

A Serving of Hope

Volume 3 Issue 1

Oregon Intergroup of Overeaters Anonymous

January 2014

commitment

Your commitment to abstinence from compulsive overeating is the most important thing in your life without exception! You may believe other things come first, but if you do not abstain from compulsive overeating and practice moderation at meals, you may destroy your chance of finding health, happiness, self-understanding, and peace of mind. If you are convinced that everything in life depends upon your practice of abstinence, you almost certainly will achieve these goals."

~ OA pamphlet: Before You Take That First Compulsive Bite, Remember...

These words remind me that abstinence requires commitment and consistency. Commitment means I put abstinence first—before anything or anyone. This may sound selfish, but saying abstinent is the only way I can take my focus off food and put it on others. Commitment means I plan ahead for the right foods at the right times and do the spiritual work that allows me to access my Higher Power. Consistency means I recommit to abstinence each day - no excuses. These words remind me that I am not the victim of a disease about which I can do nothing. I alone am responsible for accessing the Higher Power that keeps me abstinent.

~Voices of Recovery, page 159

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.

Formula For Living

With God's grace, I've had five and one half years of clear and clean abstinence. For a person who couldn't go one day without bingeing for up to three hours, this is nothing less than a miracle!

Coming into the program, I accepted the First Step in its entirety. I still do. I know with all my heart that I am powerless over food, and that taking the first compulsive bite will return me to a life marked by despair, low self-esteem, poor health, and a fat body.

Even more impressive than the gift of abstinence is the fact that I now live comfortably without excess food. All of the credit for that goes to the remaining eleven Steps of the Overeaters Anonymous Twelve-step program.

For years it seemed as if I couldn't get full no matter how much I ate. I've come to see that food could never fill the void I had; it was a spiritual sustenance that I needed. By working the Steps, I've tapped into a Power that rests quietly within. Truly, it is a gift of the Twelve Steps.

Besides the Twelve Steps, another guide I live by is a little formula my sponsor taught me: $E + R = O$. The event plus my response equals the outcome.

~continued on page 3.

Upcoming Events

January 17-19: OA's 54th Birthday Party Celebration, Four Points by Sheraton LAX, Los Angeles, Ca. oabirthday.com

January 25: Sponsorship Workshop, 10am - 3:30pm, Lake Oswego UCC, 1111 Country Club Road, Lake Oswego. Registration 9:30am. Contact Margie 503-807-0201

March 14-16: Serenity Retreat, Twin Rocks Conference Center, Rockaway Beach, OR. Early Bird Registration due Feb. 10. Balance due March 1st. Scholarships available. Email serenityretreat@oregon-oa.org or call Vee at 503-449-6005 or Marie at 503-639- 0149.

Monthly Speakers Meeting on the 1st Saturday of each month from 7:00PM-8:30PM, at Girl Scouts, 9620 SW Barbur Blvd., Portland; contact Ilene 503 268-3064.

WSO Board Of Trustees 2014-2016 Strategic Plan

Three-Year Focus: Our Primary Purpose

Getting and staying abstinent ♥ Carrying OA's message to those who still suffer within and outside the Fellowship ♥ Working the Steps to stay abstinent and recover ♥ Personal responsibility: I am the message ♥ The message: We abstain from compulsive eating and work OA's 12 Steps to stay abstinent and recover physically, emotionally, and spiritually. ♥ We practice the principles in all of our affairs ♥ We are happy, joyous, free, whole and well, and we are abstinent under ALL circumstances.

Action Plan: 2014 Goal Tasks

- Increase focus on actions required for abstinence: Create an Abstinence 101 Program: Workshops, Guidelines, Strong Abstinence Checklist
- Increase focus on the necessity of working all 12 Steps: Create a Steps 101 Program; Create a Sponsorship Training Workshop; Create workshop format using 12 Step Workbook and 12&12 Book
- Increase focus on individual's responsibility to carry the message: Promote Responsibility Pledge; Create a Sponsorship 101 Program; Write "Tips for Passing the Message."

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.

How much is your recovery worth to you?

Our disease tells us, "There will never be enough."

Scores of OA members worldwide have discovered that their fears of not having enough food, money, security or love have been lifted by a power greater than themselves. Experience has shown that OA recovery is far stronger than the debilitating disease of compulsive overeating, which also kept us captive to shame and insecurity about the future.

When describing the benefits of recovery, many members point to the promises listed in Alcoholics Anonymous (the Big Book), including: "Our whole attitude and outlook upon life will change. Fear of people and of economic insecurity will leave us" (p. 84).

To know the true freedom of recovery is to know that we can make sensible and necessary financial contributions to OA at all levels, and that this investment in our Fellowship ensures we can continue to carry the message to the still-suffering compulsive eater.

Our Seventh Tradition states that OA is fully self-supporting, accepting contributions only from OA members. While no fees or dues will ever be required for membership, OA needs help to keep its rooms open, provide opportunities for fellowship and spread its message to still-suffering compulsive overeaters.

~ From "Seventh Tradition of OA pamphlet, page 3.

OIG invites you to celebrate your recovery by making a contribution on your OA birthday. Consider donating a dollar per year of your recovery to keep OA available for all who seek recovery from this illness.

Need a Sponsor?

OIG maintains a list of members who are available to sponsor. Request one today!

Need a Sponsee?

Are you ready to pass it on, but need help finding a willing member of the fellowship to sponsor? Get your name added to our sponsor list!

To request the sponsor list or to add your name as an available sponsor, send an email to sponsorlist@oregon-oa.org or call Cherish at 503 453-0212.

Formula for Living

~Continued from front page.

Before my recovery began, I responded to most events by overeating. Relationships, jobs, vacations, health problems - were all dealt with by compulsive eating. And the outcome was always the same-remorse, fear and pain.

The E + R = O formula showed me that I needed to learn healthier responses to live and its events Today, prayer is my first response to any uncertain situation in my life. That is followed by action, which may be to call a sponsor, go to a meeting, write, wait, or talk to the people involved

When I follow the formula, I feel positive about the outcome.

Now, I resolve my problems by practicing the principles of the program and by utilizing my sponsor's formula. That isn't to say I don't have difficult times, but I do always have tools to deal with whatever life presents.

Being abstinent, thin, healthy, and full of life is a direct result of the Overeaters Anonymous program. It is teaching me to stand in the light, where the nourishment I need is always available.

~ Corona del Mar, California USA

Reprinted from *Abstinence*, 2nd edition, page 41.

Tradition One

Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon OA unity."

There are at least three factions of OA. One emphasizes a strict, disciplined food plan. Another professes working the Steps and allowing God to remove the food problem. A third group falls somewhere in between. I know OA members in all three groups who have great recovery. What is the right way? What is the OA way? What is the message we are suppose to carry?

The only message I can carry is my own recovery. I do not need to have everyone to recover "my way." You need the freedom to recover "your way." The only thing we need to have in common about our recovery lies within the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. We cannot legislate recovery; we cannot even accurately define recovery, but we recognize it when we see someone living it. Let us rejoice when we see fellow sufferers recovering in Overeaters Anonymous, thankful they have found their way. Let us be willing to try a different approach if our way is not working, Let's be open-minded and non-judgemental. The program is broad enough for all of us to do whatever is necessary.

~ *Voices of Recovery*, page 5.

Measuring Recovery and Abstinence

Numbers – human beings are obsessed with numbers. Age, bank balances, dress sizes, weight, time – the list of things we measure is nearly endless. I find that numbers are an easy way to keep score but lousy goals by themselves. How can I truly measure my quality of life, my health or spiritual development with a number?

At almost every OA meeting I'm confronted with numbers – most of which I carry in my own head. But the reality is that my program, my spiritual growth cannot be measured by a number. I know I weigh less than I did a few weeks or even a few years ago. My real progress is not a numbers game. I am spiritually more aware and more honest than ever before. I am more confident, more peaceful and open than before and I love it! Too often I fall victim to valuing the numbers instead of living life to the fullest.

At a recent Intergroup meeting, someone suggested that members could contribute a dollar for every year of abstinence in order to improve our cash flow. Now this strikes me as nice gesture and perhaps even a worthy idea to implement, but then I thought: How do put a number to the value of my personal recovery? My recovery and program are priceless. No amount of money could purchase a day of abstinence. No number on a scale can equal the spiritual growth and the quality of life I now have.

The conclusion I've reached is that numbers are very important tools to keep score. For me 10, 11 and 12 are the most important numbers because my 10th, 11th and 12th Steps keep my program vital and growing. These numbers help me judge my recovery, which, of course, is beyond measure.

~ Steve H.

Reprinted from the 12th Stepper, 02/11.

Compare, or Identify?

From the story, “A Flower of the South” in the book *Alcoholics Anonymous* it reads, “I wish I could tell you how and why AA (or in my case OA) works, but I don’t know. I only know it does — if you desire it with your whole heart and without reservation” (3rd Ed., p.384).

When I came to OA, I did have a desire. At the time I was binge eating daily until I passed out. It had not always been that way. There were times when I would just binge once in a while. This seemed normal to me. Didn’t everyone eat like this?

For years, I played games with my overeating, never wanting to stop and look at what I was doing to myself. My life seemed good enough. I was a homeowner, I had a six-figure income, I had friends, and I even went to church on occasion. I was normal. I just had a little problem with food. If I could figure this thing out I would be fine.

So I had to try everything. I even tried acupuncture, special herbs, and visualization therapy. I was a wreck on

the inside, but to friends and family I seemed happy. I worked hard to keep a smile on my face because inside I was crumbling. The more weight I gained, the more I crumbled. But how was I going to stop?

Thankfully, I met someone who told me about OA. This person explained that it was a 12-Step program that focused on emotional, physical, and spiritual recovery. So I went to a meeting. I had no idea that my life was about to change. I had my reservations about this program. Could I really do this? Plus the fact that I only saw one other African-American in the room didn’t help. How could I fit in? These people and I have nothing in common.

Then, I listened to what they had to say about our illness. An ILLNESS! You mean I am sick? I kept going to meetings and I even got a sponsor because these people had something I wanted. Not only did they have weight loss, but also looked peaceful—happy. I had been thin before, but I was never truly happy with my life.

They had what I wanted.

Then came time for the 2003 OA Convention. There was a speaker from Florida, one from California, and many local speakers. The one thing they all had in common was a solution. The solution was in the rooms of OA. I finally understood what the Big Book means when it says, “We are people who normally would not mix. But there exists among us a fellowship, a friendliness, and an understanding which is indescribably wonderful.” I felt that connection at convention and even more so now at my meetings.

It does not matter what my background, race, sex, religion or financial status is. It never has. My disease is an equal opportunity employer and it will destroy me if I choose to let it. What I heard from those speakers was that recovery is a daily choice, a commitment. The speakers not only shared their pain and struggle, but they also shared years and years of recovery. Recovery that happened one day at a time.

The convention gave me hope.

~ Tracey A.

*Reprinted from Society Pages,
9/2004*

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.