

Steps

One Day at a Time

I received the following message on a Silent OA Retreat after a meditation. I was asked to write a letter from God to me.

Special Events

- Region 3 Fall 2005
Conference/Convention
September 23-25, 2005
Colorado Springs, CO
- HMI Annual Fall Con-
vention
November 4-6, 2005
Victorian Condos
Galveston, Texas

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Take Note...

Dear Judy,

I see your pain and hurt and know you will not run away from it into the food because I am here to help you carry the burden. I love you and want to comfort you.

There is a way through this intense grief and it is with me holding your hand as we walk through the dark forest into the light together.

I have given you enough courage, love and faith to endure and grow through this. Keep on loving me—I miss you so much when we don't have much time together. I want to talk with you about what is happening. You keep on getting sidetracked about what is going to happen, when all around you there is beauty and love.

Don't be afraid to cry around others—it's okay. Sometimes life is very, very messy. Don't hide or put up walls because you don't want to be hurt again.

Love God

By Judy R. Houston

A MATTER OF...A NEW PERSPECTIVE!

“help me change my perspective for Your perspective about my situation”

Hi, my name is Carolina, and I am a food addict. Today, I went to my regular meeting, and the topic was, “what have I got out of OA so far.” As I was listening to everybody I concentrated on what I have learned this past week. The word “perspective” stood out. Let me explain. About 3 months ago, my sponsor and I met to do step 5. I told her “all” about my step 4, and it was obvious that I had to deal with a certain issue (a harmful relationship in the past). She told me to “write about it” and because I am becoming more willing to “go to any lengths” I said, “okay, I will, but give me some time.” Three months passed and I just couldn’t face it, not that I “forgot” about my assignment but I just couldn’t write about it, because I knew I would have to remember certain things and feel pain. I started praying that God would give me the courage and strength to do that. Only, when I realized I was “stuck” again, I said, “okay, today is the day; I am just going to start writing.” And then I did, and I wrote about it for 3 hours and 7 pages! Amazing...

After I did that, I felt relieved. It is hard to describe it in words, but something has lifted, and, in fact, since then my abstinence has improved (coincidence? I don’t think so). So I met with my sponsor and I just read it to her. While I was reading it to her, the rage started coming again...so my sponsor told me what her thoughts were about this and then I asked her how do I heal out of this? And she said “Carolina, you need a new perspective of this individual and of that situation. “I guess I wanted her to tell me how entitled I was to feel that way, but she cared less about the problem—she was just focused on the solution.

(That’s what sponsors are for!) So, I was wondering how to get a “new perspective” of this human being. “Pray about it for 30 days,” she said. See, I am an obedient sponsee, so I did. I started praying for him and for a “new perspective.” Ten days passed, and, amazingly, it happened.

I had been very crazy the last couple of days and I knew it was in part because I had not been connected with my H.P. So I stopped, and I started writing and I wrote step 3, as I usually do, as a reminder of my surrender to H.P (believe me, I have to do it every day because I forget very easily; even if I don’t feel it, I write it down and I repeat it during the day). Doing step 3 regularly reminds me that I am not in control any more, and that now is not about doing or controlling anything but is about me letting God doing it for me. And then I continued praying, “help me change my perspective to your perspective about my problems, bla bla bla...” and then it just happened.... Did I just say, “help me change my perspective for your perspective about my situation?” And immediately the word “perspective” joined that prayer to the other prayer, and I realized that the new perspective that I have been praying for was exactly that: “to have God’s perspective about this person, not mine”. Wow! Major breakthrough...

So then I emailed my sponsor and she wrote back asking, “so how is God’s perspective about this person” and then I thought “well, I guess it is the same perspective that He has about me.” So the next question is

“what is God’s perspective about me? It is my belief that H.P loves me, thinks I am worth it and just only thinks good things about me. But my insanity tells me that what God thinks about me is pretty negative. So now I am working on “believing God’s perspective about me, first, to then see other people the same way: from above, from H.P.’s perspective.”

So back to the beginning, one of the things that I am getting out of O.A is “a new perspective, God’s perspective, an above and beyond perspective from a Higher Power.” Don’t you think that is a so much better perspective than my limited human perspective? I am working on it; I will keep you posted!

Remember, this is a program of admitting powerlessness and getting a Higher Power: next time you need a new-powerful perspective, ask for H.P’s perspective.

Carolina, Houston



A famous perceptual illusion in which the brain switches between seeing a young girl and an old woman (or “wife” and “mother in law”) – original was an anonymous German postcard from 1888.

COMING OUT OF A PINK CLOUD

When I first began attending an OA newcomers meeting in October last year, I was overcome by the love, support and caring coming to me from the other people in the room. I cried all the way home as the knowledge that I was no longer alone became real to me. I immediately began an exploration of what abstinence meant to me and began eating three healthy meals a day with "life" in between. I was so proud when I received my one-month "chip." I was in a pink cloud of happiness. But then the cloud rolled away and the reality of every day life set in. I found myself going back to old habits and my desire to eat over my problems was stronger than ever. That

was when I realized that all the steps and tools work together. That I needed to reach out, that I needed to write in my journal, that I, yes even I, needed a sponsor and to work the steps. I found a wonderful woman to be my sponsor and have surrendered myself to the program. I am no longer in a pink cloud. My decisions are made one day at a time, one meal at a time. I am working the steps. It is not easy, but for me it is the only way to sanity. Although the pink cloud has rolled away, I find that the sun is shining on me now. I feel warmed by the love of others in the program and my sponsor. I feel new growth in my life. I am much more aware of my feelings and am dealing

with them instead of eating over them. Without OA I would feel alone and frightened. Within these rooms I have found acceptance and the desire to live my life - full of all the emotions, good and bad, of which it is made.

S.P., Houston

I feel warmed by the love of others in the program and my sponsor.

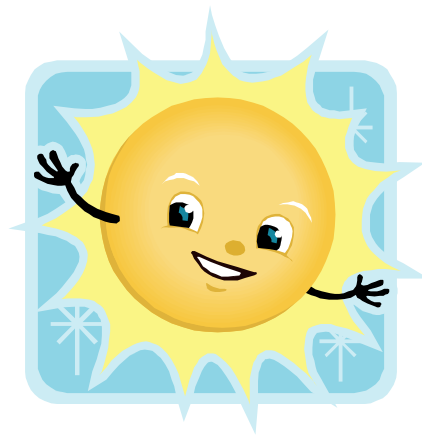
THE STRUGGLE

After several years in OA I have been blessed with a new perspective on many things in my life and the world around me. One of the cool shifts in my thinking resultant from taking the 12 steps over and over has been the compulsion-calming realization that my food and weight are only a struggle for me when "I" struggle with them. That sounds so simple and seems to be a natural occurrence for my friends and family who do not have this "thing" which you and I share and which brought us to my beloved Overeaters Anonymous. But simple or not, grasping and employing this concept has made a life-altering difference in me and, consequently, in my everyday

life and recovery. It is wonderful to think that now, post-psyche change via the 12 steps, I can make a conscious and deliberate decision to turn inward to calm my fears, worries, boredom, low self-esteem, loneliness or even unnamed feelings that have always come over me like a wave, and which drove me time and time again to try and drown myself and those uncomfortable feelings with excess food. Certainly each day and each temptation is a choice, not simply a no-strings-attached gift or permanent change that can never go backwards. Yet unlike the days prior to going through the process of these wonderful steps outlined in our AA and OA literature, I am

no longer a slave to those uncomfortable and sometimes unnamed moments, some of them quite lengthy stretches where I must eat or else risk coming completely apart. Instead, I have been given an alternative, a way to deal with and to cope with life that does not even require a clear identification of what is "the matter". A simple choice to use what I've been taught in OA in an effort to quiet the inner non-physical hunger yields a peace with my food and ends the struggle. Until the next time!

Anonymous



My Turning Point

“my Higher Power broke my fall by appearing in the form of the loving, interlocked arms of OA members”

At Step Three I stood at a turning point. What exactly did it mean to turn my will over to a Higher Power?

For me, this was like the terrifying rite of passage known as a "trust fall" at summer camp. So, there you are standing on a cliff with people telling you that the group will catch you. They promise not to drop you. You're scared. You don't want to do this exercise. You think "this is stupid. Camp is stupid. Everything is stupid." Then you realize, it is the only way down. What do you do?

For me, taking Step Three meant standing on the edge of the cliff of insanity. "Which way do I go? Do I go back to where I came from?" That is insanity. I

know. I lived there. Below me was the promised land of sanity. I stood at the edge contemplating my choices for a long time. Slowly, I turned backwards and contemplated my choices some more, knowing in my heart that if I could allow myself to fall back, if I were no longer in control, my fall would be broken by my Higher Power and I would be safe.

I prayed for the willingness to trust in my Higher Power, believing that if He were sought, he would be there for me. Finally, staring insanity head on, realizing that I would die if I went back that way, I closed my eyes, held my breath and trusted in my Higher Power. The moment my feet were no longer touching the cliff and I was actually trusting, I took Step Three in this program. My first impulse was terror--my

stomach dropped--I was certain I would crash into the ground and get hurt, but remarkably, my Higher Power broke my fall by appearing in the form of the loving, interlocked arms of OA members woven together, willing and able to catch me in a soft human basket. Doing together what none of us could do alone--helping those still suffering in insanity to "trust fall" and land in sanity.

Then, when you open your eyes, you've arrived. You are not only safe, you are off of the cliff and you've actually trusted in your Higher Power. You are on the other side of the turning point. You didn't turn back to your old ways. You put your trust in your Higher Power and you let go and let God. This is Step Three.

Michelle B., Houston



LETTER TO EDITOR

Hi Melanie, I just read the Steps newsletter and wanted to say Thank You and what a great newsletter!. I am reading it at work and I got some wonderful peace just reading it. I also loved the article "Cravings". Something was revealed to me in the first para-

graph, because I find myself doing that same pattern of behavior when I am intensely hungry. I start "snatching" at little pieces of food as I am preparing it and it usually is something I have to be careful with, like

cheese. Now, I know that this behavior is something I have to watch for. -
Lucy



Freedom From Compulsive Overeating

I'm Molli, an abstinent and grateful compulsive overeater. I weigh and measure 3 meals a day off the Grey Sheet, call them into my sponsor or another qualified person and in between meals, DON'T EAT NO MATTER WHAT!

I came to Grey Sheet a little over 3 years ago. I was so desperate to find a way out of the food! I had "white knuckled" myself to a point of intolerable pain. I had decided that if I did not find something that would take the compulsion to eat away soon, I was just going to give into it completely and take whatever consequence that yielded me, be it death or something less merciful like being alone with the food and nothing else. I had only ever found comfort with my compulsive overeating in OA so I knew I needed to go back there. But, I also knew I had no concept of what to eat, when to eat, or how much to eat. What to eat was whatever was sweetest first and then everything else. When to eat was all the time but especially if I was alone. Where to eat was wherever I was. I had no boundary around food except the ones that were temporarily created by the shame I felt when I overate. By the time I found Grey Sheet there was no peace for me around food. I hated myself if I ate what I wanted and I hated being alive without the sweet stuff.

I talked to my higher power and tried to find a meeting. It just so happened that the only one I could find was a Grey Sheet meeting!

I am so grateful to the

God of my understanding for getting me to GS and keeping me abstinent back to back since January of 2002.

I have had 2 major Ahahs! since program. The first was when I went to the school where I taught at the time after I had been abstinent for a little over a month. The parents had created this elaborate desert table in honor of Valentine's Day. The Christmas season prior to this, I had not been abstinent. Every day of that holiday season yielded new baked goods on my desk from well-meaning parents and kids. Every day I would brace myself and promise that I would not eat that stuff that day and break that promise and my heart within a couple of hours. But at Valentine's Day, I had been abstinent since Jan. 7th and when I saw all that food, I was so amazed that I did not even want to eat it! I was so grateful to realize that my compulsion to eat carbs had been removed! I can't tell you that every once in a while I don't have a brief desire to eat something like that, but I never have an overwhelming craving or a compulsion, Thank God!

My other Ahah! has to do with the fact that I still have trouble seeing what is real with my physical body. I was going to eat lunch in a restaurant about a year after I had become abstinent. I was feeling grateful and hopeful about my abstinence. There was someone behind me and as I was about to open the door, I saw the lady's reflection in the mirror. She

had this cute little body and I thought, "If I keep doing this, one day, I will have a body like

AHA!

that!" Then, when I reached for the door, I realized it was my own reflection I had seen! I am so grateful to my higher power, Grey Sheet, and all the other GS'rs who do this with me. Thank you for my freedom from compulsive overeating. Thank you for my smaller, healthier body, and thank you for my LIFE! NMW!

Molli

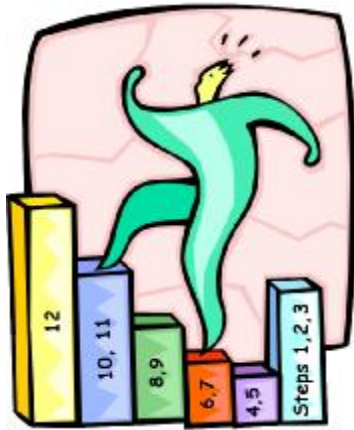


AHA!

**DON'T EAT
NO MATTER WHAT!
NO MATTER WHAT,
DON'T EAT!**

GBAI & HMI
PRESENT
2005
OA CONVENTION
NOVEMBER 4, 5, 6

Into Action



Just Do It!

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SMILE FOR YOU

Smiling is infectious; you catch it like the flu,
When someone smiled at me today, I started smiling too.
I passed around the corner and someone saw my grin
When he smiled I realized I'd passed it on to him.
I thought about that smile then I realized its worth,
A single smile, just like mine could travel round the earth.
So, if you feel a smile begin, don't leave it undetected
Let's start and epidemic quick, and get the world infected!

Keep the smile going by sending this on to a friend.
Everyone needs a smile!!



I am a Unique Child of God

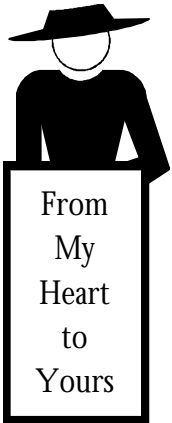
**I am who I am,
I know what I know,
I can do what I can do,
That's good enough.**



**Here I am on this day,
Breathing in and out
With nothing to prove.**



**I Can't
God Can
I Think I'll Let Him.**



Kudos to those of you who sent me articles for the newsletter! I can't tell you how much easier it was to create the

newsletter when I already had most of the articles I needed! I also enjoyed very much making the newsletter be for Houstonians BY Houstonians. Again, thank you very much, and keep up the good work! Feel free to mail me articles at any time – I have a folder where I keep them until I need to use them. You don't need to wait till I send an email asking for them.

Today I'd like to talk about a few of my favorite sayings and slogans, and things I've learned in OA.

The Only Requirement for Membership in Overeaters Anonymous is the Desire to Abstain From Compulsive Overeating.

My experience seems to be that before program I did not have power to refrain from compulsive overeating, no matter how much I truly wanted to stop. But once I came to OA and worked the 12 steps, I was granted power to resist the first compulsive bite. I am still powerless over how my body reacts to certain foods, but if I desire to abstain, I can. The key is also the only re-

quirement for membership in OA – the desire to abstain from compulsive overeating. I have found that if I desire abstinence, I have the power available to accomplish that. But it's a choice I have to make – if I don't want to be abstinent, though God is offering me the power, it is no good to me because I choose not to use it.

I had a miracle happen a couple of weeks ago. I drove to Oklahoma City by myself, an 8-1/2 hour drive. Traveling and boredom are triggers for me to eat compulsively, and I couldn't recall the last time I had taken an "abstinent" trip. However, I chose to be abstinent, packed my breakfast and lunches, and made it both ways with no extra food! I spent extra time with God and made extra phone calls along the way, but no extra food! Truly a miracle!

For today, I choose abstinence and life, and I thank God for restoring me to sanity.

One Day at a Time.

I came into program through a treatment center, where we were promptly taken off of sugar, salt, and caffeine. Although I recognized that I was a sugar addict, I whined that I "can't live my life without chocolate cake." They said, "you don't have to. Can you do it today?" I'd think a minute, and I'd say, "well, yes, I can go without it today." They said, "that's all you have to worry about – today. The interesting thing about this is that it is always today!!! That seems fairly obvious,

but what I mean by that is this: When I was dieting, if I messed up, I would continue eating the rest of the day and planned to get back on the diet "tomorrow." But tomorrow never came! If I'm just going to eat "today," then I just keep on eating because it's always today! But if I turn it around, using recovery concepts, I decide to be abstinent "today" and I can eat "tomorrow" if I want to! Once again, it's always today – tomorrow never comes. God gives us enough strength for today, and today alone. He doesn't give us enough strength to handle what will come in the future, not even tomorrow's struggles. He gives us enough for today – and if we concentrate on what needs to be done today, we can do it. I can do today what I cannot do for the rest of my life. When the future becomes today, I will be given the strength to cope with whatever comes my way, WITHOUT COMPULSIVELY OVEREATING. Without overeating, that is, if I desire and choose abstinence. I can choose abstinence and life or I can choose death – those are really the only choices.

Don't Quit Before the Miracle

The miracle—that God has used the 12 Steps and the Fellowship of Overeaters to give me power over compulsive overeating when I have the desire to abstain. The miracle—that, for today, one day at a time, I choose abstinence and life.

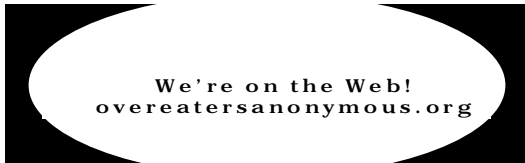
Melanie J., Editor

"The miracle—that, for today, one day at a time, I choose abstinence and life."

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Overeaters Anonymous

A Recovery Prayer

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).

How do I know who to tell my story to?
How do I weed out the idle curiosity-seekers from the broken hearts? Who NEEDS to know and who just WANTS to? Can I tell by how heavy they are? Should I only really be honest with people who are obese? Or could there be someone who looks normal but isn't?

How do I know who might be throwing up dinner or weighing every hour? How do I teach my heart to hear? What if it means that they might see me differently--

flawed, sick, weird, addicted....

Who rates my honesty? Who is worth what it will cost me to tell about my agonizing, glorious odyssey, the long, patient journey that gave me back a normal body? The road that gave me back my silly jokes and laugh lines? And my honesty?

Higher Power, help me to know when to open my mouth--as you have daily helped me know when to close it.

Mignon M.

