

A Serving of Hope

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Oregon Intergroup of Overeaters Anonymous

March 2015

INDECISION

Between two stools one sits on the ground.

~French proverb

No, I don't always know which course to take, where to go, or what to do. But OA says, in effect, "Don't sweat it." Ask your Higher Power for an answer and then relax. Inspiration will come, sometimes directly, sometimes indirectly."

I once thought I had to have answers for everything. And they had to be quick, sure, positive, and right. Today I do not know. I gave up having to know when OA showed me a better way to live.

For today: Indecision cannot panic me. Whether I have to act quickly or have some time to think, the answer will come freely, from God, if I ask for it.

~For Today, page 200

My goal is to build a life that I don't need a vacation from.

~Rob Hill, Sr.

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

Young and Abstinent

I came to my first OA meeting one month after my twentieth birthday. My anorexia and exercise bulimia made me feel much older, but I acted like a two-year-old child. This disease is cunning, baffling, and powerful at any age. OA has helped me learn to act my age and enjoy life to the fullest.

That first meeting was more than two years ago, and I have been abstinent for two years and one month. I have gained about 25 pounds in recovery and have maintained a normal weight for almost two years. I look around my home meeting and the other meetings I usually attend and I am sad to see that I am still the youngest face around.

I feel lucky to be where I am, but sad to see so many of my peers still suffering. Through this program of attraction and Twelve-Step work, I have brought some friends to meetings. Some of them have stayed, and it is a joy to see them in recovery. But many are not willing to work this program. The excuses the disease makes are the same at any age. I pray they will come back in time. I need young newcomers to help me as much as they need to be helped. I am thankful that when they make their way back to OA, I will be here — a young person in recovery. For today, all I can do is work my program to the best of my ability.

Other OA members tell me how lucky I am to have found this program at a young age. I thank my Higher Power for that. If I hadn't found OA when I did, I don't know where I would be today; probably dead or in the hospital. I am thankful to OA for giving me my life back.

One advantage to becoming abstinent at a young age is that one day I hope to say, "I have thirty years of abstinence" or even forty or fifty years! One day at a time, I pray that with my Higher Power's help I can say that.

~ New York, Abstinence, 2nd Edition, page 174.

Upcoming Events

March 21, Sponsorship workshop, 11:30am, Paulist Center at St. Philip Neri. Contact Shelby (503) 388-8638

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.

May 16, The Road to Emotional Recovery, 9am-3:30pm, Paulist Center at St. Philip Neri. Contact Michael 503-351-4035.

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.

How the Steps Changed My Life

Step One helped me see how food was terrorizing my life. I had been denying how much it affected me—physically, emotionally and spiritually.

Step Two made me realize how dependent on self I had become, how insane my life was and how I could not cope alone. I realized I needed help. I had to look to something or someone more powerful, more loving and greater than myself.

Step Three helped me surrender and recognize that I could not continue trying to manage my life. Giving myself completely to God was the only way I could start my recovery.

Step Four enabled me to look at my life and behavior honestly and to take off the mask I had worn since childhood. I did not like what I saw, but it gave me a second chance to become the person I wanted to be.

Step Five helped me share myself honestly and totally with another person and with God. I faced the reasons I had evolved as I did and could finally begin to accept myself as I am. I could run away no longer.

Step Six helped me look at my defects and become willing to change. I had to behave differently if I wanted

God to remove my defects in His time.

Step Seven made me realize I am human. I make mistakes, but I am not a bad person. I am no better or worse than anyone else. God loves me and can change me if I allow Him to do so.

Step Eight changed my attitude toward other people. I had to face the ways I had hurt people and become willing to take responsibility for my actions.

Step Nine gave me the freedom to forgive and to ask for forgiveness. I have made amends in ways I never dreamed possible and have learned to live in harmony with family and friends.

Step Ten showed me the value of an honest life. I no longer live in fear of the truth, and I am willing to take responsibility for my life and my actions.

Step Eleven improved my relationship with God and helped me find faith in God, other people and myself.

Step Twelve gave me the freedom to live by God's will and to be willing to serve others. My life is enriched as a result.

I trust my life will improve and develop each day.

-E.N., Manchester, UK, Lifeline, January 2004.

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 needs 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.

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.

Share the Whole Story

To the newcomer, one day of freedom from compulsive overeating often seems unattainable. Even struggling compulsive overeaters who have been in the program for a while may begin to give up because the handle on abstinence is eluding them. The pain, confusion, disappointment, frustration, and failures become overwhelming and take their toll. Such people feel lost and slide even further down into the pit of despair. Maybe they make one last try. They make their way to a meeting, along with the newcomers, and what do they hear?

Maybe the lead tells a glowing story about abstaining from compulsive overeating for a number of years. She speaks about her substantial weight loss; she says that she is emotionally better off than ever before; she has turned everything over to God, she says, and He takes care of everything.

In the audience is the newcomer who doesn't even know what abstinence is. And the struggling overeater, who just binged on the way to the meeting, can't get a picture of turning over anything to "God." Can they relate to what is being said? Probably not. The distance between them and the lead is so discouragingly far. From where they are, how could they ever reach the level the lead speaks about? Will they come back? Probably not. They leave saying, "Maybe for these people, but never for me."

When we lead or share, are we remembering to tell the whole story? Are we taking ourselves back to our newcomer days or the times of our near-disastrous struggles with our disease? Do we share about how half-measures availed us nothing? Do we share all about the entire journey – the failings as well as the successes? Look at the whole process. We were wounded then; we are healing now. We were discouraged; yet we became encouraged. We had been in the valley, but we became convinced that the height of the mountain was attainable.

The change came sometimes slowly for us, and sometimes quickly, but it did come. There was a lot of pain, but gain too. There was hope. There was help. Even in tears, there were cheers from our fellows. They were always there, and they always will be. There will be new faces among the old, but the spirit will be the same.

Any one of us may give the first message, maybe the only message, that newcomers or suffering overeaters hear. Help them to stay with us. Help them to keep coming back. We need them.

-Ohio, A New Beginning, page 52.

Even for the Faithless

The basic difference between people who believe in God and those who don't is that believers are able to accept the existence of God as an article of faith – a belief that does not rest on seemingly logical proof or evidence. I will not make such a leap of faith in God, as we conventionally understand the meaning of the word "God," without more clear and convincing evidence.

How then can I, a confirmed atheist, work this program, which so often invokes the name of God, instructs us to pray to God, and directs us to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God?

For five years now, I've been going to meetings, following a plan of eating, making daily phone calls, giving service, reading literature, meditating, and enjoying the benefits of abstinence from compulsive eating. I started at 400 pounds, and for well over three years have weighed around 175 pounds. Not only am I in very good physical shape, but most of the time I am emotionally and, yes, spiritually at peace. How can this be if I don't have a Higher Power?

People like me are fortunate that ours is not a religious program; rather, it is a spiritual program. It makes room, if only barely, for those of us who are not theists; those like me who do not believe in a personal God, creator, or ruler of the world. Admittedly, some passages in our literature (the Third- and Seventh-Step prayers, for example) cause me mild distress, and I feel excluded when my fellow sufferers choose to close the circle of our Fellowship with a prayer that represents their Higher Power. But I remain secure in the knowledge that this program works for me, in spite of my lack of acceptance of religion.

Perhaps it works for me because I am not, in fact, without a Higher Power. I know that I could not do what I've done, day by day, alone. I place my faith, trust, and dependence in a power greater than myself that was initially based on the experience of others who came before me, and is now rooted in my own experience of the past five years. I now have an abstinence from compulsive eating that far exceeds anything I previously was able to do on my own.

~continued on page 4

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

Even for the Faithless

continued from page 3

Today, my hope and security is in the Fellowship of Overeaters Anonymous. The collective "you" are not my "God," but Overeaters Anonymous is my Higher Power.

I have found that when two or more powerless compulsive overeaters sit together in a room, read

the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, and share their experience honestly, the sum of our powers far exceeds our ineffective individual power. It's kind of like magic; it's not entirely reasonable. But the fact remains that we can do together what none of us has been able to do alone.

~Washington, *Seeking the Spiritual Path*, page 111.

What is Abstinence?

- Abstinence is the willingness to pass up immediate pleasure in favor of the long-term goal.
- Abstinence is the ability to stick to a commitment despite heavy opposition or discouraging setbacks.
- Abstinence is the capacity to face unpleasantness, discomfort or frustration without complaint or collapse.
- Abstinence is keeping your word and coming through in a crisis.
- Abstinence is the art of living in peace with that which we cannot change, the courage to change what we can and the wisdom to know the difference.

~Reprinted from *Lifeline*, October 2000

Love God. Serve Others. Serve Others. Love God.

God loves me and wants
the very best for me
always.

For today I will live in
the Steps
and Abstinence.

I love myself
because I
am a child of God.

Food cannot fix
ANYTHING!
God is the answer to
ALL my problems.