



## *Breathe...*

The restlessness, the drive, the compulsion is becoming outlined now. No longer an unconscious amorphous blob -- it has definition. Sitting in my office at 3 p.m., when my mind begins to jump from thought to thought and action to action and I cannot stay focused on what I am doing - then I know that the food compulsion is lifting its head and will strike. A deep breath, a reach for the prayer book, a phone call, but its head is still lifted. I am paralyzed knowing that if I stand my feet will move on their own. Just for this moment, I will not get up. Just for this moment, I will not move. Take another deep breath.

A prayer to my Higher Power. If I stand up, I know where my feet will go. Cease acting - no phone call, no prayer book, no journaling, no activity. Quiet, focused concentration. Let the thoughts run, but don't move. Let the urge to action pass. Quiet. I am good. I can do this. God with me. God before me. Be still. Breathe. Into the silence. Breathe in abstinence, breathe out demon. For this moment, for today. Breathe. I

quiet. When ready, I stand, I stretch, and I sit down and move into another task. Amen.

*-Kathy C., Houston, TX*

I heard a clever saying at a meeting.

**Resentment** is when I didn't get my way in the past.

**Anger** is when I'm not getting my way in the present.

**Fear** is when I'm afraid I won't get my way in the future.

In each of these cases, my own expectations are the source of my resentments, angers, and fears.

I can't claim credit for this wisdom. I heard it in a meeting and from my own experience found it to be true.

*-Sue, NJIOA, Oasis, Summer 2007*

Abandon yourself to God as you understand God. Admit your faults to Him and to your fellows. Clear away the wreckage of your past. Give freely of what you find and join us. We shall be with you in the Fellowship of the Spirit, and you will surely meet some of us as you trudge the Road of Happy Destiny.

*-Alcoholics Anonymous,  
p. 164, Fourth Edition*

## *Today...*

Today there are tears, not tears of joy or sadness, they are tears of release, tears of freedom, tears that are clearing the path for my Higher Power to enter my being.

Today there is solitude but not loneliness because I know my Higher Power is with me always.

Today there is peace and contentment in my heart and in my soul.

Today I am with you.

*- Anonymous, Houston, TX*

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**What does a meeting's secretary do?**

In most groups the secretary is the principal service volunteer for a stated period of time. Many groups have found it best to select a secretary who is actively working the Twelve Steps, is abstaining and has other group service experience. Here is an abbreviated list of the typical duties of a group's secretary:

The secretary is responsible for making sure that the local intergroup, the region and the WSO know of any changes to the meeting's location, day, time, contact or intergroup affiliation. The secretary coordinates group activities including opening and setting up the meeting place; conducting necessary elections or appointing other group service positions; and presiding over steering committee meetings. The secretary makes announcements at meetings and ensures that others, such as the intergroup rep, have time to report during the meeting. In most groups the secretary keeps all the group's records, including a file of OA birthdays, weekly sign-in sheets, lists of members willing to sponsor, records of steering committee meetings and mailings from the WSO.



*Bring the  
body and  
the mind  
will follow*



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 [oahoustonnews@gmail.com](mailto:oahoustonnews@gmail.com).

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 we update our group's meeting information?**

Meeting information is tracked at the World Service Office. The database of meeting information is updated in the order in which changes are received by the WSO. All changes to meeting information must be submitted using the "Group Registration/Change Form" at the OA, Inc. web site. (<https://secure.yourmis.com/oa.org/pdf/GrpRegForm.pdf>)

(adapted from OA Handbook for Members, Groups, Intergroups)

Information about OA meetings in the Houston area can be found on several web sites:

1. The Houston Metro Intergroup (HMI) web site at [www.oahouston.org](http://www.oahouston.org)
2. The Galveston Bay Area Intergroup (GBAI) web site at [www.oagalveston.org](http://www.oagalveston.org)
3. The OA, Inc. web site at [www.oa.org](http://www.oa.org) (site has a list of meetings by state, city, day and a link to our HMI web site)
4. The Region 3 web site at [www.oaregion3.org](http://www.oaregion3.org) (site has a link to our HMI web site)

Please help keep our meeting lists accurate by having your group secretary inform WSO and your Intergroup of any changes.

Thank you.

Houston Metro Intergroup  
[www.oahouston.org](http://www.oahouston.org)

## Around Town

Upcoming Workshops at  
Chapelwood Methodist  
11140 Greenbay, Houston

*Body Image Workshop*  
Sat., 10/20 1p – 4pm

*Hope for the Holidays*  
Sat., 11/17 1pm - 4 pm

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*Region III Assembly &  
Convention, Denver, CO*  
October 19 – 21

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*2008 HMI Spring Retreat*  
Camp Allen 4/25-27, 2008

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GBAI Presents:

*OA Heart-2-Heart  
Workshop - Learning to  
be Effective Sponsors and  
Sponsees – 10/27*

For details see:

<http://www.oagalveston.org>

*~ OA is the only  
place where you can  
walk into a room full  
of strangers and  
reminisce. ~*

## **FAITH IN ACTION**

The other day, I heard a song on the radio that I hadn't heard in awhile, and one of the lyrics struck me: "a little less talk and a lot more action". At first, I dismissed it as not applying to my life in recovery. But since my H.P. often speaks to me through music, I decided to give some thought to what this means to me.

Before recovery, I believed that I could control my life, if only I worked hard enough ... if only I did more ... if only I took more *action!* Unfortunately, I had little faith that God could or would help me. I felt completely alone. When my hard work couldn't keep me away from the food, I cursed God even more and set out to work harder ... to try more action, usually the next "diet of the month". And the vicious cycle continued.

Then, I found OA, and realized that I was going about it the wrong way. I needed to have more *faith* in God and to trust His will for me. I needed to stop working so hard to control everything and *surrender*. When I finally "let go and let God", I was amazed with the results. The promises began to come true for me.

But have I now become complacent and been "talking the talk" instead of "walking the walk"? Isn't surrender and faith about letting God take over?

Then why was I now receiving the message to use "a little less talk and a lot more action"? I found my answer in a recent meeting where the speaker discussed the fine line between *surrendering* and *doing the footwork*. Many at the meeting seemed confused about the issue, seeing the two as flip sides of the same coin. I realized that the confusion comes from the belief that our choice is faith versus action.

But the truth is that surrendering and footwork are not opposites. You can't just do one or the other. Success in working the 12 Step program comes from putting our faith into action! I can't just talk about recovery and hope H.P. will handle it for me – I need to work for it. Today, I surrender my life over to God and use His strength to do the necessary footwork. I get to transform my powerlessness over my disease *into* the power to carry out God's will for me.

H.P. has shown me a new phase of my journey. My next lesson is to seek balance between how much I expect of Him and how much I do for myself. The old saying, "God helps those who help themselves", isn't so outdated after all. It's just about faith in action!

*-Valley Voice - Sacramento  
Valley Intergroup, January  
2002*

## WORKING WITH OTHERS

I could not wait to start working with others when I first came to program! In the tradition of addicts everywhere, I had plenty of wisdom to share. The fact that I couldn't apply it to my own life didn't daunt me at all. Fortunately, those needy others seemed to be in short supply (having run as fast as possible in the other direction). Forced to focus on myself, I began to work the steps and got my own house in order.

By the time my sponsor pronounced me ready to start sponsoring, I was convinced that I had nothing to offer others, having become thoroughly acquainted with my shortcomings. But she was relentless (she's like that). "Practical experience shows that nothing will so insure immunity from [eating] as intensive work with other [compulsive eaters]" (from Ch. 7: Working with Others, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, pg. 89). In other words, if you want it, you've got to give it away. Working with others is what I did.

Today, my interactions with other compulsive eaters are the highlight of my day. It's in working with another compulsive overeater that I often learn the most about myself: my selfish reluctance

to share the program with someone I don't like, my courage in the face of emergency, my ability to listen to my Higher Power when I have no idea what to say, and being able to put someone else first even when I am racked with grief. I've emailed, talked on the phone and met in person at all hours of the day and night and sometimes in the oddest locations. Whatever is needed, whenever it is needed. After all, that's what has been given to me.



Whenever I have doubts about the "right" thing to say or do when working with another, I remember the tools I've been given. I draw my on my connection to my own Higher Power and encourage the other person to reach out to theirs. I remember how my sponsor and others have worked with me. And I draw on the explanations I've read in "Working with Others" in the Big Book and in Step Twelve.

Each time I work with another compulsive overeater, my commitment to my own recovery is reaffirmed. I validate my own experience, strength and hope and I gain one more day of freedom from the obsession that is compulsive overeating. And that is worth any amount of time, sleep or inconvenience.

*-Jen, Greater Omaha IG, December 2006*

## JOURNALING QUESTIONS

- ☀ What does God's love do to your fears?
- ☀ How healthy are your current relationships?
- ☀ What actions can you take to change your feelings about something or someone?
- ☀ How much do you ask or expect others to fill your emotional needs?
- ☀ How do you reward yourself in a non-compulsive way?

## Experience, Strength, and Hope

My disease finds its roots back in the second grade. All of my life since then is littered with the obsession of food and weight. As with many others, my body has been contorted and abused by restricting or overeating. Last year while packing for our family vacation, I became frozen in the realization that I would not be able to eat what I wanted, when I wanted. I found myself depressed, fatigued, self-loathing, argumentative, and disagreeable. I was out of control; as was my life. It was a cold night in February 2005. This night was like all the others, I had my over-sized bowl of fix. What made it different and memorable is the utter powerlessness of my situation. I sobbed into my bowl praying for God to remove it from me, because I could not do it myself. God answered my prayer in a health problem that grounded me in fear for the next four months. I was anxious and was able to lose some weight. But that did not stop the inevitable. I, after much prayer and meditation, had surgery which was a total act of surrender.

Though I had lost some weight, it was out of fear and control and not the OA meetings which I had been attending since late February 2005. I knew it was not something that I could continue to manage. I KNEW, I could never become "abstinent" because I was unable to manage or control anything. But I kept coming to meetings. My head was my biggest obstacle. I thought I KNEW something, but God knew better. So I attended meetings but did not become abstinent. I was reluctant to ask someone to sponsor me. I would say I needed a sponsor looking for someone to offer. But that is not how the program works. I

floundered until December 27, 2005 when I finally asked someone to sponsor me. She was the only one I asked. After following up with a phone call to her the next day, I had a sponsor. If she had not agreed, I would not be where I am today.

Revisiting the past 18 months, I have lived through several stages of my imperfect abstinence. My abstinence has taken many forms. I started doing it out of accountability then defiance, then reluctance, then willingly, and now wantonly. Finally, today I do it for my life. I no longer have that voice that tells me I can't do it. I pray to God that he will give me another abstinent day. Being abstinent, I feel the joy with my children, and the connection with my husband, I also feel anger and fear. But my life



is richer for it. My journey to today is a MIRACLE. I cannot do

this on my own. God answered my prayer that February night. He sent me this program, and He sent me you. When you go to meetings, when you pick up the phone, when you share your experience, strength, and hope, you are my gift from God.

*Thoughts from a Newcomer*

- *The OA SAIL, Syracuse Area Intergroup news Letter, Fall 2006*



## OA Changed my life

How has my life changed since coming to OA? Easy answer...now I have a life! I did nothing before OA but study, argue with my mom, take it out on my boyfriend, and eat. I had one friend who I never did anything with, I was afraid to socialize with people, and I had no hobbies or interests. I was involved in nothing. I was absolutely miserable! Since coming to OA, and becoming abstinent from compulsive overeating I have sooooo much time now to live life! Since coming to OA, and working the 12 steps I have had a spiritual awakening that has let me find out who I am, what I like to do, and not be afraid to go do it!

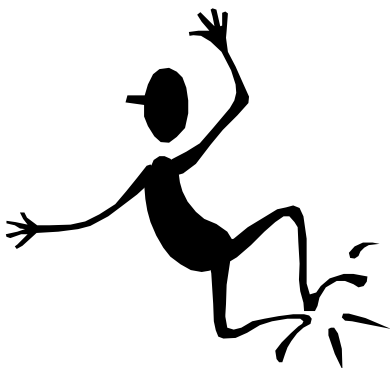
I have friends today because of this program. I have a social life today because of this program. I enjoy people and going places and experiencing new things today because of this program. As a matter of fact, my time has gotten so packed with living instead of hibernating in the house and eating, that I have had to struggle with choosing what I can and cannot do. From the fellowship before or after meetings, to conventions, to dinner dates, social events with co-workers, family

birthday celebrations, mother-daughter time with my mom, spending time with other family members (especially my nieces and nephew), vacations and traveling, working on home improvement projects, gardening and yard work...ah the list goes on! It's wonderful to have a full life today.

My sponsor says to "keep it simple" which helps me "keep it sane," because sometimes there is too much all at once. But I am grateful for having those choices today, whereas before coming to OA, I had no choice but to once again open the bag of potato chips while I did my homework, cursing my mother under my breath and waiting for my boyfriend to call so I could find a reason to argue with him. I am living life, happy, joyous and free today.

Thank you OA!

- MMV



### Letter from the Editor

Thank you to Melanie J, our outgoing STEPS editor, for many great years of service. We all appreciate the service that you have done for HMI .

Thank you to everyone for allowing me to accept this service role. It has been a joy to collect the material to publish and to put it all together. The time spent on this has allowed me a focus, and a freedom from thoughts of food. It's allowed me to fully immerse myself in program material and give me that "dose" of what I needed to make it through without acting out.

I've been reflecting on what changes I have seen in myself since beginning to work the steps. I'm amazed at how nothing has changed yet everything has changed. Instead of cursing a windy day, I look at the wind as a hug from my HP. Instead of complaining about a rainy day, I feel the rain drops as tears from God that I may be unable to shed myself. After two years of separation, I met up with a fellow OA and we talked as if no time had passed. I have seen and shared the pain and



hopelessness of a newcomer who is not yet aware of the gifts that OA brings. I hear that God-voice inside me without static and have to courage to defend myself when needed. Instead of searching for what is wrong, I often see, without even thinking, all that is right.

I recently came across a line in a book that asked whether joy and fulfillment are ever felt as deeply as loss. Before OA, the answer would have always been NO, today, it is a resounding YES. I owe all this to my HP speaking through all of you.

I look forward to hearing all of your stories and sharing our recovery together.

- Dawn G.