

# A Serving of Hope

Volume 3 Issue 7

Oregon Intergroup of Overeaters Anonymous

July 2014

## IN THE moment

*Only in a hut built for the moment  
can one live without fear.*

*-Kamo no Chomei*

Fear comes from projection. My mind does not say, "This is a fine, pain-free, worry-free moment in which there is nothing to fear. Therefore, enjoy it." Instead, it leaps ahead, conjuring up all sorts of mishaps and calamities.

As difficult as it is to shed old habits, I keep remembering the relief and freedom and joy that came the first time I tried abstaining one day at a time and not worrying about what would happen tomorrow.

**For today:** My life consists of single moments. I occupy them one at a time, savoring the fullness of each, and find there is no room for fear.

*~For Today, page 293.*

### **Atheist - Spiritual Experience**

*My OA group accepts me as an atheist, saying OA is spiritual, not religious. Still, I wonder how an atheist can have a spiritual experience.*

The Twelfth Step promises "a spiritual awakening as a result of these Steps." Atheists who complete the Steps find a spiritual awakening.

It is described in the Big Book as a psychological change of such magnitude as to triumph over the compulsive behavior. Those of us who are atheists will speak in nonreligious terms about how we experience that spiritual

*~Continued on page 4*

## Livin' It Up!

I just returned from a vacation in Orlando, Florida. I acted like any normal, healthy thirteen-year-old, running from one Epcot Center exhibit to another, petting animals at the Busch Gardens petting zoo, and going on rides at Walt Disney World. My Higher Power really gave me a chance to enjoy a vacation like a teenager was meant to.

The catch? I am a thirty-three year old, recovering compulsive overeater.

As a teenager, I was depressed and unhappy and I didn't know why. I felt so different from everyone else, and I was sure no one would like me if they knew the real me (whoever that was). I thought my feelings of ugliness, unacceptability, and separateness were mine alone.

How different my life is because of OA. Now I can share my most intimate thoughts and feelings with another person and know that I am understood, loved, and supported. After eleven years of recovery, seven years of abstinence, and having maintained a 75-pound weight loss, My Higher Power is helping me to do things that I never thought I could for myself. Namely, being able to vacation in Florida for a week and stay abstinent and sane.

I enjoyed the fun, the sun, the entertainment, and the people. I wore shorts and halter tops during the morning and lounged around the pool in a bathing suit all afternoon. Rather than focus on my problems and my self-centered negativity, I chose instead to focus on the positiveness of the people, places and things I encountered.

Working my program has also given me the power of choice with regard to food. I used to feel I had to eat my binge foods. I used to believe that food talked to me. I used to think I couldn't say no. Not anymore. Thanks to OA, food is no longer my Higher Power.

*~ Boise, Idaho, Abstinence 2nd Edition, page 134.*

## Upcoming Events

July 18-20. Serenity Retreat. Alton L. Collins Retreat Center, 32867 SE Hwy 211, Eagle Creek, OR. Scholarships available. email [serenityretreat@oregon-oa.org](mailto: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](mailto:DBelais@yahoo.com)

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

September 12-21. Region 1 Convention. Hampton Inn, Bellingham, WA. [www.oaregion1.org](http://www.oaregion1.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.

## Thinking of You

Food obsessed my soul.

I felt beaten, shattered, helpless, crying every morning, pacing the floor every night not knowing how to stop. At night, I made promises to myself which I meant with all my heart, but the next morning, I could not keep them.

I lived through the hell of diet pills, booze, stomach relaxers, tranquilizers, hypnotism, acupuncture and self-induced vomiting. I was unable to break the pattern of eating and making myself throw up. One night, I turned blue from food stuck in my throat.

When I came into Overeaters Anonymous six years ago, I was so nervous and afraid that I heard only one thing at my first meeting: "How many here have the desire to stop eating compulsively?" Then and there I know I was not some freak who couldn't pull herself away from the table or eat only half. My problem has a name: compulsive overeating.

I asked whether anyone would sponsor me and a wonderful woman said she would if I wanted her to. I look her over and said to myself, "Well, she's not so slim but she is 50 pounds lighter than she was and she's on her way down."

I called her the next day and this beautiful woman said five words to me: "I'll be thinking of you." It was the first time in

forty-five years that I felt someone cared for me! I called her morning, noon and night. I called her when I saw someone eating an ice cream cone because I saw, I wanted - and I got. All day long I called and I called again before going to bed. And every time I called my sponsor told me, "You don't have to eat."

I withdrew from sugar, flour, alcohol and diet pills all at the same time. And I didn't overeat, one day at a time. Whenever I thought about food I said the Lord's Prayer; and believe me, I was saying it almost every waking moment. I didn't know what else to do. At night I sat in the bathtub sipping diet coke and smoking cigarettes to stay out of the kitchen. (Since then, my cigarette obsession has been lifted through this program and the grace of God.)

After the first week I knew something had happened to me. Never in my life had I not overeaten for a whole week. Even when I was on diet pills, I overate. I believe today that my God lovingly scooped me up and placed me in OA, protecting me every moment. I am finally growing up and learning how to live. It has not been easy, but God's grace is always there just for the asking. Instant help is available if I open myself up and accept my Higher power's gifts. Trusting, believing and expecting have given me the most beautiful freedom I have ever known. - freedom to laugh and cry and love; freedom to live; freedom to be me. What a joy!

*~September 1981, Lifeline Sampler, pages 196-197.*

## 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.

### Region One Convention

When: September 19-21, 2014  
Where: Hampton Inn, Bellingham WA  
Sponsored by: Region One Intergroups of OA  
Inspired by: Higher Power & Associates

Service opportunities abound! Please contact Ruth D, V-Chair @ 208-659-9606/[vchairr1@gmail.com](mailto:vchairr1@gmail.com) or Paula W, LCI IG Chair @ 208-618-9297 or [gnndnit@aol.com](mailto:gnndnit@aol.com)

Speakers Needed! Contact Sue:  
[suznseattle@gmail.com](mailto:suznseattle@gmail.com).

Check out our Region One website: [www.oaregion1.org](http://www.oaregion1.org)

### ☛ 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.

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).

## The Basics

"Hello, my name is Lisa. And I am a Compulsive Overeater."

The first time I said that it didn't come out smoothly. There was a lump in my throat! It was harder to admit than I thought it would be. After all, I had answered the 15 questions (to myself) and I knew I was a compulsive overeater, but saying it out loud was a different story. Now, I have to be careful. "and I'm a compulsive overeater" wants to automatically roll right off my tongue any time I say "Hi, I'm Lisa" when I'm introducing myself to someone.

When I went to my first OA meeting some 16+ years ago, I was astonished. I guess I expected everyone there to be overweight. What I saw average looking people, some were thinner than others, but those at my first meeting were not obese. For a brief moment, I felt a little awkward, but that very quickly passed. I felt love and acceptance, as members welcomed me. As I listened to the sharing, I knew I was in the right place. I realized that some of these people had been very obese while others had been underweight, and some were at goal weight and some were very close to it. I was amazed as each member shared. I heard what they were like, what happened and what they are like now. I heard that they had felt the same way I did and how program had changed their lives - given them a life. For the first time in a very, very long time, I was filled with hope and felt as if I belonged.

At my first meeting, I was told that there is too much to absorb in one meeting and to try six meetings before I decided if OA was for me. I was told to listen, to call people, to buy the OA 12x12 book, and to keep coming back!

I knew I wanted what those people had. I quickly learned that in order to get what they had, I needed to do what they did. What they did was work the OA 12 Step program of recovery. And they used the tools to help them maintain abstinence from compulsive overeating.

During my first few weeks of OA, I learned many new things. I learned about the tools of the program and I started using them. I learned to make babysitting arrangements so I could get to meetings, and how to plan and prepare abstinent meals. I learned how to pack my lunch for work and how to greet a fellow OA member when I run into them on the street. I learned where the church keys were hidden and what cupboards and closets held the OA literature. And when I got a sponsor, I learned how to work the steps. This was all new for me, but because I wanted recovery, I did it; because that's what my sponsor told me worked for her.

At times you may feel overwhelmed and even scared, whether you're a newcomer or an old timer. But, you will learn and you will do, because you want recovery. And this program is for those who want it. I hope you want it.

Keep coming back!

~Lisa,  
Recover Lines, April 2007,  
Western Mass. IG

## Recovery is Heaven on Earth

I remember when I decided not to run anymore. It wasn't easy. I had to give up my personal mythology, the stories I told myself and my history, and look at things the way they actually were for me and the way they affected me. I had to see my parents and siblings for who they really were, not for who I wished they were. I had to do the same thing for myself. It was hard. It was painful. But it was worth it.

Facing up to my compulsive overeating was not easy either. No one plans to be an addict when they grow up. But my life would otherwise have been spent in hell. I have had foretastes of heaven in this life only because I was given the grace to face up to things.

I have been blessed in my recovery path to often feel heaven on earth. Joyful times when my children were young; love built on love; peaceful times, quieter times, now that my children are grown. It's time in my recovery to focus on myself, my recovery, and growing my commitment and consistency in the practice of all those things that support my well-being one day at a time. The only real power in life that I have is noticing my thoughts and feelings, and choosing the loving response to them. This is where prayer and meditation come in. I only have this power because of being in recovery. Being in recovery is choosing to live in heaven on earth.

~ Anonymous,  
CNMI Newsletter, December 2012,  
Central New Mexico IG.

## Saying Yes to God

To me, saying yes to my Higher Power, whom I choose to call God, means giving up control. This can be scary because of not knowing the direction God may want to take me or what God may want me to do. This is where trusting my Higher Power comes in. I have had lots of difficulty trusting God in the past, but now I know that God won't take me anywhere or ask me to do anything without giving me the power I need to get through it. This doesn't mean I don't have to remember to ask for help. My primary purpose is to abstain from compulsive overeating. The guidance I get will always support my primary purpose. My job is to do the footwork through good times and bad, trusting that God will always be there for me.

~ Anonymous,  
CNMI Newsletter, December 2010,  
Central New Mexico IG.

## Step Ten

*“Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong, promptly admitted it.”*

For many years, I have done a written Tenth Step most nights. After experimenting with many ways to do this written inventory, I settled on the following system.

In my journal, I enter the date and thank God for another day of abstinence. I then focus my reflections on the three phases of recovery - physical, emotional, and spiritual. First, I address my physical recovery. I review my food choices as well as my exercise program. The main question I answer is: Did I stay within the boundaries of my plan of eating which for me is three meals a day with nothing in between and no personal binge foods. I commit to correcting

any problem areas and plan my meals for the next day.

Then, I reflect on my emotional recovery using my character defects as the basis for this reflection. Did I practice any of my character defects? Do I owe anyone an amends for inappropriate behavior? How might I have reacted to a situation instead of resorting to a character defect? If I owe an amends, I decide how and when I can make the amends.

My final area for review is my spiritual recovery. Did I turn my will and my life over to the care of God or did I practice self will in my daily activities? Did I spend some time deepening my

relationship with my Higher Power through prayer and meditation? At this point, I thank God for the many favors in my life that day, being very specific and citing at least five unique events that occurred that day for which I am grateful.

This method of doing a daily Tenth Step is an integral part of my daily program work. It allows me time to reflect on the day about to end, as well as identify areas which need further work. I always end my Tenth Step writing feeling like I am clean, ready for a good night's sleep, and prepared for the next day.

*~ CNMI News, October 2004,  
Central New Mexico IG*

### **Atheist - Spiritual Experience** (continued from front page)

awakening; we speak of a sense of serenity, of harmony, of not battling the world, of acceptance. The simplest test is whether we are freed from the obsession that has, in the past, sent us back to compulsive overeating. Those of us who are atheists encourage you simply to do the Steps, you will get it!

~ Ask-It-Basket archives at [www.oa.org](http://www.oa.org).

### **Service**

Did you know that every month there are thousands of people who make our program of recovery possible? The biggest surprise for me was to learn the motivation for service in our program is our own recovery.

Having grown up with very service-oriented parents, I learned early on that it is important to give back to the community. Before joining OA, service was because others needed me to give. Now I do service because I need to give. Yes, I do service mostly for me. It keeps me honest and abstinent.

When I first came into program, I was tempted to jump in. But I knew, for me, I needed to receive before I could give. I am so glad I waited and learned that the program works if you work it. The tools are there to help in your program of recovery. They (and the twelve steps) are essential.

Service is a great tool and there are so many ways you can be involved. You need it for recovery and the future of OA depends on it! Here are just a few suggestions for your consideration:

- Take numbers of newcomers and call them during the week
  - Offer to lead a meeting
  - Attend a meeting
  - Write an article for the newsletter
  - Help with a marathon day or convention
  - Be an Intergroup Rep for your meeting
  - Help put away chairs at a meeting
  - Volunteer to be on call for our hotline
- ~ Anonymous, New Beginnings, April 2006, Central Florida IG*

### **At Last, Peace**

I spent three years searching for an easy answer to my disease. I looked for it in meetings, often traveling long distances from home; in sponsors, switching every few months; and in phone calls, frequently making three or four in rapid succession, but without listening.

I struggled to remain abstinent, and I constantly beat myself with negative thoughts and self-hate. I could not reconcile myself to who I was and where I was. I wanted to be in control of my recovery.

Recently, I began accepting myself exactly as I am, with my “sloppy” meals, my once-a-week bingeing and what I thought was the end of my recovery.

You know what happened? As soon as I accepted my sloppiness with food and my bingeing, I became abstinent. As soon as I accepted my weight, I lost the last five pounds and reached my goal weight. As soon as I stopped frantically looking for the answer in a profusion of meetings, sponsors, and phone calls, I found it right here inside me and in my Higher Power.

It took me three years to realize that if I let go and accept, I would begin my road to recovery.

My program is simple now. I take a daily inventory, I help other compulsive overeaters, and I stay close to my Higher Power. For today, I am calm and at peace—and forever grateful.

*~September 1983, LifeLine Sampler, page 386.*