

Together We Can



A Publication of the Metro D.C. Overeaters Anonymous Intergroup - December 2014

MY LIFE IS A PRECIOUS GEM

Last night, I finally went through some bags filled with papers I'd shoved away to go through "later". Two seasons have passed since they were relegated to the corner and most of those papers, then relevant, were tossed. However, at the bottom of one bag was a ring I had lost in the winter. I froze in disbelief. You see, this ring is special! I made it in the summer of 2005 when my daughter and I were in New York City—she in a high school fashion program, and I in a jewelry intensive workshop at the 92nd Street Y. For four full days, I hammered, soldered and cajoled the silver into a sculptural art form. I love this ring, not only for the effort expended in its creation, but for its simplistic beauty (in my opinion, of course) and vision of it becoming a family heirloom. But I'm a little ahead of myself here.

Actually, it all began last fall when I realized my precious ring was no longer on my finger. Upon this discovery, I headed straight for the trash room of our condo building, believing it had slipped off into our garbage, prior to sending it down the chute from our 5th floor condo. After rummaging through broken eggshells, splattered coffee grinds, raw chicken skin and lots of other purposely discarded stuff, I headed straight for the shower, sans handcrafted ring. Disappointed and heartbroken, I grieved.

I need to add an important detail here. When I found my ring in the bag "shoved away to go through 'later,'" it was actually the second time I'd lost it within three weeks. A few days after my rendezvous with the trash room, I found it sitting quietly at the bottom of my purse all along. It smiled up at me as its aquamarine gemstone glimmered in the light uncovering its hiding place. Immediately, I put my ring back on--I had missed it so much! Yes, it was still loose, but my excitement hushed the little voice inside me that whispered, "This isn't a good idea."

When I lost the ring again, shortly thereafter, I recognized my character defect of desiring instant gratification. The "I want it now" allowed for an opening for distorted and manipulated thinking: "Aw, what are the odds of it coming off again? It's just a tad loose." The "I want it now" is also a problem with my food, especially sweets. "Aw, just a bite of my husband's dessert is just a bite...right?" Because I'm a compulsive eater...WRONG!

Back to the story about my ring. After losing it a second time, there was nothing to be done--no trash room, nor a glimmer of a clue as to where it could be. I resigned myself to moving on with my beautiful ring as a memory, hoping it was somewhere at home, waiting to be uncovered, again. I had to let go and let God do his will, in his time, not mine. I had imposed my will and didn't listen to that whisper, which I believe was God: "This isn't a good idea."

As you know, I have just found my ring, again. And I believe God is sending me a message through these trials with my beautiful precious metal and gemstone ring.

You see, my life is also beautiful and precious. When I am willing and listening, whether to that voice inside or hearing God through others, things work out better. It's when I impose my will and upset the balance--yin yang or whatever you want to call it--that's when I get into trouble.

The program tells us to practice its principles in all our affairs. I practice, now, to let go (of my will) and let God, instead. Recently, an event challenged my new perspective on living. A power struggle between two friends evolved whereby I became an innocent and unknowing person in the middle. I found myself growing increasingly frustrated, a little angry and, definitely, not in balance. I held back though. I

I didn't try to fix the situation by imposing my will and seeking an immediate remedy to my jumble of emotions. This was hard, because I have a strong desire to make things right—right now—whether by trying to fix things or using food to numb those unsettling feelings. Now, my reaction is to listen to that whispering voice, or my sponsor or trusted friend to get a fresh perspective. It's okay to reach out and ask for help, or simply to pray quietly. So, with my two friends, I allowed things to play out and not impose my will. It happened, in God's time, that meaningful information (that had absolutely nothing to do with me) was revealed, thereby allowing for my homeostasis to be restored. And ultimately, reminding me that God's will, not mine, is best. My reaction of—no action—was completely appropriate. I'm so glad I didn't act on my impulse to have everything in (what I perceive to be) perfect order and balance, potentially resulting in the situation becoming exponentially more tangled.

As for my food, when I act on impulse to binge to reach that zone of complete disconnection with the world, upon returning to earth, my challenges are automatically exponentially more tangled. Not only must I still deal with—life—but also food fog that veils my clarity of mind, and places my self-worth in the trash can. God didn't create me to reside in a trash can!

Back, again, to my ring. It now has a new home on a slightly larger finger, staying put until I, intentionally, take it off. I recognize its roundness as a symbol. Its circular shape is continuous, similar to life's adventures and challenges. And I must continue to practice the program's principles in all my affairs, so I am equipped to LIVE my life, with all its challenges AND joy.

Farewell to food fog—its clear sailing from here. I'm living abstinently, day by day, choice by choice, in grateful clarity to God and program, building a strong foundation through daily

practice, and enjoying the beauty in my life, for it is truly precious.

Chana

LIKE A BABY

Watching my neighbor's baby grow and learn is a delight. For months she has been talking in "her own language"; then day by day she began to say "bye bye", and that was her only word. All of a sudden she seemed to learn a lot and now she says "hi", "key" and "puppy". For the first 9 months she sat or lay. Then she started crawling and scooting on her stomach. At times she lost her focus and rolled over. She began to walk on her hands and feet, followed by pulling up on the furniture and subsequently cruising around holding on. Sometimes she fell down, then got right up and continued on her course. All of a sudden, it seemed, she was walking.

It is so evident that this child's learning is incremental, day by day and step by step, building on what is already known. And so is my recovery from compulsive over eating.

For months I attended meetings, spoke about my experience, started a journal and called people to talk about my issues and concerns. Based on the responses and feedback from these individuals, in about 2 months I asked a member to be my sponsor. With my sponsor, I worked on food plans, scheduling meal times, and finding what foods I cannot eat safely without binging. I floated on a pink cloud of satisfaction.

My sponsor gave me an assignment to answer 70 questions from HOW. In order to do so, I had to read sections from the AA 12 Steps and 12 Traditions, the AA Big Book and the OA 12&12. Thus I was being introduced to the program concepts and background. Shortly after joining OA, I began to do some service. With my next sponsor, calling in my food became my focus. About a year later, I got another sponsor and I began to work on the steps with

the aid of the "12 Step Workbook." This is slow work and I am learning more about myself and my history as I perform it. In meetings and one on one, I am told that the step work will pay off over time. I must give it time.

Each step of my progress has built on what has been learned before. At times I slip back into old behavior and then pick myself up and continue where I had left off. Having a slip doesn't mean that I have totally lost the program; it is instead a challenge that will then mark a period of growth. I am grateful that I don't have to learn everything at once, which would surely overwhelm me. Instead, I go along like a baby does, learning a little bit at a time and experiencing growth along the way.

Hannah G.

MY DAILY SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

Today, I am so very grateful for the gift of abstinence that I've found in OA. I have heard those in OA say that if they start their day off with dedicated time for OA, that their day just goes more smoothly than if they don't. Over the years, that has also been my experience. I wasn't sure in the beginning what my "morning practice" would look like, but after hearing the ESH of others, I developed a format that works for me! While the list below looks long – I find that if I stay focused and invite my HP to join me, then I can get through this list in about 30 minutes. Do I do everything on this list every day? No, but I do what I can! For me, I am not sure which of the OA tools or footwork that I do will keep me abstinent today, so I just "keep on keeping on."

My Daily Spiritual Practice

1. Up
2. Say Serenity Prayer
3. Say Steps 1, 2, and 3
4. Coffee, take medication
5. Read "Upon Awakening"
6. Read the "Anti-Resentment" prayer
7. Read 3 daily mediations; write on one for 5 minutes

8. Review food plan
9. Review work calendar
10. Review, prioritize home chores
11. Review, prioritize OA chores
12. Meditate for 10 minutes (morning mediation)I pray to know God's will for me today and to do my best to carry that out
13. What is my plan to remain in contact with my HP today?
14. Which OA principle do I want to focus on today?
15. I will approach today with an attitude of _____?
16. I humbly ask my HP to remove my CD of _____?
17. Say 7th Step Prayer
18. Write out a gratitude list – what am I thankful for and why?
19. Which Step am I on? How will I work that step today?
20. Say 3rd Step Prayer
21. Say Prayer of St. Francis
22. Today I pray for the health and well-being of _____?
23. My personal prayer
24. Serenity Prayer

Anonymous

THE LONG HAUL

My analysis of my eating behavior started with a particular book proposing a particular style of eating back in the 1970's. I was hooked into the concept, and within two or three years of reading that book, I began going to a therapist who was part of a group of proponents of this eating method. When I left treatment, seven years later, I was no closer to transforming the way I fed myself than when I began. I started the OA program back in the eighties.

However, my abstinence began just a few years ago. When I finally got that this program wasn't about my eating, it was about my compulsivity - that was a big change for me. It could have been ANYTHING I was addicted to. The other aspect that has helped me stay abstinent for 5+ years, is

"it works if you work it." I have to use a lot of tools. Giving service is imperative to me; it keeps me connected. Writing is paramount - it tells me what is in my head and doesn't let crazy and/or lazy thinking infect my heart. Meditation - being silent and just listening; and prayer - often, right before I go to sleep – those are daily musts. My prayers are often like St. Francis'- I want to be the instrument of peace, of serenity, the offerer of solace, not the fire igniter who disturbs the quietude.

Tools - who on earth is comfortable calling all sorts of people? Especially these days, when it's easier to text and not have to deal with hearing the emotional sound in someone's voice? And who wants to plan long-term, yet live in the moment - the Action Plan ? I have a rough framework in my head on getting to a "normal" weight and how I will achieve it.

My eating plan is simple and it's gentle. I know that beat up doesn't work, because I did that most of my life. I took my cue from my relatives - the adults - who continually communicated to me that I was "too much" - and in their frustration at their limitations in being able to care for me, threw all sorts of names and attributive adjectives at me. I internalized the names, the negative qualities, and spent much of my life blaming myself for situations, (many in which I was actually powerless.)

In my thirties, after a series of losses, and subsequent clinical depression, I started with a new therapist. Robin, after a short period of sessions, asked if I had ever been to an OA meeting, and my "long-haul" with Overeaters Anonymous began.

In my early thirties, Robin also provided a time when I brought my parents to a therapy session. Within fifteen minutes of the four of us convening - mother, father, therapist and myself - I was crying and apologizing. I once again felt wrong about everything, and emotionally devastated.

Some six months later in session, I made a remark about my mother. From the matter of fact way that my therapist expressed herself, the ease with which the phrase, "Your parents are crazy," slipped off her tongue, I knew I was somewhere safe, and that maybe I wouldn't continue the uncraziness journey in the same way.

OA gives me instructions for living, and therapists' give me help in making this life my best life. That is how I have striven to live since September 1988, when I stepped into my first OA room.

Sealani

A REFLECTION

As I reflect on my opportunity to attend the R7 Fall Assembly last weekend, there were so many memorable moments that I carry with me that inspire me to be of service to our fellowship and my Intergroup and that support my own personal recovery practice. These include: Having the opportunity to spend time with so many people with long term recovery and abstinence and learning from them how they make their programs the centerpiece of their lives; sharing the excitement of new "green dot representatives" at their first Assembly meeting; being inspired by (and grateful to) those who seek to represent our Region by serving on its board; a focused exercise to work all of OA's steps on a problem – as part of a fellowship activity (and with very productive results!); and an opportunity to participate in the Outreach Committee's effort to share experience, strength, hope and fun in Outreach. Love and a passion for service and a commitment to OA filled the room and made me very grateful to have had the support of the R7 board and the Intergroup Renewal Committee to be able to attend.

What I take back to my Intergroup is a very humbling and important change in my perspective – that as I type this, I hope will benefit both my Intergroup and others. I have served on my Intergroup for several years and when someone approached me and asked me...what do

I like about being at our Intergroup? My "go to response" had been: "Intergroup is a great opportunity to work on my character defects." While I did mean that in what I thought - at the time - was a positive sense (it *is* a business meeting after all), attending this most recent R7 Assembly made me realize that our Intergroup – like the R7 Assembly, is both an honor and a privilege as it gives us time to live with, and in, the principles of the 12 steps and 12 traditions of OA. For me, the principles that became a focus for me during the Assembly include: Fellowship, Service, Responsibility, Integrity, Humility and Love. I realized that the strength of the members of our local Intergroup is their dedication to serving the fellowship – which is of greatest importance. As I looked within and thought about the messages I had been sending to others, I realized "my part in it," and came away with a new sense of pride in that I don't just "go" to intergroup, I "*get to go*" to intergroup. I am thankful to the R7 Intergroup Renewal Committee for the opportunity to participate in this most recent Fall Assembly. In a sense, I feel that I experienced my own Intergroup renewal – truly a blessing beyond measure.

Linda L.

The following was written in response to request for ideas regarding this newsletter and making it YOUR own.

TOPICS FOR FUTURE NEWSLETTERS

1. Do a series of newsletters on the tools of program, i.e.: Using the Telephone, Food Plans, Sponsorship; Service,
2. Ask for themed contributions on all the tools now to provide material
3. Do the newsletter for each tool once you have enough material to fill a newsletter.
4. You can send a written or email request with your email info to all local meetings asking for contributions on the tool (Especially from HOWsters, who have to study them so thoroughly.)

5. Get someone or two to write a brief history of OA locally, Focus on the benefits of Service
6. Series of newsletters on the Steps, Traditions, Concepts one at a time - can correspond to month of newsletter or each newsletter can be on the 3-part legacy of the month
7. Ask Region for a communication to local meetings from them
8. Ask people to write about 'miracles received'
9. Make a list of old Lifeline topics and use those or get permission to reprint some of the shorter stuff from that
10. Write about everything available from oa.org online, which is a lot!
11. How to take your program with you when you travel
12. Ask participants of retreats/idea days, etc., to write about their experience; also ask those organizing the events
13. Ask for people's stories of how they first found OA
14. Ask for sponsorship experiences, i.e., my first sponsee, first sponsor
15. start a mini-meeting get together for people who want to work on the newsletter so you don't feel all alone with it;
16. Create a "Newsletter Workshop" - get newsletters from other areas to get ideas
17. Start an online group to discuss ideas - talk to previous editors about this as has been done it in past
18. Do a newsletter on local OA resources people may not be aware of such as using the Where and When as a guide when you need to make outreach calls, meetings with specific slants, men's meetings, glbt meetings, meetings with reading focus; with writing focus, etc.
19. Solicit "why I slipped and why I came back" stories

Anonymous

FROM NOVEMBER INTERGROUP

New address for 7th tradition contributions

Some groups have been sending checks to the old addresses!

Here's the latest address to share with your group's treasurer:

Washington DC Area Intergroup OA
PO Box 8121
Silver Spring, MD 20907

Opportunities for Service

Carry the message! Two IG positions are open.

- *Inreach Committee* is looking for a new chair!
- *Literature Coordinator*. The IG needs a literature coordinator.

If you're interested in either of these positions, or just want to learn more, come to the IG meeting on December 14 at Holy Cross Hospital at 12:30 PM.

12th step within

The 12th day of each is the perfect day for your 12th step within work. Call someone you haven't seen in the rooms for a while. Invite them to a meeting. Who will you call on 1/12? For more great ideas on 12th step within, see <http://www.oa.org/membersgroups/twelfth-step-within/>.

Share your writing! Our **newsletter** editor is always looking for contributions. Send your writing to Sealani at sealaniclb@gmail.com. The deadline for the next issue is January 15.

Try out a new meeting Tuesday Night West Side Big Book Step Study at the West Side Club in Georgetown. 1341 Wisconsin Avenue Northwest. 7:30-8:30.

Give a call back! Help the still suffering compulsive overeater without even leaving your home! The DC Metro Intergroup is seeking several members in the fellowship to give service

to OA by calling back those seeking information about OA through Intergroup's answering service. For more information, please contact Linda L. at elsiel42@yahoo.com.

Go to World Service! Attend the World Service Business Conference! Intergroup is looking for a delegate to attend OA's World Service Business Conference in Albuquerque, NM, April 27 – May 2, 2015. Expenses are paid; attend IG to learn more and see <http://www.oa.org/world-service-events/world-service-business-conference/> for details. Requirements: 1 year of abstinence and attend IG 3 times leading up to the convention.

TECHNOLOGY SOLUTIONS

The mission of the Web and Technology Committee is to assess technology and advise the OA Fellowship how to use the technology to carry the message in accordance with the 12 Steps & 12 Traditions of OA. The Committee serves as the hub for the exchange of technology information within OA.

The OA Web and Technology committee is made up of OA members from around the world. Some of us are tech savvy and others aren't. What we share is a passion and commitment to share the message of OA to those who suffer and we believe that technology and the Internet can allow us spread the OA message farther and faster.

The World Service Business Conference Web/Tech committee has developed a website which offers some possible technology solutions. We do not endorse any one option over another; rather we share suggestions which have worked for other OA members and service bodies. Check it out! <http://oawebtech.weebly.com/index.html>

For technical support and general web-fellowship (other OA webmasters), consider joining the Webmasters Yahoo group. To subscribe to that list, send mail to oawebmasters-subscribe@yahogroups.com.

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And everytime I erase this, the whole thing changes.

AND MORE

This is a great time of year to assess whether you

