



## *How it works...*

How it works...How it has saved me once and will again and again.

I recently attended a meeting I had been absent from for some time. I walked in a little late, which I had some anxiety about as usual. Someone was reading "How it works." All OAs have heard this. Some of us can even recite it from memory as a recent group leader proved when no one could find their key to the OAsis club. ☺

However, I guess this was the first time in a while that I listened to it. I mean REALLY listened to it. I realized that I had been guilty of trying to find a softer way. I was one of those who was balking at the steps. Although I can chuckle about it now, this came as a major realization and somewhat of a shock to me. I know that this section of the meeting is often very grounding for a lot of us and that was just what I needed to steer me back on the path back to sanity.

I'm not recovered. I realize every day that recovery is journey that will last my whole life and there is no destination. I have never been abstinent for any period of time. I now, again, have hope that one day I will be. I have hope that one day I can shed some of the excess baggage I carry around with me. I have hope that I will live to see my son grow up and have children of his own. I have hope that my journey will continue for many years yet and that perhaps along the way I might pick up a few friends and we may be able to walk together down that road.

My name is Andy and I'm a compulsive Overeater and a Food Addict.

- Andy L, Houston, TX

**~ Food never really made me happy ~ but it made me think I was going to BE happy in about 15 minutes.~**

## The OA Promise

I put my hand in yours, and together we can do what we could never do alone. No longer is there a sense of hopelessness, no longer must we each depend upon our own unsteady willpower.

We are all together now, reaching out our hands for power and strength greater than ours, and as we join hands, we find love and understanding beyond our wildest dreams.

STEPS is a 12 Step non-profit publication from,

OVEREATERS  
ANONYMOUS



®

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## What is Intergroup?

Intergroup is about recovery and helping people find recovery from compulsive overeating.

Newsletter is an Intergroup information goldmine. Please write an article.

Talking out ideas. We need your input, so please attend and share.

Experience service. It will help build your program.

Reports are given by the Committee Heads to keep us informed and up to date.

Group conscience is taken and voted on.

Read the Step, Tradition and Concept of the month.

Outreach. A way to reach other compulsive overeaters.

Understanding each other and ourselves.

Preamble. It's who we are and what we are about.

- *Patty G. , Higher Power Press, Ottumwa, Iowa*

The HMI Monthly Business meeting is the second Saturday of the month at the [Oasis Club](#), 5645 Hillcroft, Suite 102 at 10:00 AM. Every group is encouraged to send a representative.

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



## Thanks!

This short note is to thank Houston OA members for their overwhelming participation in our recent survey.

HMI has appointed a committee charged with developing a plan of action to strengthen and increase OA in the Houston area. To this end, the committee conducted the survey to aid it in developing this plan.

Including hard copies and web site responses, you submitted 83 surveys. Estimating a total active membership in the Houston area of four hundred, this is a return rate of over twenty percent!

As chairperson of your committee, thank you for your participation!

Your committee is continuing work on analyzing the survey responses and will present their recommendation to HMI in January.

- *Michael C., Houston, TX*

## Around Town

Dallas Metro Intergroup  
Convention

February 22 – 24, 2008

Embassy Suites – Park Central  
Dallas, Texas

Heart of Texas Intergroup  
12 Steppin' to Recovery

Region III Assembly and  
Convention

April 4-6, 2008

Austin, TX

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2008 HMI Spring Retreat

Camp Allen 4/25-27, 2008

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Watch the OAhouston.org  
website for upcoming  
workshops and events.

### Living an Abstinent Life

What does it mean to live an "abstinent life"? The me before program would hear that phrase and think it would mean being deprived of things I may want or need. I know better today after working the program for 10+ years.

For me today, Living an Abstinent Life means:

- Freedom from food obsession: not having thoughts about the next meal totally preoccupy me;

- Freedom from resentment obsession: resentments still arise, but today I know how to deal with these poisons (Steps 4 & 5);

- Freedom from perfectionism: accepting that doing the next right thing is better than trying to make everything "perfect";

- Freedom from self-flagellation: not beating myself up for being imperfect (i.e., human);

- Freedom from people pleasing: remembering that my needs and boundaries are important and that what another's opinion is of me is NONE OF MY BUSINESS;

- Freedom from taking everyone else's inventory: what's the point?; I can NEVER know what is going on in another's mind!;

- Freedom from uncertainty: having program tools to deal with life as life happens;

So, for me living the Abstinent Life is indeed Freedom from the shackles

of unhealthy eating and unhealthy thinking.

- *Greg M., Houston*

### JOURNALING QUESTIONS

- ☀ What action that I have been putting off can I take?
- ☀ Do I have a desire to stop eating compulsively? Have I stopped eating compulsively?
- ☀ Has my thinking about love changed in OA?
- ☀ Am I helping those I sponsor find what works best for them?
- ☀ How can I best help another compulsive overeater?

Tradition One: Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon OA unity.

Our common problem with over-emphasis of food binds us to each other. We KNOW it is life consuming and life-threatening even though no so called *normal* person, without this particular addiction, can comprehend the seriousness of this compulsion. As for me, I cannot figure out how a person can drink if not thirsty. Neither could I understand how my skinny husband could pass up a tasty dessert just because he was full. Now, I try to leave all that up to God. I don't have to *understand* everything. I don't have to *approve* of everything. "God, relieve me of the bondage of self." Get me out of this selfishness and self-centeredness to the point where I can be a new me, open to the newness in others.

We practice letting go of our own ways when we let our Higher Power help us adhere to a healthy food plan; when we trust different members to lead meetings each week; when we rotate the service jobs; when we stick to the format and literature and traditions of OA. We give up our self will when we use the unique OA program of living and loving that was handed down to us by the AA/OA founders and the group conscience of Overeaters Anonymous as a whole. Imagine what can happen when we trust God and others to take care of situations with or without our input?

How important is it to have our own way? Without others at meetings, we die. Even if we're right...*dead right is still dead*. This is a "WE" program. Without learning to respect others' needs and without learning to give up self-will, self-wants, and the 'me-first' attitude, we cannot achieve peace and understanding to the degree that is promised from working the Program. We need to not focus on our differences. So what if we have an occasional squabble? We *let go and let God*. So what if members are of all ages, sizes, religions, and backgrounds? Somehow the solution of the Steps and Traditions and Concepts applies to all of us. We find we can hear and enjoy--NOT FEAR--each other. *Together we can*.

-J.H. TODAY,  
St. Louis Bi State Area  
Intergroup, January '06

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Exercise for the Body, Mind and Soul

One of the benefits of a little downtime over the holidays was the opportunity to dust off an old tool I keep buried in my toolbox. Exercise. Not just for physical recovery, although that is an important benefit, but also for emotional and spiritual recovery as well. The cobwebs that clear away on a brisk walk/jog or bike ride are enormous. I actually enjoy exercising, but like so

many things in my life, it has to be done a certain way or it's not good enough, or I get too busy and then find it's difficult to get back in the habit. I've mellowed through this program, and now I understand better the idea of consistency rather than perfection. Suiting up and showing up, even for a little while, pays me rich dividends in clear thinking and peace. Sometimes I clip on my iPod and transport my mind via upbeat, inspirational music, but other times, like today, I enjoy the quiet and allow my thoughts to bubble to the surface and throw away the dredge. In retrospect, had I not taken the time, some of those thoughts would probably have turned to slurry in my brain like what happens to my car's engine when I wait too long between oil changes.

A visualization technique I use to get to the end of my route is to envision another ideal me. She's slim, serene, and completely happy and she's the person I will eventually realize into being through this program. She's at my last signpost encouraging me on, jumping up and down excitedly, totally happy, joyous, and free. I love this extra gift from exercise, too!

- Judy H., *The Woodlands*

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*~ We'll love you  
until you learn to  
love yourself.~*

Feeling Empowered

What is the quickest way to feel defeated? Make a list of all of the things in life that you are powerless over.

Aging parents, aging children, work, sick pets, school, money, snowstorms, other people's opinions...oh, and don't forget the inability to regulate food consumption. The list continues ad infinitum. But instead of feeling hopeless, I feel empowered, thanks to OA.

Before I got into program, I had no clue what true powerless means. I just thought I was powerless over my food. All of the other things in my life I should be able to handle right? Don't adults know everything? Ha!

Tradition Two states, "For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority - a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern." Every time I read it, I add the words, '...and I'm not it' to the end of the sentence. Here is where I learn to separate my

wants and needs from the actual situation. Is it my problem that my son doesn't want to put away his laundry, or is it his? My HP says that it is his problems, if I leave my emotional baggage out of it. Since I don't know on my own what a healthy consequence is, I turn to God to help me turn a power struggle into a teaching moment. In the end, we both win. HP has used Tradition Two to help me be a better parent.

I'm lucky to have a great husband to help me in this area, but he can only help if I remember the tradition. Do I treat him as a 'trusted servant' when it comes to our marriage and parenting, or do I pull a power trip and treat him like he works for me? Which option encourages open communication and dialogue? Which one will drive me to eat when he gets resentful that I'm not listening to him?

So...let's look at that list again through the eyes of Tradition Two. Make a list of all the things in life that belong to the 'ultimate authority.' Isn't it great to know that your Higher Power is taking care of you and those you love?

*-Anonymous, Greater  
Omaha IG, March '07*

**OA.org & OAHouston.org**

Have you checked out the two program websites lately? Both are full of information that could be helpful to our recovery.

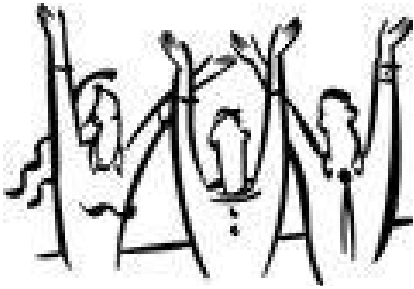
Not only will you find face-to-face meeting information, but you can also find daily inspirations, news on the World Service Bureau and its activities and links to literature.

You might find useful the link to online or telephone meetings, other region's newsletters or even links to downloadable convention talks and workshops, and upcoming activities in our area or ones you will be visiting.

Sometimes just browsing it might be the inspiration you need to get through the day.

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**We are people who  
normally would not mix.  
But there exists among  
us a fellowship, a  
friendliness, and an  
understanding, which is  
indescribably  
wonderful...**

**- Alcoholics  
Anonymous p. 17**



### Faith and Abstinence

Each time I have compiled this newsletter, I found myself with tears in my eyes, feeling a bit like a vulnerable crab who has just molted her protective shell. Over the last year, I have not only struggled with being abstinent, but with wanting to be abstinent. I knew that abstinence would no longer allow me to hide and getting abstinent would mean that I had to go through a period of discomfort to process all the things that too much food has caused me avoid. I feared that losing weight and being healthy would bring different expectations of me that I couldn't live up to and I feared change. But, as one of our sayings describes, I became sick and tired of the high cost of low living so started working with a sponsor and working the steps.

While my abstinence is far from perfect, I have enough abstinence and now enough

desire to be abstinent to be willing to feel the feelings I was trying to avoid, and to share them with another OA. I do feel some grief bubbling up but I'm amazed at how I also feel so much trust in, and protection from, all of you and my HP at the same time. Our disease is progressive but so is our recovery, I may be starting out with baby steps, but those first steps are ones to build on, just like our Twelve Steps.

I realized today after talking to some other OAs that the expectations of an abstinent life that I feared were my own. I was greatly confusing an abstinent me with a "perfect" me. I realize that I had an image of myself that I would never be able to live up to. The abstinent me that I really see is one who may still have fears but who is not crippled by them anymore, one that is not afraid of making changes to better her life rather than sticking with the old outdated habits, actions and ideas that I've carried with me for so long and have become a very heavy burden, and the abstinent me isn't afraid of uncertainty. The abstinent me doesn't need to hide behind extra weight so as not to get noticed, but also doesn't need to fear life if I do draw attention—the abstinent me has faith that

my HP will give me the tools I need to use when I need them. For all of this and the fellowship, I am grateful.

Thank you to everyone for contributing your stories!

- Dawn G

### A Change in Attitude

Humility is an avenue of true freedom of the human spirit. Failure and misery are transformed by humility; strength comes from weakness. Pain is the admission price to a new life. The 7<sup>th</sup> step is a change in attitude that permits us to move out of ourselves towards God.

I have found it hard to work on steps. I know that in OA you need to work on staying abstinent and continue to work with God. I know that I will succeed in OA if I keep working the steps and count on God and my fellow OA members.

It works if we work it and we're worth it!

- C, *Unity Intergroup,  
St. Paul/Mpls.*