

A Serving of Hope

Volume 4 Issue 11

Oregon Intergroup of Overeaters Anonymous

November 2015

GRATEFUL ABSTINENCE

“How do we get through these times without overeating? We don’t panic. Instead we quietly reaffirm our personal guidelines and ask our Higher Power to help us continue living within them. Then we turn away from food and eating to focus our attention on our OA Fellowship and the Twelve Steps.”

~ The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous, page 23-24.

I have to accept that the yearning for excess or dangerous food will return from time to time. But I can get through these trying times with my abstinence intact if I remember three simple words: Think, Pray, Act. First, I think about my abstinence, remembering the life of hell my sobriety has saved me from. I remember with gratitude what my abstinent life has given me. Then I reaffirm my plan of eating. Next, I talk to my Higher Power, asking for the willingness and ability to protect my most precious possession — my abstinence. Then I take action by picking up one of the tools this program has given me and using it. If the compulsion remains, I repeat this process, using another tool when I get to the action step. This three-part process works, without fail, if I work it.

~Voices of Recovery, page 107.

We Know Pain - And Healing

My daughter gave birth to a beautiful baby girl last week. It was an extra special birth in that she was born in her embryonic sack (1 in 80,000 births). It should have been an exciting moment, but I had mixed feelings. You see, my daughter was a surrogate, so the baby wasn’t my granddaughter. I’ve known all along that this wasn’t our baby, but it still hit me hard.

I believe I dealt with any troublesome feelings during her pregnancy by focusing on the pride I felt for my daughter. She was giving a very nice couple the baby of their dreams. She had thought it through very well and it appears she was much more prepared to let the baby go than I was. I’ve always wanted a granddaughter from one of my girls and the mystery and beliefs of her “Caul” birth make me even more curious of the woman she will become.

My problem is that one of my self-defeating behaviors is to use logic on my feelings. My logic brain was telling me that I’ve known all along that this wasn’t my granddaughter so how could I be feeling the loss of something I never had? I looked for stories from other parents of surrogates and had found nothing. No one else to justify my illogical feelings. OA has given me

~ continued on page 3.

Upcoming Events

November 26, 8th Annual Thanksgiving Day Potluck, 1-5pm, OA meeting at 4pm., 4635 NE 33rd Avenue, Portland 97211. Bring instruments and games. Contact MerleAnn, 503-281-8947. Can’t make it? Calls are welcome!

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

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

December 12, 12th Step Within Day Event. Details to follow.

December 25, 24th Annual Christmas Day Potluck, 1-5pm, OA meeting at 4pm., 4635 NE 33rd Avenue, Portland 97211. Bring instruments and games. Contact MerleAnn, 503-281-8947. Can’t make it? Calls are welcome!

January 1, 15th Annual New Year’s Day Potluck, 1-5pm, OA meeting at 4pm., 4635 NE 33rd Avenue, Portland 97211. Bring instruments and games. Contact MerleAnn, 503-281-8947. Can’t make it? Calls are welcome!

January 23, 2016, Longview, WA. Region 1 Board meeting and marathon. Save the date!

Surrender vs. Submission

A word frequently heard in OA groups is surrender. It can best be described as letting go. The individual gives up personal rigidities, relaxes and admits to being beaten by compulsive overeating. The source of this feeling is almost always despair, which is so prevalent in newcomers to the group. It is all part of a crisis experience, with an overload of hopelessness. In the act of surrender, one does not just give up, but accepts a power greater than oneself, reducing the ego and admitting the need for outside help.

The “ego reduction” can be very profitable to the personality makeup of this person. It is important to differentiate between submission and surrender. In submission, an individual accepts reality consciously but not unconsciously. There is acceptance that one cannot, at the moment, conquer reality, but lurking in the unconscious is the feeling that “there will come a day when I will be able to handle my problem on my own.”

Submission implies no real acceptance of one’s inadequacy; on the contrary, it demonstrates conclusively that the struggle is still going on. Submission is, at best, a superficial yielding, with the inner tensions still present. When the individual accepts, on an unconscious level, the reality of not being able to handle compulsive overeating, there is no residual battle. Relaxation ensues with a freedom from strain and conflict. This freedom is the

aim of the OA groups, and complete surrender is manifested by the considerable degree of relaxation that is evident in the behavior of those who have achieved it.

Once compulsive overeaters surrender at the unconscious level, their compliance with the disciplines of the program does not lessen with time, leading to the inevitable regaining of weight. They continue to get the messages from the unconscious that the need for outside help will remain for a prolonged, if not indefinite, period. Their wholehearted cooperation is then forthcoming, and constructive action takes the place of skin-deep assurances that they will merely comply temporarily until the memory of their suffering and self-pity weakens and the need for compliance lessens.

Surrender, then, is an unconscious event. It is not willed by the individual. It can occur only when one becomes involved with one’s unconscious mind in a set of circumstances that signal the undeniable need for an external greater power. The definition of surrender can be understood only when all its unconscious ramifications and true inner meaning are glimpsed. Observed by others, such an individual manifests an inner calm and a “live and let live” attitude.

*~ Peter G. Lindner, MD, 1980,
excerpt from Overeater Anonymous, Third Edition,
Appendix C, A Disease of the Body, page 201-202.*

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.

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.

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.

We Know Pain - And Healing

(continued from front page)

the opportunity to hear other's stories and hear their feelings match mine. It has enabled me to logically see my feelings are normal. But there doesn't appear to be a group for lost surrogate grandchildren. I joked that OA had spoiled me.

The pre-recovery me would have tried to purge away these insensible feelings. But the feelings don't go away. They go into hiding as a way to keep me from purging anymore, just to pop up later much bigger and when I'm even weaker. The pre-recovery me had to carry around a "feeling wheel" because she had spent so long denying feelings, she no longer knew what they were. But I was aware that there were feelings and I knew I had to process them.

Feeling scared to admit to feeling a loss when all others around me told me I should be just feeling pride, I decided to bring it up in an OA meeting. Expecting a loss of words from my fellows and an inability to affirm my feelings, the opposite happened. The woman sitting next to me took my hand and confirmed that it was a big loss. Even the folks speaking to me after the meeting had genuine confirmations of my feelings.

This experience has taught me several lessons. The first is that using logic with feelings doesn't work!! Feelings will be what they are and we don't get to decide what form they take. The second is that I have come a long way in recovery: patience to identify feelings is far better than using food behaviors to numb them. The third is that although we OA fellows all have our own walks in life, and no matter how left-field-out of the ordinary my experience is, OAer's understand pain. They don't let their logic over-ride feelings so neither should I.

Thank you OA for everything!

~ Anonymous

What Makes OA Different?

OA offers us recovery from compulsive eating on three levels: physical, emotional and spiritual. The basis for stopping our compulsive eating behaviors—and staying stopped—is spiritual growth. We achieve this by working the Twelve Steps of OA and learning to live according to the principles underlying them.

~ *Dignity of Choice*, page 1.

This Love Alone

When I walked into my first meeting nine months ago, part of me had made a vital decision. For thirty years I tried to do it my way, and for a year my counselor had told me I should go to OA, but I resisted and resisted. I was full of self-righteousness and an "I know better" attitude. I clung to the idea that I was my own god while my life was sucked away, bite by bite and binge by binge. I went to that first meeting broken, with nothing left to fight against and nothing worth fighting for.

I have continued handing my will over since that day. I do what my sponsor suggests even if I don't want to. I stick to my food plan even when a little voice says, "Oh wouldn't that be much nicer than what you are having?" I read, write, make calls, and go to meetings even when I am tired.

The results are miraculous. Not only am I seven and a half months abstinent, but more important, I have growing inner peace, serenity, and feelings of belonging and wanting to be alive. For many years previously, I had wished for my death.

I know I regularly take back my will. But my Higher Power's love for me means I love myself and am more accepting of my human failings—accepting enough to talk about them so they aren't shameful, toxic secrets. My Higher Power always takes me back when I turn to Him. It is such a joy to have this unconditional acceptance and to believe it with every fiber of my being. This love alone transformed my life.

OA has opened up my heart and my soul. I feel blessed to be in this Fellowship of people who understand me and who are there for me even when I am not there for myself.

By working the Steps and using the Tools, I opened up to my Higher Power. I see now that He was always there, waiting for me to reach out. My Higher Power helped me get to that first meeting, and I am grateful for the world that has opened up for me.

~Rachel H., Lifeline, March 2015, page 23.

I Choose

I have received at least 10 invitations for holiday open-house events. It's nice to know people enjoy my company and want to invite me. However, it is overwhelming to think of all that food spread on tables, looking so tantalizing.

I must remember that just because the rest of the world seems to eat with reckless abandon (it's the holidays; I deserve it!), that doesn't give me the green light to change my food plan by even a morsel. And I need to remember this is not a punishment. Keeping the same

—continued on page 4.

Q3 2015 Contributions to OIG

This report appears quarterly. 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
Thur 6:00 PM Tualatin	00046	100.00
Fri 10:30 AM Beaverton	00706	50.00
Mon 7:00 PM Dundee	00796	100.00
Mon 12:00 PM Portland SE	06652	100.00
Mon 7:00 PM Portland NE	16216	487.80
Mon 12:30 PM Forest Grove	19903	60.00
Mon 12:00 PM Beaverton	22065	102.00
Sat 7:00 AM Portland SE	23622	56.01
Mon 5:30 PM Salem	26872	100.00
Wed/Fri 12:00 PM Lake Oswego	33618 / 33913	210.00
Tues 9:30 AM Beaverton	33814	500.00
Sat 10:00 AM Vancouver	34274	200.00
Sat 10:00 AM Seaview	36544	20.00
Wed 7:15 PM Portland SW	38889	50.00
Thur 9:30 AM Beaverton	41103	120.00
Thur 12:00 PM Portland NE	48990	245.31
Thur 7:30 PM Longview	50311	15.00
Thur 7:00 PM Silverton	51565	30.00
Wed 6:30 PM Portland SE	51751	111.00
Thur 12:00 PM Ocean Park	52810	240.00
closed meeting	52977	284.52
Mon 9:30 AM Woodburn	53628	50.00

I Choose (continued from page 3)

food plan during the holidays, just like any other time, is one of the greatest gifts I can give myself and those around me.

I know that if I start playing in the holiday goodies, I will end up back where I started with my face in a candy dish and my soul full of shame. This can only bring misery. I don't know about you, but to me that sounds like a pretty sad way to spend the holidays.

This year I choose to do the following: stick to my food plan, attend meetings, talk to my sponsor and other recovering compulsive overeaters, and use the tools and Steps to help me through this holiday period without picking up that first compulsive bite.

This program gives me more than I could ever ask for on a wish list—inner peace, hope and unconditional love.

~As edited and reprinted in *Lifeline*,
December 2007, page 14.

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>.

Third Step Prayer

God, I offer myself to thee—to build with me and to do with me as Thou wilt. Relieve me of the bondage of self, that I may better do Thy will. Take away my difficulties, that victory over them may bear witness to those I would help of Thy power, Thy love, and Thy way of life. May I do Thy will always!

~Alcoholics Anonymous, p. 63

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.