

Society Pages

The Newsletter of
Unity Intergroup March 2007

Carrying the Message

What OA Means to Me

I am so grateful for the miracle of the Twelve Steps and for the support of fellow Overeaters Anonymous members. I am alive today because of this fabulous program.

I first came to OA in 1985. I struggled with relapse for several years and finally committed to rigorous abstinence in early 1990. Since then I have worked with various sponsors, making progress with each. The spiritual disciplines that I surrendered to in my early years in OA really worked for me. Within a few years I had lost almost 200 pounds and my physical recovery has been stable for well over 16 years.

Gradually over the years, however, I became less consistent with OA's suggested daily disciplines (the tools of recovery). I began to think I just didn't need them anymore. After all, life was infinitely better than it had been before, and I was physically abstinent and maintaining a substantial weight loss. Deep inside my heart, however, I was painfully aware that the emotional and spiritual progress that I wanted (and desperately needed!) still eluded me. As hard as I tried, I just wasn't able to get it, whatever "it" was.

I knew of people in other areas of the country who were experiencing a level of emotional and spiritual recovery through a more structured OA program that was quite attractive to me. Working within this structure requires an extra commitment to work all the OA tools daily; I was not one of those people.

But, was I willing to work within this new structure to receive what I saw in others and wanted for myself? Oh, no, not me! Those disciplines were rigid and ridiculous (even though it was exactly what I had done in the early 90's.) For two years I watched and waited. I noticed that others seemed to get

better while I continued to struggle. And then one day, I decided I'd give it a try. What could be the worst thing that could happen?

In April, 2004 I surrendered. I got an out-of-state sponsor (whom I've never met) and began working each of the eight tools every day. The disciplines include having a very clear food plan, connecting (voice to voice) with at least three OA folks a day, calling a sponsor at a specific time each day (something I had wanted for years), committing my specific food, calling in all food changes (which turns out to be freedom instead of bondage), doing a reading and writing assignment every day and sharing it with my sponsor during my daily call. Whew!

Quite honestly, sometimes it still seems pretty overwhelming. But it was that way with the food in the beginning also. I couldn't imagine being abstinent; and now, I can't imagine *not* being abstinent. Quite remarkably, I'm having the same experience with my OA journey: At one time I couldn't imagine working under such rigid structure within OA, and now I can't imagine *not* doing it. The results are just what I'd been looking for, plus more. I am gradually experiencing the emotional balance and spiritual recovery that I've longed for. I am growing up. This is coming about as a result of the daily use of the tools and the directed Step work with my sponsor. Life is not perfect, but I find it much more manageable. My relationship and faith in God is growing.

Just like there is not one course of treatment that works for every person diagnosed with pneumonia, not every compulsive overeater or food addict needs to work the OA with this kind of structure. This prescription certainly works for me. So, what does OA mean to me? It means FREEDOM! That word describes my experience best. Beyond my wildest dreams!

~Anonymous

Newcomer Meeting Location Change for the Month of March

The Monthly Newcomer meeting (held on the 3rd Saturday of each month) will be held at a different location for the month of March only. This is a great opportunity for all of us to meet the newest members of our community and answer any questions they may have about OA. Come join us on March 17th at:

St. Alban's Episcopal Church
6716 Gleason Rd
Edina MN, 55439

Located south of Hwy 62, between Hwy 100 and Hwy 169. Cross streets are Gleason and Valley View Rd.

Please call Sue L at 952-933-4104 or Kristie M at 952-822-1443 with any questions.



Public Information Committee...a Call to Service

I would like to introduce myself. I am Julie W, compulsive overeater. I am the new Public Information Committee Chair and trusted servant. I have been in the OA program for 3 years and have found new serenity and peace that I never imagined possible.

I took on the task of being the www.overeaters.org webmaster last year. One of my activities has been working on ways to increase the traffic to our web site. When I look online (and offline) for OA, I find that we are not published...not in the White Pages, Yellow Pages, Star Tribune or most any "lists" of helpful services available to the community.

Frankly; if you don't know us....you won't find us.

I am looking for a number of volunteers to do 1-2 hours of service per month. If you can commit to volunteering once, that is OK too. I have identified small tasks that can be done online at your home computer or at the local library. These assignments are easy. I will give you a target market and then you send out email requests to individuals in that target area.

Example. To get the OA Newcomer meeting listed in the Community Education bulletins for the local metro area, the volunteer would put "Community Education Minnesota" in their search engine. Then from the resulting list, they would go to the sites, determine whether people viewing the site might find OA helpful, find the organization's contact information, email them a pre-written message with the newcomer flyer attached, and keep a log of the contacts you have made. Simple.

I also have assignments that are brief and can be done by mail or phone. One example is sending OA approved literature and materials to your local Libraries, Universities, Schools, Hospitals and Clinics.

There are so many possible ways to spread the experience, strength and hope of OA.

Public Information Committee meets each month before the Unity Intergroup Meeting from 11:00 am to 12:15 pm in the rotunda of the Plaza Building, 1660 Parkdale Drive (southwest corner of I394 and Hwy 100) in St. Louis Park. Our next meeting will be April 14th. Attending the meeting isn't required for you to volunteer, but everyone is welcome.

If you would like more information, email jwinters.2@juno.com with the subject "OA PI Committee" or call me at 612-616-0453.



Spring Retreat

The OA Spring Retreat will be held in Buffalo, MN March 30, 31, and April 1. If you haven't already registered, cost is \$140. Scholarships are available! For more information, visit the OA Unity website at www.overeaters.org.

Links

List of Local Meetings	www.overeaters.org
Region 4 Web Site	www.oaregion4.org
World Service Web Site	www.oa.org

Step 3

“Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.”

Free of Self

I had to make a decision to turn my will and my life over to the care of God.

This was very hard for me--you see I am strong-willed. I like to do things my way and in my timing. I like to play God. Even with my children, I want them to be made into my image and likeness, rather than God's.

The sentence that has helped me the most to surrender, to turn my life over is found on p. 417 of the Big Book's 4th edition: "Nothing, absolutely nothing, happens in God's world by mistake."

By priding MYSELF, I failed to see things as God sees them. But if I abandon myself by praying about and by doing the one next right thing, I do not have to worry about making a "mistake," because I had sought His will and am safe in the care of God.

By doing Step 3, I got to redefine God. My old concept of God didn't work--I put too many limits on Him. Now I know He will never abandon me--that is the conscious contact with God we talk about in Step 11. I am never alone. I am totally cared for. How reassuring to know that Someone cares!

Don't get me wrong, I didn't say the 3rd step prayer once and am now "free of self". It is a daily, sometimes hourly thing.

~Anonymous

Another Form of Acceptance

For me the 3rd Step is "Let Go and Let God". It is surrender and this was not easy for me. The Big Book tells us this is not an overnight process. When I first came into program, I had a "God Box". My sponsor suggested this. When things were overwhelming or I seemed unable to cope, I wrote them down and put them in the box, a direct mail box to God.

As time went on, I found that I no longer needed this in-between method, I could surrender things, especially my self will, to God. It is when I give up self that I see the changes God has put before me. When I stop trying to control, my life goes smoothly! What a paradox, to let go is to find.

For me, the 3rd step means acceptance of God's will in my life. It is only when I let go and let God that I have a sense of serenity, a sense of contentment with those things going on around me. It is when I give up control that I see the answers God puts before me. I need to stay out of God's way.

It still means I will take action and then surrender the results. I am allowing myself to be in God's hands, to trust that He will be there for me. Every moment I live invites me to both give and receive a particular lesson, usually one I had not planned on. All things prepare me for the next lap in life's adventure. I now take time to smell the roses.

~Anne W.

Do I Have Options?

It was only after failed efforts on my part that I was ready to consider the third step as an option. Only after I was out of options did I become willing to make a decision.

Today, I am thankful for this solution and the gratitude I feel each day...for the gift of abstinence and a whole new way of living. I freely turn my will over to the care of God. There is no other option. For this I am grateful.

~Gerrie

THE SURRENDER PROCESS

I have read a lot on the subject of surrender. Some of the dictionary definitions for "surrender" are: 1) to give up possession of or power over; 2) to give up claim to; give over or yield, especially voluntarily, as in favor of another. The dictionary also says: surrender commonly implies the giving up of something completely after striving to keep it.

Now the questions are: how do I understand the surrender process? And have I surrendered to the God of my understanding? I like the dictionary's definition that surrender commonly implies giving up of something completely after striving to keep it.

The surrender process has taken me a long time to understand. The first time I encountered surrender was when I was flunking out of college as a sophomore. My emotional state was still that of an 8 year old child. My first surrender to God happened after I received a letter of truth from my sister. I had never believed in the power of God or that He cared about me. I was all alone at college. My only resource was to reach out to God, if there was a God who cared about me. I admitted my mistakes. My only hope was in Him. But I wasn't sure He was there for me. This was surrender—I gave up my way of living in favor of God's way. The result was a new attitude, a new way of looking at, doing things, & behaving myself. I did a 180 degree turn about, not by my own doing, but God's.

Over the ensuing years, my surrender has been a gradual process. God has brought my problems before me in one way or another. Once I have acknowledged that "Yes, this is true of me", then I become willing to have God lead me into doing the footwork. I leave the rest up to Him. He has taken care of my low self-worth, my co-dependency, my relationships, & most recently my food.

I still have a long way to go in the surrender process. I know there are many more subtle character defects in me. To the degree that I am teachable, I hear my God speaking to me. He helps me accept my defect & talk about it with other abstinent people. In For Today p.1 it says: "the best time to give up my will, my old ideas, & my defects is any time I am ready to

grow." Growth to me is gradual, according to God's timing. I cannot will myself to grow. I need God to lead me into the process.

Every day when I wake up, I am in bondage to myself. However, if I ask God to relieve me of the bondage of self, it generally works. This surrender has, for me, been "the start of genuine growth & maturation." I believe this is what happens to me daily as I continue to surrender my self to God.

~Char H.

The Door of Willingness

The key to step three is willingness. Without willingness, I turn my life over to binge foods and the chaos this creates. Sometimes all I can do is pray for willingness and gradually the door to spiritual freedom opens up. The only thing that can slam the door shut is my own self will. The dependence on my higher power sets my spirit free to enjoy my life just as it is, with all its pitfalls and also its joys. I put myself in prison when I wait for a "food fix" to numb out.

When I try to make my will conform to God's will, my life sails along and I can be abstinent. When I take back the illusion of self will, my life gets crazy again!

Step three is the door of willingness. Let's walk through that door together.

~Barb S

Open To Growth

For years I thought that if I was in control of everything around me then it would somehow miraculously roll over into being able to control the way I was eating. I tried everything I could think of to solve my food problem. When nothing worked I moved on to trying to control everything and everyone around me.

I truly believe that most of the time my motives were good. I was the parent and I knew best when it came to my children. Even after they grew up and became adults, I still believed this to be true. I wanted only the best for people around me and, of course, I knew what that was better than anyone else did. Never did I really pray for God's will for them. I only prayed for what I thought was best for them to happen. I was completely ego-centric when it came to wanting things my way.

I never understood, until I came to OA, why things always seemed to go wrong. Today, as I open myself up to the spirituality of the OA program and make the decision to turn my will and my life over to the care of God, as I understand Him, I become open to receive what the Big Book promises.

I find that even though I have read the Big Book and listened to many Big Book studies, each time I read it I get something new out of it...but only if I am open to receiving it. Sometimes I forget to make that decision and it is at these times I seem to get stuck in myself. It's as

though I get mired down in the muddy mess of this disease. I am unable to pull free from the muck and move forward.

Only when I have an open mind and am willing to turn my will and life over to a Higher Power am I allowed the freedom to grow and learn through the steps.

~Anonymous



April Society Pages

The April Society Pages will feature Step Four; "Made a searching & fearless moral inventory of ourselves." The Saturday Golden Valley group has volunteered to write for that issue. Articles on the Step or a personal story are still accepted from other OA members, however. Please indicate if it is OK to include your name with your article and send your contributions to ellen_oa@hotmail.com for publication in Society Pages.

The deadline for submission of articles is 12:00 noon on Thursday, March 22, 2007.

Intergroup Board

Becky T., Chair 952-423-1527

beckytio@frontiernet.net

Julie B.H., Vice-Chair 715-381-8470

jbhgold@hotmail.com

Amy D., Treasurer 952-270-0098

amydunker@yahoo.com

Catherine W., Secretary 612-205-0930

Catherine_oa@hotmail.com