

A Serving of Hope

Volume 4 Issue 8

Oregon Intergroup of Overeaters Anonymous

August 2015

Promises and GIFTS

"The illusions I had as a compulsive overeater were at the root of my illness. When exposed to the bright light of reality these ideas—my old illusions—crumble into dust and blow away."

~For Today, page 134

I carried the illusions I brought with me to this program for many years. For example, if I were a "good girl," life would bring me no pain; when I married, I would be taken care of; I could control people, places, and things; being thin would solve all my problems; if I had enough willpower, I could stop eating.

When I came into Overeaters Anonymous, these illusions were exposed to the light of the Twelve Steps, and gradually they lost their hold over me. OA gave me the courage, hope, and clarity to face my life, one day at a time, without eating compulsively. Today I believe that living in reality carries with it the widest spectrum of feelings and challenges. When I keep the Twelve Steps close at hand, I have a chance to experience the promises and gifts of this program.

~Voices of Recovery, page 55.

The views expressed in this 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.

The OA Tools

I've been in OA for over two years now and when I attended my first meeting, I thought, "I don't have a huge problem with eating anymore. I'm almost all the way healed." Boy was I wrong! As usual I was believing a lie. I don't think I understood what abstinence meant or what it felt like to have peace and serenity.

The words, "Half measures availed us nothing" remind me that I cannot have abstinence if I'm not willing to strap on my OA tool belt and use the tools daily. I used to look at it as another inconvenience in my day that would get in the way of my free time. I did not have a willingness to sponsor or to help out at meetings because that would demand too much time and commitment. Now, I look at Step Twelve as a big part of my abstinence. My life is more fulfilling when I can reach out to others in this program and when I ask others for help.

One of the tools I have recently started using is e-mailing my daily food plan to my fellow OA accountability partner. This tool has helped me to achieve abstinence with fewer slips. It's amazing the unity I feel between us. At the same time that I found my food accountability partner, another OA member asked me if I could be her food sponsor. I feel so connected by having daily contact with these women. I am blessed to share life with them and I thank my HP for bringing them into my life. I understand now what it takes to maintain my abstinence. Thank you, HP, for providing the OA tools.

~Tina S, Vancouver, WA

Upcoming Events

August 15, Sponsorship workshop, 11:30am, Paulist Center at St. Philip Neri. Contact Shelby (503) 388-8638

August 22, "The Maybe Last Annual Pool Party @ George and Louise's", 11 am to whenever. Contact Louise or George at (503) 245-8506, or Louise at llainpdx@gmail.com.

September 5, Monthly speakers meeting, 7:00PM-8:30PM, at Girl Scouts, 9620 SW Barbur Blvd., Portland; contact Ilene 503 268-3064.

September 9, Oregon Intergroup Meeting, 7-8:30pm, at Girl Scouts, 9620 SW Barbur Blvd., Portland. Everyone is encouraged to attend.

September 18-20, Region 1 Convention: The Journey is the Destination, Riverhouse Hotel & Convention Center, Bend, OR. <https://sites.google.com/site/region12015convention/home>

What OA Has Meant To Me

Last October, after receiving a notice of a new OA meeting in my area, I decided to take a look. The meetings were convenient for me in regard to time, day and location. Everyone was extremely friendly at the first meeting I attended. The big surprise to me was that it was a very spiritual program. All my life I felt a close relationship to my Higher Power, but never considered I could call upon Him to help me control my compulsive overeating. In fact, I didn't really realize I had a disease!

After the meeting, I spent many hours reading the literature that had been given to me at the meeting and looking at the OA websites and doing more reading. The thing that really struck me was that I did indeed have a disease and yes, my HP was there to guide me if I just asked for guidance.

Those first three steps of OA became my salvation. I have never looked back. I am so grateful for the little nudge I got to go to that first meeting. The acceptance and welcoming of the members of OA give me such a feeling of belonging. I so look forward to my weekly meeting with "my family."

Every day I see the rewards of believing and trusting in my Higher Power. He brings me peace and contentment and a reason to live.

My life has changed in these last months. I am so blessed with understanding from family and friends. I have received so many "little miracles." Because of my new found wonderful relationship with my Higher Power, I have been able to maintain abstinence and know that if I have doubts or struggles, OA friends are just a phone call away.

We can all do it, just for today

~VZ

It Works If You Work It

The disease of compulsive overeating is cunning, baffling, and powerful. It uses any means possible to rob us of our program and recovery, manipulating us into continuing to use excess food for survival. It keeps us in the bondage of food, fat, overeating, and self-obsession. The disease cuts us off from the world and closes the pathway to God.

Our recovery is contingent on the elimination of compulsive overeating from our lives so that we can reopen that pathway and keep it clear. It's only through abstinence that we can do that.

The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous focuses on freedom from compulsive eating.

~Excerpt from *Abstinence*, page 58.

Step 8:

Making a List, Checking it Twice

I was hopeful that this was a one-time deal. That I would do that fearless and thorough inventory and proceed with the discovery of my character defects, knock them off and then determine, with my sponsor's help, my List of People I had Harmed and fix that. Can you tell I am a straight-laced rule follower?

Well as you undoubtedly guessed, that isn't how the 12 Step process worked for me. There is no one and done. I get to continue to uncover more character defects and not surprisingly run into amends problems sometimes with the same people I started with at the beginning. I do find that discouraging from a certain point of view. But if I turn that around, I can be grateful because I cannot deal with something I do not know. There is a person to whom I am related who is particularly hard for me. I wrote a sincere amends letter to him back in my first go round on Step 8. I was only able to do that because I prayed every day for this person for about 6 weeks. That helped me see that I did want all good things for him. Very liberating.

Ah, but wanting good things for him didn't translate necessarily into being able to do well in each other's company. I was pretty frustrated with my living amends. They did not go as I hoped. My sponsor tried to temper my expectations. He pointed out a couple of important things: expectations mean I am not letting go and, with some people, you both may need to limit your exposure.

So the net result is that I am continuing to gain compassion for this other person and for myself. Very slowly, glacially slowly, the ice is beginning to melt in my heart. Nice, small things happen that continue to create a fuller acceptance in me for this person. Since this is movement in a positive direction, I am encouraged. The 12 Steps seems to be a life-long, "apply as needed" every day kind of process, and so worth it.

~ Pat O.

Why Be a Sponsor?

"Life will take on new meaning. To watch people recover, to see them help others, to watch loneliness vanish, to see the fellowship grow up about you, to have a host of friends - this experience you must not miss."

~Alcoholics Anonymous, 4th Ed. page 89.

It's Up to Me

I knew I needed Overeaters Anonymous long before I learned of its existence. I used the term "food-aholic" and often thought, "I feel as if I'm strung out on drugs. I wish I were strung out on drugs so I could quit taking them. But I'm not on drugs, so what can I do?"

I had my stomach stapled and found that it simply turned me into a vomiter because after the surgery, even when I thought I ate correctly, excess acid would cause unbelievable pain and I vomited because that was the only relief I could find. I lost 60 of my 300 pounds and started right back up. Within a few months of surgery, it seemed the only things I could keep down were soda-pop and salty snacks, which I consumed by the gallon and by the pound bag.

A few years later, my husband found Alcoholics Anonymous and I was jealous because I saw him getting well and I was struck in my illness. (Even before AA, we spent more on junk food than on beer.) I even tried going to open AA meetings in the hope of hearing "food" instead of "alcohol." Often I was so inspired, I found myself telling someone about it - with a half-eaten donut in my hand.

Finally, at a Narcotics Anonymous meeting, I heard the leader say she started gaining weight after becoming sober from alcohol and drugs, and now she is in Overeater Anonymous. (NA was very understanding about my problem; speakers talked of "your drug of choice, be it alcohol, drugs or food.") I spoke to the woman after the meeting and arranged to accompany her to an OA meeting near my home town.

She never made it, but somehow I found the courage to go alone to that strange town, to a building whose exact address I didn't know. And I found home!

Those first few weeks were discouraging. I sat reading my OA literature and binging. Then one night, something I

was reading hit the little switch in my head and a light bulb popped on. I said, "God, please take away this compulsion to overeat." And it worked.

The next day, a man called and said my husband had won a new home computer at a drawing and could he come and deliver it. The day after that, our former landlord returned our deposit, which I had thought lost forever, and an extra fifty dollars for improving the property. Friday, someone called from a place where I'd had a job interview months before and said I was hired if I was still available.

Well, I thought, this OA program is magic. Here was my Higher Power doing for me all the things I could never have done in three lifetimes.

The next day, my dog bit the delivery man and I had to deal with the Health Department. The day after that, my husband slipped and came home drunk. The day after that, my prospective employer called and said the funding was mixed up and they couldn't hire me after all. And you know what? That is when I *knew* OA program is magic, because I still didn't want to overeat.

Today I know that I just have to keep working the steps, that the "easier, softer way" is to work all twelve just as fast as I honestly can. Through OA I know that my serenity doesn't depend on other people. When my best friend is working her OA program and my husband is working his AA program, things are heavenly. But when I am the only one working a program, I find that things can still be heavenly. It is up to me.

I used to be the sort of person who could win a million dollars and gripe about the income tax. Now I am the kind of person who is grateful to be a compulsive eater because it brought me to my Higher Power and a life that is joyous and free, no matter what's going on anywhere.

~December 1983, Lifeline Sampler, page 159.

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. Your anonymity will be respected at all times, and 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. Please consider virtual sponsorship today! Go to <http://www.oaregion1.org/sponsor-application.html> to get started.

Q2 2015 Contributions to OIG

This report appears quarterly and is group. If your group made a donation that is not included below, please contact the treasurer at treas@oregon-oa.org. A special thank you to all of the groups for their donations to help carry the message and support our OA service structure.

Meeting Name	Group Number	Donation Amount
Tualatin Thurs	00046	100.00
Dundee Mon	00796	204.00
Portland SE Mon	06652	200.00
Gresham Wed	07901	244.61
Vancouver Mon	11259	50.00
Beaverton Mon	22065	120.00
Philip Neri, Sat	23622	220.42
Salem, Sat	29424	102.25
Lake O, Wed/Fri	33618/ 33913	150.00
Portland SE, Sat 10am	36473	50.00
Seaview, Sat	36544	40.00
Canby, Tues	45836	200.00
McMinnville, Fri	49171	200.00
Portland SW, Fri	49679	40.00
Longview, Thur	50311	40.00
Portland NW, Sun	51093	40.00
Speaker Mtg	52186	21.00
Ocean Park, Thur	52810	60.00
Vancouver Wed	52977	46.50
Portland SE, Wed	53019	110.00
Woodburn, Mon	53628	87.00
Sponsor Meeting	53742	65.75

The Inside Track

One symptom of this disease is that we seek an external solution, when the real solution come from within. The outward methods I used to tackle the disease of compulsive overeating never had any permanence. At best, the methods were a temporary fix. The diets, therapies, and medications just stopped working for me. Confusion and frustration set in. No, there was no human solution.

Ultimately, I came to know that the answer I seek is truly the inner spirit - the spirit of God within me. The Twelve Steps tackle the job of clearing away the debris, a cleansing process that brings me closer to a fulfilling union with the spirit within. There is no external answer, just the internal one.

Each day, I remain open to the nurturing of that answer. Part of my daily prayer is that I may overcome any human frailty that blocks the internal answer. I stumble and fumble, impeding my own progress, but I can learn from this. Faith grows. Hope increases. New meaning comes to life.

If the disease of compulsive overeating brings us together, out recovery keeps us together. Together, as we move closer to the cell door to gain freedom, we notice that the key to the door is on the inside. God's light illuminates the way out for us. The inside track is our salvation: we are never alone.

~Ohio, Seeking the Spiritual Path, page 64.

Got CDs?

Our Intergroup CD library needs your help! A lot of our CDs have been checked out for a long time. We all need a chance to hear the experience, strength and hope found in our CD library.

If you have a CD from our library, please return it so others can strengthen their recovery. You can return a CD by either giving it to your IG Rep or mailing it to the PO Box on the front of the CD package.

Thanks so much for your help. For questions, contact Marie at 503-351-0917.

Calling All Meetings: Is Your Voice Being Heard?

Do you want to strengthen OA in your area and throughout Oregon? Make sure your voice is heard in full force 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. Oregon Intergroup meets the second Wednesday of every month at the Girls Scouts building, 9620 SW Barbur Blvd, Portland, OR 97219.