

Serenity Times

DECEMBER 2012
www.oagalveston.org

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

Surviving & Thriving the Holidays!

Here are some tips from the OA rooms on surviving and thriving during the holidays:

- Keep it simple.
- Ask for God's help to abstain.
- Have a game plan and tools in place.
- Get rid of temptations in the house.
- Remember, "When in doubt, leave it out."
- Realize you cannot please others, so why die trying?
- Think of it as "just another Thursday or Saturday."
- Recall the natural high or "holy awe" you get from being around junk food and not eating it, or excess and not indulging (ours is a positive, happy choice!).
- Remember, making even the littlest room for HP helps!
- HALT if you are Hungry, Angry, Lonely, Tired (or bored, sad, or anxious).
- Remember our "disease brains" think celebrating means getting sloppy; real celebration is living happy, joyous and free!
- Look up words like "joy," "happiness," "hope" in OA's **For Today** and **Voices of Recovery**, to anchor your mind and heart in satisfying reality. I looked up "joy" in **For Today** and found the loveliest quote: "Those undeserved joys which come uncalled and make us more pleased than grateful are [the ones] that sing"—Henry David Thoreau" (p. 64). We don't need extra food or "fabricated delight" to savor what is meaningful about holidays, whatever our creed or religion.

— Edited and reprinted from *Calling* newsletter,
South Central Pennsylvania Intergroup, December 2010

Sound Bites from OA Shows Air on Wednesdays Through January 9, 2013

Some of the Topics:

- 100+ pounds to lose—is there hope for me in OA?
- The three levels of recovery from compulsive eating.
- In all our affairs—how recovery in OA can improve every aspect of your life.
- New Year's resolutions—what can you do differently this time.

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.

Serenity Times is a publication of the Galveston/Bay Area Intergroup of Overeaters Anonymous. The editor reserves the right to edit for space and style. Reprinting of this material is permitted provided proper credit is given the source. Please send submissions to:

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12th-Step-Within-Day

Celebrated on 12/12 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.

"...we have been rocketed into a fourth dimension of existence of which we had not even dreamed."
Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous p.25

Houston/Metro Intergroup OA
presents a
NEWCOMER'S WORKSHOP
Saturday ~ Jan 12, 2013, 2-4pm

@ St. Anne's Catholic Church
2140 Westheimer, Houston TX 77098
St Christopher Room (in the Parish Hall)
Contact: Sandy L. 713-628-2377

Eating Never Helps

I've been coming back to OA meetings for over 10 years. Hearing the experience, strength and hope others have shared has drilled into me "eating never helps." This is true. I have discovered that food is the enemy, not the friend, and that God, the program and the Fellowship can get me through anything without my eating compulsively. In the past year, my father and a grandson have died, and I have experienced unpleasant, unexplained health problems. In the past, I would have turned to "my friend" food for consolation. Food never rejected me. For 24 hours a day, seven days a week, that food showed up on my body. I questioned whether it was a friend, whether seeking solace through food was creating more problems for me, because eventually the excess weight became a severe problem too. It was disabling me, moving me toward an early death, and the original problems were still there. At age 52, I am 202 pounds (92 kg) down from my top weight. When I am experiencing difficulties, I have come to believe what others in program have told me: "this too shall pass"; I am living an adventure; and serenity is proportional to acceptance. I have learned to focus on the positives in life and to thank God daily for the miracles he has granted me. I have come to accept that bad things do happen in my life, but I do not have to eat over them. I have a disciplined plan of eating. Having such a plan is much easier for me in times of worry and distress. It is a given that I will use that plan of eating, and I am not tempted to stray into sugar, alcohol or white flour. I call and email friends within the Fellowship. I regularly attend meetings and conventions despite what life may be throwing at me, and I continue with service. I sponsor, call, email and get through life on life's terms, but I stay abstinent. Although not program language, I have learned the following, which is the essence of what I heard in meetings: "If I have a problem and eat over it, then I'll have two problems."
— Jenna L., Arlington, Texas USA

How OA Changed My Life, “Two States of Being”

I received these payoffs from compulsively overeating:

Morbid obesity. I hate that description of myself, but I saw it on my medical records. Morbid obesity meant my overweight condition would kill me if continued; 100 pounds overweight is morbidly obese.

Pain, as in joints. My arthritis pain was aggravated by many years of morbid obesity. It has lessened considerably after nine and a half years in a normal body size.

Poor health. In addition to arthritis, I suffered borderline diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, heart palpitations and constant indigestion. I had two surgeries for bone spurs between my toes. I had knee surgery twice for damage resulting from overload on my joints. I was hospitalized twice for bowel problems.

Emotional flat line. I made life decisions while drugged on excess food, which adversely affected my life. I felt little pain, but also no joy, excitement, love or happiness. When I felt fear, anxiety or lack of love, I used food to live life on my terms.

Lack of clear judgment. While drugged, I made poor job decisions, married three alcoholics, ran up credit card debt and did not keep a clean home.

Lack of control. The majority of my decisions were based on food: my need to have it, how I would get it and my terror of not having it. While I felt that I controlled things, the truth was that food controlled me. I operated under false values.

Pleasure. What pleasure? I was depressed. Long ago, I must have had one pleasurable moment with food and then chased that dream for the next 39 years. Some life of pleasure! I pasted on a smile for the world. I lived a lie.

Loneliness. Food cannot hug me, hold me or converse with me. The night I hit my bottom I ate so much that I thought my stomach would burst, and I considered ways of ending my life. Food did not comfort me.

Delayed feelings. When I began feeling anxious, food took the edge off and delayed the feeling. Then I could take no action to solve whatever problem caused the anxiety.

Safety. I took no risks. I stayed in a false feeling of safety and did not grow as a person.

Demoralized character. I did nothing to build character. I had no desire to be moral, self-respecting or helpful to others.

Paranoia. I felt that people were out to get me. I ate to numb that feeling. I could not face the reality that most people were not even thinking about me!

I receive these payoffs from abstaining from compulsive overeating:

Good health. I am relieved of most health problems related to morbid obesity.

More time to think of others. I am surprised at how much time I have in my day to concentrate on work, family, program and friends now that I'm not obsessed with planning my next meal, calculating how many calories I've consumed, planning my shopping trips or what snack I could pick up.

Normal-size body. Maintaining a normal body size means last year's jeans fit this year. I don't have to keep three or more sizes in my closet. Everything fits!

Physical activity. When I turned 50, I climbed through the window of a racecar and drove 118.1 mph for six laps. I scuba dive, walk two big dogs and enjoy an active sex life with my husband. I swim and exercise and I play on the floor with my grandchildren.

A new way of life. Because OA has removed my self-focused activities, I have the time and desire to serve others. I do a lot for my friends, family, OA, church, work and people I don't even know.

A light in my eyes. Friends tell me I have that. My whole face genuinely smiles. I am not hiding behind a smile. When things are rough, I can think clearly to deal with problems and can see my cup as half full.

Textbook for living. That is what the Big Book is for me. For the most part, I relate to Bill's story. When I compare, I run into trouble. My self-centeredness was dressed a little differently than Bill's; mine was decorated with self-loathing and self-pity. Truth is, Bill and I went to the same prom.

When I look at these two states of being, I want to stay in the abstinent arena. I could go on, but will close here in gratitude for this shift in me—physically, emotionally and most of all spiritually. God bless OA for changing my life. Trust God and buy broccoli.

— Reprinted from [Lifeline](#) magazine

Taking Action

On the Saturday of an OA convention, I planned to hang out with my dad during a break in the schedule. When I called to tell him the last session was over, he told me he had changed his mind and was going to spend time at home with my stepmother. I hung up the phone at a loss as to what to do. No banquet tickets were left, and if I went home, I'd have to cook dinner, eat and rush back. Fortunately I had just sat in a session about food inventory. We had looked at our last slip and had reviewed the physical, emotional and spiritual reasons behind the slip and the spiritual, emotional and physical actions we should take. In the past, I would have gone to the fast-food joint nearby, ordered a large meal, called several people and gossiped about how my dad had treated me. I also would have been angry at my stepmom for taking my dad away, even though it was his choice that hurt me. What I did do was go home, make an abstinent dinner, call my dad, eat my abstinent meal and return to convention. When I called him, I stood up for myself, something I rarely do. I confirmed he was the one who had asked me to hang out. He said he had changed his mind because of my tight schedule. I pointed out that I had told him the schedule a few days before, and he had plenty of opportunity to let me know he had changed his mind. He said what he had done was crummy. I agreed. He seemed surprised by my agreeing; in the past I would have placated him. I did end up gossiping about the situation anyway, but I did not binge. I had made a plan and stuck to it, and I had stood up for myself! I did realize one thing about my gossip. I still hurt. My dad hadn't truly apologized, and even though I stood up for myself, I still felt rejected. I realized I was making my father my Higher Power. If my father rejects me, my Higher Power rejects me. I had to realize I am loved regardless of what my father says or does. My Higher Power loves me, accepts me, thinks I am worthy and enjoys spending time with me.

— Edited and reprinted from *Out of the Cocoon* newsletter
Milwaukee Area Intergroup, May/June 2009

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 (52400)

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. 311

Contact: 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

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