

# A Serving of Hope

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Oregon Intergroup of Overeaters Anonymous

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## CHOOSE TO CHANGE...

*“Rather, we came to understand that the basis for stopping our compulsive eating behaviors—and stay stopped—is personal inner change.”*

*~ A Plan of Eating, p.1*

Change is the key word for me in the above quote. I went into the program looking for another diet club. I kept coming back because I couldn't understand how Overeaters Anonymous worked. I kept looking and listening for the solution, and I finally found it. I would have to change the way I was eating, behaving, and thinking. The changes would happen inside myself, so the outside could change. The direction for how to change were in the Twelve Steps. Somehow, I knew that if I followed the Steps, I would achieve physical, emotional, and spiritual health. I am grateful to a program of recovery that has allowed me to understand that recovery from compulsive eating is possible if I choose to change.

*~Voices of Recovery, page 298.*

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. Writings may be edited.

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).

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**Oregon Intergroup  
has a new number!  
971-317-6343**

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## A Spiritual Choice

I my lifetime, I have had a tendency to manufacture a lot of my own misery. I don't think I did it on purpose, but my stubborn will and pride often got in the way. By clinging to my way of doing things, I created a lot of headaches and heartaches that probably could have been avoided.

I am grateful to OA that for today, and, I hope, for the rest of my life, I am abstinent. Actually, I'd rather say I'm choosing to be abstinent. In some ways, abstinence is a gift, and in others, a choice. For me, the gift is freedom from obsession with body image and with food—where to get it, eat it, hide it, purge it. That gift was given to me by God, and I believe it says somewhere in our literature that we maintain that gift through our spiritual condition. I know I'm not always free of these obsessions, especially when things seem overwhelming in my life. That's when abstinence, for me, becomes a choice.

This disease manifests itself in various forms in different people—starving, bingeing, overexercising, vomiting—but a lot of it is about control. When I want to control my life because I can't wait for God's direction, and when things aren't going my way, I turn to other sources instead of resting in his care.

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## Upcoming Events

October 25, 9:30am-3:30pm. Hope for the Holidays, Cedar Hills UCC, SW Park Way, Beaverton. Contact Alice 503-927-7438, [apw91@yahoo.com](mailto:apw91@yahoo.com)

November 16, noon- 4 or 5pm. 4th Stepping Through the Holidays: A Mini-4th Step Workshop, SW Washington Hospital, Conference Room A. Contact Judy W. (360) 601-8390, [fun4juts@gmail.com](mailto:fun4juts@gmail.com) or Nicole (360) 907-3996

November 27th, time TBD. 7th Annual Thanksgiving Day Meeting & Potluck @ MerleAnn's, in Portland. Contact MerleAnn (503) 281-8947.

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.

## Daily Contact Is Important

As I immersed myself in program after I arrived in OA over 25 years ago, I heard of the importance of sponsorship to my recovery.

Six weeks into my recovery, I attended an OA weekend event and heard many people share about their recoveries. A healthy-looking woman, who behaved in a sane manner and appeared free of compulsive eating, attracted me. This approach to life very much attracted me, and I asked her to be my sponsor. I'll always be grateful that she did sponsor me and helped me grow in recovery in our daily contact. Through her I learned I could be abstinent no matter the circumstances. I could be free of compulsive overeating, could change and could have choices. Before OA the disease trapped me as soon as the compulsion hit; I never had choice. What a gift choice is!

My first sponsor and I had daily contact for seven years. My normal approach to life was to be a loner, figure things out myself, not ask questions and pretend all was okay. To live abstinely I could no longer be like that. My daily contact taught me how to share with another, be honest, let another into my life, ask questions, figure out how to work the Steps and be abstinent regardless of situations. Over the years I've changed sponsors a couple of times as circumstances have changed.

Today sponsorship is as important to me as it was at

the beginning of my OA journey. I need my sponsor to be immersed in OA, committed to abstinence, available to connect with me, and willing to challenge me to grow into all I can be (not that I'm always appreciative at first of searching questions or tasks).

And daily contact is still important to me.

Now it's email that enables that contact, and an electronic program facilitates weekly face-to-face meetings. The daily connection with my sponsor means I'm reflecting on happenings in my life and my responses: how I'm using the Steps, how much I'm seeking and following God's will, how grateful I am, and whether any compulsive thinking or behaviors are trying to get back into my life. Our daily readers For Today and Voices of Recovery are wonderful prompts for reflection.

Today my busy life makes it difficult for sponsees to have the daily phone contact I experienced in my early recovery. I thought using electronic forms of communication wouldn't work for sponsorship, but experience has shown they can work and work well as an alternative when circumstances require it.

I am committed to sharing the gift of sponsorship with others so they may know the gift of freedom I received and have choice in their lives not to pick up the food or compulsive eating behaviors.

~Faith M., New Zealand  
Reprinted from A Step Ahead, Q3, 2013

## 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.

### Got CDs?

Our Intergroup CD library could use your help! A lot of our CDs have been checked out for a long time. We all need a chance to hear the experience, strength and hope found in our CD library.

If you have a CD from our library, please return it so others can strengthen their recovery. You can return a CD by either giving it to your IG Rep or mailing it to the PO Box on the front of the CD package.

Thanks so much for your help. For questions, contact Jenice at 503-705-5599.

### 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.

## Finding Serenity

When I first came to OA, I had a lot of anger, fear, and depression. I just wanted to crawl into my cave, read, and eat.

In OA I encountered the “extended version” of the Serenity Prayer. Week-by-week, it slowly began to seep down into my innermost being.

First, I was learning acceptance. When I quit fighting the unchangeable things in my life, peace began to come. The emerging courage and wisdom empowers me. I don't feel like a perpetual victim any more. More and more I'm letting go of my past.

Patience with myself and the process relieves a lot of my obsessions. An appreciation of all that I have fills me with gratitude to you and to God. Tolerance and patience with others brings more understanding and love. Strength from my Higher Power gives me what I need to get up one more day, work the program, and live outside of my own selfish will.

Now, three years later, a heavy burden has been lifted off my mind, as well as fifty pounds from my body. Best of all, I am finding healing and serenity beyond my wildest dreams. Together with you and my Higher Power, I am doing what I have never been able to do alone. Thanks, OA.  
*~ Rosanne K., Portland*

## The Gift I Give Myself

The holidays provide a host of excuses for an addict like me to use as justification for self-destructive behavior with food. However, my disease never takes a holiday and I cannot afford to be lax in my recovery. I need to work my program just as hard, if not harder, during the holidays as during the rest of the year.

That means I go to extra meetings, read the literature, phone OA friends, even just to talk, and most importantly, I schedule extra time for meditation to offset the extra stress. I find I must find a way to keep my emotional equilibrium or my entire program can become unbalanced as well.

Now I find that the holidays are no longer about the foods I have given up, but about thankfulness, gratitude that I now have the energy to share time with others because I have found a way to take care of myself through OA.

*~Inspired by J.A., Oakland, CA Lifeline 12/88.*

## A Spiritual Choice

continued from front page.

My Higher Power wants only the best for me, and when I take over, I miss His best.

When I was twenty-five and forty thousand dollars in debt, He got me into a free treatment program, provided places for me to live, a car to drive, food to eat, a job, and then OA. My Higher Power took care of me long before I believed He would.

When I met my fiance, I thought it would never work. My fiance was a blue-collar man, he hunted, and he drove a truck! I wanted a yuppie who drove a BMW and wore a tie to work. But my handsome prince is the most sincere, humble, gentle, kind, and thoughtful man I've ever met; in three months, I'll be his wife.

The most recent miracle is my job. I'd been in a job that I hated for three years. But I couldn't give up the money, the travel, and the prestige it afforded... until I couldn't take the

emotional stress anymore. It took me three years to let go of my will, but within days of my surrender, the job I've always wanted at this company was handed to be on a silver platter. (Not gold, mind you, because I'm taking a cut in pay, and I think I have to give up my car phone!) I haven't been this excited about work in years.

I owe it all to my Higher Power and to OA. I truly believe in the Third and Eleventh Steps: that if I pray for willingness, sometimes even the willingness to pray for willingness, my Higher Power is faithful. And thank you to everyone in OA for being there to help me as I grow. I couldn't stay abstinent without you—without meetings, sponsors, phone calls, and all the rest. You've been there to hold my hand as I've cried and thought I would lose my mind. You've encouraged me to keep coming back. You've listened and loved me through it all. I'm so grateful to you. I just wanted you to know.

*~Wisconsin, Seeking the Spiritual Path, page 93.*

## Here's a Clue!

I began my abstinence in OA 23 years ago, abstaining ever since. My top weight was 240 pounds. For 22 years, I've maintained a normal weight.

The clue to my longevity is that I surrendered when I came to OA. I was a bulimic diabetic before bulimia came out of the closet. My doctor laughed when I told him I induced vomiting to avoid regaining the 50 pounds I had lost on a diet. By the time I found OA, my body no longer cooperated in the insanity. My moment of "pitiful, incomprehensible demoralization" came one day when I saw my reflection on the surface of the toilet water; self-loathing filled me.

The woman I asked to sponsor me had lost 138 pounds, maintaining a normal weight for two years. She said that if I wanted what she had, I should do what she did: call in my food every day, read the AA books substituting "food" for "alcohol" and work all Twelve Steps as if my life depended on it. This disease is a life or death matter.

I continue to do what has worked

for me all of these years—three meals a day with nothing in between and avoidance of sugar and refined flour. I don't expect those I sponsor to eat the way I do, but I ask them to define their abstinence.

I see my dietary disciplines serving the same purpose as certain religious disciplines or fasts: I remember between meals that I don't need food; I need a Power greater than food. An added benefit of abstinence was that my diabetes disappeared.

I became a sponsor after only a month in OA and consider this type of service a mainstay of my long-term recovery. "You can't keep it unless you give it away." I only sponsored to the level of my recovery and my sponsor helped me with problems. I wrote my first inventory in the first three months, but had to do it again with feeling two years later. Regular writing is a way of life for me.

I hadn't been able to cry or feel joy for several years before OA. With OA, I grew into the full range of emotions

God intended. I had to explore my relationships on an emotional rather than an intellectual level and shed blocked tears. My initial amends were the dollar-and-cents kind, but my Fourth and Tenth Steps brought feeling amends.

I've been active through the years at all levels of OA service. I feel strongly about rotation of leadership and am happy to step back and let others participate.

Through these years of new life given to me by OA and my Higher Power, I've experienced divorce, remarriage, career change, relocation and a more loving relationship with my parents. Nine months ago, my husband died after a prolonged cancer. Two widowed sponsors are helping me through this difficult time. Through all that life dishes out, I hang on to my program. Eating would only compound my problems, and I might not get a second chance.

I'm glad OA has circled the globe. The Twelve-Step way of life seems to work in diverse cultures with any addiction or compulsion. Keep coming back!

~Anonymous, Los Angeles, Lifeline, Oct. 2000.

## On Service

I truly believe that I am doing the will of my Higher Power when I am abstinent. And to keep that gift, I must work others through the Steps. When I do this, and work the Steps diligently myself (practicing these principles in all of my affairs) a whole lot of extra room opens up in my life. I once heard someone share at a meeting about the recurring dream they had about having an extra room in their house they didn't know about. I thought, "I too have had that dream many times!" She said that living in recovery, we get this surprise extra room. I love that. So what do I do with that extra room? I do things I never dreamed possible before program. I run. I dance. I rub elbows with the world. I love my family unconditionally.

I stretch myself with new projects at work. I give service beyond the group level. Sometimes it hurt a bit to grow and stretch. I am faced with fear and insecurity. My character flaws of procrastination and self centeredness glare at me. But with the constant help and support of my Higher Power, I work through them and continue to grow and improve. If I were perfect today, what need would there be for inventories, fellowship and meetings? So just for today, I am abstinent, and grateful for the opportunity to be of service at many levels in OA. Who knows what rewards are still in store for me? Who knows how BIG that extra room may get?

~Jill F - Lumberton, NJ, *The Stepping Stone* newsletter, South New Jersey OA.