

Easy Does It



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Monthly Newsletter of Overeaters Anonymous
Madison Area Intergroup, P.O. Box 294
Madison, WI 53701-0294 Tel. (608) 663-8823
www.region5oa.org/madison/

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Step Two

Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.

Tradition Two

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.

Fourth Step Help

Are you having a little trouble working your

program? Stuck on the fourth step - made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves. Wow, that sounds so overwhelming. Need help? There is help. Come on out Saturday, February 26, 1-3pm at McFarland Lutheran Church. There are flyers available at all meetings. Local recovering OAs will offer concrete ideas about processes that can help you. Even if you are not working a fourth step at this time, come on out. Hope to see you there.

New Meeting Possibility

Feeling the loss of the Monday night meeting? There is a lot of talk going on right now about a new Monday night meeting, potentially on the east side, start time about 5:30pm or so. There is interest in having this as a topic meeting; Women and Sexuality. Contact at this time is Mary J at 256-1669. If you have any ideas to

contribute, or an idea for the meeting place - please let her know.

Upcoming Events

Thursday, Feb 3: Madison Area Intergroup Meeting. 6:15 pm, Mt. Olive Lutheran Church. All are welcome. Service opportunities at every level!

Saturday, Feb 26: OA Unity Day. Guidance for the Fourth Step. McFarland Lutheran Church 1 - 3pm.

Oct 14 - 16th Big Book Study - see brochures available at all meetings.

For more information about these and other OA events, click "Upcoming Events" at www.region5oa.org

Child Friendly Meetings

At Canada Day, the speakers mentioned child friendly meetings in their area. As a mother of a three year old, I was very interested in what a child friendly meeting was. I asked her about them. A child friendly meeting can take various forms. 1) There could simply be an area within the meeting room for children to sit and play, perhaps with a toy box and it is known at that meeting that there will be noise during the meeting. People should refrain from discussing sex and using profanity. Members with children are welcome to bring their children to the meeting. 2) There could be a room or space available next door to the meeting room where a baby sitter is hired by the group. The children of members are looked after by the baby sitter during the meeting. 3) The same as number two

except members of that meeting would sign up to do the "baby sitting" in the next room. This is a similar service to leading, getting speakers, etc.

I believe there are a number of OA members that have children who would like to see one or more of our Madison Area meetings be child friendly. Therefore, please take a group conscience at your home meeting to see if this is something your meeting would like to offer. If any group decides to become child friendly, please contact a member of intergroup and let us know which format your meeting has adopted. Thank you so much for considering this. -Rhonda

Abstaining or Dieting?

I have given a lot of thought to just how abstinence differs from dieting because of my desire to explain the OA program to newcomers. In OA, we always insist we are not on a diet!! We have no will power!! But, to even the most liberal listener, our "three moderate meals a day with nothing in between" certainly sounds like a diet. Wherein, then, lies the difference?

The difference comes not in what we eat while we are abstinent, but how we think while we are abstinent. I like to think in terms of abstinent thinking versus diet thinking. Here are some of the point of difference I have found significant.

Diet Thinking

1. There is an initial "psyching up" or mental preparedness. A sort of will power build up takes place.
2. Food obsessions dominate each day. Excessive time is spent in special preparations and menu planning. Food is the primary focus each day.
3. The end of the diet is the primary goal. The future (How many more pounds to go?) dictates our time.
4. As the diet progresses, anxiety increases as will power decreases.
5. Thoughts toward the end of the diet dwell on what we can eat again that we were denied when dieting. Food fantasies increase.
6. When a diet ends, we are not better off than before, for our thin bodies are doomed to relapse. Moreover, our will power will be less

strong with subsequent efforts.

7. A diet ends.

Abstinent Thinking

1. There is a "letting go" as though a burden has been lifted. The body and mind relax and flow.
2. Food thoughts are lost between meals. Eating is an activity of the day but not a focal point. Meal planning and preparing are kept simple.
3. There is no goal. Each day is a day unto itself.
4. As abstinence continues, serenity becomes greater. Emotions are calmed (except for the occasional flare-ups that occur when we give up our tranquilizing food and learn to deal with life).
5. There are fewer thoughts of non-abstinent foods; fantasies decrease as we surrender to abstinent eating on a day-to-day basis.
6. As abstinence progresses, we are changing. New ideas are replacing old ones so that, when we are thin, we are in a better place emotionally and spiritually. Our strength (through our Higher Power) grows as our efforts continue. -Joyce

Wise Words

We suffer primarily not from our vices or our weaknesses, but from our illusions. We are haunted, not by reality, but by those images we have put in place of reality. - Daniel J. Boorstin

To know that you do not know is the best. - Lao-tzu

Suffering is a lesson the Soul needs in order to get to its Beloved. Joy is too. - Ram Dass

Be cheerful, call for help to the One who comes at the call, saying, "Forgive us, You who love to forgive". -Rumi

You grow up the day you have your first real laugh at yourself. -Ethel Barrymore

H.O.W. = Honesty, Openmindedness, Willingness.
-Anonymous

Work Those Tools

"Compulsive overeating is a disease of isolation" - so begins the section on telephoning in OA's tools of recovery. I related to those words immediately. I overate alone, I even arranged to be alone so I could overeat, and I felt too ashamed to tell anyone (even myself) the truth about my eating and bingeing.

I don't remember the first time I picked up the phone and called another OA member. I do remember that I would copy down names and numbers from the **We Care List**, intend to call but wouldn't. I was afraid I'd call at the most inconvenient time, afraid the person I was calling wouldn't remember (or care) who I was, afraid I wouldn't know what to say, and even afraid I'd get the help I wasn't always entirely sure I wanted.

Today I can still focus on those fears, but more often than not I make the call. Why? Simple: I don't want to overeat. I don't want to isolate with or without excess food. I don't want to deprive myself of the support I get and hopefully give when I call. Besides I learned by calling OA members that I enjoyed talking with others, especially newcomers. I learned I wasn't really the loner I imagined myself to be. - Hazel

I have a story about the telephone tool. Week after week, meeting after meeting, the OA newcomer gladly wrote his name and phone number down in the **We Care** book. He would then go home and wait to be called, but to his disappointment, no one called. He said nothing, but over time he became resentful. Why was no one calling him? He imagined the others calling one another and deliberately snubbing him. Fortunately he kept coming back; he knew he was a compulsive overeater, so where else could he turn for help? Also, fortunately he stayed long enough to finally realize that most people in his meetings weren't calling anyone, **and neither was he!!** He began making calls and was comfortable enough to share this joke on himself at the meetings. - Gladys

OA Literature

Reading and using OA LITERATURE is the tool I am attempting to improve on this year. Reading literature, especially a daily meditation book to start my morning, is a great way for me to stay connected to my Higher

Power. It encourages me to start the day with God - with a desire for knowledge of His will for me, and the power to carry that out.

Not long ago, I had gotten into the habit of rushing headlong into my day, without stopping to connect with my Higher Power first. When I discussed this with my sponsor, she suggested that I try just five minutes in the morning, just to get into the habit. Reading one meditation book, she said, would be a great start. So, I tried it and I think it really helped. Then, I started to read two meditation books. I was doing much better with the morning thing. I'm sure my life was going much better, but one of my shortcomings is that I don't realize when things are going smoothly, but I do notice when things get ugly. I sometimes don't realize how serene and uncomplicated my life is until it is too late. I have at times gotten complacent about doing the foot work, and the God's reminders are pretty harsh. In my case, things were going pretty well. I was doing my morning readings, and then circumstances evolved in which I had to start getting up, and out of the house over an hour earlier in the morning. The morning reading and connecting went by the wayside. As it happened one morning after about 10 days after this schedule change, I was rushed and in a hurry. I caused a minor "bumper-buster" car accident in the parking lot at work, damaging a coworker's car. I was filled with guilt and remorse - I felt terrible! I believe that this occurred, at least in part, because I was rushed, not centered, and did not have God in mind.

On the positive side of the program, because I have learned that honesty and working the 9th step (making amends) are crucial to maintaining my recovery, I had the courage and honesty to go to her right away, and offer to cover the expenses of the accident. I am sure it will be an expensive lesson (most of mine are)! I know that in order to have peace and serenity, and in order to function at my best in carrying out God's will, I need to continue to strive to improve my daily use of OA literature, especially first thing in the morning, before I have gotten into any trouble.

-Anonymous

Service

SERVICE: "An act of assistance; help; aid." Applying this to the OA program of recovery, we are asked to

offer our assistance in carrying the OA message wherever we find an opportunity, to be of help to others along the road of recovery, and in the process be given aid so that we might overcome the illness of compulsive overeating and the accompanying dilemma the illness creates; all this and even more in the name of SERVICE.

All of us have something to contribute, no matter how big or small. Putting out the chairs, leading a meeting, being group treasurer, intergroup representative; the list of opportunities to be of service goes on and on. Service plays an important part in each of our recoveries.

So, step up to the plate and see what you can provide. You will gain so much from this simple act.

-Anonymous

The Honesty Tool

I am so grateful to be abstaining and to be in recovery, just for today. Since I made a fresh start in the program two years ago, rigorous honesty is a daily tool I use to stay healthy.

After my morning prayers, I call my sponsor, and the first statement I make is whether I have been abstinent the night before. To sleep all night without eating compulsively is a miracle and an affirmation that there is a Higher Power in my life. I could never stop on my own.

I have a problem knowing how much to eat, so I willingly measure, weight and write down my food every day. I prepare my meals in advance and make sure I have enough of the right foods on hand so that I don't set myself up for a binge. I also make at least two OA phone calls a day; I need live voices to connect with. I pray in the morning and evening, asking for abstinence and for help with getting through my life. I do not choose to run from my feelings today. Writing is a tool I use daily as well.

I was directed through Step Eleven to seek professional help when I began in OA, so I worked with a nutritionist to learn how to prepare balanced, healthy meals. I sought out (and still work with) a professional trainer who provides me with a fitness program. I have the freedom of being able to choose to work out

moderately. By taking all these actions daily, I have received God's gift of good physical recovery and have even become an athlete.

To stay out of denial, I weigh myself regularly. I pray while on the scale. There are OA members at my workplace, too, and we keep in close contact. I never knew how good life could be until I became honest about my food two years ago. I am humbled by knowing what I am capable of doing with food, and I am very grateful to have kept coming back. I have such freedom today; it all started with my rigorous honesty about my eating. -Lifeline, January 1997

Keep Coming Back

Keep Coming Back

Just for Today

Keep It Simple

Easy Does It

You're Not Alone Anymore

Bring the Body and the Mind Will Follow

Keep Coming back

The list of slogans goes on and on. But, these are more than just words. These are mantras, affirmations, things to cling to in desperate times. These are words to gain hope, strength, and courage from; things to say when things get kind of rough. We are all in this together. Each of us wants the absolute best for everyone else.

If you are abstinent, great, share with others. We need to hear that it is possible. It is possible to get abstinent and to stay abstinent. If you have yet to achieve this, or have lost it - don't beat yourself up. Just live right now, just this minute. You will get there. Don't give up. Keep coming back. Work those tools. We all suffer this disease of isolation. Come out - I know I love seeing everyone. See you at a meeting soon!!!
-Anonymous

Submit Your Writing To

Easy Does It! Oy! Get orff yer great duff an' send yer wee scribblins o' recovery to Lisa at lisa.grunden@wpsic.com or to the address on page one.