



## No Starting Over

I am amazed that I have been in OA for more than 27 years and, by God's grace, abstinent for 24. At times I have fought for that gift, but I wanted recovery more than I wanted sweets.

I did not want to try abstinence, but it finally hurt more to eat than to abstain. In 1979, I went on an eight-month binge, and nothing filled the void or removed the pain. In essence, I was playing Russian roulette with the food. I never quit OA during this time; I called my sponsor at least five times a week, went to meetings, gave service to the best of my ability and read AA's Big Book and *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*. I did everything but put down the food. Then a crack appeared in the armor of my self-will, and God snuck in and took me at my word.

At times I went through physical withdrawals. My joints ached, my head throbbed, my muscles hurt, and my stomach cried for binge foods, but I knew the food would not fix the pain. I tried to sabotage my abstinence, but something always came along and spared me from disaster.

I remember the day when my compulsion to binge vanished. On a cold January morning in 1980, I realized I wanted some doughnuts. The more I wanted that food, the faster I worked, when finally I thought, "If you eat those things, you don't have any one to blame but yourself. You can't blame your parents, the church, God, your sponsor or your friends in program. If you eat, you will have to deal with the consequences." At that moment my sugar craving lifted.

I wish I could say that I have been perfect with the food since. Sometimes I think I can handle certain foods, and they bring me to knees. However, I usually do not bring those foods into the house, and I don't like to test fate by having them only when I eat out. Plain and simple works best.

This gift of abstinence has humbled me, I will not repeat the past because my memories of bingeing are too fresh to forget; I don't want to start over again. I now understand what I have heard for many years: "The farther away I am from my last binge, the closer I am to my next one." I believe I have another binge left in me, but I don't think I have another

recovery. For today, I will not test fate or God.

-M.K., Denver, Reprinted from *Lifeline*, Nov. 2005

"When we face the guilt that truthfully tells us, 'You made a mistake,' we're free of shame that falsely tells us, 'You are a mistake.'"

-*The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous*, p.43

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®

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The opinions expressed in this publication are those of the individual contributing OA member and do not necessarily represent those of the Editor, HMI, or OA as a whole.

## **Around Town**

### **Galveston/Bay Area Newcomers Workshop**

**Topic: The Tools of Recovery**

**Sat. January 10, 2009  
2:00 – 4:30 pm**

Up the Street Club  
508 W. Nasa Rd. 1  
Webster, Texas

### **Houston Metro Intergroup Newcomers Workshop**

**Sat. February 7, 2009  
2:00 – 4:00 pm**

Oasis Club  
Houston, TX

### **Dallas OA Convention**

**Feb. 27 – Mar. 1, 2009**

For more information visit:  
[www.oadallas.org](http://www.oadallas.org)

### **HMI Spring Retreat**

**May 15 -17, 2009**

Camp Allen

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

## **“True Humility”**

“Liking myself, as God does,  
opens new doors, evokes a

new spirit that gives me  
courage and makes room for  
true humility.” *For Today*,  
January 24.

When I first walked in to  
“the rooms” of Overeaters  
Anonymous I hated myself  
and what I had become on  
the outside and realized after  
a few meetings I really didn’t  
even know who Karla was on  
the inside. I was so confused  
about me, my life and where I  
was headed.

I remember the “sick”  
state of mind I was in the first  
week I joined OA all too well.  
Oh, the painful memories...I  
was in a dressing room at  
Target, shopping for a trip to  
Florida...yes, the “dreaded”  
swimsuit shopping that I had  
been putting off for weeks in  
hopes of losing a few  
pounds. My mind was racing  
and I was thinking oh God  
please let this suit fit and look  
good so I can get the heck  
out-of-here! I managed to  
pour myself in to the first  
swimsuit. Slowly, but surely I  
finally looked up at myself in  
the long-length mirror and  
how disgusting I looked! I  
shook my head in disbelief. I  
said to myself, “I hate you”  
and asked, “Karla, what have  
you done to yourself?” I didn’t  
even recognize myself!

Today, almost eight  
months in the program I am  
learning “to know” Karla and  
actually learning to like  
myself on the outside as well  
as the inside ( with the help  
of my Higher Power, of  
course). OA gives me the  
tools to help me learn about  
myself and it was when I took

my first Fourth Step and  
trusting my sponsor that  
helped me along the way. I  
am so thankful for the  
Program and the many new  
doors that are opened daily  
in my life. This Program gives  
me a true sense of humility!  
Thank you OA.

*-Karla, Dallas Metro  
Intergroup, Feb. 2008*

## **Lessons of Abstinence**

When I reach out to a  
fellow OA member, I also  
reach out to myself. I did not  
have any human  
interconnection before joining  
OA. I felt like a woman  
trapped within suffocating  
and isolating madness. I was  
no different from any other  
addict without a program.

Now I do have a program  
with Steps, slogans, tools  
and Traditions to depend on  
daily. I also have a loving  
support system within the  
group.

I joined OA April 18,  
2005. Within five months I  
have lost 117 pounds (53kg),  
achieving a weight I have not  
experienced in more than 10  
years. I hope to continue my  
abstinence, but if I don’t, I will  
view the setback as a lesson  
rather than a total permanent  
failure. Progress, not  
perfection.

I also have a clearer  
understanding of how much  
Higher Power cares for me  
and how Higher Power can  
exist in my life.

*-J.S., Naples, Florida,  
reprinted from Lifeline Jan  
2006*

### **Tradition Five**

**Each group has but one primary purpose-to carry its message to the compulsive overeater who still suffers.**

- ☀ Do we welcome newcomers to our group and give them individual attention?
- ☀ What do we do to welcome back members who are returning to OA?
- ☀ Can new members find sponsors in our group?
- ☀ How do we treat the long term member who is facing difficulties with compulsive eating or with life?

### **Correcting Distortion**

Abstinence to me starts and ends with the Overeaters Anonymous definition of abstaining from compulsive overeating. To understand this, I have to define compulsive overeating.

Eating compulsively is behaving in an impulsive manner that leads me down a self-destructive road of misery. It is an obsession to eat or drink uncontrollably against my will. It is not

eating specific foods or an unhealthy diet, but the behavior where I attempt to control what I cannot control-or a total lack of control. It is living in the extremes with no middle road.

Compulsiveness is the insistent, repetitive and unwanted urge to eat when I am not hungry, to eat foods I don't want or to eat more than I can possibly stomach. Abstinence means I have arrested this behavior. My recovery is dependent on my being abstinent. In fact, when I am not abstinent, there is no growth. Honesty, open-mindedness and willingness go right out the window. I lose my commitment and get in the way of my Higher Power by behaving in controlling, erratic and impulsive ways.

My recovery is dependent on my being abstinent, but abstinence is only a corner stone of my recovery. It's a state of mind, a sense of clarity, a release from the burden that my disease wants to give me.

My abstinence is not my food plan. But my food plan is a critical tool I use along with the other tools I have learned from OA that help me keep my abstinence. It provides the boundaries I need to keep me on the straight and narrow. Weighing and measuring helps me deal with my portion distortion, which is a symptom of my disease. My food plan keeps me aware

of when, how much and what I am eating. I have a deliberate ignorance of what I am eating.

Part of the state of mind abstinence fosters is living with intention and in the now. This means being responsible for my thoughts, feelings, actions, perceptions and beliefs; being accountable for my behavior; and for living for today, not dreaming about tomorrow or reliving old feelings of "why me?" or resentments from the past.

My definition of abstinence evolves and grows as I walk the path of recovery. It is becoming this three-dimensional concept that provides the energy and power I need to develop the willingness to keep on the journey, and it will continue to change over time, I am sure.

Abstinence gives me the ability to get out of my Higher Power's way so he can work in my life. It gives me the ability to develop and grow my relationship with God. It allows me to wake up and gives me the freedom to be real. Ultimately, my abstinence gives me a gift in the form of the promises described in the Bog Book and the reasonable happiness described in the Serenity Prayer. For today, I can be abstinent, and thank God for that.

*-Joel I., Reprinted from Lifeline, November 2006*

## Oasis Club Membership: A Twelfth Step

### What is the Oasis Club?

#### The Oasis club is many things to its members:

- First and foremost, it is a safe, convenient meeting place for OA meetings.
- It is Houston's only facility entirely dedicated to OA activities.
- It is an ideal meeting place for sponsors/sponsees.
- It is quite, safe place to mediate.
- Simply, it's a place any club member can come to use anytime.

### Why join the OASis Club?

- Membership helps to keep the Club open and available for meetings.
- Members may have a key for easy access to the Club.
- And...to enjoy the benefits listed above!

#### Oasis Club dues:

Annual \$55.00

Semi-Annual \$30.00

The Oasis Club needs your support to keep supporting OA! Dues may be placed in the 7<sup>th</sup> Tradition basket in the dues envelope available at the Club, or mailed to Oasis Club: Vice President – Membership, 5645 Hillcroft, #102, Houston, TX 77036

The Oasis Club Monthly meeting is the second Saturday of the month at the [Oasis Club](#), 5645 Hillcroft, Suite 102 at 9:45 AM.

*Service in OA has been a surprisingly powerful factor in our recovery. Simple actions which seemed unimportant when we took them have turned out to have profound effects on us and others. Hugs we've given at meetings, phone calls we've made, letters we have written, simple words of encouragement which we've spoken and quickly forgotten, have come back to us—sometimes at the very moment we've needed them most—from people who received through them the strength to keep walking the OA path.*

*-From The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous, Step Twelve, p 101*

## Forgotten Gratitude

Thanks to everyone for your patience waiting for this newsletter. It is surely many months overdue and I offer my apologies. In looking back on why such a long lapse, I have to be honest and admit that some of my defects got in the way: procrastination, perfectionism, saying yes to some projects when I should have said no...the list can go on and I have learned where some new boundaries are. As I sat to compile this newsletter, I recalled what gratification I received from doing so. I love to research material for the newsletter and to read everyone's stories of recovery. It's truly inspiring to be immersed in program material and feel the connection with other OAs around the world. What would make this newsletter even better would be more submissions from our own Intergroup members...so consider submitting an article next time you feel a need to share with someone!

Yours in service,  
Dawn G., Houston, TX