

Working the

Steps

One Day at a Time



Things to do Instead of Eating...

Special Events

- November 13 –
Holiday Workshop
- January Date TBA—
Annual Newcomer's
Meeting

Take a sock to mend, write to a friend,
Scrub a tub, give your cat a rub,
Make a bed, paint your nails red,
Read a bit, learn to knit,
Do your hair, reupholster a chair,
Make a call, walk to the mall,
Try to write, fight urban blight,
Take a bath, stroll a path,
Get involved, see a problem solved,
Whatever your thing, give it a fling!

Just for Today

I will try to live
through this day only,
and not tackle my
whole life problem at
once. I can do some-
thing for twelve
hours that would ap-
peal me if I felt that I
had to keep it up for
a lifetime.

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When Stubbornness Works



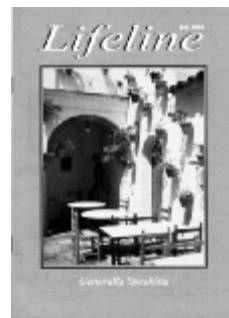
Mohammed Ali was on a plane. The flight attendant asked him to fasten his seat belt. His reply was, "Superman doesn't need a seat belt." The attendant didn't miss a beat. She said, "Superman doesn't need a plane." Am I trying to do this program MY way?

After procrastinating for the past 4 years, I finally subscribed to the OA Lifeline Magazine. I have been amazed at how many thought-provoking ideas and articles I have come across; one of them was in the February Issue. The author of an article was talking about "filling the void," and that a rumor had circulated in her region that a "common"

occurrence in their 12-step program was people quit working a program after 5 years because the reality of living life without their drug (excess food) is too difficult and painful!

I could identify with the feeling of wanting to give up and give in to the food, but my next reaction surprised me. A

stubbornness that said, "I'll show you... food will NOT get the best of me." I will keep on working the steps; working to be more honest! Yes, it's inconvenient at times, but life with the steps and honesty is still better than a life of denial and excess food! That keeps me from living!
Anonymous



My Prayer



"God give me patience, and I mean right NOW."

Lord help me to relax about insignificant details beginning tomorrow at 7:41:23 am p.s.t.

God help me to consider people's feelings, even if most of them ARE hypersensitive.

God help me to take responsibility for my own actions, even though they're usually NOT my fault.

God, help me to not try to RUN everything. But, if You need some help, please feel free to ASK me!

Lord, help me to be more laid back, and help me to do it EXACTLY right.

God help me to take things more seriously, especially laughter, parties, and dancing.

God give me patience, and I mean right NOW!

Lord help me not be a perfectionist. (Did I spell that correctly?)

God, help me to finish everything I sta

God, help me to keep my mind on one th -- Look, a bird -- ing at a time.

God help me to do only what I can, and trust you for the rest. And would you mind putting that in writing?

Lord keep me open to others' ideas, WRONG though they may be.

Lord help me be less independent, but let me do it my way.

Lord help me follow established procedures today. On second thought, I'll settle for a few minutes.

Lord, help me slow down and not rush through what I do. Amen.

1 2 Steps for the HOLIDAYS

1. We admitted that the Holiday Season has deeper meanings attached to it than the devouring of food.
2. We came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could help us see and celebrate the TRUE meaning of the Season.
3. We came to believe that our Higher Power could help us to appreciate the joyfulness of the season as we understand it.
4. We made a searching and thorough examination of our relationship with food in connection with the holidays as well as what other things we have enjoyed about the season.
5. We admitted to our Higher Power the exact nature of our past food habits during holiday seasons past.
6. We became entirely ready to allow our Higher Power to remove our attachment to food as an unavoidable necessity of the holidays.
7. We humbly asked him to remove our desire to partake of the holiday treats.
8. We made a list of all persons whose presence makes the holiday season joyful for us and with whom we would like to share our joy.
9. We made plans to spend time with those people whenever possible, except when to do so would remove us from our primary purpose of abstinence.
10. We continued to enjoy the company of our friends and family as well as all the other enjoyable non-food aspects of the season.
11. We sought through prayer and meditation to improve our appreciation of the season, praying for knowledge of the meaning of the season and the joy we feel at this time.
12. Having realized that sharing with others the joy of this season far outlasts the fleeting good feeling of food, we gave ourselves the gift of abstinence throughout the holidays, and give others the gift of our full attention and appreciation.

submitted by Barbara S.

“deeper meanings attached to it than the devouring of food....”

“our primary purpose of abstinence.....”

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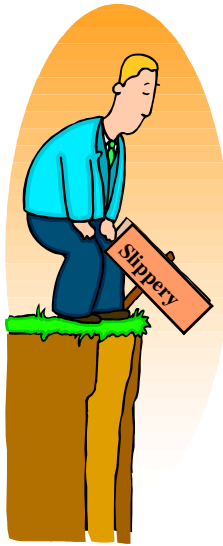


Hope for the Holidays:
 A special meeting to help prepare for the season

 Saturday, November 13, 2-4 p.m.
 at the Oasis Club, 5645 Hillcroft, Suite 102

 For more info contact : Greg M at 713-666-1306

Don't Fall Off The Cliff!



“I am very careful. I don't take ANY chances.”

“I DON'T WANT TO GO OVER THE EDGE.”

I got a really nice compliment yesterday afternoon from a lady I work with. I came into the lunch room and she said "you are really doing good aren't you". I thought, hmph, if you only knew. Ha! Ha! But really, I didn't know what she was talking about so I asked her what she was talking about. She said, "well you are losing weight and you look good. How much have you lost?" I thanked her and told her I didn't have a clue. She laughed and said "what, you don't weigh?" I said "that's right, I don't weigh". She asked me why and I told her because no matter what the scale says it is never the right number. Now, this lady is probably about 50 to 60 lbs overweight, she has seen me at my absolute heaviest, and she saw me LOSE 100 lbs AND GAIN 150 lbs in one year. Yeah, pretty unbelievable, isn't it. Anyway, as I write this I want to take it back and say that she is just remembering me when I weighed 400 lbs but, I SEE HER EVERY DAY. Duh!!!! So, either her eyes are bad, Ha! Ha! or it is true. I don't have a clue. All I know is that even talking

about it makes me kind of jittery because I start thinking about what I look like and how big I am compared to so and so and are they bigger than me or am I bigger than them and so it goes. The insanity starts. But, in OA I have learned that I CAN manage my thoughts/mind if I do it BEFORE I take the first compulsive bite. So, right now, I know my head is doing a number on me so I am going to say some affirmations and make some phone calls when I leave school. It is like I am playing with a very fragile glass ball on the very tip top of a cliff. There is not much playing area. At first, I am very careful. I don't take ANY chances. As I get better at rolling the ball around and it not going over the cliff, I get braver and braver and the ball gets closer and closer to the edge. It is 2000 feet over the cliff to nothing but granite rock below. If the ball goes over, it is going to be shattered. NO question about it. I am getting really good at this so I push it a little farther, a little farther. One time it goes over a bit and I am able to grab it really quick. Then I see how far I can let it go over and still grab it. I reach farther and farther. Fi-

nally, the ball goes over and I reach and it is too far and I go over WITH the ball. That is how it happens for me. I didn't go over when I was being cautious and making sure it didn't even approach the edge. I don't know if this means anything to you or not. I just thought of it as I was writing this. I DON'T WANT TO GO OVER THE EDGE AGAIN. The miracles of modern medicine have put me back together again like Humpty Dumpty, but even though he was put back together his shell was cracked and weak and he had to be REALLY careful with himself. That is where I am now. I am VERY fragile and I HAVE to remember that. Thank you for being in my life. Love always, Anita



Trying, You're Lying

"...when I try to do it, I give myself permission to fail"

"Trust" instead of "Try".



"...a solution to what seemed unsolvable to me alone."

"May the secrets be silent no more."

"Trying, you're lying" I first heard that in an OA meeting. It has just come to fruit in my life. "Trying" is a word that I use to let myself off. "Trying" is making an attempt, not actually doing. "Trying" is also to experiment, to test, to see if it works. I don't need to do any of those things with whatever I am dealing. When I tell myself I am "trying", it means non-action, excuses and ultimate failure.

Whether adhering to an eating plan or living by a moral

principle, when I try to do it, I give myself permission to fail, I give myself an excuse...."Well, at least I tried". Yeah. Right. But I also did not remain abstinent.

I am replacing the word "trying" with "trusting." "Trusting" is two-way communication. I acknowledge my weakness in this area and also claim the "power greater than ourselves to restore us to sanity."

If I am "trying", it is usually something insane that I really don't

want to give up. If I am trying to stay on my food plan and I binge, that is insane.

When I replace "trying" with "trusting", I feel the power come into my life, that gives me abstinence. "Trust" is a strong word that conforms my will to the will of my Higher Power. "Trust" delivers me from self-will. "Trust" gives me humility. "Trust" keeps my eyes on my goal. Trust means success through my Higher Power who knows no failure.

"Trust" instead of

Graysheetter



I don't know about you, but I grew up feeling like my problems were all mine. It isn't that no one in my family cared. They did. It's just that they modeled solving problems yourself, not whining to others, never "airing your dirty laundry." When someone in my family developed a drug dependency, it wasn't discussed outside our nuclear family. Going to a counselor was a stigma. Pride prevented going to a support group. The stiff upper lip was daily wear.

So when I developed a compulsion to eat, I didn't know what to do. Not only did I have no idea what professionals might be helpful, but

shame kept me quiet. I grappled with this overwhelming, secretive drive and these awful feelings all alone, even though I have great friends and family. It's not like I wasn't wearing my disorder. I was really large. But somehow I couldn't talk to anyone about what REALLY was going on in my life—the unstoppable binges, the aching body, the food blackouts, the secrets, the hiding....

Thank goodness for the Higher Power who put me in the same workplace with a Graysheetter. The way she ate attracted my attention. Finding that someone had my disorder saved my life. That there were legions of

people with my disorder is still unfathomable to me. That there were people whose disorder was arrested through Graysheetter was a miracle in my mind—a solution to what seemed unsolvable to me alone. That I could actually lean on these people, learn from these people, call these people in the middle of the night, and accept leadership from these people continues to be what keeps me going each day. I appreciate the connectivity represented in these pages, the willingness to admit, to put aside pride for recovery's sake, to be open to healing. May the secrets be silent no more.

Mignon

Region III Assembly

Greg, our HMI Vice Chair and Region III Rep has posted the following report: Region III Assembly, Tempe, AZ, August 27-29, 2004, meeting notes:

The following is a synopsis of key items reviewed and discussed during the Region III Assembly. Many of the items have backup material that expands upon the point. Please let me know if anyone would like more information on a specific item. Official Assembly meeting minutes, submitted by the Regions Recording Secretary, Wanda S, will be available in the future. Friday, Aug. 27, was a workshop on OA Unity. Attendees shared their personal experience on this topic:

- * Representatives of the Phoenix area shared about the unity issues in their area. They have three OA Intergroups

that all follow different approaches to recovery. These three IGs, with a history of non-communication, recently began unification discussions when members of each IG began to ask, "How are we alike" rather than, "how are we different?"

- * A similar story was shared about the Los Angeles Intergroups

- * Emphasis that the 12 Steps and 12 Traditions are what keep us together

- * Saturday, Aug. 28, was the business workday for the Assembly.

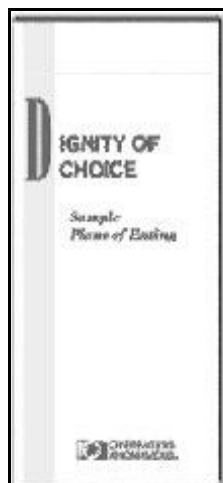
- * 36 voting members were present and accounted for

- * All OA groups are requested to include their WSO assigned 5-digit group number when submitting donations to Region and WSO. A mention was made that a donation was received from an Oasis Club meeting Houston, but the group number was not included.

- * Future Region III Assemblies:

- * Spring 2005 Tulsa, OK
- * Fall 2005 Colorado Springs, CO
- * Spring 2006 San Antonio, TX
- * Fall 2006 Houston, TX - this was voted on and approved by the Assembly
- * There will be a WSO Convention in 2007 as the result of many members input to WSO. The location will be Philadelphia, PA.
- * The Region has 84 unaffiliated groups help is needed to contact these groups and see if there are local IGs with whom to connect.
- * Region III Steering HIPM/PI (Hospitals Institutions Professionals and Military / Public Information) Committee: Greg M remained Committee Chair.
- * The HIPM/PI Committee Mission Statement is: To serve as a connecting hub for communicating our HIPM/PI collective knowledge and strategies among intergroups in Region III.
- * Committee goals continue to be to reach out to all Region III IGs and offer help and support with HIPM/PI activities. Specific past and future planned outreach activities were reported.
- * A new fund was approved by the Region III Board to fund requests by intergroups that want seed money to help attend local health fairs / conferences.

*Service is Slimming!
Thanks Greg!*

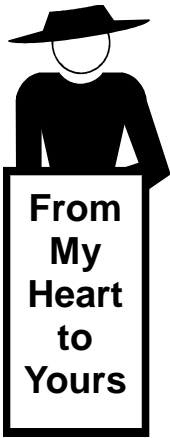


Four years in the making, this new pamphlet provides to both new and longtime OA members guidance in devising their own plans of eating. It covers topics such as:

- The difference between a plan of eating and abstinence
- Having a choice of plans
- Reviewing our eating patterns
- "Trigger" or "binge" foods
- Eating behaviors
- Dealing with quantity
- Structure and tolerance

The pamphlet provides six sample plans of eating (reviewed and approved by a licensed dietitian) with which some OA members have had success.





Hello, all my friends, welcome to part 2 of my OA story! We left off with me not abstinent. I told myself that

the problem was the availability of meetings in my town. So, when we moved to Houston, I was excited. SURELY now, going to meetings would be so much easier—there would be many more choices, more times, more places, etc. NOW I would get abstinent!

So, I got to Houston, and now all the meetings are at the least 25 minutes away! Sure, there are many of them, but I'm working evenings, so I can't get to evening meetings! On and on and on, there was always some reason why I couldn't get to a meeting, why I didn't get a sponsor, why I couldn't get abstinent.

Finally, I realized that these were all excuses, and the only way I was going to get abstinent was to be willing to go to any lengths! I went to the World Service Convention in New Orleans, though I didn't know anyone from our area yet. I made a commitment that before the weekend was over I was going to have a

temporary sponsor. Amazingly, I met a woman from Houston, and she has "temporarily" been my sponsor ever since! I started going to 3-4 meetings a week, regardless of how far I had to drive.

I got abstinent then, and today I celebrated one year of abstinence, though I have to say it has been VERY imperfect abstinence. This disease is truly progressive; coming out of the second relapse was harder than the first, which was harder than getting abstinent the first time. I don't think I would survive a third relapse! Even with this abstinence being so imperfect, I've lost about 45 pounds, for which I am very grateful! Over this last year I have decided to become a part of Houston OA! Thanks to all of you who have welcomed me, and made me feel at home. I especially appreciate all of the recovery I see at my home meeting—the 8:30 Saturday morning meeting at the Oasis club. It is definitely worth getting up early in the morning and driving across town for!

Well, that's my story in a nutshell. What I will be doing in this column in the following months is that I will just share with you whatever I have been learning or experiencing lately.

Lately I have realized that I still can be in so much denial about the food—about how much I'm eating, about how it

affects my body, my emotional state, and my spiritual state. I have come to realize that denial is "denying reality." If I deny something that is true, then I am lying! So denial is lying to myself, to my sponsor, to God. Again, I'm reminded of "How It Works" where it says "Rarely have we seen a person fail who has thoroughly followed our path." As we read on, we see that these "rarely people" are those who cannot be honest with themselves. Rigorous honesty is one of the foundations of 12-step programs, and I am constantly reminded that this is so. So, my program needs to encourage (and possibly force) me to be honest about my food. My "nazi sponsor" didn't like me talking about my food being "good" or "bad" in any given day. She wanted to talk about whether I had been "honest" with the food. To encourage me to stay honest, to stay out of denial, and to be abstinent day by day, presently I am emailing my food to my sponsor daily, after I have eaten it. I have no clue how long I will do this, but for the moment it has been very successful in giving me the accountability I need to stay honest, because if I'm honest, I become willing to be abstinent, I ask God to help me, He gives me the power, I'm abstinent, and there you go, a happy camper!!!

Love, Melanie



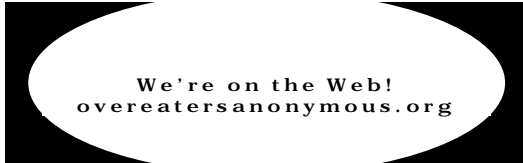
"...the only way I was going to get abstinent was to be willing to go to any lengths"

Had I been "honest" with the food?

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Overeaters Anonymous

Slipped Lately?

From Page 68 of
As Bill Sees It

"Though I know how hurt and sorry you must be after this slip, please do not worry about a temporary loss of your inner peace. As calmly as you can, just renew your effort on the A.A. program, especially those parts of it which have to do with meditation and self-analysis.

"Could I also suggest that you look at excessive guilt for what it is? Nothing but a sort of reverse pride. A decent regret for what has happened is fine. But guilt—

no.

"Indeed the slip could well have been brought about by unreasonable feelings of guilt because of other moral failures, so called. Surely, you ought to look into this possibility. Even here you should not blame yourself for failure: you can be penalized only for refusing to try for better things.



STEPS is an official publication of the Houston Metro Intergroup (HMI) of Overeaters Anonymous. STEPS actively solicits comments, suggestions, and contributions from all OA members. Manuscripts cannot be returned, and the editor reserves the right to edit for style, punctuation, etc., but not for content. Send your contributions to: Editor, at HMI address above or email the Editor at mjenkins@velaw.com (weekdays) or jandmj@awesomenet.net (weekends). Opinions expressed here are those of the writers. They do not represent OA's official policies. Take what you need and leave the rest. Feel free to use ideas for your own area newsletter (giving proper source credit).

**The only way to fail is to quit.
Don't quit before the miracle!**