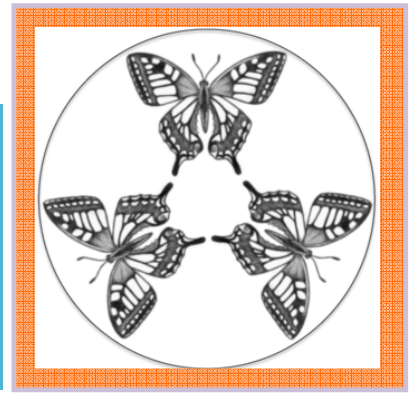


Butterfly

Overeaters Anonymous Greater Cincinnati
Intergroup Newsletter



Abstinence- An Inside Job in a Changing Landscape

Two years ago in the spring I returned to OA after an eleven-year absence. During those eleven years I regained all the weight I had lost and more, lost it again through a program of my own design and regained it and more yet again. Finally, I surrendered to the gift my Higher Power kept putting in front of me – the program of Overeaters Anonymous. I became willing to be accountable to a sponsor, have food plan, use the tools of OA, go to meetings - in short to become a member of Overeater's Anonymous.

Around that same time I had the opportunity to apply for a dream job in New York City, I prayed, talked it over with my husband and my sponsor and prayed some more and finally sent in my resume, knowing that the likelihood of even getting an interview was slim. In the meantime, I was learning my food plan, submitting to the discipline of being accountable daily by calling in my food to my sponsor, writing daily,

Article continued page 3

Step 7 Prayer

*My Creator,
I am now willing that you should have all of me, good & bad. I pray that you now remove from me every single defect of character, which stands in the way of my usefulness to you & my fellows. Grant me strength, as I go out from here to do your bidding. -Amen*

Recovery Through Life's Hurdles

Fear, common sense, acceptance and first hand experience: these are the things most responsible, I think, for my ability to remain abstinent during illness and hospitalization. Fear is a great motivator; it can make you jump impossible distances in a split second to avoid a car speeding thru a crosswalk. But, as a long-term motivator, it produces more ulcers than successes. Most common sense is a just a way of dealing with my fears long term. Fear of a DUI kept me from drinking and driving. Fear of cancer helped me quit smoking. It was more common sense than will power.

After 26 years of hanging around Overeaters Anonymous, the past 6 ½ years abstinent, I've accumulated a great deal of first, second and third-hand experiences and knowledge. Diagnosed with diabetes in 2002, I have relied on OA to stay alive, to keep my eyesight and to keep my legs. Much of my experience and knowledge comes from having 5 toes amputated, a lot of two-week hospitalizations for infected bones and having had almost every eye procedure known to medical science. In 2002, even with an average blood sugar level above 500, I still wouldn't go back to OA. By 2004, I lost the sight in my right eye due to blood leaking into the eye.

(continued on page 2)

On the Action Plan

Some of our groups have added a Plan of Action to the tools of the program and for me to stay abstinent it is important that I put this newest tool into practice. I follow the 12 steps and the 12 traditions in my everyday life, but there was always something missing. I have lost 135 lbs in the last 2 years by being abstinent through the OA program. I follow my plan of eating (gray sheet), call my OA friends everyday, use the tools of writing and burning (I write to my sponsor when I'm having a hard time dealing with life). I use anonymity (I only tell people that I am in a 12 step program when they ask how I lost my weight), service (I help set up for meetings and volunteer in our community), and sponsorship (I have 4 sponsees who I work the Big Book with and aid them in their growth through the program).

Article Continued on page 3

Steps 7, 8 & 9:

7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.



Traditions 7, 8, & 9:

7. *Every OA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.*
8. *Overeaters Anonymous should remain forever non-professional, but our service centers may employ special workers.*
9. *OA, as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.*



Spiritual Principles in the OA Program . . .

Tradition Seven: Responsibility

Tradition Eight: Fellowship

Tradition Nine: Structure

Recovery through Life's Hurdles (Continued from page 1)

Properly horrified, I finally dragged my 280-pound carcass back to OA, got a sponsor and got abstinent. I lost 65 pounds and got off all my medications. Most importantly I have a long list of things to be grateful for: I have good eyesight and I have 2 legs with feet. I am not bound to a wheelchair or a bed. I am actually enjoying my life and my friends in OA.

The key is ACCEPTANCE. I had plenty of time to reflect on my situation last week in the hospital and the concept of acceptance kept coming to mind. After all, just exactly what could I do about anything? Surgery was unavoidable (I could not walk and could have lost most of my left foot). Patients order their meals from a menu and in or out of the hospital; I rely upon the Grey Sheet menu. I have to accept the fact that when I run my life, I get diabetes, I weigh 320 pounds, I drink a lot, and smoke 4 packs of cigarettes a day. I was part of a study group that an Air Force doctor described as "overweight, over-anxious, chain smoking, and alcoholic fat slob". I also accept the fact that there is a higher power in my life: I certainly can't take credit for learning acceptance.

-Ted Mc.

On the Action Plan (continued from page 1)

I prayed to and meditated with my Higher Power as suggested in the 10th, 11th and 12th steps found in the Big Book, but there was something missing in my life. I was having a hard time keeping my program from getting stale and boring. I had tried many things that had been suggested and as I was reading some of the OA literature I found that some individuals use a Plan of Action.

Wow this is what I was missing in my program something that I could do every day! Mine plan is to exercise and work toward a new form of service that is helping others who suffer from more than just compulsion. The time I am taking for (myself) to exercise is my time with my Higher Power. I build a strong gratitude list, working on my defects and talking to my Higher Power while I exercise. This is just what I needed to keep my program fresh and alive. (It all so makes the time go by faster!) With the help of my Higher Power I have been able to start running for the first time in 25 years and we are not done yet! Together we are getting ready to walk our first 5k and next year we'll be able to run our first 5k and walk a 10k. I have found that the new addition- the Action Plan, keeps my program on track and I have been feeling great.!

-Erin P.

Meetings by Catherine S.

I love meetings. As a tool, it's my second favorite right after "a plan of eating". I refer to meetings as my "dip in the well" giving me perspective and that all important sense of we not I. The honesty and acceptance found at OA meetings was very foreign to my way of life before Overeaters Anonymous. At the very first meeting I attended in Covington, a young girl admitted to suicide attempts. I was shocked! Who would say such a thing in front of others? On the surface, I could not identify at all, but something kept me coming back. After months in OA, I was able to admit to myself that I thought of suicide every day. After the gift of about 18 months of abstinence, I realized that I no longer obsessed over, or even thought of, suicide. WOW, that was huge for me.

I've never gone to a meeting that didn't give me a gift of some kind whether it be one of those wonderful aha moments where I identify completely and see myself in the person sharing, or learning to laugh at myself because I know that all I have to do is "keep it simple". The meetings remind me in little ways and big ways that this program has blessed my life beyond anything I could have imagined. Thank you OA for reminding me to KEEP COMING BACK.

Abstinence- An Inside Job (continued from page 1)

. . . going to OA meetings and learning to apply the Twelve Steps in new ways and with a new depth. I had been an active member of another Twelve Step Fellowship for almost two decades but I had to put aside everything I thought I knew about the Twelve Steps and be a beginner in OA.

Five months later I found myself living in New York City! I had visited the wonderful NYC Intergroup web site to get meeting information and was sad to discover there were no OA HOW meetings in NYC. Moving from suburban Anderson Township to NYC was a huge change. The mechanics of daily life that I never even thought about suddenly became a daily challenge.

I continued to stay in daily contact with my sponsor and apply the Twelve Steps to every aspect of my life but I didn't get to an OA meeting until I had been in New York for about three weeks. I started checking out a variety of OA meetings - I knew that they would not be like my wonderful home group in Covington but I thought I would surely find a group where I felt at home. Instead I was very disappointed in the meetings I was attending. I tried to keep an open mind but did not feel that I was hearing the positive solution of the Twelve Steps of OA. I whined regularly to my sponsor! In retrospect I realize that I was looking for what I could get rather than what I could give. My new job was demanding and my meeting attendance became very sporadic.

Finally, I realized that it had been months since I had been to an OA meeting! I was still abstinent, accountable daily to my sponsor and had many opportunities to carry the message of OA to people who approached me asking how I had lost the weight. I was delighted to share my story and tell them that Overeaters Anonymous works, but I knew in my heart that if I wanted to stay abstinent I had to truly be a member of OA, and that means attending meetings and being of service. I tried a phone meeting but discovered I prefer face-to-face meetings. So I found a step meeting where they read A.A. and O.A. literature and committed to going every week. I started to feel a little more connected and began to sponsor. Shortly thereafter I stumbled on an OA Intergroup website for a neighborhood north of mine which listed a number of meetings including OA HOW. I immediately made plans to go to meetings in that community and am slowly starting to feel connected to my new group.

I certainly don't recommend anyone handle a move in abstinence the way I did. My arrogance and selfishness put my abstinence in peril. I am grateful for the many Twelve Step opportunities my Higher Power gave me and my sponsor's endless patience. The habits of accountability and continually seeking spiritual growth that were established in those early months of abstinence in Cincinnati have been invaluable. I am thrilled to report that I am maintaining an 83 pound weight loss. OA works! I still miss the laughter and easy fellowship of my original home group but I carry their message and example in my heart.

With love and gratitude,
Mary C. NYC

On Step Seven

Like step 6, I heard early on that step 7 required only a minimum amount of time to work. Again, maybe that is because in the Big Book only one short paragraph pertains to step 7. On page 76 appears what is known as the 7th Step Prayer.

So much of step 7 and recovery in general requires a large shift in humility in order to have any success. The true meaning of humility evaded me for a long time, first in life before program and for many years in program. There is still a lot for me to understand. One night in a meeting I heard someone give 3 "definitions" of humility.

- 1) Being teachable.
- 2) Knowing who we are and who we can be.
- 3) Doing God's will.

The easiest of these for me to apply to the subject humility is the first one, being teachable. Looking back at my life, I can identify many, many occasions when I was not teachable, including times with my parents, my immediate family and on the job. Program over many years has taught me that I was the guy on pages 60 to 62 that wanted to direct the play, was self centered and egotistical and was in fact playing God.

We begin practicing humility when we take the first step. We surrendered and asked for help. We continue to practice it throughout the remaining steps and in working the other areas of the program. We sponsor others and help them work THEIR program. We remain open minded and NOT attain Advanced Sobriety Syndrome.

-Joe

Maintenance Today...

Statistics:

Abstinence Date: June 14, 2008

Size: Started at a size 18, now a size 4

I am happy to say that I have been maintaining a 60 pound weight loss for the last couple of years. I came in to the program wanting to lose weight, but I knew that it was more than that. My life was a mess. I was miserable, but I didn't understand why. Since then I have worked the steps and let go of the fear, anger and regrets that I had been carrying around for, in some cases, 30 years.

Working the program is essential to maintenance. Without it I will go back to the food. I sponsor, attend meetings, go to workshops, retreats and conferences. When asked to do service, I do it whenever possible. Getting outside of myself and helping others helps me spiritually and mentally. Daily, I review my day and will try to recognize any wrongs that I may have done and make it right. My goal is to never have to do another amends. Living a life that does not cause the need for an amends is so much easier! Recently, I have been learning that meditation and reviewing the good that has occurred each day is even more powerful in my recovery.

Today, I keep to my food plan and the food is no longer an obsession. I have a big book sponsor that I am working with. We read each chapter and compare notes on what stands out to us. I also have a maintenance sponsor. I am answering maintenance questions which I read to her and we discuss. Each of these sponsors have over twenty years recovery!

My recovery, big book study and work with maintenance questions are all different as time passes. I am evolving. What an incredible feeling it is to wake up each day to a fresh new start!

-Veronica P.

Service at the Intergroup Level...

When I was asked to write a short article about this topic my first reaction was "what do you mean, 'short'?" There is no such word in my vocabulary! My first sponsor told me that I should come to Intergroup. There was no asking.... When I got there, I discovered a room full of wonderful OA people who were grateful for being liberated from overeating and who wanted to share this experience with others. That was back in 1976 or so. I served for about 9 years, doing all kinds of interesting service and going to conferences and conventions in other cities with other folks from Intergroup. I even learned how to be a treasurer, a vice chair and a retreat co-chair. I've said many times that all those things I didn't learn in kindergarten, I learned coming to Intergroup (and I'm still learning them)! All those service "nouns" are really "verbs"—you just do them the best you know how.

Then in 1985 I figured I'd done enough service—it was someone else's turn to do it. That was one of the first steps I took toward my relapses. After the last relapse (that lasted 11 years), when I came back into the rooms of OA and God gave me another shot at this thing called abstinence, I knew it was a green light to do service beyond the group level. When my two-year Monday night class was completed, into the Intergroup doors I came (after volunteering to be one of my groups' representatives—and since I had no competition I got to do it). After all I still hadn't learned all those kindergarten things yet (and there are many who will give witness that I still need some more learning)! That's ok—the opportunities to work with the weird and wonderful people of OA make me feel right at home!

For better or worse I served again as your Intergroup Treasurer and Mini-Convention co-chair. From 2007 to 2010, I had the awesome privilege of attending Region 5 Assemblies AND four World Service Business Conferences as YOUR DELEGATE! Being surrounded by such motivated people who have such willingness to serve are some of the highlights of my OA life. You just can't come away from those experiences without realizing just how lucky I am to be a compulsive overeater in recovery!

Right now I am serving as your Intergroup Vice Chair and when that term is up (again), I have scheduled myself (with your permission) to serve on one of the intergroup standing committees. Service keeps me focused on maintaining my recovery so I can give it away. What a deal! How can I lose?

Thanks for asking me to "talk" about Intergroup service!

Yours by the grace of God and the 12 steps & fellowship of OA,

-Rena H

A Few Dates to Remember...

August 20th – Ohio Day of Sharing (Columbus)

September 10-12 – Fall Retreat, St. Anne's (Melbourne, KY)

For more info go to our Greater Cincinnati OA website!