

Working the **Steps**  
One Day at a Time

**Special Events**

- Newcomers Workshop  
Saturday, January 28, 2006,  
2-4 PM  
OAsis Club
- G/BAI PRESENTS  
OA Newcomers Workshop  
Saturday, February 4, 2006,  
2-4 P.M.  
Temple Beth Tikvah Building  
12411 Park Shadows Trail  
Houston, TX 77058
- HMI  
Annual Spring Retreat  
March 24-26, 2006
- Region 3  
Fall 2006 Convention  
Hosted by HMI  
October 20-22, 2006  
Location & Details to Follow.

**20 Truths to Remember**

*The following list was in our Registration Packet at the Fall Region 3 Assembly.*

1. Faith is the ability to not panic.
2. If you worry, you didn't pray. If you pray, don't worry.
3. As a child of God, prayer is kind of like calling home everyday.
4. Blessed are the flexible, for they shall not be bent out of shape.
5. When we get tangled up in our problems, be still. God wants us to be still so He can untangle the knot.
6. Do the math. Count your blessings.
7. God wants spiritual fruit, not religious nuts.
8. Dear God, I have a problem. It's me.
9. Silence is often misinterpreted, but never misquoted.
10. Laugh every day. It's like inner jogging.
11. The most important things in your home are the people.
12. Growing old is inevitable, growing up is optional.
13. There is no key to happiness. The door is always open.
14. A grudge is a heavy thing to carry.
15. He who dies with the most toys is still dead.
16. We do not remember days, but moments. Life moves too fast, so enjoy your precious moments.
17. Nothing is real to you until you experience it, otherwise it's just hearsay.
18. It's all right to sit on your pity pot every now and again. Just be sure to flush when you are done.
19. Surviving and living your life successfully requires courage. The goals and dreams you're seeking require courage and risk taking. Learn from the turtle—she only makes progress when she sticks out her neck.
20. Be more concerned with your character than your reputation. Your character is what you really are, while your reputation is merely what others think you are.



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*Heart of Texas OA, October 2005*

## A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to Serve....

Dear Melanie,

Funny thing, but when I went online to see what I could do in the way of service, I read your email, and decided to send this to you. Hope it helps.

I was worried about getting my financial aid package today because it hadn't arrived when everyone else's did. I had already written about it, talked to my sponsor about it, and kept taking it back from my God box. During prayer and meditation, my eye caught a word that had long been a mystery to me of sorts. That word was service. I had previously "carried the bag and the key" -- which would put me at some meetings that I probably would not have otherwise gone to. Service was a tool that I used very sparingly because I thought that I didn't have the time for it; I work part time, go to school part time, and am a mother of a 9-yr. old and an 11-year old.

But I remember when service put me where I needed to be. I was very busy with school and work concerns. It was the day before I was due to leave for the Houston Convention, and I had come to the conclusion that I would be too busy at "my" internship to go. So I called the woman with whom I was supposed to go. She called me back a few minutes later, and told me that she had a family emergency and was going to have to

back out of going to the convention. Two other OA members aside from me were supposed to ride with her.

To this point I was suffering from a sixteen-year relapse and a bad case of doubt. I felt like one of those OA members who had just been too far gone for the program to help. If I were a practicing alcoholic, I would have felt equivalent to a person living under a bridge with their bottle and no place to go...I felt that bankrupt. I was negative in my checking account, I had no working vehicle, my school and work were overwhelming, and I wasn't doing well in either. Resentment, anger and doubt sat with me daily and nibbled at what little sanity I had left.

A small, but persistent voice said, "Go. You need to be at this convention." It was so strong. I remember saying back, "If you want me at this convention, then you must put me there." And that was it.

My mother and partner were sitting at the kitchen table while I was on the phone. The rest was a blur. Somehow, my Higher Power put both of them into the OA corner immediately. They suggested that I call my sister to borrow her SUV, and then we went into my room to work out a plan to find the money to pay for my part of the hotel room, food, and gas. We managed to scrape together just enough for gas and the convention, and my sister was happy to let me use her SUV. Loving OA members provided the rest of the money for hotel and food.

I called the other OA members who were planning on riding up for the trip, and told them that the only difference in plans was that the driver had changed. It felt simple and the right thing to say.

At the convention I found an OA meeting that seemed tailor-made for a "last gasper" like me. I took another sponsor (in addition to the one I had) immediately, and she wasted no time in putting me to work on the steps, tools, and food plan. Today, if HP wills it, it will be 66 days of back-to-back abstinence from white flour and sugar, and a release of 25 miracle pounds. My family has given so much love, understanding, and support for OA calls and meetings that I can't believe how blessed I am to have them as my family. My OA family has grown closer to me than before too -- they were waiting, but I couldn't let them in before.

Service is a pathway to putting aside my own problems that should be God's anyway. I'm a worrier and a niggler. Those are two defects that often put me into negativity, and a need for greater control. But service takes me out of myself -- if only for a few minutes, or an hour or so. Turning a problem over to my Higher Power takes shape in the action of doing something as service for OA. It's a concrete way of saying, "Okay, I'm trusting you on this one HP, so I'm going to go over here now and do some work." In fact, that's why I'm writing this now.

Blessings Be

*Lidia E., Corpus Christi, TX*

**"Service is a pathway to putting aside my own problems that should be God's anyway"**



## Journey Without Limits

...

The Twelve Steps are teaching me how to live one day at a time.....

An analogy I heard at a meeting has helped me continue the Steps. Someone described abstinence as the lifting of fog from a beach strewn with debris and large boulders. Even though we can now see the mess clearly, we still have a mess to clean up. With the Steps, we learn how to clear the debris and overcome the obstacles that block

our path. The fog may have lifted, but that does not mean the work is finished. It is simply the beginning of a wonderful journey without the limit of a destination. I now know I belong, and for that I am grateful.

*R.T., Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA*

*Excerpt from "Journey Without Limits," Lifeline, August 2005*



**“the beginning of a wonderful journey”**

### Plan Ahead for 2007

Begin making your plans for OA's World Service Convention, "Ring in Recovery: Declare Your Freedom from Compulsive Eating."



**August 29 to September 1, 2007**

You'll meet old friends and make new ones in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania USA, the City of Brotherly Love.

Visit OA's website for [Convention](#) details and the latest news.

Happy  
46th Birthday  
OA!

The third Saturday of January (Jan. 21, 2006) is the designated annual celebration of the Jan. 19th, 1960 founding of OA.

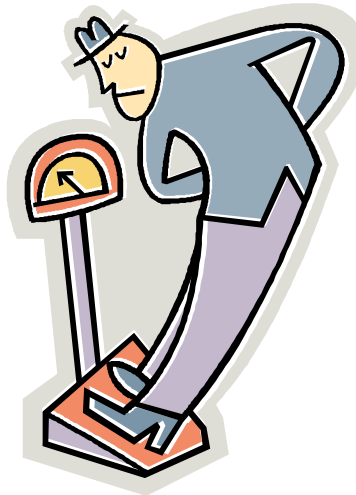
## My Primary Purpose

In November of 2003, I was walking home in the rain after dark. The streets in Houston were flooding and I had abandoned my car at a secure location and proceeded to walk home. I soon stumbled on the sidewalk and fell, landing on and injuring my knee. There in the rain, at my top weight somewhere around 282 pounds, I wondered if I could continue the short walk home. I sat on the cold, wet grass and began to fantasize about an ambulance coming to rescue me. If the vehicle could make it through the flooded streets, I was sure that even two strong paramedics would not be able to pick me up and put me in the ambulance. Next, I was consumed with the fear that I could not use crutches because I was too heavy. I was already obsessing about missing work because I could not use crutches and would be financially devastated... and on... and on it went.

I had a "come to Jesus meeting" that night, in the dark, in the rain with a sore knee. I decided that I could not live like that any longer. I hated the way I looked. I hated the way I ate uncontrollably. I hated the way I avoided people, including loved ones. I hated, hated, hated myself. I either had to die or choose to live. I chose to live.

Eventually, I was able to walk home, and no, I did

not go directly to OA because I did not yet believe that I was as crazy as those OA people. (Denial, as they say, is not a river in Egypt, it is merely a state of mind!) I went to a diet club and over the course of many months, I lost 60 pounds. It was unbelievable! I was counting my calories and eating as much junk food as I could squeeze into my set number of calories and losing weight. Yes! It was working! ... Oh, did I mention that I was



squeezing as many junk food calories as I could get into the diet? Yes, I guess I did mention that! ... I was once again showing a lack of discipline. I acted as though I did not care about my health; I just had to have a certain amount of junk, had to lose weight and by golly, that was what I did.

Well, the inevitable day arrived when the "diet" no longer worked. I started gaining weight, a little at a time, then quickly. When I had

gained back some of the weight, I finally yelled "uncle". I had had enough. I went to OA in August of 2004 and was welcomed back with open arms. What a relief! This is my second, and hopefully last, time to join OA. The first time, I lost 80+ pounds and knew I was cured, so I no longer had a need for OA. I went out for many years and gained 150 pounds! ... Gee, I guess I was not really cured!

I was miserably obese, but what brought me back was the knowledge that I could have a spiritual awakening and that is what I missed the most about this program of recovery. Of course, I wanted to lose weight, but more than that I was seeking that fit spiritual condition I had experienced for such a short time many years ago. It was difficult to come back and see people who knew me before. I was humiliated that I had gotten so out of control. When I reentered the doors of OA I found acceptance and love just as I was. What a wonderful gift for someone so desperate.

I knew that working the steps was essential, so I purchased the OA Workbook and got busy answering questions even before I found my Step Sponsor. I was eager to get better and meet again that God of my understanding.

It was important for me to get a food plan, so the diet that I had used at the

*(Continued on page 5)*

**"the inevitable day arrived when the "diet" no longer worked"**

(Continued from page 4)  
diet club seemed the logical thing for me to do. I then described my



“abstinence” as staying within my assigned calories. I allowed myself to eat anything I wanted as long as it was within the limit.

Well, one day at work, there were piles of goodies brought in by various vendors. I could not keep away from the huge cookies that I loved. I ate many of them. I went back several times to get more and more. (Yes, I had given up on the calorie counting for the day!) Finally, I thought I'd save myself a trip and crammed one gigantic cookie in my mouth. I planned to chew it before leaving the kitchen, then I could carry one cookie out with me and no one would know that it had been a two-cookie trip (gee, like anyone even cared). It suddenly occurred to me that someone might walk in and catch me with crumbs on my face and on my shirt and my cheeks full of cookies like a chipmunk. I realized how humiliating

it would be for this grandma to get caught by her boss or coworkers. I had not eaten like that in a very long time and, frankly, it frightened me. That day in February 2005 was the last time I ate refined sugar.

My new abstinence was no sugar and a certain amount of calories. Well, since I do so well counting calories, I was able to gain 30 pounds with sugar-free junk in a relatively short time.

I say all of this only to say that the God of my understanding has been gracious enough to let me hear and understand what is repeated in the OA meetings I attend: “Our primary purpose is to abstain from compulsive overeating and to carry this message of recovery to those who still suffer.” Never in my OA history had I abstained from compulsive overeating! I had abstained from eating lots of things, but never from compulsively overeating. I wondered how in the world this could be accomplished.

“When the student is ready, the teacher appears” is another saying I have often heard. I was ready and my food sponsor came into my life. I was afraid to do what she instructed, but I really wanted to carry this message of recovery to those who still suffer. As long as I was still suffering, I could not effectively carry the message. With great trepidation, I asked for help and my sponsor and I began the journey of my

surrender. Steps 1-2-3 are the great stepping stones to my recovery:

Step 1. *We admitted we were powerless over food - that our lives had become unmanageable.*

Step 2. *Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.*

Step 3. *Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.*

I took the first steps and God helped me along the way. The Third Step Prayer (from page 63 of the 3rd edition Big Book) is my solemn daily petition:

*God, I offer myself to Thee - to build with me and to do with me as Thou wilt. Relieve me of the bondage of self, that I may better do Thy will. Take away my difficulties, that victory over them may bear witness to those I would help of Thy Power, Thy Love, and Thy Way of life. May I do Thy will always!*

I am working the Steps and following a food plan that does not allow for sugar and white flour. I am not ingesting the food that sets off the cravings, so I am not being ruled by the obsession. I stick to certain portions without counting calories, and I weigh and measure my food. It's amazing to me that something that sounds so restricting can be so liberating! I am more productive now because I am not daydreaming about what I'm going to eat, how I'm going to get it, etc. I know what I can eat, I am satisfied

(Continued on page 6)

**“Our primary purpose is to abstain from compulsive overeating and to carry this message of recovery to those who still suffer”**

*(Continued from page 5)*  
and I am feeling good physically and mentally.

The biggest miracle for me is that, for the first time in my OA history, I am Not compulsively overeating! God is truly doing for me what I could not do for myself and for that I am grateful. I am not claiming to work this program perfectly, after all this is about progress, not perfection, but God is

saving me from killing myself one-bite-at-a-time. I feel as though I am doing the will of God and a byproduct is loss of weight and loss of the mental obsession, one day at a time.

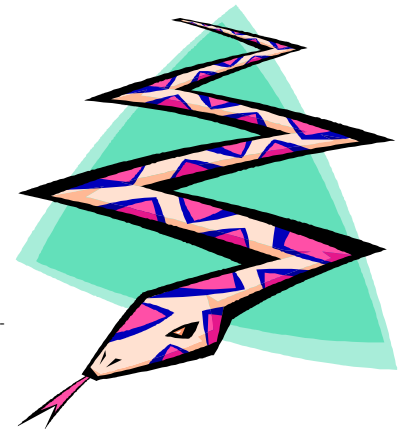
So, I really do have a purpose in my life and it is the same as yours, my fellow members of OA:

“Our primary purpose is to abstain from compulsive over-

eating and to carry this message of recovery to those who still suffer.”

May the love and peace of the God of your understanding dwell within you.

*Anonymous in Houston*



## Don't Kiss Rattlesnakes

At the beginning of my first holiday season in OA I had six months of abstinence. But when my children baked holiday cookies, I thought, “They’ll feel bad if I don’t try them.” After one taste, I couldn’t put down the sugar. For three months I ate compulsively; clean abstinence took six months.

My second holiday season in OA I stayed abstinent until Christmas dinner at a relative’s house. I thought, “This dessert comes only once a year. I don’t have it in my house. Surely it can’t hurt to try it.” I came home and ate every sweet thing in the house and began a two-month relapse. The terror of what I was doing opened me to getting a sponsor who had what I wanted (365-days-a-year abstinence). With her encouragement and the Steps, tools and Fellowship, I reclaimed abstinence, one day at a time.

My third holiday season in OA I stayed abstinent. Abstinence was a greater blessing than the pleasure sugar gave me, and I had no hell to pay afterwards.

Recently, a local newspaper printed an article about a man who brought home a baby rattlesnake from the desert. To show a friend how tame his pet was, he kissed its snout. The rattlesnake bit him on the lip, and the man nearly died. How, I wondered, could anyone be so naive? Did he reason that because he took care of this cute little snake it would never act out its nature? Did he think it loved him?

My compulsive-eating self is like a rattlesnake. It isn’t evil; in its cage it is benign. I can live in peace with it as long as I do not forget it is a dangerous animal, not a pet. However, during the holidays it is easy to forget, to be confused and to be influenced by friends, thinking I can get away with it. I want to be pals with my compulsive-eating self—until I let it out for just one treat. Then I discover my absurd naiveté! I have uncaged a dangerous animal that bites me, and my abstinence dies before my eyes.

During the holidays I

often feel the urge to kiss my rattlesnake. Painful emotions like loneliness, grief, alienation and shame hit. The sights and smells of food assault my senses. Pleasure calls, expectations mount, busyness and pressure demand relief, people around me are insane

However, the program shows me alternatives to this insanity. The Steps, tools and Fellowship show me a new way to like myself and cope with life. I can tell someone what I’m feeling, go to more meetings and change my holiday lifestyle. I can work the Steps on a difficult person, place, situation or emotion. I can discover for myself that “It is an incomparable pleasure to use the power this program gives me to eat moderately even on days when excess is the norm” (*For Today*, p. 329).

Happy holidays. Don’t kiss your rattlesnake!

— Lifeline 2005

**“The Steps, tools and Fellowship show me a new way to like myself and cope with life”**

## 3 of My Favorite Slogans

Hi, my name is Carolina and I am a food addict. There are three "slogans" that we say in OA that have been extremely helpful for me as I grow in the program.

The first slogan is "keep coming back." I always did, anyways, because I didn't have any other place to go. Diets don't work (for me) and I already knew that I needed another kind of solution. Financially, I could not pay for any kind of treatment, whatsoever! In the beginning, at the very least I found people in OA who understood my overwhelming reactions to french-fries and ice cream. That, in itself, kept me coming back. As the time in OA went by, and I did not have any "significant" results (meaning dropping 35 pounds in 4 days or so), I started to feel frustrated. But I kept coming back. I knew inside that it was a matter of time to start "getting it." Honestly, what helped me the most to keep on coming back was to listen to people talking about relapse or "coming back to the program after 10, 15, 20 or more years." Most of the time, they either looked sad, or overweight, or shameful and certainly regretful, or not sticking to OA in the first place. So I didn't want that to happen to me. (In fact, if you are one of these people, I take this opportunity to thank you for sharing even that experience, because it helped me.) As of right now, I only go to one or two meetings a week and it might not be enough, but I am faithful with what

I have achieved. When for some reason I can't make it to a meeting for more than a week, "coincidentally", my food starts getting bad, my mood worsens, and my life goes back to the unmanageability stage. That also keeps me coming back, because I know what happens if I don't.

The second slogan is, "it works if you work it." Every time that I get frustrated with OA or somebody or my food, or life...in my insanity I want to blame it on somebody or something else. So my conclusion would be, "fine, my recovery program doesn't work! Let me go back to my self-destructive mode. Please hand me the bucket of ice-cream." It works if you work it; if something is not "working," it is because I am not working it. Sometimes "to work it" means call my sponsor, write, commit my food, practice rigorous honesty, practice integrity, pray, etc. But I also know that there are situations in life in which there is nothing we can do, and "working it" in those cases means letting go, letting God, acceptance, and faith – commitment – consistency with the program, despite not "seeing" results.

The third slogan is: "do the next right thing." Now, I have to tell you that 95% of the times, in my experience, the next right thing is to wash the dishes! (Maybe if I would use that more often I wouldn't have dishes in the sink piled up in the first place, right?). Doing the next right thing helps me stay in the present, in this and only – next right moment and not fur-



ther than "one day at a time." I used to keep myself busy so I didn't have to face "feeling." So I was always thinking what to do next. But many times, I didn't have anything to do next, or let me correct myself, I didn't have anything to do next "that I wanted to do", or I was depressed or I was bored, etc. Now, I have that solution that I have been waiting on forever. No matter what it is, if it is the dishes in the sink, if it is my almost-dying plant that needs to be watered, if it is to make a phone call, do the laundry, balance out my checkbook, go wash the car, go to the grocery store to buy some abstinent food, pray, write, call my sponsor, reach out to my family, etc, etc, etc, I know now how to live my time, doing the next right thing that is available for me to do. That has taken out so much anxiety of my life!!!

But bottom line, all of three of these slogans remind me of :

Acceptance:

I am powerless

Hope:

Only my Higher power can help me (if I allow Him to)

Action:

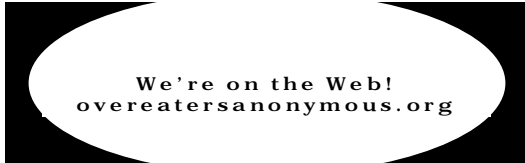
The program provides me the steps and tools to know how to live my life.

**"keep coming back"  
"it works if you work it."  
"do the next right  
thing."**

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*Overeaters Anonymous*



## Surf The OA Houston Website!!!

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](mailto:mjenkins@velaw.com) (weekdays) or [mannekimj@sbcglobal.net](mailto:mannekimj@sbcglobal.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).

If any of you are like me, you have NOT used our Houston web site to its full advantage! Alan B. has done a great job of putting together some great Resources for us. Just look:

- The Tools of Recovery - An OA Brochure
- "How it Works", from Chapter 5 of the AA Big Book
- First Edition of the AA Big Book Online - at the Region 5 Website
- Fourth Edition of the AA Big Book Online - at the AA GSO Website.
- Index to the AA Big Book - Online
- Schematic Outline of the first 103 pages of the Big Book - Online
- Fourth Step Inventory Chart - Online
- Tenth Step Inventory Incident Report – Online
- The Love Letter Technique
- Ninety Tools for Abstinence
- The Ten Practical Points Of Recovery
- The Twelve Promises
- A Few of Our Favorite Thoughts, Prayers, and Sayings
- OA Literature
- Downloadable Big Book & Steps Forms
- Index to the AA Big Book - text file.
- Schematic Outline of the first 103 pages of the Big Book
- The Arch of Freedom

- A Big Book Checklist
- Step 4 Outline
- Generic Fourth Step Inventory Chart
- Fourth Step Inventory Chart - Fear
- Fourth Step Inventory Chart - Resentments
- Fourth Step Inventory Chart - Sex Conduct
- Step 8 & 9 List
- Tenth Step Inventory Incident Report
- Step 11 Prayers & Meditations

If you would like to access any of these great links and documents, go to [www.oahouston.org](http://www.oahouston.org) and click on Program Resources.

Surf's Up!