

# Together We CAN

A Publication of the DC Metro Intergroup of Overeaters Anonymous

March/April 2008



www.oa-dcmetro.org



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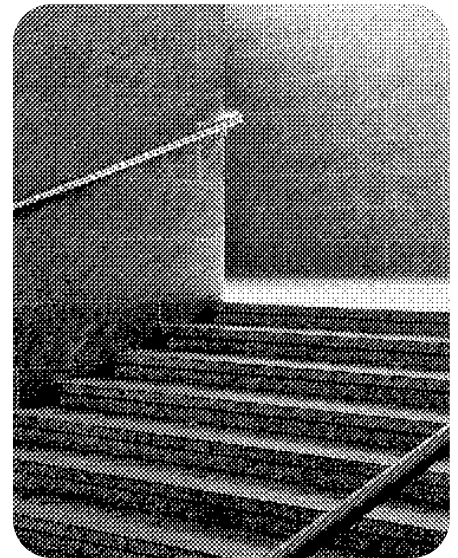
## ABSTINENCE ACTION—STEP ONE

I'm grateful for the fact that I came into program desperate enough to do anything anyone told me. I went home after my first meeting, and of course finished the binge foods I had in the house. But I also made the call I'd agreed to make to the woman who became my first sponsor. During that call, I made an eating plan for the following day, and miracle of miracles, I followed it. My sponsor gave me questions to answer; questions that got me to look at my eating, obesity, and history of relating to the world and to people around me. She had me read the literature and think about various concepts, such as what insanity and powerlessness mean.

I'm very grateful that my sponsor had me working on Step One from the first call, rather than letting me find stability with food first. I needed to realize from the start that abstinence (freedom from food) comes from action; it is a respite earned daily rather than being guaranteed. Working Step One highlighted the importance of following my eating plan — the tool and the Step dovetailed. Planned eating and planned program work also made my days feel structured. All of a sudden I was free from aimlessness, boredom and uncertainty.

Step One made me look at the full ramifications of my problem; not just what I was eating, but how I fit my life around food and how my life consisted mostly of hiding and avoiding. I came into OA knowing I used food to cope, but Step One helped me see the futility and destructiveness of this. Realizing that I was slowly committing suicide was one of the first honest moments in my life. Understanding that I could have my binge foods or a hopeful life, but not both, was one of the most positive.

When I think of how my life changed in my early days of program, I feel gratitude, awe and wonder. The first word of Step One is



"we," which for a lifelong isolator is a huge lifestyle change. Having a sponsor and a community of people who do what I do with food is a priceless gift. I've been in OA almost 20 months and have lost nearly 60 kilograms (132 lbs.). Far better than this, though, is feeling that I now have a place in the world. I have found my tribe. I have come home.—  
KATE H., VICTORIA, AUSTRALIA

### Upcoming Events

**Love and Fellowship Event,  
Saturday, March 15, 2008  
Silver Spring, MD. See more  
info on back...**

**Spring Big Book Study Series  
Noon - 3:30pm, 15 March | 19  
April | 17 May, Annandale, VA**

**Virginia Beach Retreat  
Friday, March 28th, 2008–  
Sunday, March 30th, 2008  
Quality Inn & Suites  
Oceanfront  
Virginia Beach, VA**

**Mini-Marathon  
Saturday, April 5  
Rising Sun, MD  
contact Kris: 866.641.6511**

**8th Annual Wellspring Retreat,  
June 20-22, 2008  
Germantown, MD**

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**STEP ONE MADE ME LOOK at the full ramifications of my problem... how I fit my life around food ...my life consisted mostly of hiding and avoiding. Step One helped me see the futility and destructiveness of using food to cope. Realizing that I was slowly committing suicide was one of the first honest moments in my life. Understanding that I could have my binge foods or a hopeful life, but not both, was one of the most positive.**

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# RELAPSE & RECOVERY: THE FIRST 3 STEPS

**A**fter a relapse, I recently went back to the first three steps. The spiritual principle behind the first step is honesty, and I realized that dishonesty and keeping secrets were a big contributor to my relapse. Mostly, I was lying to myself. I told myself that adding a dash of something I don't normally eat or an extra bite of something or an extra serving of something else was okay. I told myself it was okay to pour over cookbooks (my sponsor calls them porn for overeaters!), buy and cook things that don't belong to me for my houseguests—and sample them, and cut my meeting attendance nearly in half. Those things, over a several month period, eventually led me to a sugar binge. I was right back to where I had left off last time, and worse. I am so grateful for all of the members of the program who called me or talked with me at meetings and told me that they wouldn't let the disease take me back.

## STEP 12

We take electricity for granted. We know the sun will rise every day. There are things we expect will always be there.

So it is with meetings. If I walk into a meeting 5 minutes late, I know it will have already started. People will be reading from the journal. The literature will be displayed. A leader will be there to lead and speak. This does not happen because some well paid secretary sets everything up and hires the speaker leader. No. These things are all voluntary; and if any one of these links in the chain of service is broken there will be no meetings, and eventually no OA. So it is important for me to remember that even though my services may be small, they contribute to keeping OA alive and growing.

I wrote a step one inventory that focused on all of the food behaviors and extra food I had been keeping secret, and shared it with my sponsor. I became will-

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**(THE THIRD STEP PRAYER)  
IS A PRAYER TO ASK God to  
make me the person who  
finds doing God's will to be a  
joyful, peaceful, wonderful and  
amazing thing, rather than  
something to be feared.**

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ing to give up those things, and called on other OA members and my Higher Power for lots of help and support to give them up one day at a time. My sponsor asked me to read the first 164 pages of the Big Book (Alcoholics Anonymous) and then she sat down with me and asked me a series of questions from the book to lead me through the first three steps. I had no problem accepting that I am not a normal eater, will never be a normal eater. I accept my disease is fatal and progressive, and I am powerless over it. These are facts of my life that will never change.

I also believe most of the time, and certainly am always willing to believe, that my Higher Power can and will restore me to sanity.

I got a little hung up on step three. I had this fear of having to turn over my life and will perfectly to my Higher Power all the time. I could feel my own will and my self-

ish desires rear up in protest over that idea. I felt sunk. I knew I was powerless, I knew my only hope has to come from a Higher Power, but I wasn't sure I could really turn my will over. I was afraid that I would be dishonest to take this step by saying the third step prayer out loud with my sponsor. But she invited me to take a closer look at the prayer and think about what it really says: "God, I offer myself to Thee—to build with me and to do with me as Thou wilt. Relieve me of the bondage of self, that I may better do Thy will. Take away my difficulties, that victory over them may bear witness to those I would help of Thy Power, Thy Love, and Thy Way of life. May I do Thy will always!"

My eyes were opened that this prayer is not a solemn oath to God to do His will forever. It is a prayer to ask God to help me be freed of the bondage of my own will and selfishness and for freedom from my disease, so that I may be open to God's will and to help others. It is a prayer to ask God to make me the person who finds doing God's will to be a joyful, peaceful, wonderful and amazing thing, rather than something to be feared.

I also saw that the words of the third step says "Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him." This step is about making a decision, not about turning my will over. I can act on my decision by continuing to work steps 4-12. And now that I have taken the first three steps I know that I do not have to do this alone. My Higher Power will guide me through all of this and will do most of the work. I just have to be willing to take some actions and do some footwork each day. —LEAH

## LOVE AND FELLOWSHIP EVENT—SATURDAY, MARCH 15

Please bring your own dinner and join us for an evening of fellowship, recovery, and crafts. Bring your dinner anytime from 5-7pm. Recovery meeting starts at 7pm. Crafts start at 8pm. We will gather at Leah's house: 10229 Douglas Avenue, Silver Spring, MD 20902. Questions? Call Leah at 301-593-7159 (h) or 410-991-3221 (c).

Share your story with *Together We Can*, your Intergroup publication. The May edition will focus on *your story of recovery*. Send your article to [newsletter@oadcmetro.org](mailto:newsletter@oadcmetro.org) by May 4, 2008.