

A Serving of Hope

Volume 1 Issue 2

Oregon Intergroup of Overeaters Anonymous

February 2015

Honesty

By the husk you may guess at the nut.

~Thomas Fuller

How do I shape up under scrutiny? Is my appraisal of myself an honest one, or do I fall back on variations of the theme, "Thin is not well," or "Appearances aren't everything"? Do I use the old excuses of glands and metabolism for my continued overweight? Those rationalizations and the mental gymnastics they involve may keep me fat.

If I remain obese, what indication does a newcomer have that the program works? I need to face the truth, starting with my definition of abstinence. I may also need to replace sponsors who, out of misguided kindness, are helping me keep up the myth of spiritual recovery while I stay fat.

For today: I believe in the OA principle that each person is the sole judge of his or her healthy weight, but honesty is honesty and is not subject to interpretation. How honest am I?

~For Today, page 190

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 or call (971) 317-6343.

Not Work, Just Life

I am very grateful to have Overeaters Anonymous in my life. In fact, I can safely say that OA gives me a life. Today I do things, go places, and take risks. Without the help of OA's plan for living, I would have stayed locked in fear. My obsession with food and my body is but a symptom of my spiritual malady. I need OA's Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions, and tools to participate fully in life. I need to work my program to arrest my illness and grow closer to my Higher Power's will for me.

First and foremost, I need a plan of eating. I have learned that unless I put down the foods that cause binges and trigger my body and weight obsession, I cannot hear my Higher Power. Food cuts me off from God. It also keeps me from myself, my friends, and my family. Because God speaks to me through others in and outside of the OA rooms, I must put down the food if I am to listen.

God speaks to me, but he does not do the work for me. This means that I'm responsible for my food choices. I make a grocery list and go to the store to ensure I will have abstinent foods in my house. I pack my lunch in the evening when I make supper. When I travel, I call the airline and request a vegetarian or diabetic meal because they are usually healthier than the regular meal. I pack extra water and abstinent foods.

To keep emotionally fit, I rely on the tools and the Steps. I use writing to find out what's going on with me. How am I feeling? Why am I resentful? What

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Upcoming Events

February 21, Sponsorship workshop, 9am, Paulist Center at St. Philip Neri. Contact Shelby (503) 388-8638

February 28, Mirror, Mirror... A Self-Acceptance Workshop, 10am-4pm, Salem Hospital, Bldg. D, Creekside Room. Contact Christina xabeth@comcast.net or Pat C 503-580-5738.

March 13-15, OIG Serenity Retreat, Twin Rocks Conference Center, 18705 Highway 101 North, Rockaway Beach, Oregon
Email serenityretreat@oregon-oa.org or call Vee at 503-449-6005

April 11, Miracles marathon, 10am-3pm, McMinnville First Baptist Church, 325 SE First Street, McMinnville, OR. email deborah_ruppert@yahoo.com or call Robert 503-835-1042.

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.

That First Step

Powerlessness. When I read this word in Step One, I thought it meant that I was going to be powerless over food and have an unmanageable life for the rest of my days. At first OA meant finding people with whom I could share my powerlessness and unmanageability.

My first Year in OA, I lost weight by dieting and used powerlessness as a crutch. When I overate, underate, manipulated, compulsively spent, or gained or lost weight, the “powerlessness” was the perfect crutch to justify my insane behavior.

Each Meeting became a powerlessness party for me. I felt euphoric finding people to share my insanity and no one telling me to stop it!

After a year of depending on this crutch, I relapsed and gained back thirty pounds. I was devastated.

Someone gave me a book and told me to read the words of Step One again “word for word.” I did . I began to realize that the admission of powerlessness was only the beginning of Step One — a point from which to move forward.

As I read further, I began to see an alternative to the unreality that has characterized my life of compulsive eating and binging. I had a glimpse of a new reality

that could be mine.

Today, I see that I used my “powerlessness” crutch to avoid the real work — making changes, feeling feelings, doing the footwork, writing the inventory, seeking my Higher Power, and taking responsibility.

My life has changed. I have written my inventory. I go to meetings and share my mistakes as honestly as I can. I have done the footwork, made the amends, sought a conscious contact with my Higher Power, and gotten the resulting rewards.

I know the Twelve Steps are designed to get me well, not keep me sick. My sanity was restored and my compulsion removed, together with my excess weight, as a result of living these twelve suggested Steps.

My Higher Power has given me the ability to react sanely around food today. I don't want to be powerless over some item in my fridge or be afraid of a dessert. I want to have the power to say, “No, I choose not to eat that.” And I believe that's what my Higher Power wants for me too. Now I see the First Step as a point of reference from which I move on, not a position I take for the rest of my life.

~ Scotland, A New Beginning, page 63.

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.

BROKEN DREAMS

As children bring their broken toys with tears for us to mend, I brought my broken dreams to God because He was my friend.

But then instead of leaving Him in peace to work alone, I hung around and tried to help with ways that were my own.

At last I snatched them back and cried, “How can you be so slow?”

“My child,” He said, “What could I do? You never let them go.”

~Unknown

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.

The Abstinence Advantage

Last night during pitch time I said my piece. But I left the meeting wondering if what I said was what I meant to say. My heart was going out to newcomers and others who have not quite been able to “let go and Let God” help them with their abstinence.

Because many OAs in my area are blessed with great gifts of long-standing abstinence, our meetings are often abstinence-oriented. This is a wonderful thing for us, and exactly what I need.

But I have noticed that some of our newcomers and a few of our diligent but non-abstinent members are either dropping out or fighting their reluctance to attend meetings. Because they are not currently abstinent, they are feeling “less than” others.

OA is not a diet club, but it’s not an abstinence-seniority club either. OA is a program that uses the Twelve Steps to help compulsive eaters find peace, health, and recovery from their food obsession. The first day of abstinence for a newcomer is just as important as day 2,347 for an oldtimer.

Often, I begin my pitch with, “Hi, I’m C.W., and I’m a compulsive overeater, and this is my ___ day/month/year of abstinence.” For me, my abstinence is some-

thing to celebrate. But, thinking back, perhaps I’ve been a little smug. As I have remained abstinent through the generosity of my HP, I have gained more compassion for those still compulsively overeating. I have noticed smiles freeze on faces and eyes show despair every time a member proclaims his or her length of abstinence.

So, after much deliberation, I’ve decided to change my little introduction. From now on I’ll say, “Hi, I’m C.W., and I’m a compulsive overeater, and thanks to my HP, *today* I am abstinent.”

Still, I wonder about what I said last night. I do have a tendency to sound preachy; I’d like to fix everyone and everything — anything to distract me from my problems. Although I have definite opinions about the competition that can result when comparing one member’s length of abstinence to another’s, I have an even stronger conviction about the concept of abstinence. Before my commitment to abstinence in OA, I allowed greed, self-centeredness, jealousy, and envy to consume me. I was miserable, and I made sure that those closest to me knew it. On the other hand, in my public life I was cheerful and witty, and I would often go out of my way for those who would often go out of my way for those who

would give me approval or attention. I was at the mercy of my disease for 32 years; I don’t want to go back.

Abstinence is absolutely essential to peace and sanity. It is more important than anything to me — more than my religious beliefs and more than my love for my husband, children, and family. And they are all worth going to any length for! You see, if I am not abstinent, I cannot appreciate or participate in those wonders. Abstinent for today, I see with new eyes a world I occupied all my life but never saw; a child’s struggles, a husband’s disappointment, a beautiful landscape. Abstinent for today, I am willing to go to a movie or a play without the promise that I’ll be taken out for a huge dinner also. Abstinent, for today, I find that my children are for loving, hugging, fussing over, and holding hands with; not for showering with the tons of sugary treats I bought for them but ate by myself instead.

So, if you were at that meeting and I left you a little confused, I apologize. In the future, you won’t find me listing my abstinence in number of days. But don’t let that fool you — it’s still the most important thing in my life.

~Sylacauga, Alabama,
Abstinence, page 77

On the Spiritual Experience...

Most of us think this awareness of a Power greater than ourselves is the essence of spiritual experience. Our more religious members call it “God-consciousness.”

Most emphatically we wish to say that any alcoholic capable of honestly facing his problems in the light of our experience can recover, provided he does not close his mind to all spiritual concepts. He can only be defeated by an attitude of intolerance or belligerent denial.

We find that no one need have difficulty with the spirituality of the program. *Willingness, honesty and open mindedness are the essentials of recovery.* But these are indispensable.

“There is a principle which is a bar against all information, which is proof against all arguments and which cannot fail to keep a man in everlasting ignorance — that principle is contempt prior to investigation.”

—HERBERT SPENCER

Not Work, Just Life

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are my expectations, and are they different from my Higher Power's? I go to meetings and share my feelings with people who love me unconditionally. I call my sponsor to talk about my fears and anxieties.

The Steps help me keep my emotions from taking over. Steps Four and Ten work best to keep me honest and aware. If I'm anxious about a project, practicing Step Three and letting the anxiety go will help. If I'm angry at a person or a group of people, I can take a Fourth Step and find out what my part is. Before OA, I ate over every feeling;

now I have many other options to deal with my emotions.

my relationship with my Higher Power, the spiritual part of my recovery, requires work, as does every other relationship in my life. I need to hang out with God, as I hang out with other friends. I share with God my fears and troubles, my good news and accomplishments; then I'm still and listen for His reply.

In the morning, I read my OA and AA meditation books. I read Step Eleven from the AA *Twelve and Twelve* and Step Three from OA's *Twelve and Twelve*. I thank God for another day to be abstinent and do

His will. In the evening, I try to read some program literature; two pages from the Big Book, or a story from *Abstinence* or the Brown Book (*Overeaters Anonymous*). I thank God for another day of abstinence and another day free from the food and body obsession.

What's most miraculous about this is that I do not consider it work. These actions are both part of my life and the very reason I have a life. As we say at the end of meetings, "Keep coming back. It works when you work it, and you're worth it!"

~Texas, Seeking The Spiritual Path, page 121

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 Marie at 503-351-0917.

O.A. Tools of Recovery

**Plan of Eating
Sponsorship
Meetings**

**Telephone
Writing
Literature**

**Action Plan
Anonymity
Service**

Principles of the Steps

(to practice in all my affairs...)

**Honesty
Hope
Faith
Courage**

**Integrity
Willingness
Humility
Self-Discipline**

**Love
Perseverance
Spiritual Awareness
Service**