

A Serving of Hope

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Oregon Intergroup of Overeaters Anonymous

April 2014

awareness

"We're always happy to share our secret: the Twelve Steps of Overeaters Anonymous, which empower each of us to live well and be well, one day at a time."

-The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous, p. 106.

Over the years that each of us have spent or will spend on our individual recoveries, we develop certain ideas and philosophies which help us walk the magnificent journey of physical, emotional, and spiritual discovery. One of mine is a belief in the Five "Ps" of Program: practice, prayer, perseverance, patience, and progress. If I want to stay in recovery on all three levels, I need to do these things every day. I practice the program to the best of my ability; no half measures will do. Half measures get half results, and I'm not satisfied with that anymore. I expand my spiritual awareness through prayer. I pray to the God of my understanding that I may know His will for me, and I pray for the willingness and power to carry that out. Spiritual awareness is my breath of life, and it takes perseverance to sustain that life. I learn patience by waiting for the fruits of my efforts, knowing they will come in time. You will be amazed and grateful for the progress you make. Your spirit will soar, and you will be able to show your gratitude by passing on the secret of your recovery—the Twelve Steps—to others.

~Voices of Recovery, page 342

My Life Is the Message

At the end of the description of the tool of service, OA's "Tools of Recovery" pamphlet says, "We are promised a life of sane and happy usefulness as a result of working the Twelve Steps, and service helps fulfill that promise." Service is the culmination of all the willingness I have been carrying out in the Steps and in the rest of the tools - to all those whose lives I touch.

Compulsive overeating is not just about eating too much or too often. Compulsive overeating seems to be more of a disease of attitudes. Compulsive overeating is a symptom of attitudes waiting to be transformed. Through OA, my negative attitudes are transformed into positive attitudes and actions. My cowardice is being turned into courage; my dishonesty into honesty and integrity; my laziness into perseverance; my fear into faith; and my resentments and hatred turned into love and acceptance. I have heard it said that service is love in action, and I am proving it.

~ continued on page 3.

Upcoming Events

April 25 – 27. Serenity by the Sea: Focus on Abstinence. 25th Annual OA Men's Retreat. Camp Alexandra, 2916 McBride St., Surrey, B.C., V4A3G2. Contact is Tom 604-702-1946 or tmhop@shad.ca.

May 3, 2014. "Freedom from Obsession: Out of the Symptoms and Into the Solution 9:30 am – 3:30 pm. Immanuel Lutheran Church (Sellwood area in Portland), 7810 SE 15th (on SE 15th between Bidwell & Lambert) near Tri-Met Line #70. Contact Michael 503-351-4035 or dmichael8@comcast.net

June 21st. Abstinence Workshop. 10 am – 3pm. Smirna Church, 31118 So. Hwy. 170, Canby. Contact: Vina (503) 631-2632.

June 27-29. Sunlight of the Spirit Retreat sponsored by the Central Oregon IG. Wesley Meadow Lodge at Suttle Lake (about 15 miles West of Sister). Contacts are Nikkie (541) 280-4382 or Jacque (541) 760-1574.

July 18-20. Serenity Retreat. Alton L. Collins Retreat Center, 32867 SE Hwy 211, Eagle Creek, OR. Scholarships available. email serenityretreat@oregon-oa.org, or call Vee at 449-6005.

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.

Maintaining Freedom

Yes, I have been free from compulsive eating for three years. Many people say to me “What a gift from God,” and they are right.

I’m reminded, though, of the story of the man who was walking down a country road when he came upon a most beautiful farm. He stood leaning on the freshly painted white fence and admired the lush green fields. Directly, a bright red tractor came to the spot where the man was standing and stopped. A man climbed down from the tractor, took off his hat, wiped his brow, and asked if he could help. The visitor asked, “Are you the one who owns this place?” The farmer said yes, he owned the farm, and the man replied, “God certainly has blessed you with a beautiful farm.” The farmer stroked his chin thoughtfully and said, “Yes, God has blessed me, but you should have seen this place before I came along.”

Like the farmer whose land was full of rocks and weeds before he put his labor into it, I had to learn to use the steps and tools of recovery to get my body in shape before I could enjoy the fruits of my labor.

I was given the gift of a “pink cloud abstinence” for the first year and a half in the program, but on a long sales trip I became hungry, angry, lonely and tired - I HALTed- and I traded my gift for a piece of apple pie. This began another phase of recovery. It would take me three months of slipping and sliding before I could regain my abstinence. During that time, I continued my meetings, I went to intergroup, and worked the steps with my sponsor. My relapse taught me many things for which I am grateful, one of which is that sugar in large quantities makes me higher than a kite, and sets up a craving for more. This craving, I’ve learned, spawns the compulsive thinking that comes between me and my Higher Power and cuts off my intuitive process. At the same time, I have learned to be gentler with myself.

God is a merciful God, and I am part of God. Therefore, I must be merciful. I had to give up my old fears and guilt-ridden ideas about eating one bean over my plait, then assuming I had lost my abstinence.

I learned that as long as I did not have compulsive thoughts about food, I didn’t overeat. I thank God for my abstinence, out loud, at each and every meal, and in doing so I have been able to maintain my contact with my Higher Power and not have compulsive thoughts.

Today I follow the bull’s-eye approach. I no longer have to be perfect; in other words, I strive to hit the center of the bull’s-eye. If I miss the center by eating something I hadn’t planned, that’s okay by me. What I want to avoid at all costs is winding up in a corner, alone, with a half-gallon of ice cream and a box of cookies. I begin each day by getting on my knees and asking God out loud to give me the willingness to be abstinent today. I also ask God to give me His knowledge of what I am to do today and the power to carry it out. The most important gifts I have received from the OA program are my conscious contact with God and the wonderful gift of intuition that comes with it.

So, like the farmer who gets up early to plow his fields I get up early to do my exercise, to make outreach calls when I’m in pain, to do a Tenth Step when I develop resentments and to work with my sponsor closely. I continue to give service whenever and wherever I can. In other words, I work my program, and, like the farmer, I reap the rewards of my efforts. I get what I give.

I am grateful to OA and the wonderful Twelve Steps because they have released me from the bondage of compulsive overeating. These simple Steps, Traditions, and the tools of recovery have set me free; free to be me. Thank you one and all, and keep coming back.

~MM, Lifeline, November 1997

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.

My Life Is the Message (Continued from page 1)

Since I have been in program, I have had the privilege and honor to hold several service positions at the group and intergroup level. My recovery is blossoming as a result.

I very much adhere to the concept of service outlined in Step Twelve and Tradition Five.

When I was a young person, my father would often say to me that being useful is the most important thing in life. I thought he meant I should be a rescuer and a caretaker of others. I have since come to realize that he was talking about service.

Before I had any recovery, my disease of compulsive overeating was apparent, both in my physical being and in my attitudes and actions; now my recovery shows to everyone I touch. My life is carrying the message and being of service, as a result of a spiritual awakening.

I have an anonymous quote I think is pertinent: "I sought my soul, but my soul I could not see. I sought my God, but my God eluded me. I sought my brother, and I found all three." I am the beneficiary of my own love and acceptance because I also experience the love I am willing to share with others. I am extremely grateful for the privilege of being a member of this program.

Service means that I am a regular at my meetings, and that I share how the program works in my life. I share what doesn't work in my life, and I am available to newcomers and others who reach out to me for an uncritical ear. And I try to be willing to love others until they learn to love themselves. Then I continue to love them. I give back what I so generously have been given in OA.

~ P.M.L., Riverside, Ca. Liveline, December 1997.

How has OA saved your life? Share your story of recovery. Email your submission to newsletter@oregon-oa.com

Words of Wisdom...

Instead of telling God
how big your fears are...
Try telling your fears
How BIG your GOD is!

~From Changed Attitudes

What is OA?

An OA brother wrote me last week and asked if I thought OA was a self-improvement program or a self-discovery program. That question made me think a lot. I concluded that this program of recovery is both. As I "improve" myself, I am discovering who I really am. I am not all the different people wearing those different hats, as I have been in the past. I am myself, living with a solution to my life, a life sometimes full of problems.

I am improving myself in such a way that I have fewer and fewer regrets. I know I will never be perfect; thank God I no longer have to be that! But I have been learning that improvement in my life is needed daily. And, as I improve in areas, I have been discovering the new me and new ways that I can live without the crutches of food and over-indulged emotions. I am so grateful for having this program to learn who I am.

~Anonymous, by e-mail, Lifeline, January 1998.

RECORDING OF ROZANNE'S MEMORIAL

The recording of the Rozanne Memorial is posted on the OALAIG website, on both the Events podcast and also the main Virtual Speakers podcast. It can be found at:

<http://www.oalaig.org/speakers-podcasts/oa-speakers.html>

Young People's

Phone List

Oregon Intergroup now has 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.

Giving of Myself

I owe my life to this program. Without OA, I am self-willed, depressed, missing a core and real connection with my Higher Power and others. The strength I get from all of you and coming to meetings enables my life to unfold in a real, living way.

Our primary purpose is to abstain from compulsive overeating and carry the message of recovery to those who still suffer.

Sharing recovery in OA comes in many ways, from just being at a meeting, to making phone calls, doing service at the meeting or other levels. And then there's our money. How we choose to put into practice carrying the message is certainly a matter of personal conscience. Here's my experience.

When I first came to OA, I put my dollar in the basket like everyone else. And when our World Service Conference voted around 1990 to use the slogan "it takes \$2", I started putting my \$2 in (with a bit of pride). Looking back, one thing that happened to me in my first ten years was becoming financially sound as I became the solid, real person that was beneath the fat. And I put my \$2 in the basket. My life has changed since then. Finances are an issue, but I still put my \$2 in the basket. And I do other kinds of service.

A few months ago, I heard the

slogan in the latest OA suggested format "give as though your life depends on it", and that started me thinking. My heart says I owe my life, my serenity, and my peace to the fellowship, because no way can I survive compulsive overeating on my own. Additionally, one of the spiritual principles that has become clear to me is that the more I give, the greater my return. And I often hear newcomers say "I wish I'd heard about this program earlier." It's entirely up to us to spread the message.

Does OA need more money? After all, our meeting's paying the rent and buying literature and making 60/30/10 contributions. So I'm back to Step 12: "Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps, we **tried to carry the message to other compulsive overeaters...**"

While each of us is asked to do this on a personal decision level, it is our intergroup that maintains the phone lines, maintains online groups, puts on our retreats, serves our groups with meeting lists, coordinates local public information, provides insurance for our meeting places, and serves as a place where we can join together and reach out. Is our intergroup fully funded? NO. Our trusty service workers are doing all they can do to keep things running smoothly, but we haven't found a treasurer and funding is always scarce. If we could afford to have

a part-time worker for day-to-day work, as the Eighth Tradition suggests, we could up **free up time for member volunteers to do more outreach to the still-suffering compulsive eater**. It strengthens our local meetings to send delegates to World Service and Region, but funding is a struggle. Our local area is enriched by every delegate we send; they bring back a wide range of experience, strength and hope.

The more resources we have to reach the still-suffering compulsive eater, the more people can hear about and find recovery from the pain of our disease, and the more resources we'll have to reach more suffering compulsive eaters.

So what would it look like if I gave 2% of my monthly net income to the basket? What would it mean if I were to let go of drinking diet pop and put that money in the basket?

As a result of this program, I have a grateful heart. That is a miracle. But how can I put this into action? **Service at all levels, including the basket.** It's not dues. It's not profit. Funds used in the spirit of the Traditions won't become an issue of power or personal gain. What you choose is no one else's business. But this I know: For me, it feels good to give. ~
Louise A.

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.