

A Serving of Hope

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Oregon Intergroup of Overeaters Anonymous

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USEFULNESS

True ambition is not what we thought it was. True ambition is the profound desire to live usefully and walk humbly under the grace of God.

~Bill W.

My worth as a human being — and, yes, my happiness — is not measured in money or position or in what I own. It comes from my usefulness to myself and others, and it is to be found in something no amount of money or prestige can buy: the OA program of recovery.

What price is a new quality of thought? Today I am teachable, with freedom to grow, to change, to resolve problems and feel good. Where is that for sale? A good day is when I can use my gifts to help another person, and that can't be bought. Wordly acquisitions may give me the appearance of feeling good, but that's all they give — appearance — and today I know the difference.

For today: When I get caught up in materialistic values and think that money and position will fix me, I remind myself that neither money nor position could have given me what I received in OA.

~For Today, page 358.

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

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.

Emotions - a New Way of Living

"We have found that all of us inevitably encounter their feelings [emotions which are bringing pain into our lives and keeping us from growing today], and it only makes matters worse if we have them or try to will them away." (OA 12&12, page 84).

Denying my emotions is how I have always dealt with unpleasant or negative emotions. My dad's admonition to keep my eyes forward, don't look left, right, or behind, was kindly given advice that life goes on. That advice, however is a reflection of how I have dealt with the strong emotions of my life - don't deal with them, put them out of my mind, behind me, and go on. But they come back, they always come back to bite me.

Somehow they have to have an outlet and I chose food as that outlet. I ate my fears and angers and grief and jealousy and resentments, and in the end they gobbled me up and spit me out as an isolated, fat, scared woman, always on the edge of life, never a participant - until I found program, the Steps, a Higher Power and the fellowship.

I'm still often scared and isolated, and I haven't lost the weight that will qualify me as a "normal" size, but I have friends and a solution. I have happy days and sing along with the radio, even if someone might see me.

Working the 12 steps of OA has brought me closer to being a loving, lovable person. With the help of HP, the 12 steps, and the fellowship, I believe I can one day be loving and lovable.

~Anonymous, reprinted from *Northern Lights* newsletter, Sept/Oct 2005.

Upcoming Events

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.

April 18, Sponsorship workshop, 11:30am, Paulist Center at St. Philip Neri. Contact Shelby (503) 388-8638

May 2, Monthly speakers meeting, 7:00PM-8:30PM, at Girl Scouts, 9620 SW Barbur Blvd., Portland; contact Ilene 503 268-3064.

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

May 29-31, Sunlight of the Spirit Retreat, sponsored by the Central Oregon IG. Suttle Lake, Oregon. Contact Linda O. (541) 815-2334.

July 31-August 2. Serenity Retreat. Alton L. Collins Retreat Center, 32867 SE Hwy 211, Eagle Creek, OR. Scholarships available. Email serenityretreat@oregon-oa.org, or call Vee at 449-6005.

Done Your Fourth Step Yet?

Members of our fellowship share their experience.

Let the Healing Begin

As daunting as the fourth step was, the rewards were immense and they still continue to blossom. My sponsor guided me through the traditional column method, and also sat with me and we read the more probing questions on pages 34-42 in *The Twelve Steps of Overeaters Anonymous*. This was when I really started to see step four wasn't meant to be a one-size-fits all process; the spirit of the law dictated that I would really need to dive deep on my own, in addition to accepting the help of every tool available to me, since no one except me would be able to find those secret places that needed to be healed.

Then the magic really started to happen when I realized the step work was unfolding nothing like I had anticipated. I had dreaded seeing the aftermath of my past on paper, but it really just seemed very objective now. I could step back for a moment and see the mistakes I had made almost as if they had been those of another person... and if it had been another person, wouldn't I have compassion for them? I would! Step four helped me realize the implications of the fact that my longest list of resentments was aimed at myself. I could let myself off the hook, after years of needless torture? Yes, in fact, it is imperative for my health and happiness that I do so.

Together with my sponsor, I was able to identify patterns in my behavior and reactions to specific triggers. I was able to start to tease out some of my character defects, some of which I was quite familiar with, but many which had never been named or even known. With humor and understanding, she was able to suggest ways to more quickly recognize when my behaviors are being driven by old patterns. "Hello, old friend!" I can now say, with a smile, to jealousy or self-pity whenever they crop up.

Best of all, a full and successful effort in the fourth step made it so much easier to approach the fifth step with humility, as well as trust and openness to the possibility that this program really does work when I work it!

~ Suzanne T.

Not Ready For The Fourth Step

I don't feel ready to start my fourth step, although that's the next one. Have I ever stolen someone's money or someone's life partner? How much do I value money? How often do I hurt peoples' feelings? What are the fewest complaints I've made? Do I neglect to reach out to people who need my support, even when I've promised to? Was there a time when I received a gift and didn't behave graciously? Who do I rely on too much, not stopping to ask after their needs?

These aren't the questions printed in the 12 & 12. Because I can't remember any of those, I made these ones up in the style of reflection. In certain moments, I feel entitled to this boldness of paraphrasing greater writers than me. But, why shouldn't I allow my inventory to come from my own questions? I am after all a penny-pincher, a bit insensitive and passive-aggressive; around holidays I'm a flake and an ingrate, and I take some people for granted.

But I knew all that already. According to my OA study, I won't have made "a searching" inventory until I uncover more than the routine self-abasing. Still, in writing this brief passage, I did have one surprise: I paraphrase regularly. When I need the real material, there's nothing like the source, so I'll go back to the 12 & 12 and find the real questions – when I feel ready to start my fourth step.

~ Eric V

Reach Out For Help

Relapse can begin by:

- A drifting away from your Higher Power
- Isolating instead of engaging
- Gaining weight
- Losing the self-esteem we've gained through working the steps
- Losing our sense of self

If any of these are happening to you lately; if you find yourself back in the food - even just a little, call someone! Ask for help! We are all here for you.

~ Reprinted from *Utah Soaring*, June 2003.

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.

Character Defects Hide Character Assets

<u>Defect</u>	becomes	<u>Asset</u>
Perfectionism		Accepting progress
Lying		Telling the truth
Stealing		Charity
Procrastination		Action
Fear acted out		Faith
Anger acted out		Love and tolerance
Arrogance		Humility
Dishonesty		Honesty
Self pity		Gratitude
Fantasy		Reality
Not asking for help		Asking for help
Judging		Acceptance
Being self-centred		Being interested in others
Minimizing your needs		Acknowledging and meeting my needs
Being controlling		Love and tolerance
Isolation		Sharing
Being a victim		Taking responsibility for myself
Gossip		Anonymity
Criticism		Tolerance and acceptance
Selfishness		Selflessness and generosity
Pride		Humility

~Steps, Winter 2000, *The OA Journal of Recovery*

The Simple Approach to the 12 Steps

- Step 1: There's a power that will kill me.
 Step 2: There's a power that wants me to live.
 Step 3: Which do I want? (If you want to die, stop here. If you want to live, go on.)
 Step 4: Using examples from my life, understand that selfishness, dishonesty, resentment and fear control my actions.
 Step 5: Tell all of my private, embarrassing secrets to another person.
 Step 6: Decide whether or not I want to live that way any more.
 Step 7: If I want my life to change, ask a power greater than myself to change it for me. (If I could have changed it myself, I would have long ago.)
 Step 8: Figure out how to make right all of the things I did wrong.
 Step 9: Fix what I can without causing more trouble in the process.
 Step 10: Understanding that making mistakes is part of being human. (When I make a mistake, I fix it immediately, if I can.)
 Step 11: Ask for help to treat myself and others the way I want my higher power to treat me.
 Step 12: Don't stop doing 1 through 11, and PASS IT ON!

~Reprinted from *The Overeaters Anonymous Journal of Recovery*

Tradition 12

"Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities."

I have a deep love for the traditions and applying them not only in my group, but also in my personal life. The rooms of OA are where I learn how to apply the traditions and then I have to practice them in all my affairs at work, at home, at church, at school, in the community, and in my friendships.

Anonymity reminds me that we are all equal. I do not know the right way, I don't even know the best way. I only have one perspective - mine. By practicing the principle of anonymity, I recognize that my voice is important, but carries no more weight than anyone else's. I find a spiritual truth: I am of worth; my worth comes from my Higher Power. You are also of worth and I need to show you the dignity and respect that you deserve.

My sick mind would like to twist the "principles before personalities" into allowing me to justify forcing my principles on you. But that is not the intention of the tradition. "Principles before personalities" to me, reminds me to be one among many.

~ Marci W.
 edited and reprinted from
Utah Soaring, Dec. 2005.

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.

Step 3: Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.

It's not enough for me to just turn my abstinence from compulsive eating over to God. Step Three tells me to turn my life over to God as well. Why should how I conduct other aspects of my life be different from how I maintain my weight and stay physically fit? I can't separate the two ideas. I am powerless over food and my life is unmanageable, so I must ask myself if I am willing to put up with the discomfort and awkwardness that may arise from choosing God's will over my own.

Am I willing to go to any lengths to remain abstinent? Am I willing to do things I've never done before - to ask for help, to show humility? Am I willing to accept the process of working the Steps and Traditions as well as the outcome of God's instructions?

~ Anonymous, VA, Lifeline, March 2004.

