

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

Two Horses

Special Events

- January 27, 2007, 1:00 - 4:00 p.m. Newcomer's Information Day Chapelwood United Methodist Church
- April 27 - 29 - HMI Spring Retreat 2007 - Camp Allen

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Just up the road from my home is a field, with two horses in it. From a distance, each looks like every other horse. But if you stop your car, or are walking by, you will notice something quite amazing. Looking into the eyes of one horse will disclose that he is blind. His owner has chosen not to have him put down, but has made a good home for him. This alone is amazing. If nearby and listening, you will hear the sound of a bell. Looking around for the source of the sound, you will see that it comes from the smaller horse in the field. Attached to her halter is a small bell. It lets her blind friend know



where she is, so he can follow her. As you stand and watch these two friends, you'll see how she is always checking on him, and that he will listen for her bell and then slowly walk to where she is, trusting that she will not lead him astray. When she returns to the shelter of the barn each evening, she stops occasionally and looks back, making sure her friend isn't too far behind to hear the bell.

Like the owner of

these two horses, God does not throw us away just because we are not perfect or because we have problems or challenges. He watches over us and even brings others into our lives to help us when we are in need. Sometimes we are the blind horse being guided by the little ringing bell of those who God places in our lives. Other times we are the guide horse, helping others see. Good friends are like this. You don't always see them, but you know they are always there. Please listen for my bell and I'll listen for yours.

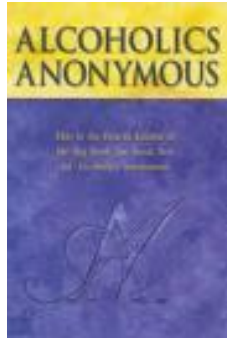


Author Unknown

Be kinder than necessary, for everyone you meet is fighting some kind of battle.

Big Book Daily Readings

Following are the pages of the Big Book that I read daily with few exceptions. An OA member provided these pages with the story that "an alcoholic" was told if he read these pages daily he was ensured of recovery. I find them helpful to get myself out of the way, connect with my higher power, and remember to act with right motive during the day. Christine, Houston



“Lack of power, that was our dilemma. We had to find a power by which we could live, and it had to be a Power greater than ourselves”

We Agnostics Pg 45

Lack of power, that was our dilemma. We had to find a power by which we could live, and it had to be a *Power greater than ourselves*. Obviously. But where and how were we to find this Power?

Well, that's exactly what this book is about. Its main object is to enable you to find a Power greater than yourself which will solve your problem.

How It Works, pgs 62 - 63

Selfishness, self-centeredness! That, we think, is the root of our troubles. Driven by a hundred forms of fear, self-delusion, self-seeking, and self-pity, we step on the toes of our fellows and they retaliate. Sometimes

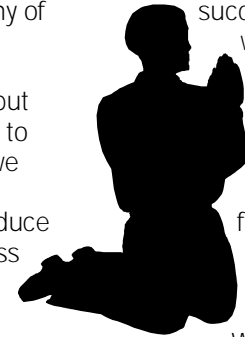
they hurt us, seemingly without provocation, but we invariably find that at some time in the past we have made decisions based on self which later placed us in a position to be hurt.

So our troubles, we think, are basically of our own making. They arise out of ourselves, and the alcoholic (compulsive overeater) is an extreme example of self-will run riot, though he usually doesn't think so. Above everything, we alcoholics (compulsive overeaters) must be rid of this selfishness. We must, or it will kill us! God makes that possible. And there often seems no way of entirely getting rid of self without His aid. Many of us had moral and philosophical convictions galore, but we could not live up to them even though we would have liked to. Neither could we reduce our self-centeredness much by wishing or trying on our own power. We had to have God's help.

This is the how and the why of it. First of all, we had to quit playing God. It didn't work. Next, we decided that hereafter in this drama of life, God was going to be our Director. He is the Principal; we are His agents. He is the Father, and we are His children. Most Good ideas are simple, and this concept

was the keystone of the new and triumphant arch through which we passed to freedom.

When we sincerely took such a position, all sorts of remarkable things followed. We had a new Employer. Being all powerful, He provided what we needed, if we kept close to Him and performed His work well. Established on such a footing we became less and less interested in ourselves, our own little plans and designs. More and more we became interested in seeing what we could contribute to life. As we felt new power flow in, as we enjoyed peace of mind, as we discovered we could face life



successfully, as we became conscious of His presence, we began to lose our fear of today, tomorrow or the hereafter. We were reborn.

We were now at Step Three. Many of us said to our Maker, as we understood Him: "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

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Big Book Daily Readings, cont.

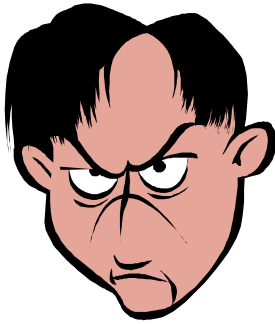
(Continued from page 2)

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!"

Pg 66

It is plain that a life which includes deep resentment leads only to futility and unhappiness. To the precise extent that we permit these, do we squander the hours that might have been worth while. But with the alcoholic (compulsive overeater), whose hope is the maintenance and growth of a spiritual experience, this business of resentment is infinitely grave. We found that it is fatal. For when harboring such feelings we shut ourselves off from the sunlight of the Spirit. The insanity of alcohol (food) returns and we drink (overeat) again. And with us, to drink (compulsively overeat) is to die.

If we were to live, we had to be free of anger. The grouch and the brainstorm were not for us. They may be the dubious luxury of normal men/women, but for alcoholics (compulsive overeaters) these things are poison.



Into Action, Pg 86

When we retire at night, we constructively review our day. Were we resentful, selfish, dishonest or afraid? Do we owe an apology? Have we kept something to

ourselves which should be discussed with another person at once? Were we kind and loving toward all? What could we have done better? Were we thinking of ourselves most of the time? Or were we thinking of what we



could do for others, of what we could pack into the stream of life? But we must be careful not to drift into worry, remorse or morbid reflection, for that would diminish our usefulness to others. After making our review we ask God's forgiveness and inquire what corrective measures should be

taken.

On awakening let us think about the twenty-four hours ahead. We consider our plans for the day. Before we begin, we ask God to direct our thinking, especially asking that it be divorced from self-pity, dishonest or self-seeking motives. Under these conditions we can employ our mental faculties with assurance, for after all God gave us brains to use. Our thought-life will be placed on a much higher plane when our thinking is cleared of wrong motives.

The Family

Afterward, Pg 133

We are sure God wants us to be happy, joyous, and free. We cannot subscribe to the belief that his life is a vale of tears, though it once was just that for many of us. But it is clear that we made our own misery. God didn't do it. Avoid then, the deliberate manufacture of misery, but if trouble comes, cheerfully capitalize it as an opportunity to demonstrate His omnipotence.



"We are sure God wants us to be happy, joyous, and free. "

ISSUES

My reasoning for naming this story “Issues” comes from a statement that is made in Chapter Five of the AA 12 & 12, at the bottom of page 55: “But of the things which really bother and burn us, we say nothing.” That in it self is the humongous issue that sends a lot of people over the edge and into the throes of all sorts of addictive and compulsive behavior.

Now, I take this matter all the way back to when I encountered employing a very unusual sponsor who insisted that instead of calling in my food every day, that I called in what type of issues were actively going on in my life that particular day.

Back then it seemed awfully strange and awkward from the usual procedures (when dealing with a sponsor), but I was willing to do just about anything and everything anybody suggested and/or told me to do in an attempt to get rid of some of my overload of fat.

My AA sponsor had advised me to just become teachable and learn how to follow directions, so since I was sick and tired of being sick and tired, I had become willing to do whatever deemed necessary in order to go forward toward what I desired most of all at that time. That is when I miraculously let go of and released 82 pounds of excess and unwanted weight that was on my body. I felt good and I felt

relieved.

One day back in the early 1980’s I realized that it wasn’t all that much the food as it was the issues in my life that I was eating over. If I couldn’t tackle and handle the issues that seemed to constantly come up in my life, I’d take it out on the unnecessary food that I could tackle and handle.

Now, that’s when I learned that I really had a problem. I had a problem with standing up for and speaking up for myself when it was anything concerning the issues of feeling as if I was being taken advantage of and being taken for granted as far as what my responsibilities should not be as a working wife and mother. I had become a “superwoman” in my own right without even knowing it. The biggest issue of all was that I didn’t know how to back down out of that uncomfortable position, and for some reason I felt as if I’d created that position for some reason (unknown to me), therefore I had to continue to keep up my past actions. Anger, resentment, and several other character defects would not allow me to leave that issue unsolved. And, that’s when all hell broke loose.

My spouse absolutely refused to allow me to stop being responsible for everything under the sun and more, and I couldn’t allow myself to keep on being responsible for

everything, so after a whole lot of therapy, and a separation, we were finally able to work things out somewhat. We split up on who pays which bills, and compromise as to which party does certain chores.

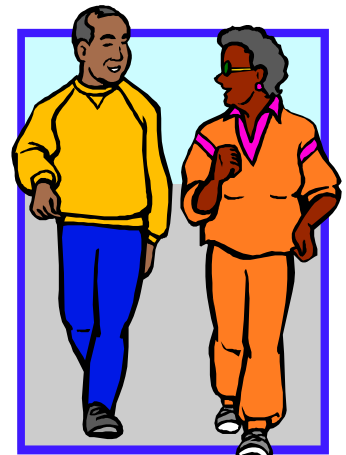
In a nut shell, as the statement said: “The things that bother and burn us the most, we say nothing.” Now, that might not seem like much to some people, but when we look at the fact that it’s totally disturbing the peace within our household we see it is a gigantic, problematic issue.

It’s these sorts of issues that send us into excess food, not the great big issues that only come around once or twice in a lifetime.

It is the little bitty nit-picking issues that drive some of us just about mad. So, let’s come out of the closet about the things that bother and burn us the most. That’s where our recovery as a compulsive overeater starts.

Rose-2, Houston, Texas

“But of the things which really bother and burn us, we say nothing.”



Getting On the OA Parkway

Most of us take one of the many Houston Freeways at some time during our day. We use it to go to work, run errands or any number of things. The one common denominator to using the freeway is to know where you are going and to expect, well, almost anything, but, in particular, obstacles and challenges to getting to your chosen destination. We have also learned that we must know where we are going and have a plan for how and when we are going to get there. The more prudent traveler learns before getting into the car which freeway must be used, what on-ramp will allow access and what off-ramp must be utilized to exit towards your final destination.

So let's consider that you are getting onto OA Parkway (known locally as the OAP) to begin a journey that we have to make. This is a delightful journey to mental health and physical health. Maybe it's a new journey for some of us that we are just starting or it could be a journey we have made in steps over many years. At any rate, in this journey you had to find your way to on-ramp 1A to Powerless Overfood Highway and it took some time and fancy maneuvering to get over to the HigherPower

Interchange and things were going so well and the trip was fascinating and beautiful. You felt so much better about yourself you were floating in a pink cloud. So much so that, without even realizing, you took the very next OAP off-ramp into life's seedy part of town. Self doubt and loathing on every corner, bingeing and purging, bad foods, depression and disgust at every turn and possibly worst of all you felt like you could never find your way back to the OAP no matter how hard you tried. In short you were lost without a clue to your own whereabouts. You began to spend more time thinking about how you got lost than how to find your way back. Pretty soon you felt like you had wandered so far from the OAP it was hopeless to even think you could find your way back. You believed you were a navigational failure. Therefore, you were adrift in oblivion; hopeless oblivion.

Not so fast there pal, you just have to retrace your steps and find On-ramp 1A onto the Powerless Overfood Highway. You just have to turn around and go back to the beginning. How do I do that, you ask? Remember how you got on the OAP in the first place. It's how we all got on the first time and for me,

personally, it is how I get back on when I take the wrong off-ramp. We admitted we are powerless over food and our lives had become unmanageable. Use your OA Global Positioning System (GPS). It is made up of numerous beneficial tools. The telephone list, your sponsor, OA materials and last but certainly not least, meetings.

There are so many analogies I could have used in my humble attempt to get my point across. Remember this. I believe that it is unreasonable to expect perfection in the OA program. After all, we are human, this is a complex and complicated disease, and slips are going to occur. We have to keep moving forward. It has been my experience that the longer I stray from the program the harder it is to find my way back. It takes bravery to pick up the telephone and call someone and say, "I am lost and I need directions to get back." However, believe me this is the kind of bravery that I know I and other people suffering from this disease respect the most. Greg T., Houston

"I am lost and I need directions to get back"



No Longer Alone

Had I hit bottom yet? I'm not sure, and frankly, I didn't want to find out. I didn't want to



feel worse than I did, and that's what brought me through the doors

of Overeaters Anonymous that first day. I was shocked and surprised to hear my story repeatedly told by others during that first meeting. There weren't any "dirty little secrets" I was eating over, until I started working the steps and realized all the secretive things I had done with food. When I felt comfortable sharing some of these things with my husband shortly before our 23-year anniversary, he was amazed at the things I

had done with food that he had no clue about. Although I had never been unfaithful with another man, I managed to slip away in private to protect my love affair with food. I resented being around others when food and I were having our "special" time together. To my husband's credit, I also had no real awareness of the hold food had on me. Perhaps I was in denial, but I never took an honest look at my relationship with food or took the time to realize how crazy some of the things were that I did with food. Didn't everybody obsess about where to get it, when to have it, how to eat it, etc., etc., etc.? Apparently not.

This program has given me many gifts in the short time I have been here. Learning about myself has been a huge gift, and

discovering that decisions without action to follow them up are dead ends. I had a busy life and really didn't think I needed more friends, but they are a wonderful blessing of the program. Honestly, they aren't a bonus; they're a necessity. They inspire me on how to better work my program, or they remind me of where I used to be or can end up if I ever get too comfortable. The wisdom of this program is that to keep our recovery, we have to be of service. This abundance mentality is wonderfully freeing. Hoarding or jealously guarding our recovery actually diminishes it, and by sharing it with others, we gain more of it. I have much to learn, and I'm grateful for the support and encouragement that you all so willingly offer.

Judy H., Houston

"This program has given me many gifts in the short time I have been here"

Calendar of OA Events

Date (2007)	Sponsoring Body	Event	Place
2/24	Dallas Metroplex IG	Unity Day Celebration	Dallas, TX
2/23-25	Los Angeles Intergroup	47th Annual OA Birthday Party The annual OA Birthday Party is a three day celebration of OA's founding in Los Angeles in 1960.	Los Angeles
3/23-25	Las Vegas OA Intergroup	Region III Assembly & Convention	Las Vegas, NV
4/30-5/5	OA	World Service Business Conference	Albuquerque, NM
8/30-9/2		World Service Convention	Philadelphia



I'm going to let Dola C., from Bonaire, Georgia have the floor today. She speaks my heart as well, if not better, than I can.

Melanie

Snakes In My Head

Let me tell you what just one bite does to me. First I start my "stinking thinking." Then I begin to believe the thoughts my disease plants in my head, and I am doomed. From that one thought, all the other lies I have heard, believed, and acted upon reappear like the snakes on Medusa's head, only mine are inside my head.

I justify eating more and eating between meals. I forget to pray or say thank you. Gratitude disappears. I stay away from meetings and no longer make phone calls. My hard-won self-esteem begins to erode. My self-pity rears its ugly head. I start comforting myself with more and more food, usually foods that are sugar-laden or contain fat and white flour, and in great quantities – all the foods that keep me spiraling downward. My shame sets in, and I'm again mired in the

morass of negative thinking, loathing myself. Gone is the peace and serenity I once knew. Despair tells me I am never going to return to where I once was. I am killing myself with twisted thinking and insane behavior once more. Insanity always accompanies that first bite.

How do I get out of this pit? My Higher Power, God, always gives many opportunities. I spy a forgotten pamphlet, or get a phone call and take advantage of it. I ask my HP for help, for I am too prideful to call someone or go to a meeting. Eventually I return to a meeting. I find a seat in the back of the room and sit consumed with anger, feeling resentful, defiant, fearful and silent, daring anyone to approach me. Someone



greet me, and because I am again a people pleaser, I smile my fake smile and accept his or her "welcome back," even though I think the person is insincere.

I leave the meeting with a glimmer of hope, aware there is a better way. I am grateful, I think. I have started my journey back to the program and a better way of life. All I need to do is "suit up and show up." I am not alone anymore. Realizing my HP is responsible for this miracle in my life, I give thanks.

This is what just one bite will do for me.

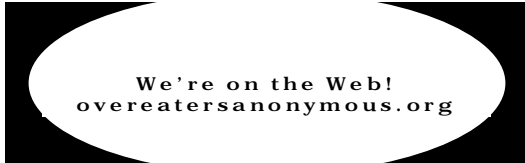
Dola C., Bonaire, Georgia, reprinted from *Lifeline*

"All I need to do is 'suit up and show up.'"

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Overeaters Anonymous

FINANCIAL INVENTORY

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 manekimj@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).

I asked one of my sponsorees to write a financial inventory. She asked, "Where do I start?" I then wrote out these questions on financial inventories I had completed in past years. It was helpful to her and some other sponsorees. Financial issues keep cropping up in my life and especially in my relationships.

Taking a look at these questions and writing answers showed me many patterns in my financial strengths and weaknesses.
Judith R.,
Houston



FINANCIAL INVENTORY

1. What were your parent's attitudes and beliefs about money?
2. What is your financial status or what is your perception of your current financial situation?
3. How do you feel about yourself when you have enough money?
4. How do you feel about yourself when you do not have enough money?
5. Have you been responsible where money is concerned?
6. Have you paid your own way? Explain.
7. Have you expected others to pay your way? Explain.
8. Do you feel comfortable discussing budgets, money management, financial decisions, etc. with your spouse? Explain.
9. Do you have family members you must support? How does that feel?
10. Are there any resentments or anger about money issues? Describe the situations and people involved.