: Oregon Intergroup Meeting, 7:00 to 8:30pm, at Girl Scouts, 9620 SW Barbur Blvd., Portland. Everyone is encouraged to attend.

October 16: Gratitude Workshop 1:00 to 4:00 PM with registration from 12:30-1:00 PM at the Education Center in Peace Health Hospital, Vancouver, WA. Contact Judy W. at 360-601-8390.

November 12: Half-Day Marathon. More details to come.

## 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.

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.

## EXPERIENCING THE 8TH STEP

While the 8th step seems to be centered around other people, in my experience, it is the first step towards forgiving and loving myself. This step gives us the gift of being able to look honestly at our relationships, how to forgive, and ultimately, how to fundamentally change ourselves to become more growth-oriented, helpful, and healthy human beings.

The first time I did the 8th step, I was in my early 20's, and I filled a three-ring binder full of names of people I had harmed, from the girl whose grandmother's ring I had stolen when I was five, to my parents from whom I stole money, to my boyfriend for yelling at him. The list was long, and I was deeply humiliated by my list of wrong-doings.

However, from that first 8th step, I learned the profound gentle space that one person can hold for another from my sponsor, who listened with patient ears and a gentle and discerning heart as she helped direct me as to what I should do for each amends. I learned that nothing I had done was so radically terrible that I would lose the respect of my sponsor, and that each action that I had once taken had a direction I could take to start to change that behavior.

In more recent 8th steps, the list is much shorter, but I am still always wowed by the grace and kindness my sponsors have treated me with as I do them.

I have also learned to always have myself on the list for any harms I have done myself mentally, physically, and spiritually. However, with each name that goes on the list, I also see new ways that I can be free of self-hatred and regret by knowing how to amend my behavior and grow in new and valuable ways.

On the flip side, hearing a sponsee share their experiences and past mistakes always allows me to grow as I ask God to help me guide them towards appropriate amends, and I have the opportunity to realize each time that I am not alone in being imperfect, though I am always perfect in the eyes of God. Each time this happens, my heart expands, as I am so grateful for the chance to be of service to another individual in such an intimate way, and to be deserving of another's trust.

For many newcomers, just reading steps 8 and 9 can cause tingles of fear or a desire to bolt out of the rooms. However, in my 15 years of being in OA, I can say with confidence that going through steps 8 and 9 are never anything short of transformative, and so all I can advise is to simply begin.

~Kat V., Hillsboro, OR

## Keeping an Open Mind

We all have a problem keeping an open mind. Whether we're dealing with a coworker whose ideas seem counterproductive or talking to a relative whose political ideas seem ridiculous, we are challenged to carefully consider other people's opinions and advice even when we don't want to.

There's a reason to keep an open mind. Even if we don't think we can learn something from one of the steps or from listening to someone share in a meeting, we can always be surprised. There is always the option to "take what you need and leave the rest." Sometimes we leave more, like when dealing with crazy relatives!

I know that I spent a lot of time rejecting paths to new ideas simply because I didn't like the person who brought them to my attention or I thought the concept sounded odd. But that wasn't working out for me.

When I joined OA, I was doubtful of many of the tools and people I came across. But I realized that my old "reject first" way of life needed changing. Since then I have been surprised over and over again what keeping an open mind has done for me. I give everything and everyone a chance now, knowing it could help my recovery.

~Ed.

### Looking for a new meeting?

The Saturday 10:00 a.m. meeting at St. Philip Neri Paulist Center is in need of attendance and support.