

A Serving of Hope

Volume 3 Issue 11

Oregon Intergroup of Overeaters Anonymous

November 2014

ATTENTION!!

Oregon Intergroup has a new contact number!
(971) 317-6343

sanity

Clearly a power greater than ourselves had to be found if we were to be restored to sanity.

~ The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous, page 12.

For someone as impulsive and driven to find relief as I was, sanity took many forms: waiting instead of acting, looking for the positive in the situation, feelings of satisfaction when the action fell short of the intention, and learning to be aware of my compulsion and think it through.

When I relied on my wits alone, I used all my energy to make things happen. Too often I met with frustration, disappointment, and feeling of failure or self-pity, which led me back to the food.

The Higher Power I found in Overeaters Anonymous revealed a more peaceful approach to living. My HP enabled me to begin asking for help, contemplate my options, and anticipate the effect of my actions on others.

I began to trust in this Higher Power, trust my instincts, and, ultimately, trust other people. Now my faith in that power reveals itself in the smallest decisions during my day.

I feel a calmness and a confidence that produce realistic expectations under adversity. Now that's sanity.

~Voices of Recovery, page 36.

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.

Willing to Take Action

I used to think of willingness as passive. Sure, I was willing. I was willing to admit I was powerless over food and that my life was unmanageable. I was willing to believe that a Power greater than myself could restore me to sanity. I was willing to turn my will and my life over to ANY power that would lift my merciless obsession with food and make me a normal eater. Those were the first three Steps, right?

I remember the first time I read that Step Three was an action Step. I could not understand that. I was willing to turn my will and my life over to a Higher Power, but I was not willing to take any responsibility for it. "Okay, HP, you got me. I'm all yours." That is as far as I got my first time around on the Steps. But when God did not instantly remove my obsession with food, and when he didn't turn me into a normal eater, I got angry. Why wasn't this program working?

~continued on page 3.

Upcoming Events

November 15, 9-10am. Sponsorship Workshop, Paulist Center at St. Philip Neri. Contact Shelby (503) 388-8638.

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 or Nicole (360) 907-3996.

November 27, 1-5pm 7th Annual Thanksgiving Day Potluck (1:15pm) & Meeting (4pm), MerleAnn's, 4635 NE 33rd Ave. Portland, 97211. Contact MerleAnn (503) 281-8947. Bring a musical instrument! Home is now pet free. Can't make it? Calls are also welcome!

December 6, noon, A Plan of Eating Workshop, Spokane Valley Medical Center, 12606 E Mission, Spokane Valley WA 99216. Contact Jacqui at 509-844-4780.

December 6, Monthly Speakers Meeting, 7pm-8:30pm, Girl Scouts, 9620 SW Barbur Blvd., Portland; contact Ilene 503 268-3064.

December 13, 1-5pm, Relax & Rejuvenate, Bethal Congregational Church, 5150 SW Watson Ave, Beaverton. Email memberatlarge@oregon-oa.org or call 503-319-4942.

December 25, 1-5pm, 23rd Annual Christmas Day Potluck (1:15pm) & Meeting (4pm), MerleAnn's, 4635 NE 33rd Ave. Portland, 97211. Contact MerleAnn (503) 281-8947. Home is now pet free. Can't make it? Calls are also welcome!

January 1: 14th Annual New Year's Day Potluck (1:15pm) & Meeting (4pm), MerleAnn's, 4635 NE 33rd Ave. Portland, 97211. Contact MerleAnn (503) 281-8947. Home is now pet free. Can't make it? Calls are also welcome!

Serenity in a Suitcase

I've traveled quite a bit during the eight years of my OA recovery. At first, I could not go anywhere without being into the food. But in the last five years, I've been given the gift of abstinence on business trips, in the mountains, at the beach, and while visiting family.

Away from home I chose not to make meetings a part of my program. I'd pack my daily meditation books, my journal, my phone book, some weighed and measured food - and my Higher Power. I'd keep in touch with my sponsor and OA sponsor and OA friends, read program literature, write in my journal, and abstain.

This past winter, my husband and I flew to Florida for our yearly visit to my parents. The weather was beautiful, so we retreated on a mini-vacation by ourselves. When we returned to finish our stay with my parents. When we returned to finish our stay with my parents, the pain of my childhood of compulsive eating reared its ugly head.

I was surrounded by lots of food not on my food plan, tireless attention to what I was and wasn't eating, and constant banter about food. What a reminder of the way I lived before recovery!

During those two days I was unable to pick up the

phone. It was as though I was trapped in the past. One night I thought, "Okay, I've had enough of this pain, I'm going to eat - things I haven't eaten in six years and lots of them!" I just didn't care anymore.

But my HP took over. As if being led by the hand, I did what's always worked for me during times of intense stress when the food is calling to me: I read program literature and started writing. This story is a result. I had to share the miracle of abstinence. Even though I couldn't call anyone to ask for help, my HP knew I was willing to hear this message.

My HP is always there for me; I just need to listen. As I wrote, I heard the voices of my OA friends, just as if I'd called them, telling me how excess food won't make the pain go away. And the teddy bear I got at the 1992 World Service Convention in Baltimore was sitting on the bed right behind me sending me more messages of abstinence!

In twelve more hours, I'll be on a plane back to my OA family. This trip reminded me that I need to take all the tools of the OA program with me when I travel. It helped me see that one hour in a meeting away from home can add one more day of serenity and abstinence to my life.

~ Rockville, Maryland, Abstinence, page 90-91.

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.

Heard at a Meeting

At the recent Hope for the Holidays marathon, the fellowship came up with the following callouts for Pressed (feeling stressed during the holidays) and Blessed (using program to deal with life on life's terms).

Moving from Pressed to Blessed

Provoked	Balanced and beautiful
Reacting	Loving
Empty	Enthusiastic
Stressed	Sharing
Sad	Sleep
Exasperated	Exercise
Drained	Double-down on Program

☞ 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.

Interested in helping us start a young person's program in OIG? Email your ideas and contact information to youngpeople@oregon- oa.org.

OIG Hosts First Sponsorship Workshop

Hello!

I write with great happiness and good news!

On October 18th, Oregon Intergroup hosted the first in a series of Sponsorship Workshops! The workshop was designed to give information and support to people new to, and nervous about sponsorship, as well as provide a space for more seasoned sponsors to share their experiences and insights.

The workshop was just lovely. We had four participants who got to walk away with some helpful handouts. Participants asked some great questions and made some very illuminating points. We really enjoyed discussing different aspects of sponsorship and some suggested "Dos and Don'ts." So much so, that we ran out of time!

For the workshop next month, Jenice and I will be working to consolidate presented material or see if we can rent the room longer to allow us to get through all of the material with plenty of time for Q&A. We are also working on making it more visually stimulating to allow for multiple learning styles. (Perhaps I will bring my giant whiteboard and plethora of markers). Additionally, I am working on putting together another handout that includes a big book study of the chapter *Working With Others*, as well as links to online step study guides.

Eventually, we plan to take this meeting to other groups within the Oregon Intergroup. So if you live far away or have a Saturday morning meeting that conflicts with this workshop, we will come to you! We think that we will stay at our current time and location and really nail down the flow of the workshop before "taking the show on the road."

I look forward to seeing you all at this workshop soon.

If you would like to do some service, please pass on this report to your home group or other meetings during announcement time. Many people do not read the newsletter or use yahoo group, so letting people know about this event would be very much appreciated.

The next Sponsorship workshop is scheduled for November 15th from 9-10am in the Paulist Center at St. Philip Neri. The entrance to the building is on the East side, and the building is handicapped-accessible. There is plenty of parking. St. Philip Neri is on the bus line #4. The workshop is in English. If you have any barriers keeping you from attending and/or understanding the material, I would be happy to assist with that.

In Love and Service,
-Shelby S.

How has OA saved your life?
Share your story of recovery.

Email your submission to newsletter@oregon-oa.com

Willing to Take Action

(continued from front page)

Today, I can accept responsibility for myself. I have to be willing to take action. I have to be willing to admit I am powerless over food and the DO something about it. Today, that means I need to create a plan of eating. I need to call my sponsor to help me stay on track. I need to go to meetings and pray and meditate to stay in touch with my Higher Power. All of these require willingness through action.

Today I am willing to let God restore me to sanity. This means I pick up a pen and start writing when I get the food thoughts. It means that when I think I can skip a meeting, I go anyway. It means that I pray instead of breaking my commitment to my to my plan of eating. I have to be willing to ask for help. God has never turned me down when I ask for help. Yet, sometimes I refuse to ask.

For today, I am willing. Willingness is a gift from God as a result of working this program. I am grateful for the willingness to do whatever it takes to recover from this disease today.

~Missouri, Seeking the Spiritual Path, page 30.

A Many-Sided Treasure

Abstinence is freedom — freedom to say, "No, thank you" to that dessert because my desires have been changed. I used to eat because I couldn't say no, and I couldn't stop. Abstinence frees me to choose healthy foods, friends, and thoughts.

Abstinence is inner peace and clarity of mind to see that cravings, confusion, emotional binges, and excess pounds are all I'm giving up.

Abstinence is a gift from God. It's the number one action in my life so that God can be in the center. Abstinence frees me to hear God speak through others and through readings.

Abstinence is strength and power. God's power has become available because of my powerlessness. The longer I am abstinent, the stronger new habits become and the faster old destructive fantasies fade from my mind. It establishes a new way of life.

~Tampa, Florida, Abstinence, page 5.

Just for Today I will have a quiet half hour all by myself and relax. During this half hour, I will try to get a better perspective on my life.

~Just for Today Pamphlet

My Sponsors and My Recovery

A member of our fellowship shares the experience, strength and hope that she gained with the help of her sponsors.

I'll just start off by saying that I am grateful to be abstinent today and grateful that my energies are going toward living today on a spiritual plane and not about food.

On the topic of sponsorship, I think about diversity and gratitude. I have been in OA for almost four years now, and I was in OA for maybe a year in the past. During that time, I have had five sponsors. They were different in their own ways and shared similarities. One sponsor believed in a very structured and fixed food plan, another none at all. One sponsor did lots of service work in OA, another frequently hosted events at her house, so no OAers had to be alone or tempted on the holidays. What all of them have in common was a love for the fellowship of OA, a desire to be of genuine service, and an understanding of the steps and how to work them. Sometimes we worked out of the red OA step study guide, sometimes we worked out of Lawrie's big book and step study guide. I have answered the OA HOW 30 questions, completed creative writing exercises, let myself rest for at least 10 minutes in between activities, seen a

nutritionist, and so on.

My sponsors have suggested tools for how to live life without hurting myself with food, meaning they helped me learn to live with discomfort and how to make changes if my behavior is causing the discomfort. I had to find a sponsor that I could trust telling everything to; one who wouldn't criticize or judge me while offering up the steps and traditions as a solution.

My sponsors have all been abstinent and had spiritual practices of their own. It was important too, to find a sponsor who had the willingness and time to give me a lot of support. When I stopped eating compulsively and stuck to a daily food plan that didn't include binge foods and had meals with clear beginnings and ends, a lot of seriously intense feelings and fears came up. I had to seek outside help in the form of a therapist, but I also needed to be able to call my sponsor everyday if necessary. When I found my current sponsor, I told her I would probably need a lot of support: meeting once

a week and calling everyday. She said she could handle that, so I got to trust that she was being honest.

I have grown to see that the steps are a way of life. I am so grateful for my sponsors. They gave me ideas of how to practice the principals in all of my affairs, to practice honesty, integrity, patience, tolerance, love, and service. My current sponsor reminds me to "Stay in the Day," and "Be a person among persons." All of my sponsors have encouraged me to "Don't eat no matter what, no matter what don't eat." Since I am also recovering from anorexia and bulimia, I also translate this to not restricting, or changing the amounts or types of food willy nilly because of emotions: "Don't mess with food no matter what, no matter what don't mess with food."

In a variety of ways, sponsors listen to me, guide me, inspire me, and help me to incorporate the steps and traditions into my life. It has meant letting go of old ideas and getting a way better life instead.

For sponsorship, I am grateful.

~Shelby S.

PLAN OF ACTION FOR THE HOLIDAYS

Make a plan of action to help address holiday stress and interactions. Here are some ideas.

- Have a food plan for each day.
- Call at least three different OA people each day. Share my experience, strength and hope with them.
- Read OA literature daily.
- Write out my feelings and thoughts each day.
- Call my sponsor and share my feelings, thoughts, and successes each day.
- Attend and support as many meetings as possible.
- Practice the principles of 12 step recovery in all my affairs each day.
- Set aside quiet time each day to pray and to meditate.
- Give service in whatever way I am able.
- Love myself unconditionally today by making loving choices to protect my abstinence.

~ Author Unknown