

Together We Can



A Publication of the Metro DC Overeaters Anonymous Intergroup August 2014

EARLY MORNING PEACE

Sitting with my coffee and pen
Thinking about my many friends.
Listening to a mellow radio show
My mind starts to go with the flow.

I read pages of inspiration
And ponder to see their application.
The words I read are very clear,
And these are the messages that I hear.

Building on faith shows the way to go,
Creating a solid base on which to grow.
Open my mind to new ways to see
And act myself into a new way to be.

Looking within becomes revealing
Of old patterns that yield to healing,
By working to become a channel of love
For God's unending help from above.

This one moment is my only focus of time
And thus leads me to find
Clarity and peace of mind.

Hannah G.

ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE JULY 13 DC METRO OA INTERGROUP MEETING

Newsletter: The deadline for contributions to the next newsletter is September 15. The next deadline after that will be November 15. Please send your newsletter contributions to Sealani (sealaniclb@gmail.com). [Deadlines are in odd-numbered months; we aim to print and distribute the newsletters at the Intergroup meetings of the even-numbered months. (editor added)]

Where & When Help for August: If anyone can be a back up to help get copies of the updated

Where & When printed and brought to the Intergroup meetings, please contact Linda S., corresponding secretary, for details.
lindas@capaccess.org/ 301-641-9508 cell.
Thank you.

Action for all: Urgent IG Budget Shortfall: Please ask all the meetings that you attend to send in their 7th tradition contributions. IG is running significantly behind on its budget. You can send your contributions to IG's PO Box (listed on up-to-date copies of the Where & When). [If you did not know earlier that DC Metro now has a post office box, now you do – and please make sure that your meetings' treasurers know too.]

Washington DC Area Intergroup
Overeaters Anonymous
PO Box 8121
Silver Spring, MD 20907-8121

Exciting News about the Answering Service – and A SERVICE OPPORTUNITY: IG is trying a new answering service. A live person will answer the phone and can provide the caller with information about meetings and about our website. That person can also refer people in crisis to volunteers willing to take crisis calls. So if you are willing to be “on call” to share your experience, strength, and hope, please e-mail IG chair Sabina G. for more information -- at chair@oa-dcmetro.org .

RUMINATIONS

When I was first working with my current sponsor, I wrote the following:

The chaos lives within. There are many disconnects inside me that hold me back from fully experiencing love, joy, and peace in my life.”

Staying in the food allowed me to push aside my feelings of inadequacy. My ego was very punishing, always letting me know that I wasn't good enough. And the reason I wasn't good enough was because I couldn't control my eating. It was like a merry-go-round that wouldn't stop and that I couldn't get off of. I'd eat to numb the feelings, and the eating was largely what caused the feelings.

So what were/are these disconnects:

The idea that eating will make it better;
that I'm unworthy;
that I have to do it all myself;
that if people really knew me they wouldn't
like/love me at all or anymore;
that my life has no meaning and is trivial and
unimportant.

There's a flip side to it, too. When I'm not in the food, all of my judgments about myself turn outward to others, and I become better than others. This is something I always need to guard against, and I do that by remembering that we're all connected—that we're all part of the Divine Flow.

The main character in a novel I read recently talks about the "everydayness" of life. He says that it's everywhere, and for him, everydayness is a terrible thing—sameness, boredom—and, as such, is something to be overcome.

There's another side to this, as well—the comfort of everydayness. Often we long for it when things in life are turbulent. I know I do. I look forward to my abstinent meals eaten at pretty much the same time every day. I look forward to my routines. The thing to remember is that there are almost always two sides to everything. Glass half empty; glass half full. What's your perspective today?

For me, freedom comes when I feel safe enough to break out of my routines and enter into a new adventure, and all of this is a gift of abstinence. I love the attributes that step 12 assigns to all the steps: 1. honesty 2. hope 3. faith 4. courage 5. integrity 6. willingness 7. humility 8. self-discipline 9. love 10. perseverance 11. spiritual awareness and, 12. service. These are pretty much the opposite of what most of us recognize as character defects. In other words, you have what we want to transform those defects into.

In a class I took 20 odd years ago, I learned that there are really only two things—fear and love. Fear is not knowing, and love is knowing. All of the defects stem from fear, and all of the wonderful attributes listed above are embodied in love.

Knowing this provides me with a sense of comfort, and yet, I still find it useful to the point of necessity to look at all the facets of fear—to be specific.

The disease of compulsive eating makes life far more complicated than it needs to be because fear makes life far more complicated, and examining my life through the vision of the 12 steps has made my life simpler and much richer.

My job, then, is to keep coming back and keep examining my life one day at a time.

Cheryl W-C

THE MESSAGE OF RECOVERY

I have been coming back to OA for 29 years to keep hearing the message of recovery and to carry the message of recovery to other compulsive eaters. This is my story and why I keep coming back.

In April 1985, I attended my first OA meeting on a Wednesday in the building where I worked. I was really nervous, but immediately the message was carried to me and I heard it and felt instantly like I was in the right place. This is what I heard.

- There were others like me.
 - That I wasn't crazy.
 - That I could continue to show up no matter what size my body was.
 - That status meant nothing in the rooms.
- We all had the same disease.

• There was nothing I needed to do at the beginning except to keep coming back.

• That others would love me, accept me and give me hugs, until I could love myself.

After my head started to clear, then I heard the message that there was a solution. And I kept coming back to find out what the solution was and how I could get it. I heard that:

- If I kept coming back I would get better.
- If I worked the steps and the tools I would get better.
- If I believed in a Higher Power, I would get better.
- If I got a sponsor, I would get better.
- If I found a food plan that worked for me, I would get better.
- And that I only had to work the program one day at a time.

Then as the years went on I needed to hear the messages over and over again in different ways so I would continue to recover. The more messages I heard, the more I wanted to hear, and the stronger my recovery became. These are the actions I took.

- I attended meetings regularly and went to more meetings when I felt my recovery slipping
- I attended workshops given by my intergroup.
- I went to retreats in different parts of the country.

- I went to the World Service Conventions where I heard the message from all over the world.
- I listen to phone meetings and podcasts.
- I started doing service at the meeting and intergroup level.

I needed to hear the messages that no matter how long I was in program, there were no guarantees that I would stay abstinent and sane unless I worked my program every day, one day at a time, even on weekends and vacations. And from the very beginning, even though I didn't know it at the time, I started carrying the message back to other compulsive eaters as a way of holding on to my cherished abstinence.

Peggy R.

YOU ARE WELCOME TO DO SERVICE

I was on the "12th Step Within Committee" at the Spring 2014 Business Assembly. I always get real excited and look forward to Overeaters Anonymous Assemblies and Conventions as I learn and network with other Region 7 representatives. If you are struggling with your abstinence, I would say that one of the best ways to get started is by going to one of these events as a rep in the spring or the fall. It inspired me!! You can begin the process of becoming a representative at these conferences by attending our Intergroup meetings on the second Sunday of each month, from 12:30 P.M -2 P.M. You don't have to be abstinent to attend these meetings. You can even just come and sit in on an IG meeting, participating at whatever level you are comfortable with. You can also volunteer to support Intergroup and not come to the IG meetings, by communicating with the Committee Chairs, The committees are: Events, Inreach, Literature, Newsletter, Outreach, Ways and Means, Website, and Where and When.

The best way to get in touch with the chairpeople is via the link on Metro DC internet site:

<http://www.oa-dcmetro.org/intergroup/> then to Intergroup - Contact a Committee Chair.

Bob G.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU, HB TO YOU, HAPPY BIRTHDAY DEAR OAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA.

"FREE your mind, FREE your body; FREE your body, FREE your mind!" Wasn't that a mantra from the 60's? And now we're claiming it as the go-to catchphrase for the 55th Annual Overeaters Anonymous Birthday party in the 10's!

"We've come a long way, baby!" since 1960 when our beloved found Rosanne S. started the first Overeaters Anonymous meeting in her living room. Come be part of the massive Birthday Party celebration January 23-25, 2015 in sunny, beautiful Los Angeles!

What a wonderful opportunity for us all to commune together at the actual birthplace of OA. Go to: <http://www.oalaig.org/> or google/bing: LA OA Birthday Party

FROM THE FRIDAY NIGHT WRITING MEETING

Step one: we used to think that "if we could just get to the perfect weight, life would be perfect." Yes! I would become perfectly successful at my job, I would be adored by those around me, those who snubbed me would reconsider, strangers would be kinder. I would be healthy, happy, successful, and gorgeous. My house would become clean, or at least the fact that it's messy would be forgivable compared to my more numerous virtues. Life would be so much easier.

In the process of physical recovery from my disease of compulsive eating, I have given 70lbs away to the universe. I am still far away from the "perfect weight", but even with my progress so far the old illusions I had about weight loss seem a bit comical. In truth, skin doesn't retain elasticity

forever. Not only do wrinkles not go away, they actually become more visible with weight loss. I am still adored by some and not by others. I do notice, however, an increased sense of kindness and respect from strangers and colleagues alike. More importantly, I feel so much lighter, healthier, and happier. My body has started to become capable of great feats. I have had unexpected changes as well – I feel more vulnerable to the elements. To stray eyes. I find that I'm oddly more aware of my size as I get smaller, especially when I'm at the gym.

Some of the most important changes I have experienced are actually the result of the spiritual aspects of the program. I'm more fully present, less resentful, and more capable of being close to those I love. I have become better at my career because I am less of a perfectionist and am more willing to ask for help. I am more tolerant of myself and others. I live the human experience more fully.

I am still a work in progress. I know that I can only ever experience a daily reprieve from my illness. Accepting that I am powerless over food is a step I need to remember to take every day. Accepting that I am powerless over LIFE is the ultimate challenge. The illusion of control kept me sick for decades and threatens to pull me back at times. The greatest gift I have ever given myself is joining OA. The greatest gift I can continue to give myself is to keep committing to the program one day at a time.

Sarah S.

OA AND LIGHT

In OA, God's healing power comes to us through a caring community of other compulsive overeaters. I am so grateful for coming in to program years ago and for program helping me experience life a new way. It has taken time for

me to get to where I am today and I am grateful that I have hope about how my relationship with my higher power will continue to grow and develop.

It is amazing how Higher Power places things in my life to help me learn and grow, heal and recover, experience and give love, and feel greater ease instead of dis-ease. I recently heard a quote that reminds me of how God's healing comes to me through my OA Fellows. It reminds me how much I need the help of community to experience the love and light of my HP and how this sunlight of the spirit can shine behind the clouds of storms and then create a rainbow. If I can only continue to learn to recognize and/or have faith that there is sunlight behind the clouds then my problems will be almost solved.

Thank God for bringing me to OA and thank God for the love, acceptance and support I experience daily through program. I will keep coming back for sure!

Katrina

4/28/14

WORLD SERVICE BUSINESS CONFERENCE

Report on Experiences at the spring 2014 World Service Business Conference

I appreciated this opportunity to participate in the 2014 WSBC for the kinds of projects we worked on and for the experience of being among other caring OA members giving service. I am reporting on some of the overall decision-making and on my own participation on the Conference Literature Committee (CLC).

New Strategic Plan: The first strategic plan of the OA Board of Trustees was for five years, 2008-2013, ending with the 2013 action plan called "The Year of Abstinence Awareness. In evaluating this period of strategic planning, the trustees decided that the time period was too long and the multiple goals too ambitious.

Consequently, the next strategic plan will be for three years, with the overall focus for 2014-2016 being Our Primary Purpose. ["Our primary purpose is to abstain from compulsive eating and to carry the message of recovery through the Twelve Steps of OA to those who still suffer."]

Each year will have a *theme related to our primary purpose*: for 2014, abstinence; for 2015, the steps; and for 2016, sponsorship. These themes suggest some good ideas for workshops that we can plan and schedule for the DC Metro area.

New literature and possibilities: Once the Conference Literature Committee has identified a need or responded to a proposal by preparing a new item and the Board of Trustees has approved it, then the delegates at a WSBC must also approve the new document before it can be published. This year delegates approved a new 3rd edition of "the brown book", *Overeaters Anonymous*. All the stories except one by Rosanne are new. The 2nd edition, with its stories, will be discontinued except for the remaining copies already in print (so you may want to buy a copy while they are still available).

Another *newly approved document* is a *Unity with Diversity Checklist*. Watch for announcements as to when each of these new pieces of literature will be ready for distribution.

Not passed this year, but *approved by the Board of Trustees for a CLC revision* and another try, is an annotated list called *The Promises of The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous*. While not meant to be an exhaustive list, the proposed pamphlet lists many of the possible benefits of working the program. A CLC subcommittee will review written critiques by

delegates and respond by preparing a revised document.

One new document that was not quite ready for sharing with the 2014 WSBC is a proposed detailed format for conducting a Twelve-Step Workshop over approximately 15 sessions. I am now a member of the CLC subcommittee charged with reviewing and finalizing this document. We are keeping in mind a timetable that will allow us to complete our review of the draft and any revisions before the fall 2014 Board of Trustees meeting at which the BOT would vote on its readiness. I hope that our DC Metro WSBC delegates and others will then have a chance to consider and vote on the workshop plan at the spring 2015 WSBC.

A past and future Intergroup role regarding the WSBC agenda: Proposals for business items for WSBCs can be submitted by December of the preceding year. These are then circulated in about February to every intergroup, which – if it's busy agenda allows – can have the opportunity to vote on whether each proposal is worth putting on the WSBC agenda. Some years DC Metro has had time to do this, some years not. Perhaps we can plan ahead now to provide that kind of input before the 2015 WSBC.

Linda S.

NEWSLETTER DEADLINES

The deadlines for the next few months are:
September 15 November 15 February 15,
or, if you process information better this way –
every other month starting in September 2014.

Thanks everyone, for your past, current, and future contributions to the newsletter.

Newsletter "staff"

WSBC FROM A PERSONAL PERSPECTIVE

For two months I have been attempting to write about my experiences at the 2014 World Service Business Conference. In wanting to write about my experience cogently, and with the idea in mind that it is my job to share about the positive experiences at this level of service, I have kept failing at this self-assigned task. The business conference for me was a very mixed bag, with my confidence and excitement waxing and waning as different activities were presented each day.

In reporting about the conference, I am taking a different tack that most past attendees – I am sharing what my experience was, rather than which workshops I attended. (The practical information is available at OA.org - "2014 Wrap-Up Report.")

This April was my first time going to the World Service Business Conference. I was assigned to the "12 Step Within Committee," was attracted to join the sub-committee, which eventually became known as "The Simplicity Project." Whatever committee one is assigned to work on during the conference, and within that, the sub-committee, the group follows through with a year-long project, the results of which are presented at the following year's WSBC.

I had been looking forward to this business assembly enthusiastically, and there certainly were times when that excitement stayed with me. When I stood up to argue "for" or "against" a motion, or when I asked a "point of information" question for myself and maybe, other newbies – those times helped me to understand the entire parliamentary process and representing not just myself, but Metro DC, as well.

Thank goodness, there were at least two regular OA meetings a day during the conference. There

I could focus on my purpose, my representing Metro DC, and most importantly, acceptance of whatever it was I was dealing with that was provoking resistance.

And I prayed continually, for acceptance.

It is not unusual for me to believe that people who have done more service in the program, or have come to more conferences, have a wisdom I don't possess yet. I made that mistake once again – in fact, several times, believing that someone else's way to go was smarter than my own. And once again, I learned that we are all sick people.

I remain perturbed at two specific interactions, and for those, I must pray to be released from the bondage of anger and resentment that they have elicited. I must look to myself to see what I have done to create the situation.

It always comforts me, when I get to acceptance of "what is," and from understanding what was driving my distress, I can then again deal with reality, and allow myself to be internally informed about making different choices about how I live my life.

I am left with questions that plague me when I am here, and were clearly questions for me in Albuquerque – How come the same people do service, over and over again? Why do people take on multiple roles? Will no one else "show up" if they don't volunteer? How long would we have to wait, minute-wise, for a new person to take on a role that someone else always volunteers for? Do the "usual" participants feel that no one else can do the job as well? Is there fear about doing service? Are people afraid of something? Am I doing too much? Why, when a service doesn't require abstinence, is it so very hard for different people to volunteer?

From the Tools of Recovery:
Service

"Carrying the message to the compulsive overeater who still suffers is the basic purpose of our Fellowship; therefore, it is the most fundamental form of service. Any form of service—no matter how small—that helps reach a fellow sufferer adds to the quality of our own recovery. Members who are new to OA can give service by getting to meetings, putting away chairs, putting out literature, talking to newcomers, and doing whatever needs to be done for the group. Members who meet the abstinence requirement can give service beyond the group level in such activities as intergroup representative, committee chair, region representative or Conference delegate. There are many ways to give back what we have so generously been given. We are encouraged to do what we can when we can. "A life of sane and happy usefulness" is what we are promised as the result of working the Twelve Steps. Service helps to fulfill that promise.

As OA's responsibility pledge states:
"Always to extend the hand and heart of OA to all who share my compulsion; for this, I am responsible."

(OA.org)

Having said all I have in this report, I would be honored to serve again as a representative of our area in a future World Service Business Conference.

Sealani

