

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

Keep Coming Back

Special Events

- July 21—HMI & OA-HOW present a Sponsorship Workshop 1-4 PM—Chapelwood Methodist Church
- September 14-16 Annual HMI-CBAI Convention—Galveston
- August 30—Sept 2 World Service Convention Philadelphia, PA
- October 19—21 Region III Assembly & Convention Denver, CO

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When I first came to an OA meeting, I heard people saying “keep coming back.” So I did. I came to meetings for me. I needed this group of people to help me hold onto my sanity. I learned so much from just sitting in the room and keeping an open mind. I don’t know when the changes occurred, because they were gradual, but my life is so different now. Two years of keeping on coming back have made the world of difference in my emotional state when I get stressed, in my spiritual outlook, and in my physical appearance. I have tools to help me handle stress. I have a daily spiritual practice that keeps me humble yet feeling loved and protected. I am a bit lighter physically, but

what is important is that I am smiling



more, sleeping better, having better relationships with old friends and relatives and building new relationships with people who are growing and learning along with me.

During the holidays, the meeting that I think of as my “home group” dwindled and there were lots of faces I missed seeing. The last meeting I attended was full of

many of those people. I felt so glad to see that they were still on the recovery road and willing to share their lives with me and others in the group. I just wanted to hug them all. So I am learning now that I need to keep coming back, not just for me but for others too. We are all important and we can be so much more together than we are alone. I don’t want to be isolated anymore. I will keep coming back and I hope others will too, because I value my new found sanity!

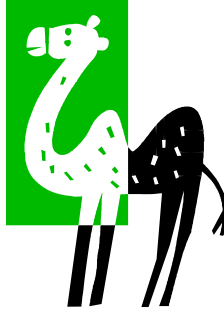
Keep coming back, it works when you work it and you’re worth it.

Shirley P., Houston, TX

I Start my Day with The Third Step Prayer

I remember when I attended a workshop, and one of the speakers shared the Third Step Prayer.

And, when Wayne Dyer came on Channel 8 to share on The Power of Intention, he shared that he starts his day like a camel: on his knees. And for millions of viewers, he shared the prayer that starts his day:



"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 will always be grateful for this example: if he can do it, so

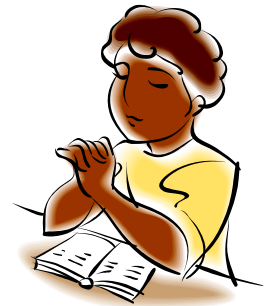
can I. I can put away my ego just for today, and offer myself to a power greater than myself to guide my day. I can ask for humility without feeling humiliated, and listen to the soft voice within who guides me to become better in the small things, that they may build like little bitty steps to become the best I am meant to be. Sometimes, it takes a minute at a time. Always, it is a day at a time.

I practice with all the love, kindness and patience for the child within, that has been lost in a life of compulsion, anger, fear, sadness, guilt, and self-pity. I give up all my self-pity, so that a power greater than myself will relieve me of my anger and fear. I do this through the day, reinforcing my resolve with spiritual readings, with a short inventory of the day. I congratulate myself on

the tiny things I do well to make my day better at work and at home. I notice how my feelings change, abruptly and unannounced, from joy to depression, from elation to sadness.

I observe, without being judgmental. This is the hardest thing. To stop judging myself harshly for the myriad emotions which attack me and control me. To acknowledge them, to note the change they bring on me, and search the memory that brought the change. To be grateful for this knowledge, and be aware. To be here, now.

Irma M.



"God, I offer myself to Thee, to build with me and to do with me as Thou wilt"

WSO PLACES WORLD WIDE MEETING LIST DATABASE ONLINE.

Now those looking for an OA meeting anywhere in the world are able to log on to the

[World Service Office Web Site](http://www.overeatersanonymous.org/all_about_meetings.htm)

and find out what groups meet in any part of the world!

This is an exciting new service that has great potential for the OA Fellowship.

Online Now at the [WSO Web Site!](http://www.overeatersanonymous.org/all_about_meetings.htm)

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Winning the Battle

My neutrality with food has been slipping for some time, but it came to a head this past week. On two separate occasions, I had a battle with sweets and the sweets won fair and square. Before OA, these types of events would have been the norm and they would have led to a food free-for-all. But not today; my life is quite different.

I joined OA almost four years ago in Austin, Texas. When I moved to Houston, I jumped right into an OA home group. I did service, prayed and read OA literature every morning, met with my sponsor, and worked the steps to the best of my ability. Although my food wasn't perfect, most times, I understood and experienced what the Big Book said regarding neutrality (I did not replace "alcohol" with "food"

here, but you can.):

"And we have ceased fighting anything or anyone, even alcohol. For by this time sanity will have returned. We will sel-



dom be interested in liquor. If tempted, we recoil from it as from a hot flame. We react sanely and normally, and we will find that this has happened automatically. We will see that our new attitude toward liquor has been given us without any thought or effort on our part. It just comes! That is the miracle of it..."

But, like I said in the beginning, this precious sanity surrounding food has been ebbing for some time. I

spoke with my sponsor after my latest binge on sweets, and she asked, "What's changed for you? What were you doing before that you aren't doing now?"

I paused for a second. Well, I thought, I used to do service but my life got too hectic for that. I used to pray and read OA literature in the mornings, but my mornings got too full. I used to try to squeeze in an extra meeting, but one meeting per week became the norm. Based on this assessment, I think I left Steps 11 and 12 out sitting on the curb for pick-up. But thanks to OA, I have the recovery to know that I can fine-tune my program at any time and, by doing so, am guaranteed to be a bit saner because of it. Today after making a few living amends to myself, I feel nothing but hope surrounding God's ability to help me one day at a time to not eat compulsively.

GBAI OA member

"What were you doing before that you aren't doing now?"



Open Letter to all Houston Area OA Groups From the Houston Metro Intergroup Board

So why are we writing to you? The HMI monthly Board meetings usually have an attendance of 7-9 people. That's not very many given that there are more than 45 meetings listed on the Meeting Sheet, and EVERY meeting may have a representative. We, who are on the HMI Board, want you to come join us; all your meeting has to do is have a Group Conscience and elect an HMI representative. Your group not ready to do that? Come and visit anyway; we meet from 10 to 11 on the second Saturday of every month at the OAsis Club, 5645 Hillcroft (between Harwin and Westpark), Suite 102). Just as with every OA meeting, HMI is only as strong and vibrant as the members who participate make it. So, please, come join us. Help strengthen OA in Houston by working with other groups on activities that benefit and promote recovery for all of us.

We all love our home OA meetings and the people there who have helped us

along the journey of recovery. But it is easy to forget that these beloved meetings are part of a larger network of meetings in the Houston area. You may notice that your group sends donations to the Houston Metro Intergroup (HMI) or you may have been to an HMI retreat or workshop. So what is HMI and what do they do?



Houston Metro Intergroup (HMI) exists as the servant of the Houston area OA groups to administer and coordinate OA activities common to the groups in the area and to further the Overeaters Anonymous program in accordance with the 12 Steps and 12 Traditions, in order to carry the message to all compulsive overeaters. HMI serves also as a clearing house for activities outside

the Houston area by making sure Houston is represented at Regional and World Service Business Meetings. HMI has no authority over individual meetings and is concerned only with activities that are area wide.

So what are some of the activities HMI does get involved in? In the last year, HMI has either participated in or sponsored the following:

HMI/GBAI Annual Convention; Region Three Fall Meeting; World Service Business Conference; HMI Spring Retreat at Camp Allen; Newcomer's Workshop; Hope for the Holidays Workshop; Area Wide Meeting and Telephone Lists; OA Houston Website; OA Houston Phone Line; HMI Newsletter Steps; Literature Sales

Please take this letter and read it at your regular meetings to encourage participation in HMI. Remember that service is a part of recovery for all of us and we look forward to seeing you at our next meeting.

**"service is a part of
recovery"**

What Does Recovery Look Like?

So much of what I do today revolves around forgiveness. And by forgiveness it does not mean, "oh, I am soooooo kind that I am going to forgive you even though you are soooooo bad". That is arrogance. Forgiveness is being able to just simply see a situation, person, place or thing from a different perspective.

For instance, I have really worked hard on forgiving myself for being the size I am and having been in program for over 18 years. I think that I should be the perfect size now, whatever that size is. Ha! Ha!. Well, the truth is that I AM the perfect size right now, today, exactly like I am, to be on the path and move toward God on my particular journey, as long as I

am abstinent, which I am. So, what would a newcomer think in a meeting when I share about being heavier than I am when I first came in. Well, I always qualify that I DID weigh over 400 lbs at one time and that I have maintained 100 lb weight loss but that I am still on my way down. And, I know in my heart that I would weigh over 800 lbs today or be dead if I had NOT found this program 18 years ago. I guess what I have to remember is that whatever a newcomer or anyone else thinks of me is absolutely NONE of my business. My only purpose is to serve – so all I



have to do is carry the message and there is no guarantee that when the message is heard, it will be accepted. After years in program and living this spiritual life, practicing these principles in all my affairs and letting the promises of this program be revealed to me in Divine order, today I can say that yes, I have emotional, spiritual AND physical recovery, even though sometimes I don't think it looks like it. That is why this is a "we" program. So you can remind me about the fact that I DO have recovery in all areas at those times I forget.

Anita, Houston, TX

"I am the perfect size right now, today, exactly like I am, as long as I am abstinent"

Bring Your Body to the Truth

If you remove your body from the truth, when you are ready the truth is nowhere to be found. But if you continue to bring your body to the truth, then when you are ready the truth is waiting there for you.

And that truth—our promise of recovery—is

in every OA meeting when we join hands, pray together and joyously, lovingly encourage one another: Keep Coming Back!

From *Overeaters Anonymous*, "Rozanne's Story", pg. 17.

KEEP
coming
BACK

Let Go and Let God

You know, it has occurred to me that working a spiritual program is analogous to being a rubber band. What does a relaxed rubber band do? It just sits there moving freely with whatever comes along. It has no stress when it is totally relaxed. What happens to the rubber band when it is stretched just a little, tiny bit. It wants to return to its relaxed position. In fact, in order to maintain its stretched condition, it undergoes much duress. As it stretches further and further, it becomes more and more taut, having no give, becoming totally inflexible, even thinning out as it reaches its limits of stress.

Now, if it is just stretched a little bit, it can be released and it returns almost instantly to its original, relaxed position. Lets say that as it

stretches it goes around things and gets caught on things. It stretches more and more and gets all tangled up. When it is released, it does not immediately return to the totally relaxed position. It returns to the nearest tangle so that only the very end of the rubber band is



relaxed. Then, since one end has already been released, that end wants to return to its completely relaxed position but it has several entanglements to get through first.

That is how my program is. I start out as this stretched, tight ball of nerves that is clinging to anyone and

anything that I can grab on to. As I become more relaxed I no longer have the need to cling to that closest thing I am clinging to, whether it is a person, place, thing, idea, job, whatever. Then, I relax for a bit but I am still being pulled to further relax. So then I reach the next person, place, thing or idea to hold on to. It goes on and on and on until I am totally relaxed like the stationary rubber band with no stress on it. That is when I am one with God. So, are you clinging to someone, something, some thought or someplace that is keeping you from achieving oneness with God. Let go of it. The result will blow you away and I guarantee you will experience life beyond your wildest dreams. Just a hint, I know that one thing I was holding on to was fear.

Anita

“The result will blow you away and I guarantee you will experience life beyond your wildest dreams”



My Will or Thy Will?

The past few days, the following phrase has been going through my head, and I was reflecting on it again when I woke up this morning:

“The will of God will not lead me where the grace of God will not protect me.”

When I am living in God’s will, I love this phrase. It gives me great comfort. When I am not living in God’s will, it’s a nice reminder to get back with the program, because it works.

The big question is always how can I be sure if I’m doing my will or God’s? My will is forced, turbulent and chaotic, filled with obstacles and struggles. Nothing seems to fall into place, and I find myself constantly wondering what I’m doing wrong. When I’m running on my will, I take life in chunks. I’m obsessing about the calendar. What’s due, and when? What’s going on next week? How many appointments do I have to squeeze in this week? “Holy cow! This is such a busy month!” Before I know it, I have absolutely no clue that living life one day at a time is even an option. I’ve forgot-

ten. My will does that to me.

God’s will is a much different ride. I’m finding it difficult even to describe life in God’s will because I have much less experience with it! What I can tell you is that for me thus far, living God’s will one day at a time has not been lonely. I’ve been in constant contact with my sponsor, dietician, therapist and other members of the Fellowship. Not hurting myself with food or exercise daily has been tough. I’m used to hurting myself. I know how to do that. But that is NOT God’s will for me. OA has taught me that. Living God’s will one day at a time has not been easy. As the Big Book says, “Simple, but not easy...a price had to be paid.” It is arduous at times. Other times I feel like I’m just floating around, surrounded by the love of God. I will take either of these two options over my days stuck in the food.

I once heard the difference described this way: Life before surrender is like boxing. You’re working hard, bobbing, weaving. BAM! You get punched in the eye. You go back to bobbing and weaving. BAM!

Another hit, then another! By the end you’re exhausted, sweaty, dirty, beaten and bloody.

Life after surrender is like surfing. It still requires much effort on your part to participate, but if you go with the flow and ride the waves, you enjoy it! Despite the ups and downs, you’ve got balance today, so you can handle it. You’ve got the breeze in your hair, sun on your face and a nice smooth ride.

Today I choose to surf with God and all of you, rather than box alone in life. The view is wonderful, and in the end I have more life to live and a wonderful group of friends to live it with.



Thanks, OA!
— Stacy P., Lomira,
Wisconsin USA, re-
printed from *Lifeline*,
January 2007

**“Today I choose to surf
with God and all of you,
rather than box alone
in life”**

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Overeaters Anonymous

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 man-nekimj@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).



This is the last Steps newsletter I will be editing.

I have enjoyed being able to produce this newsletter for three years now, but it is time to pass on the opportunity for service to someone else.

I am stepping down from being the

An Opportunity for Service

Editor of the Houston Metro Intergroup Steps newsletter, and hopefully, someone else will feel the desire to take over the position in time for the Fall newsletter.

Thank you for all your support and encouragement while I have edited the news-

letter. I know you will continue to pass that support along to the next editor.

If you would like to take over the position, please contact me or someone on the HMI Board.

Again, thanks for all your support.

Melanie J