

A Serving of Hope

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Oregon Intergroup of Overeaters Anonymous

June 2014

A NEW LIFE

They that reverence too much old times, are but a scorn to the new.

-Francis Bacon

Do I look back in longing and think what fun it was to eat what I wanted when I wanted it? Do I feel my life today is one of deprivation? Dear God, remind me of what life was like before I came to Overeaters Anonymous—the obsession, the demoralization, the treadmill, the despair and sickness. I am as powerless over food now as I was the day I walked into my first meeting. Compulsive overeating and hope are not compatible.

My new life of abstinence, peace of mind and physical well being was made possible by a willingness to trust in a Power greater than myself. All I have to do is keep on letting that Power do for me what I cannot do for myself. That is more precious to me than any remembered “high old time” with food.

For today: On my knees, I pray to be “as a child”—to go back now to steps one, two and three. There is nothing out there in the wilderness of compulsive overeating that I want.

~For Today, page 221

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.

Hold On! Don't Give Up!

When I came into program a little more than four years ago, I was hopeless. Not only with the food, but with everything! I just wanted to die. I thank God I was given the gift of OA, because that was where I finally found hope. I also found that I was not alone anymore.

For a while I continued to feel alone, and I struggled with the program. However, I did something I never had done in my whole life - I kept coming back. Still to this day, I live with these words.

My attitude had been, "If something doesn't work quickly enough, why bother?" I gave up on myself easily, and so did everyone around me. I just floated around on my little cloud going from place to place but never really staying anywhere. Every now and then I would land somewhere and gather bits and pieces of recovery, but I still would not stay. It just validated my own stupidity to me. "I am a helpless, hopeless, lost soul," I convinced myself.

Even coming into the OA meeting rooms, I felt that I would never get "the program." I kept getting back into the food. I kept trying to figure out what was wrong with me. I kept suggesting to myself that I needed other solutions: more professional treatment, more intense therapy, a change of environment, some-

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Upcoming Events

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

June 20th – 22nd. “Stepping Into the Promises” - Greater Columbia IG Retreat. Lazy F Ranch, Ellensburg, Washington, Contact Kathy K 509.586.8516

June 27-29. Sunlight of the Spirit Retreat - 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.

August 2. Beach Happening - The Risks of Recovery, Peninsula Church Center, Seaview, WA. Contact Diane B: 503-318-6608 DBelais@yahoo.com

August 25th. Sunday. Annual pool party at George and Louise's. Details to come.

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.

Recovery From Relapse

Writing is often one of the best tools to help us recover from relapse. Write on one or more of the topics below. Share your writing with your sponsor, sponsee, or an OA friend. Together we recover!

1. **Recovery is contagious: relapse is not.** Do I act that way? Do I have faith that my Higher Power will allow me to work with others without suffering the same fate myself? What can I do to help? Will I make a commitment today?
2. **Relapse is not failure.** How has my relapse helped me to grow?
3. **Compulsive overeating is a disease, not a personality defect.** Do I recognize that, or do I take on shame and guilt for something that is physically wrong with me?
4. **If I slip, I must get up.** What actions can I take to get MY program back on track? What was I doing before?
5. **Recovery is a process.** They say, "Progress, not perfection." Am I on a positive journey even though I am sidetracked now?

Example: How has my relapse helped me to grow?

- Relapse, or a slip, helps me grow because I must practice honesty. I must tell at least my sponsor about it.
- A slip helps me learn how to ask for help.
- A slip lets me know which step I am working on - Step 1. Admitting that I am powerless over food and that my life has become unmanageable leads me to practice humility, open-mindedness and willingness.
- A slip points out unhealthy behaviors I have been engaged in or unwise food choices I have made.
- A slip reminds me of the need for working the steps, using the tools, and spending time and energy connecting to my Higher power through prayer and meditation.
- A slip helps me remember not to judge others who slip or relapse—there but for the grace of God...Forgiving myself for the slip is crucial.
- A slip is a new beginning—always a good place to be.

~ Robyn R. reprinted from CNMI News, June 2003.

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.

Abstinence...

Abstinence is an act of surrender, not control. Eating right was a new concept for me, and letting go of weight control scared me. But I did let go, and I'm so glad! By working the Twelve Steps and living with a desire to not overeat today, I have maintained my weight loss of 30 pounds and done so (except for two pregnancies) for more than twenty-six years. Since I completed Step Nine twenty-six years ago, sanity has become my way of life - not always easy, but always worth it.

I am grateful for physical, emotional, and spiritual recovery. I am grateful for the opportunities I have to share this amazing program with others. I am grateful for the Steps and my commitment to work the Step I am on today. I am grateful to my higher power, who is always within reach, even when I can't sense it. And I am grateful for my first sponsor, who showed me this simple path of recovery out of the food and into a new plane of existence.

-Sandwich, New Hampshire
Excerpt from Abstinence, 2nd Edition, page 176

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.

Celebrating Abstinence

By the grace of my Higher Power and the help of all of you in this wonderful program, I will be celebrating 26 years of continuous abstinence on January 17th. On January 16, 1980, I had been in OA for almost 3 years. I had gone through 7 sponsors. I could barely accumulate more than 3 days of abstinence. Since coming into program in 1977, I had gained weight and my life was becoming more unmanageable. I watched many friends in program get abstinent and lose weight and I was jealous and miserable. I was convinced that my Higher Power was going to let me die of compulsive overeating to make an example to everyone else of what happens when you don't do it "right."

Fortunately, my Higher Power is far more loving than that. During those very painful three years, I developed a food plan that I felt I could live with if I had to follow it for the rest of my life. I had begun to work the Steps. I had started to look for all of the things that triggered a binge, most of which were emotional upsets. I called a sponsor and other people on a daily basis. Right before my last binge, I went on a weekend OA retreat.

Nothing magical happened on January 17, 1980. I made a decision not to pick up the food that day, and miraculously, was given the strength to do so. I added another day to that and one more to that. I wasn't thinking in terms of years or even days. Just one more minute of not picking up the food. I am going to make that decision today and do the footwork (sponsorship, food plan steps, literature, meetings) to insure that I get that miracle today. The great news is that I'm not special and that the same miracle is available to you too. Today. Right now. It works!

~ JS, reprinted from *The OA Steppingstone*, March 2006

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

God, Grant me the serenity,
To accept the things I cannot change,
The courage to change the things I can,
And the wisdom to know the difference.

Grant me the patience with the changes that
take time,
An appreciation of all that I have,
Tolerance of those with different struggles,
And the strength to get up and try again,
One day at a time.

Hold On! Don't Give Up!

(Continued from front page)

one special in my life. All my life I had searched for something, and finally I was given that gift which was the program. But even in the meeting rooms of OA, I was still trying to search for something else. I realized, finally, that I could not do that anymore. I realized that I needed to open that gift I had received, take it, and put it to use. I also needed to thank God, and return the favor by letting Him in and letting Him help me with the food and everything else in my life.

It has not been easy, but it has been worth the effort. I still want things to happen overnight. I still get in the selfish mode that I should be further in my journey. I'm learning that growth is a slow process; everything happens in God's time, not mine. WHAT a concept!

Is is a miracle to me that I kept coming back and haven't given up. When I first came into program, I tried to keep in mind that all I needed to do was hold on and not give up. Some days, that was all I could do - just hold on and nothing else. Today, I know that I'm only one bite away, and taking that bite will lead to that hopeless and isolated place I once lived. With program and God, I have hope, and with that hope I have the help I need to not to give up on myself. Every day I have a choice to open the gift of recovery.

-Pennsylvania, A New Beginning, page 119-120.

What's Holding You Back?

"People have a hard time letting go of their suffering. Out of fear of the unknown, they prefer suffering that is familiar."

~ Thich Nhat Hanh

Is fear of the unknown keeping you stuck in your disease? Are you choosing to hold on to your suffering by putting off writing your 4th Step? Is your fear of speaking your truth out loud keeping you from the healing power of a 5th Step? Before we start working the 12 Steps to recover from our addiction, the Big Book of AA asks if we are "willing to go to any length" to recover. Recovery takes courage. Let your Higher Power stand beside you as you face your fears and choose to live a different life—one free from the obsession. Still need help? Answer this question: How would your life be different if you were free from the obsession? Now that you've imagined it, don't let fear dictate your future. Choose recovery today.

~ Alice W.

A God Job

I'm going through a divorce, abstinently. It was one of the hardest decisions I've ever come to, and it has taken a tremendous amount of courage.

I was a fat housewife and mother who hated being where she was. I felt unnecessary, as if anyone could do what I was doing. My job description was: eating, washing dishes, clothes and floors, and screaming at the kids. I thought I was stuck. Miserable and desperate, I prayed, "God, change me into the person you want me to be." That prayer took courage.

Immediately after that, I found OA. Even the first meeting created a change in me. I saw hope for the first time.

"God," I pleaded next, "guide me in choosing a sponsor," and I was led to a beautiful and wise woman who became my closest friend. More changes followed as I reached out and, in reluctant but trusting love, touched another person with my

innermost feelings.

When I first identified what I felt, my greatest fear was of divorce. Somehow, I knew deep inside what was coming. For months, I was terrified; but I couldn't stop changing.

I also feared taking an inventory. Unleashing all of that internal turmoil seemed more than I could bear. But I knew it had to be done, so I kept praying, "God, change me."

I wrote my inventory and gave it away. Then the changes came—in floods. I became aware of my talents and abilities as well as my defects, and I saw few of the limitations that used to discourage me. I grew. Gradually, God gave me the courage to change from an obese, self-hating housewife into a beautiful, confident career woman with a vision; to get out of a depressing environment and move into the unrestricted unknown; to build a new life. Two years ago I could not have faced the trauma of divorce because of my low self-

esteem. Today, after working daily with two sponsors for a long time, I can face what- ever comes.

Sadly, the hardest part of changing has been the judgemental attitude of some of my fellow OAs, who perhaps feel threatened by my changes. Even within the safe walls of OA, where change is encouraged, we occasionally pull each other down with our restricting fears. When one member risks change, it offers hope to the others, but some will invariably feel threatened by it. Fortunately, I kept searching for my own validation, and I found it.

Unless we face and walk through our fears, they keep us bound. Only by daring to change can we eliminate the fears that held us captive in the past. Change is risky and it takes courage, but it is absolutely necessary to our recovery. It's a God job - and we're worth it.

~October 1983,
Lifeline Sampler,
pg. 275-276.

Interested in Building our Young People's Program?

Plans are underway to host a Young People's event. Are you interested in helping with the event? We need you and your ideas! Please email youngpeople@oregon-oa.org.

Seeking a Spiritual Solution

"In OA we share a belief that we can each recover through a spiritual relationship with a power which is greater than ourselves alone."

~ OA 12x12

A spiritual solution is the only answer for me that works in recovery from compulsive overeating. I have lost weight without God in the past. But as soon as I stopped "dieting" I gained the weight back, plus more. Today I don't diet; I seek a spiritual program by working the 12 STeps of AA. There is a God-sized hole within me that no amount of food, stuff, money, etc. can fill - only God can fill my needs. Therefore, I need to seek my Higher Power in all of my affairs. I feel a calm and serene emotional state when it comes to today. I don't have to worry, control or manipulate - because my HP is with me wherever I go - doing for me that which could never be done with me alone.

How do you satisfy your hunger for spirituality?

- By taking myself off of "auto-pilot" and really looking and listening to what's going on around me.
- By moving outside of the box of what I believe is right or possible, to allow for things that are beyond my comprehension or understanding.

What does faith mean to you?

- Faith is not belief without proof, but trust without reservation.

~author unknown, Today, Central Jersey IG newsletter, Nov/Dec 2005