

A Serving of Hope

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Oregon Intergroup of Overeaters Anonymous

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RECOVERY BEGINS WITH ABSTINENCE

"Clearly, if we are to live free of the bondage of compulsive eating, we must abstain from all foods and eating behaviors which cause us problems."

- The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous, pp. 2-3

When I was new to OA, my "old ideas" were usually 180 degrees from the things I heard at meetings and read at the literature. The idea of being in bondage to certain foods and eating behaviors was in striking contrast to my old idea that these foods and behaviors were "treats." The key for me was getting honest enough to acknowledge that they really were causing me problems.

At first, I tried to argue that I needed to eat this way because of my problems. But as I abstained one day at a time, I began to see those problems vanish from my life, "sometimes quickly, sometimes slowly." And as this happened, I began to see the connection between my relationship to food and the problems. Now it begins to make sense: anything that causes problems in my life holds me in bondage. Abstinence opens that prison door and makes all of the miracles of recovery possible.

~Voices of Recovery, page 190

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.

Faith Versus Fear

It is with total awe that I move into this day. I wonder at God and the mysterious ways in which He moves. As I observe two of my friends and the turns their lives are taking, I see one with faith and one without. Acceptance dominates one friend's life, as she searches for ways to cope. She works towards letting go and letting God do for her what she cannot do for herself. To watch this spiritual growth in action is a gift from God to me. I see her fear being replaced with serenity as her world changes drastically, yet she is moving forward one day at a time.

My other friend becomes overwhelmed at her news and questions why God is doing this to her. She is devastated and afraid. She feels alone and doesn't know where to turn. She looks at me and cries, "What am I going to do?"

My Higher Power gives me the best answer. "You'll take this one day at a time and trust that God has a plan. There is a reason; ours is not to question why."

Faith is a gift from God, and as I work in recovery, I feel blessed. My life is good; I am able to accept that which God has given to me, and I am grateful. Now, instead of trying to fix things for my friends, I accept my limitations and offer support and understanding. But I turn the hard things over to God and pray for peace, health and prosperity for all who mean so much to me. I find comfort in knowing that God will carry them, too.

~ D.B., London, Ontario Canada. Reprinted from Lifeline 11/97

Upcoming Events

February 22: Unity Day, 10:30am - 2:30pm, Bethel Congregational UCC, 5150 SW Watson, Beaverton. Registration 10am. Contact Toni 503-750-1680.

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

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.

Abstinent from Approval-Seeking

It's been ten years since I started abstaining, though I came to OA more than seventeen years ago. My abstinence, of course, has never been perfect. In fact, I often question the definition of abstinence, as I question other practices and concepts in OA: Is fat serenity okay? Should OA endorse a food plan? Should abstinence be mandatory before speaking at meetings? Can you still be overeating and absorb the program? Is this really a progressive disease? Is OA the only way to recover? The list goes on and on, and so does the debate.

Ten years ago, I decided that answers and explanations aren't necessary to recover. I sought sponsors whom I respected and tried to incorporate their suggestions into my program. It was, still is, okay for me not to buy everything I see and hear in OA. I have had to find my own way. This is the greatest lesson I learned in OA: to know myself and my weaknesses, to be

honest about myself, and take responsibility for the choices I make.

I no longer seek approval from other OA members. My lesson was to learn not to be so susceptible to what others think of me and, in turn, not to judge what other people are doing. They, too, need to find their own way.

It is ironic that the people who adamantly and passionately advocate their positions and ideas in OA are often the ones who later leave the program.

As other members have noted, it does concern me that meetings can get bogged down in extraneous literature, ideologies and psychobabble. The simple, unadulterated Twelve-Step program works, and it leaves a lot of room for individual differences and beliefs. We can all grow in our own ways. Let's keep it simple.

~ D.S., Manchester, N.H., reprinted from Lifeline, 11/97.

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.

Podcasts

Need an instant pick-me-up? Want something to listen to as you do the dishes or take a walk? Here are some helpful sites made just for our fellowship. Download to your iPod, burn on a CD to share, or just listen through your computer. If you find them helpful, explore other OA sites and listen to their offering of podcasts!

www.voiceamerica.com/episode/65243/100-pounds-to-lose-is-there-hope-for-me-in-oa. This site also has many other speaker episodes. (Interview style.)

www.oalaig.org/speakers-podcasts/laig-event-speakers-bureau.html Several speakers at special events and workshops such as 'Thanksgiving in the Park', 'Mens's Retreat' and 'Steps 1, 2, and 3.'

www.oa.org/oapodcasts Lots of recovery here.

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.

IN MEMORIAM: Rozanne S., Founder. Overeaters Anonymous
July 15, 1929—January 16, 2014

“A journey of a thousand miles must begin with a single step.”
 (For Today, p. 311)

With one step into a 1958 Gamblers Anonymous meeting, Rozanne S., the founder of Overeaters Anonymous, set foot on her worldwide journey to bring help and hope to thousands of people struggling with compulsive eating. Rozanne’s journey has come to an end. The Board of Trustees and the World Service Office of Overeaters Anonymous pay tribute to the woman whose energy, vision, determination and compassion gave birth to OA in 1960. With the help of many others, hand in hand, she nurtured OA for 54 years.

Rozanne was born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, on July 15, 1929, to parents who valued education and hard work. They instilled those values in Rozanne. When she was 12, the family moved to Chicago. Already she felt insecure about her weight and herself. At 18 and a junior at the University of Chicago, she thought being thin was the way to boys and happiness; she dieted from 142 to 118 pounds. A better fit, she thought, for her 5 foot 2 inch height. The boys came, and her grades plummeted. She left the university, enrolled in business school and regained the weight she had lost. A year later, she returned to the university and earned her degree.

She began work as a producer’s secretary, first in summer stock and then in New York City. She returned to Chicago two years later and became a fashion copywriter for a department store. Her love of writing flourished. Seeking a warmer climate, she moved to Los Angeles and reveled in her job as assistant advertising manager for a chain of department stores. Despite her success, low self-esteem plagued her, and she continued to suffer from compulsive overeating.

January 1955 opened the door to love, and by the end of the year, she and Marvin S. married. The births of daughters Debbie and Julie followed. (Marvin passed away in November 1999.) In November 1958, she saw a television program profiling a new Twelve-Step program, Gamblers Anonymous. She and Marvin took a friend-in-need to a meeting, not realizing it was she who would find salvation. She thought, “I’m just like that . . . Their compulsion is with gambling and mine is with food, but now I know I’m not alone anymore!” (Overeaters Anonymous, Second Edition, p. 11). She realized she wasn’t “wicked or sinful.” She had a disease, and it had a name:

compulsive overeating.

However, no groups existed for compulsive overeaters. A year later, in desperation she returned to another Gamblers Anonymous meeting where the founder encouraged her to pursue her idea of starting a Twelve-Step program for compulsive overeaters. On January 19, 1960, Rozanne and two friends convened the first meeting of Overeaters Anonymous. (For more of Rozanne’s personal story of recovery, see “Keep Coming Back: Rozanne’s Story,” Overeaters Anonymous, Second Edition, p. 7.)

Rozanne became OA’s visionary, always searching for new ways to reach out and carry the recovery message. She abandoned her initial attempts to rewrite the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions for compulsive overeaters, relying instead on the universality of the original Steps and Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA).

Early on she recognized the media’s value in carrying the message. She coaxed the producers of a syndicated television show to feature OA. On November 1, 1960, seven OA members appeared on the show; it produced a significant jump in OA membership. With meetings in her home, endless hours dealing with correspondence and counseling and cajoling on the phone, papers piled high in her dining room, and hours spent on financials, Rozanne’s life, with Marvin’s support, became OA. But “together we can,” and with increasing membership and helping hands, together she and OA members grew the organization.

Rozanne brought significant change to OA’s diversity, its outreach and its recovery program. She suggested OA hold its first Conference in August 1962. In 1961, OA had voted to ban men. Rozanne disagreed. With the Conference Committee’s approval, she invited A.G., a male Texan and co-founder of Gluttons Anonymous, to attend. Gluttons Anonymous merged with OA at the Conference, and thus began the welcome of men into OA.

The announcement of the upcoming Conference appeared in the first OA Bulletin, written by Rozanne and precursor to OA’s Lifeline magazine. She thought of the name Lifeline when imagining a lifeboat next to a huge ocean liner at sea.

A first Board of Trustees (BOT) emerged from the first Conference, and members also voted to hold an annual May Conference. The OA

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IN MEMORIAM, (continued from page 3)

Convention grew out of a day of sharing experience, strength and hope at the first Conference.

In 1979, after Rozanne expressed concern for helping international OA members, the first Conference International Committee became a reality with Rozanne as chair. She also served on the BOT and as National Secretary.

Rozanne wrote many literature pieces for OA, including the original To the Newcomer pamphlet (1966) to orient newcomers; I Put My Hand in Yours (1968) to give information on how to start and strengthen groups; and

Beyond Our Wildest Dreams (1996) to share OA's history. A DVD interview titled Reflections: A Visit with OA's Founder and a CD compilation of speeches And Now a Word From Our Founder, Five WSBC Speeches brought Rozanne's insights and hope to members at large.

Rozanne's compassion for and understanding of the emotional, physical and spiritual challenges faced by compulsive eaters have touched people worldwide. She leaves an enduring legacy that will continue to inspire and heal those who still suffer.

~Reprinted from www.aa.org

Step 2

Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.

How have we who were not believers in God come to believe in a Higher Power?

It usually started as we sat in an OA meeting and experienced the camaraderie of our fellow compulsive overeaters. Here were people who understood us and cared about us. We could be totally honest about ourselves and they still accepted us unconditionally. This acceptance grew into love, carrying with it a power that seemed to stay with us as we left our OA meetings. It was not too great a leap of faith to believe that this shared love was a power greater than ourselves that could lead us to sanity.

For all of us... coming to believe was something that happened as we began taking actions which others told us had worked for them. Whether or not we believed these actions would work for us or not did not seem to matter. Once we took the action and saw it work, we began to believe. Then we tried other suggestions and our lives began to be transformed.

This willingness to act on faith, then, was the key to step two. It was the beginning of a healing process that would relieve us of the compulsion to overeat and bring stability to our unbalanced lives. As we responded with action to the love we had been shown in OA, the result was a new faith in ourselves, in others, and in the power of that love. We had begun to develop a new relationship with a power greater than ourselves, and we were ready to move ahead with our recovery.

~ *The Twelve Steps of Overeaters Anonymous*,
pages 13-14, 16-17.

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**Recovery is a BIG Deal
Abstinence is a BIG Deal**

Freedom from food obsession one day at a time is a gift. OA has helped me find a self-defined food plan of three meals a day and some sanity.

That's not how it used to be with me around food. The food compulsion used to feel like a constant magnet in my mouth, nagging with a need to binge or graze daily. What a hard way to live! I would wake up in the morning already feeling full, and say to myself, "Okay I'm not going to binge today." Well, in a few short hours, that resolve would be gone, and I'd be back into the food, bewildered, frustrated and dismayed . I was powerless.

Coming to OA has changed my life - I am grateful for the Twelve Steps, and sponsorship meetings, phone calls, and a finding a higher power. For someone who couldn't get through the day without turning to food, I am grateful for the chance to live another way.

OA is such a blessing.
Let's keep coming back!

~J.W.
Reprinted from Santa Cruz OA newsletter,
Fall 2008

Save Someone's Life!

Is there something written in your OA journal that might help someone's recovery? Share it in the newsletter. You might just save someone's life! Submit to:

newsletter@oregon-aa.org