

THE TWELVE STEPPER MAY 2005

Published to share recovery and support within the fellowship of Overeaters Anonymous by the Louisville Metro Intergroup.



The Best of The Twelve Stepper 2004



(JANUARY)

STEP ONE

The "Sugary Carb Season" which seems to last from the middle of October until the end of the year -- has reminded me once again that I am powerless over food.

There is one table in the work room of my place of employment. Near the middle of October our patrons begin bringing gifts of appreciation -- always food gifts. My co-workers bring gifts for happy holiday wishes -- also food gifts. All of this goes on the break table in the work room.

It amazes me that I can look at a gift wrapped box, recognize the shape, and get a squirt of saliva. My mouth literally waters. Platters wrapped in clear wrap are tempting. They display my trigger foods and are hard to ignore.

In the past, I would decide that I could probably handle "just one" treat. Of course, I never could. So, for about 10 weeks, I would gorge on sugary treats, and still not be satisfied. One treat was not enough, and 10 weeks of treats was not enough. I was powerless over food, and my life had become unmanageable.

I noticed something different this year. The food is lasting a lot longer than in the past. I think I know why. It's because I'm not eating it! Instead of calling it "just one bite" I'm calling it "that first bite". During my break I call my sponsor. Even if she is not home, just hearing her voice on the answering machine, and leaving her a brief message, reinforces my program. I carry program literature, and read during my break. I drink flavored water -- lots of it. If the weather permits, I go outside and stroll around for a few minutes.

My co-workers are joking about their clothes getting tight, and already talking about starting their next diets. I am so grateful that I don't have to do that any more. I have the 12 Steps to use as my plan of living. I have a food plan that promotes my good health. I have a Higher Power to help me live the plan. I have the support of OA folks to encourage me and inspire me. I am truly blessed.

Sonja F., Louisville, KY



PROGRESS NOT PERFECTION

(FEBRUARY)

TWO STEPPIN' IT

Usually when I talk about step 2, I think about all the insane things I used to do with food. The sneaking, the purging, the eating carrots all day so that I could binge at night. It was insane that I wanted nothing more than to be thin, yet my actions said that I had a great desire to be fat! Coming to terms with my first step in OA helped me to see the insanity of this disease- it really is cunning, baffling and powerful.

As the Big Book tells me, it is vital to my recovery to continue to enlarge my spiritual life. Recently, Step 2 has taken on new meaning for me. I have come to believe that God can and will restore me to sanity, but today I see my insanity as the idea that I am separate from God. God is either everything or God is nothing. If this is true (and how can I move on to step 3 and turn my will over to something that I do not believe to be EVERYTHING), then it is impossible for me to be apart from God. I am connected to everyone because we are all ONE. This makes it very destructive to withhold forgiveness. I looked up the word "forgiveness" in the dictionary and it said that to forgive means to "cease to hold resentment against". Just like our textbook tells us, resentment is our #1 offender. So it seems that it would be a useful recovery action to forgive any seeming offense and turn my attention to what God would have me be. In this way, I get restored to sanity- I remember WHO others ARE and in so doing, I remember WHO I AM!

Signed,
Grateful Recovering Food Addict And Compulsive Overeater.

(MARCH)

TRADITION THREE

"The only requirement for OA membership is a desire to stop eating compulsively."

How lucky we are that this is the ONLY requirement for membership. No one can be turned away from OA because of our ability to pay, body size, race, gender, religion, or beliefs. No one can be turned away for not following the steps, not following a food plan and not being abstinent. Thank God for that. I did none of those things in the beginning of my recovery, but I did have the desire to stop eating compulsively and to end the mental obsession with food. We are members if we say we are and no one can prevent us from being a member for any reason.

When the AAs originally wrote this tradition it included the clause "honest desire". (This still appears in the "Foreword to the First Edition" of the Big Book, p x.) Since few have this level of honesty when they first enter OA (AA), and I didn't, it was taken out. Who am I, or the group for that matter, to judge someone's desire to stop eating compulsively? For me, just coming to meeting shows a desire to do something, otherwise why keep coming back? Maybe we want to lose some weight before a big event. Maybe our doctor told us about a health problem we need to take care of. Whatever your reason, keep coming back, no one can keep you away!

While the desire to stop eating is the only requirement for membership, it does not guarantee you recovery from the disease of compulsive overeating. The program of recovery outlined in the Big Book and Twelve and Twelve are how we get better, one day at a time. I came to meetings and did little else for six months, and I got more and more miserable. Fortunately I became willing to work the program, surrendered, got a sponsor, took suggestions, read conference approved literature, used the tools, started going through the steps and the miracle happened. That's how it works and the miracles keep happening.

Keep coming back! The only person that can keep you away is you!

- Jennifer

(APRIL)

A Prayer

Dear God, I come to you today with gratitude in my heart for everything that you have done for me. You have all power, and I re-commit my will and my life to you. I ask you now to help me realize when I am doing something that is against your will, so I can stop and change it. Grant me willingness, surrender and acceptance today to fully work the program and experience life on life's terms. Show me the way to help my fellows find the solution as I have. Thank you for this abstinent day, Amen! Allie W



(June)

SURRENDER

Submission is not the same thing as surrender. Submission is yielding to someone who has control over you. Surrender is an act of life. During battle, the act of surrender is a life-giving act. Those who surrender know that it is their only chance for survival. They surrender or die. I thank God that I understand this today. I thank God that I finally reached the point where I knew there was no other choice BUT to surrender. With all of my years of struggle with this disease, I was never willing to surrender everything. There was always something I wanted to keep for myself. When I finally reached the point where I realized there was no human way for me out of this disease, I surrendered. I became willing to do whatever God and other recovering people told me to do. There was nothing left to hold on to more important than abstinence. I surrender everything in order to receive this gift. Again, because I am still newly recovering (53 days!), most of the experience I have in surrender has been about my food plan. I have also surrendered to the things I need to do each day to maintain abstinence (writing my food down the night before, committing it to my sponsor, reading and writing on the steps, contact with other compulsive overeaters). What I am still practicing and working toward is surrender of all areas of my life. I am WILLING to do it. That is the first step. Because it is an unfamiliar way of living, I need to practice it daily to make it a habit. I am grateful that there is a solution.

-Ellen, Owenton, KY

Rozanne's

Prayer

(O.A.'s 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 on
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.

Together We Can Do
What We Could Never Do Alone



SERVICE OPP!

July 2005 will be my last month as Twelve Stepper editor. I've been editing for 1 ½ years and it's time to share this wonderful learning and growing opportunity with someone else. If you are interested in learning how to do this – I'm willing to teach it. If you are fairly comfortable with Microsoft Word, it's a snap! Call or email Shawwna.

shawnnasue@insightbb.com
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(FEB)

WHAT RECOVERY HAS MEANT TO ME

Abstinence is the greatest gift from God. It has brought me more than I ever imagined possible. My life is full of love, laughter, peace, serenity, and joy. It is also full of the crazy stuff, but today that's okay. I have tools to deal with all that life brings, one day at a time. As I sit in meetings and realize what a minority we are (the people who have found this path), I realize how truly blessed I am to have been shown the solution. My gratitude leads me to service. Carrying the message to still suffering compulsive overeaters is the greatest service. Helping people find a way out of the pain and isolation of this terrible disease and into the warm arms of recovery helps make my own recovery stronger, and allows me to give back what I have been so blessed to have, and let's me say, "Thanks for this gift, God."

- Shawwna

SERVICE CONNECTION

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This edition of the Twelve Stepper was a collection of writings and submissions from all of 2004. Any submissions that were sent to me to be published in this month's issue will be in June's regular edition of the Twelve Stepper. Thanks to all who support the Twelve Stepper by writing. It's a wonderful service and everyone benefits.

Do you feel

Anger?

Resentment?

Worry?

FEAR?

If so,

**Call GOD,
ASAP!**

THE BIG BOOK AND ... a Spiritual beginning

The central fact of our lives today is the absolute certainty that our Creator has entered into our hearts and lives in a way which is indeed miraculous. He has commenced to accomplish those things for us which we could never do by ourselves. Alcoholics Anonymous (4th ed.), pg. 25

When I first came into OA, I knew that there was talk of God. I was okay with that. I figured there was a God, having had returned to the religion of my youth (after significant searching). I had come to terms with what I expected from God – which was not much.

I didn't expect God to actually play a part in my life. I figured God was too busy with more important things than to worry about my little life. God had left figuring out my life to me. I didn't realize it at the time, but my idea of God was very limiting and abandoning – reminiscent of my experiences with adults in my life up to that point. I thought if God ever spoke it would be at booming, ear splitting volumes. He was quick to judge and long to forgive. I thought that he was up in some vague, distant "heaven" and you had to die before you go to meet him. The God of my understanding at that time was very small and puny. I have come to believe that the word "God", as used in the steps, is just one way to describe a Guiding Spirit, more powerful than ourselves, which we come to experience in our lives by working the steps. The 2nd step was the beginning of that spiritual experience for me.

It wasn't until I had worked the steps with a sponsor that I was able (using prayer, meditation and healthy dose of "acting as if") to develop a concept of a Higher Power that works in my life today. My HP now speaks to me in whispers and coincidences, loves me unconditionally, and *wants me to be happy* (what a concept!). My HP was always with me – I just had too much diseased thinking in the way to recognize Him. I now have that certainty the Big Book talks about -- that my HP lives in my heart, guiding me to do His will, things I could never do without His help. Staying abstinent on a daily basis is just one of those things.

Today I choose to call my HP "God". But I don't think it matters what name is used. Whether the name is "Goddess," "Infinite Wisdom," "Creator," or "Fred," the most important thing is to completely surrender daily to that Higher Power with the knowledge that, with our work, it will restore us to sanity and lead us to recovery, one day at a time.

- Bobbie B.



You may be the only Big Book that someone sees. Living in the solution is the greatest service.

Lifeline

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OA's monthly magazine written by and for OA members like you and me! Just \$15 a year, less for multiple years. Comes anonymously to your home. Pay by check, money order, or credit card. Read it and enrich your serenity, abstinence, and recovery! Order several ways:

Contact Bobbie B. 459-5447

bkbrown1969@yahoo.com or online at:

www.aa.org

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

The following people are celebrating their abstinence from compulsive overeating!

Brenda Lee celebrated two years of abstinence on Tuesday, May 17 at the Epworth Meeting.

Congratulations Brenda!



Jennifer E. will be celebrating six years of recovery and 5 1/2 years of abstinence on Friday at the 6:30 meeting.

Congratulations Jennifer!



Christy L. will be celebrating two years of abstinence on Monday, June 6 at the Salem United 6:30 meeting.

Congratulations Christy!



**Nothing Tastes as Good as
Abstinence Feels!**



WRITE FOR THE 12 STEPPER

We all have experience, whether we are abstinent or in relapse. We never know who will be touched and helped by our words. Someone out there needs to hear what you have to say. It only takes a few minutes to jot down a gratitude list or share what works for you. No article is too small! What's your favorite slogan? How does it help you? All articles can be anonymous (in case you're shy!) So what are you waiting for!? 3 ways to submit articles:

1. shawnnasue@insightbb.com
2. Shawna Mills
512 Dale Ave. Louisville, KY 40214
3. Call 361-3105 or 366-8004

RETREAT REMINDERS

DATES:

JUNE 10, 11, 12

MARYDALE RETREAT CENTER
ERLANGER, KY

Registration begins at 4:30 p.m. Friday
O.A. Meeting at 7:00 p.m. Friday
Speaker begins at 8:30 p.m.

Bring an open mind, honesty and willingness...take home strengthened OA Recovery.

The retreat includes the following opportunities:

Speaker
Yoga
Meditation
Free Time
Entertainment
Karaoke
Games
Silent Auction
Raffle
Fellowship

Remember to bring cash or check for the raffle and silent auction. If you are donating something for the raffle or auction, bring it to the retreat.

ANY QUESTIONS?

Call Sherrie Hyman (Retreat Chair) 502-262-7396
or
Kathy Christian (Registrar) 502-451-1721
Or
e-mail: oaretreat2005@yahoo.com



Serenity is the gracious
gift of peace that we
receive for living by the
will of God.