

Serenity Times

NOVEMBER 2012
www.oagalveston.org

A Publication of the Galveston/Bay Area Intergroup of Overeaters Anonymous
WSO 9342 Region III

Celebrations

November 17

International
Day
Experiencing
Abstinence

Celebrated the 3rd Saturday in November, this day encourages OA members worldwide to begin or reaffirm their abstinence from compulsive overeating.

December 12

12th-Step-Within Day



Celebrated on December 12 each year to encourage OA service boards, meetings and individual members to reach out to those within the fellowship who are still suffering from compulsive eating behaviors.

Have You Heard?

Expectations are pre-planned resentments.
Reduce my requirements on other people to behave a certain way.
Isolation is the dark room where negatives are developed.
Seven days without a meeting makes one weak.
The smartest thing an OA member can say is, help me.
If God is your co-pilot, SWITCH SEATS!

OA is a fellowship of individuals who, through shared experience, strength, hope, and the 12 steps of this program are recovering from compulsive overeating. We welcome everyone who wants to stop eating compulsively. There are no dues or fees for members; we are self-supporting through our own contributions, neither soliciting nor accepting outside donations. OA is not affiliated with any public or private organization, political movement, ideology or religious doctrine: we take no position on outside issues. Our primary purpose is to abstain from compulsive overeating and to carry this message of recovery to those who still suffer.

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Who's Driving the Bus?

Step One prepared me for Step Two. I admitted my powerlessness and the unmanageability of my life. Then I came to believe that a power greater than myself could restore me to sanity. I had admitted to powerlessness; now I had to admit my insanity. I understand that this can be a stumbling block for many people. I was fortunate in being able to accept it without hesitation. I could recognize myself instantly in the crazy pedestrian of the Big Book, who repeatedly walked into traffic and suffered terrible injuries, only to step out again, surprised when the result was the same.

I had a history of using food inappropriately. We laugh at the old-time peddlers traveling from town to town selling the magic potion, the cure for every ailment. Food was my potion. I used it to subdue pain, to ease tension, to dull emotions, and to ease loneliness. Food was my best friend.

I continued to use it even after I recognized the terrible price it demanded. It provided short-term relief from distress only to leave me deeper in despair. Food is part of celebrating in our culture, but when abused as I abused it, it robbed me of the happy times, too. I could not sit still with any emotions. When I was stuffed full of food to the point of physical pain, I still turned to food for relief-driven by a compulsion over which I had no control.

When I found OA, admitting my insanity was a relief. The power greater than myself was the sticking point. I didn't open my mind to this for a long time. I had to recognize that ego and intellect are not firm foundations. They are steel barriers that cut me off from life. I had to end the debate. I had to become willing to suspend my unbelief and take a blind leap of faith. This was the key for me. This is the Step, according to Bill W., where we find the first promise of the program-the promise that we can be restored to sanity.

The remaining steps outline what we must do to let the miracle unfold. A HP can restore my sanity. To me, sanity means having food in its proper place as nourishment for my body. It means emerging from the food fog to live in the clarity of the moment. It means accepting food day and bad, pain and uncertainty, as well as exuberance, joy, and serenity. It means coming out of isolation to help others and to ask for help. It means resigning from my job as God. It means living the Steps as well as I can and recognizing that my HP is always there for me.

Years ago, I came across a wonderful analogy. If you are on a bus that is speeding wildly down the road, totally out of control, it's time to open the driver's compartment to see what idiot is driving the bus. This question must remain front and center in my thinking: who is driving my bus today?

--Nova Scotia, Canada
Seeking the Spiritual Path

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Overeaters Anonymous

Here we experience the great truth that when we let go of our need to control people and simply allow our Higher Power to serve others through us, we receive an abundance of joy and strength.
- OA 12 & 12, p. 106

Recovery Story: Reclaiming the Spirit

When I look at pictures of myself as a child, I see a young girl spinning, smiling and smelling lilacs. But my parents divorced when I was seven, and life became more difficult. Slowly I gained weight and retreated as I began to eat and eat. Each year I saw another 10 pounds (5 kg) on the scale. Each year I experienced more dismay and harassment from my family. I topped out at just over 300 pounds (136 kg). Of course, this top coincided with my bottom.

At 21, I felt different. I didn't think I was supposed to date. I didn't know what would become of me professionally. Even the glimmer of self-confidence I guarded inside me diminished because I was sure people judged and disliked my fat appearance. I felt I had to earn admiration and acceptance. I was my toughest critic.

Then I found OA, where I belonged the minute I walked in the door. The recovery that slowly followed could only have come from some power outside myself. This is obvious to me because my best devices had taken me to a demoralizing and uncomfortable weight. In the depths of my disease, I remember thinking the real solution to my weight problem (not my life problem) was to become a compulsive exerciser. This is laughable in hindsight. Probably no exercise regimen was rigorous enough to counteract all the calories I was taking in!

Once in program, I started to exercise in a healthy way. I replaced my family's dysfunctional systems with the Traditions and Steps that make OA a safe place to recover. Since joining 10 years ago, I have given up things that no longer serve me, whether foods or friends. I have lost over 150 pounds (68 kg) and have maintained that loss for more than 7 years.

The greatest opportunity and challenge of my life came this year. I'd never been farther south than Florida, yet I accepted a job in Brazil! The process has felt "Higher Powered." I'm happy to find the Twelve Steps here in Brazil too, with OA literature translated from the familiar English versions.

"The will of God will never take me where the grace of God cannot protect me." Recently, I heard these words read at a meeting. The will of my Higher Power has taken me far from home this time. My gratitude to OA runs deep. I know that no matter where I am on earth, as I turn away from excess food and toward my Higher Power, I will make it through whatever challenges and adventures are in my path.

My life has changed and continues on a changed trajectory from where it would have ended without OA. Every time I have feared letting go of something that does not suit me, I've been rewarded with serenity and growth on the other side. In the process of surrendering, I end up reclaiming the spirit I see when I look at those childhood pictures of myself.

Reprinted from Lifeline magazine

What Do You Mean By "Doing the Footwork"?

~ By Lisa OA in Silicon Valley, CA

Soon after I got into OA I heard "Let go and let God." Later it was "just do the footwork." I tried to understand how I was suppose to turn things over to my Higher Power, but also do the footwork. I couldn't figure it out. What was the difference between taking back control of something and just "doing the footwork"?

Eventually I did come to understand. Awareness came with one of the first loving acts I started to do for myself. I started to wear my lap belt when I drove. I have the automatic shoulder strap seat belt in my car, but for years I would never use the lap belt. I figured, "Oh well, I want to die anyway, why bother." My husband would remind me to put it on when I was in the car with him. Occasionally I would do so just to appease him, but I never told him my thoughts.

Soon after working the steps I began using my seat belt. Amazing! Sometimes I would reach down and touch it just to remind myself that, yes I do love and care for myself. That was such a difficult sentence to say to myself the first time. Eventually I started saying, "See HP, I'm doing the footwork." It was comforting to know that I was taking some positive action on my part, and communicating with my HP too. I remember the old-timer's saying "Faith without works is dead."

Eventually I began doing a lot more things as I started working the steps that would be considered "the footwork". I found myself making my bed in the morning, I pulled the drapes, I began answering the phone, and sometimes I even placed the calls! I continued using the other tools of the program: meetings, literature, writing, anonymity, and service. I used the tool of sponsorship and got a sponsor. Soon I became a sponsor. Though I was releasing weight, I still struggled with the tool of "plan of eating".

When I lost my sponsor I had to be vulnerable once more and reach out again and get another sponsor. This asking for help part was really hard for me. But I said I would go to any length, right? Still God works in his own way and his own time. Most recently, with the help of my new sponsor, I started developing and using a plan of eating that was right for me and all my allergies.

But the most important action, and the hardest, is asking for help when I need it, whether it's from my sponsor, another OA'er, or my HP. Now that's doing the footwork and it keeps me abstinent. These days I always use my lap belt. When I do so I feel the love of my HP.

Such a small gesture, putting on a lap belt, but now it contains so much significance. It's like a quick little prayer or meditation. Plus it makes me realize how far I have come in this program.

The Gratitude Path

It seems to me that the antidote to negative thinking is gratitude. I tend toward negativity, especially when I'm confused or stressed. I find that if I substitute thoughts of gratitude, my thinking goes from being fear-based to being God-based. By thinking myself into a state of gratitude, I am freed of my negativity.

It doesn't matter how childish or mundane my thanks are, I can begin with thoughts such as these: Thank you for the chair. Thank you for the stars. Thank you for my shoes. Thank you for the opportunity to serve. Thank you for new challenges. Thank you for guidance. These thoughts help me get out of my negative feelings and concentrate on that for which I am grateful. Then I end up in a spiritually high place, where I'm in a state of gratitude. Rather than taking all my blessings for granted, I feel the presence of a power greater than myself. I don't feel alone, vulnerable, insignificant, or negative. Instead, I feel full of faith, safe, and confident that I'm on the right path.

--Louisiana USA, Seeking the Spiritual Path

Serenity Times, Publication of the Galveston Bay Area Intergroup 2012 Meeting List

MONDAY

Deer Park (51567)
Open Meeting, Literature 11:30 a.m.
In His Presence Fellowship Church
1202 East P Street (Fellowship Hall)
Deer Park TX 77536
Contact: Bekki S. 409-454-5720

Intergroup Business Meeting

Jan., April, July, Oct.

3rd Monday, 5:30 p.m.

Bay Area Community of Christ Church

Travis @ Austin Street

Contact: Kay H. 281-557-3881

TUESDAY

Santa Fe

Topic/Discussion 6 p.m.

Rosa May Catching Annex Bldg.

12045 15th (on corner of Hwy 6 and Ave K)

Guest Speaker on 5th week of a month

Contact: Linda 409-457-9517, Laura 281-507-4968

WEDNESDAY

Clear Lake (13244)

Literature (Big Book/12&12), 10 am

Clear Lake United Methodist Church

16335 El Camino Real Rm. 304

Contact: Jean 281-488-2402, Kay 281-557-3881

THURSDAY

Webster (30093)

6:30 p.m. Up the Street Club

508 W. Nasa Parkway, RM 2

Discussion Meeting

Contact: Chuck B. 281-770-7539

SATURDAY

Clear Lake (12635)

For Today/Discussion, 10:30 am

House of Prayer Lutheran

14045 Space Center Blvd.

Contact: Marcia 281-488-7684

2012-05-05
@
10:30-11:00 AM