

# A Serving of Hope

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Oregon Intergroup of Overeaters Anonymous

December 2015

## POTENTIAL

*"In OA we have discovered that humility is simply an awareness of who we really are today and a willingness to become all that we can be."*

*~The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous, p. 60.*

OA has given me a newfound freedom, the freedom that comes as a result of practicing unconditional love and acceptance of the person I am today.

In my Fourth and Fifth Steps, I realized what character traits and behaviors had outlived their usefulness in my life. I saw that my old ways of reaching out to the world kept me from reaching my full potential. In Step Six, I became willing to let go whatever stood in the way of my being present to life.

I am powerless over fixing myself, but I am not helpless. I can pray for the willingness to be willing to surrender and allow the natural progression of change to unfold in God's time. I can even enjoy myself in the process.

OA has given me back my power. Today I choose to practice unconditional self-acceptance while I relish the mystery of change.

*~Voices of Recovery, page 15.*

## Time Flies

On Sunday March 15th, 2015 I attended my first OA meeting. I was beyond nervous and overwhelmed with my debilitating shame of being a compulsive overeater. Before the previous Wednesday with my therapist, I didn't know such a group existed. This was going to be the last thing I tried before resigning to a surgical solution. Being overweight since I was 7, I'd tried just about every diet or "magical fix" available. Sometimes I could "be good" for several months, other times a week or two would pass before I succumbed to the seductive numbing that binging provided. Each failure chipped away at what little self-esteem I had and the mean girl in my head would remind me that I was worthless and ultimately unlovable. So, as I walked into The Alano Club that morning, the mean girl was telling me I was wasting my time.

The room was full of comfy seating and several people were already there. I was greeted and warmly welcomed as I chose a seat I thought was towards the back so I could silently observe. The meeting started and to my dismay I found that the leader was seated about a foot away. "Great," I thought, "now everyone will see me." I had been counting on my invisibility so I could potentially sneak out if I didn't like what I heard. The man welcomed everyone to the meeting and

*~ continued on page 3.*

## Upcoming Events

December 12, Take a break from the Holiday Hustle and Bustle, 1-4pm, 12th Step Within Day Event, Speakers and Collage, Beaverton Community Center/ Community Room, 12350 SW 5th Street, Beaverton, OR 97005. Contact Nancele, 971-317-6343.

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

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

January 23, 2016, Tired of Yo-Yo Dieting?, 10am-noon; Session on Carrying the Message, 1-3pm, Cowlitz PUD Auditorium 961 12th Avenue, Longview, WA. Contact Nancele, 971-317-6343

## Body Serenity

I am a recovering Anorexic and Bulimic. Just saying that gives me chills as it took me so long to get to the point of accepting that. Recovery hasn't been a straight, clean shot for me. In the process of getting my serenity, I put on more weight than the doctor charts would like. Would I like to lose some of it....yes. But here lays the problem.

I know how to lose lots of weight very fast, but it is in no way healthy for me. So I have become content with maintaining where I'm at. Recently, I started to hear the term "fat serenity" in my OA meetings. I was able to leave that phrase on the table as I knew it wasn't one that would be good for me to take to heart. But life happens, and a few weeks ago my eating disorder decided to take the term and beat me up with it. It was a very hard fight as I started to spend time noticing my weight. But I fought back, pulling out every recovery tool I had. I talked about it in meetings; I shared it with my sponsor; I talked about it with my fellows on the phone and I wrote about it. I believe I won that fight and now I have more strength in my recovery than before.

My OA program is not about fat, it's about serenity. When I focus on the fat, I become obsessed with weight loss. I spend all my free time exercising and

forget to balance my life with sedate activities such as playing the piano, knitting, writing and doing service for others. When I'm focused on weight loss, I count every calorie I eat trying to stay alive on the fewest possible. I forget that food is fuel and that I can enjoy food without abusing it. When my focus is on weight loss, I forget that my body does amazing things for me and isn't my enemy, but the container for my soul. When my focus is on weight loss, I start to believe that others will not love me, nor will they accept me at the weight I'm at now. I come to believe that the thinner I am, the better a person I am. I lose sight of the inner things that make me special. I forget to love myself, to love others and to accept love from others. I do this because I am a compulsive dieter and I lose my serenity.

The bottom line in my recovery is to focus on "body serenity." If I'm not willing to accept my body size now, I'm in trouble. I must keep my focus on who I am and not on what I look like. I must keep focused on doing the right thing with my food and food behaviors. I must stay focused on my HP and loving others. And if my HP decides to change my body size, I must accept it and be happy. Being happy is a choice for me and no matter what society says, it's the one I choose. May we all find "Body Serenity."

*~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](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.

### 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.

### 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.

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](http://oregon- oa.org) or call (971) 317-6343.

## Time Flies (continued from front page)

shared his story.

I was shocked. His admissions were my deep, dark secrets. He talked about his life before program and how powerless he was over his compulsions. The more he revealed the more uncomfortable I became, because it was glaringly obvious I belonged there. Then he spoke about the serenity and abstinence he'd found in OA. How the 12 Steps had granted him freedom from the prison his life had become.

As others shared I felt my walls crumbling. These people were beautiful, smart, and, in some cases, thin, but they were struggling. I would have never guessed the inner turmoils of these individuals who looked like they had it all. They no longer seemed like strangers and I suddenly had the urge to be seen.

My voice was shaky and quiet as the small bravery in me volunteered to share. With eyes downcast, I repeated the harsh words of the mean girl who'd berated me for over two decades. I truly believed I was worth less than someone skinnier than me, and my accomplishments were nullified by my lack of self-control. Tears flowed down my cheeks as I confessed my greatest fears, "I feel so hopeless and alone. Why would anyone love me? I'm just a waste of space."

After the conclusion of the meeting, members offered hugs and commiserations. They told me to keep coming back and give the program a chance. The warmth, love, and acceptance I felt in that room inspired me to attend more meetings. With each passing day, my gratitude for the people and the program swelled.

Today I have 6 months of abstinence, a feat I never thought possible. My sponsor is the most wonderful woman and had been the first one to welcome me to my first meeting so many months ago. The mean girl in my head is much quieter now and easier to ignore. I am no longer lonely or hopeless; I no longer have to be a slave to my disease. Letting go was one of the hardest things I've ever had to do, and I still try to take control sometimes, forgetting there is a Power greater than myself to take care of me.

The Sunday morning meeting at The Alano Club is now my home meeting and it's my turn to welcome newcomers who may be unsure of themselves. I will never forget my first meeting and the feeling of coming home.

~Hannah

## Why Do Service?

"Service is slimming."

That's a quote I hear around program all of the time, but is it true? For me, I suppose that the answer is: sorta. It certainly doesn't hurt to do service and I don't think that my program would be as strong without it, but like all things now, I must put healthy boundaries around my service and I must remember that service is just one of the many wonderful tools I have to work this program and the miraculous 12 Steps.

Service gets me out of my head and gets me to focus on where I can be most useful. Service keeps me coming back when I don't want to or feel as if I don't need to. Service even gives me something to do with all of the time I have since I don't fill it with my compulsions anymore.

The simplest service you can give is just showing up to a meeting. Knowing there are other compulsive eaters out there like myself who have found a solution to our common problem bolsters my recovery each time I go.

Service may or may not be slimming, but it is definitely rewarding. So, the next time you're asked, say yes to service; big or small the recovery you get is immeasurable.

~Christina

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Dear God,  
If Today I Lose My Hope,  
Please Remind Me  
That Your Plans  
Are Better Than My Dreams

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## 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>.

## Welcome Home

After two years in program and a sixty-seven-pound weight loss, I awoke one morning believing I was cured. This was the first insane thought before the first compulsive bite.

It took six years of overeating and suffering for me to make it back to OA, although I tried to several times. I'd go to meetings searching for a person or sponsor who would say the right thing and fix me. I thought someone else should be responsible for my recovery — or blamed for the lack of it. I didn't realize I had to be willing.

The geographic cure didn't work. Neither did diets. Self-control was nonexistent. I was powerless over food and completely miserable. I continued to pray for an answer even though I thought HP had given up on me.

Three and a half months ago, I read a notice in the local newspaper. Someone was starting a new OA meeting in our small town. Little did I know that this person would become my sponsor and dear friend. I went to this meeting and came home abstinent!

I'm back home again with my OA family. I've learned a lot in the past six years, including the biggest lesson of all: I can't live without OA. In the last three and a half months I've experienced God-given abstinence, recovery from my disease and an understanding of the program I didn't get the first time around. And I've made many wonderful friends.

In our world of fast foods and quick fixes, my great hope was always an overnight change, a magic pill, an easier, softer way. I was too impatient to wait and too lazy to work long and hard to make it happen. This, I'm grateful to say, is what I used to be like. One thing is for sure — breaking old habits doesn't come instantly.

Nothing takes longer or requires greater effort than practicing the principles of the program in all my affairs. Not is there anything more satisfying than a life lived fully, free from compulsive overeating.

Thanks HP, I'm glad you waited for me!

*~Texas, A New Beginning, page 26.*

## Light at the Top of the Pit

Not so long ago, I lived my life as though I were lying at the bottom of a deep, dark pit. When I looked up, I could see sunlight at the top of this pit, but it was far, far away. Most of the time I did not have the energy or the motivation to even lift myself off the floor. I did not have any strength. It seemed like I only had barely enough strength to breathe. Occasionally, I would try to get up and crawl up the side of the pit. I would only get a few inches off of the bottom when the dirt would break loose, and I would fall again. Then, finally, I gave up trying. But I always looked up and saw sunlight at the top of the pit. I didn't know back then what that sunlight represented. I did not find that out until I walked through the doors of OA.

In OA I discovered, with the help of the loving, caring Fellowship and the Twelve-Step program, that the sunlight was God. In my whole life, I never believed in a God; I never believed in any higher power at all until I was forty years old and discovered OA. Once I found God, He gave me an immeasurable amount of freedom, strength, and energy. He gave me strength to climb out, one hand above the other and one step after the other. One day at a time, I crawled out of that pit.

The closer I came to the top, the more beautiful the sunlight was: the sunlight that represented God's love for me. I would have never found God if it had not been for the wonderful people I met in OA. The unconditional love I received, the caring, and the sharing of experiences turned my life around - literally, completely around.

I've been in OA for one year, and I've just completed going through my Twelve Steps. I have a wonderful,

caring, loving sponsor I can turn to and a wonderful Fellowship that I've found in OA. I now have a patient, loving, and strong God and tried to live my life according to his plan for me, I began to lose the weight. I began to pray that my character defects be removed. My obsession with food was removed.

One day at a time, my whole life has changed. I've lost 87 pounds, and I now exercise every day. I love the support and the sharing at OA meetings. I try to attend four meetings a week, and I want to express how grateful I am to all of the Fellowship at all of the meetings. I'm grateful to OA for showing me that there is a Higher Power, a loving and caring God who can and will change your life.

Don't give up. God is out there; all you have to do is ask for help and He will give it to you. I am living proof of that. I do have occasional slips and relapses, but I know deeply in my heart that I will never go back to the way I was before I found God, before I found OA. I never want to lose the spirituality I now have. I know that a slip or a relapse can happen, and I tell myself, "This too shall pass," and it does.

I wrote this story for the atheists who are struggling with compulsive overeating and don't know where to turn or what to do. In addition, I wrote to convey this message to younger women: don't wait! You don't have to wait until you're forty years old to walk through the doors of an OA meeting. The sooner you attend the meetings, the sooner you can start, with God's help and guidance, to turn your life around. Believe me, there is light at the top of that pit, and that light is God. May you find Him now.

*~Pennsylvania, Seeking the Spiritual Path, page 112-114.*