

OA DC INTERGROUP NEWSLETTER

November 2009

PLEASE SEND ARTICLE SUBMISSIONS TO: newsletter@oa-dcmetro.org

Don't Just Sit There, ACT!! - Amy

I've heard said at meetings that "Don't be surprised if your family presses your buttons, after all, they installed them!" Often times that comment will be followed with laughter, but in all seriousness, when it comes to the holidays and family, staying abstinent is no laughing matter. For me, it's life or death. Prior to Program, I was a passive participant in my life, left to the whims of a destructive disease that controlled every waking moment of my life. The Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) sums up the way I lived on page 24... "The fact is that most alcoholics, for reasons yet obscure, have lost the power of choice in drink. Our so-called will power becomes practically nonexistent. We are unable, at certain times, to bring into our consciousness with sufficient force the memory of the suffering and humiliation of even a week or a month ago. *We are without defense against the first drink.*" Just swap in the word food for alcohol and you had perfect description of the hell compulsive eating put me through.

Now, thanks to the Program of Overeaters Anonymous, I have a Higher Power, whom I choose to call God, and the tools of recovery (a food plan, the Twelve Steps, meetings, sponsorship, phone calls, literature & writing, service and anonymity) to take back control of my life and learn how to deal with my disease, one day at a time, and stay in recovery.

So, to stay abstinent over the holidays, I have learned a simple way to remember to ACT on the tools of recovery.

A- Assume nothing. Plan for everything. For example, if I am going to my parent's house for Thanksgiving dinner or Christmas dinner, I am not going to assume that they understand my disease or my food plan. I call ahead ask exactly what is being served and offer to bring whatever I need and enough to share with others. I'm known in my family as the "salad girl" as it seems that in my family no one is concerned with vegetables during Thanksgiving!

C- Commit to your food plan and to your recovery before you go. I commit exactly what and how much food I am going to have with my sponsor, and if necessary, I bookend the meal. What that means is that I ask, ahead of time, a fellow friend in recovery to be available for a call after I have finished my abstinent meal. I have found it especially helpful to excuse myself from the table and make a quick call while everyone else is having dessert.

T- Take your Higher Power with you when you go. It says in the AA 12&12 on page 40, "Our whole trouble had been the misuse of willpower. We had tried to bombard our problems with it instead of attempting to bring it into agreement with God's intention for us." I truly believe that God's will for me today is to be abstinent and to be of service to others and that He will give me the power of choice to do so. So, before each holiday function I go to, I pray, asking for abstinence and think about how I can be of service to others. For example, at a work party, looking for the people who look stressed or lonely and striking up a conversation with them. Or a complimenting co-workers on how pretty they look; simple things that take the focus off me and the food and on to others.

By the Grace of God and the Program of Overeaters Anonymous, I have been abstinent for 21 years and trust me if I can do it, so can you. We all know the holidays can be stressful, but I truly believe that if I ACT accordingly and practice the Big Book's code of "love and tolerance of others" (page 84), then I will make it through ok.

Continued on last page....

A HUGE THANK YOU TO EVERYONE WHO WROTE AN ARTILCE – PLEASE KEEP SUBMITTING

Recipe for an ABSITANT Holiday Season - Robyn	
<p align="center">Recipe For <u>Honesty</u> (Step 1)</p> <p>God, Creative Intelligence, Universal Mind, Spirit of Nature or Spirit of the Universe, I'm a real compulsive overeater ... and I need your help today. (pg.. 10-2, 46, & Chp. 3 BB)</p>	<p align="center">Recipe For <u>Humility</u> (Step 7)</p> <p>My Creator, I am now willing that you should have all of me, good and bad. I pray that you now remove from me every single defect of character which stands in the way of my usefulness to you and my fellows. Grant me strength, as I go out from here, to do your bidding." (p. 76 BB)</p>
<p align="center">Recipe For <u>Hope</u> (Step 2)</p> <p>God, I'm standing at the turning point right now. Give me your protection and care as I abandon myself to you and give up my old ways and my old ideas just for today. (p. 59 BB)</p>	<p align="center">Recipe For <u>Love</u> (Step 8)</p> <p>"We attempt to sweep away the debris which has accumulated out of our effort to live on self-will and run the show ourselves. If we haven't the will to do this, we ask until it comes." (p. 76 BB)</p> <p>God help me to become willing to sweep away the debris of self will and self reliant living. Thy will be done for this person as well as for me.</p>
<p align="center">Recipe For <u>Faith</u> (Step 3)</p> <p>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! (p. 63 BB)</p>	<p align="center">Recipe For <u>Self Discipline</u> (Step 9)</p> <p>God give me the strength and direction to do the right thing no matter what the consequences may be. Help me to consider others and not harm them in any way. Help me to consult with others before I take any actions that would cause me to be sorry. Help me to not repeat such behaviors. Show me the way of Patience, Tolerance, Kindliness, and Love and help me live the spiritual life. (p. 78-80 BB)</p>
<p align="center">Recipe For <u>Courage</u> (Step 4)</p> <p>"I was to sit quietly when in doubt, asking only for direction and strength to meet my problems as He would have me. Never was I to pray for myself, except as my requests bore on my usefulness to others WHEN I AM DISTURBED BY THE CONDUCT OF OTHERS "This is a sick man. How can I be helpful to him? God save me from being angry. Thy will be done." (p. 67 BB) God help me to show this person the same tolerance, pity and patience that I would Cheerfully grant a sick friend. This is a sick person, how can I be helpful to him? God save me from being angry. Thy will be done. (see above and p. 141 of 12&12) WHEN I AM AFRAID "We ask Him to remove our fear and direct our attention to what He would have us be." (p. 68 BB)</p>	<p align="center">Recipe For <u>Perseverance</u> (Step 10)</p> <p>God remove the selfishness, dishonesty, resentment and fear that has cropped up in my life right now. Help me to discuss this with someone immediately and make amends quickly if I have harmed anyone. Help me to cease fight anything and anyone. Show me where I may be helpful to someone else. Help me react sanely. How can I best serve You - Your will, not mine be done. (p. 84-5 BB)</p>
<p align="center">Recipe For <u>Integrity</u> (Step 5)</p> <p>God I thank you from the bottom of my heart that I know you better. Help me become aware of anything I have omitted discussing with another person. Help me to do what is necessary to walk a free person at last. (p. 75 BB)</p>	<p align="center">Recipe For <u>Spiritual Awareness</u> (Step 11)</p> <p>"As we go through the day we pause, when agitated or doubtful, and ask for the right thought or action. We constantly remind ourselves we are no longer running the show, humbly saying to ourselves many times each day 'Thy will be done.' " (p. 87-8 BB)</p>
<p align="center">Recipe For <u>Willingness</u> (Step 6)</p> <p>God help me become willing to let go of all the things to which I still cling. Help me to be ready to let You remove all of these defects, that Your will and purpose may take their place. (p. 76 BB)</p>	<p align="center">Recipe For <u>Service</u> (Step 12)</p> <p>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 upon 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.</p>

Sometimes We Say What We Need to Hear Ourselves – Stacie H.

I had an epiphany last holiday season, and it happened in the unlikeliest of places – the dreaded Christmas Party. Being brand spanking new to program, I knew that it was going to be a vulnerable time. Still, I was at a funny period in my recovery: I had lost a bit of weight, was regaining sanity, starting to love life again . . . and resenting all the work I had to do in the program that had gotten me to that point! I threw quite a few temper tantrums at various meetings; I'm ashamed to say. Yes, I was plowing along, weighing and measuring and begrudgingly using the tools, but I was whining like a petulant child about it.

So fast-forward to the Christmas Party thrown by a friend of mine. The woman is a baker and pretty much a goddess in the kitchen. She annually makes a special confection that a year later I can still taste. Needless to say, I knew there wasn't going to be a morsel of abstinent food there. Armed with the knowledge that had been beaten into my brain in the five hundred OA meetings I had gone to that month, I ate my dinner before I went, and brought an abstinent snack. When I arrived, it was a relief to not even have to look at the food. I knew it was there, but I wasn't hungry so it didn't concern me. My friend knew my food restrictions, so when I asked if she would be offended that I was eating my own, she didn't bat an eyelash when she said it was fine.

But the real breakthrough came later. Having thoroughly enjoyed the party and the people (instead of thinking what I could stuff, sneak, steal, and scarf), I didn't mind staying later than I had planned, and found some quality time to talk to my friend. She mentioned how proud she was of me and glad to see me happy. "Still," she asked, "do you ever feel restricted, or like it's too much work?" YES!!! I had been bellyaching about it for weeks! But what came out of my mouth was very different. "I can't say I love it all the time. It's been really hard. However, I'm happier now than I have ever been in my entire life. EVERYTHING is better than it was, even three months ago, and I know I owe that to the program. So if it means that I can't have a cocktail, or a dessert, then that's the tradeoff I'm going to have to make." And as it was coming out of my mouth, I realized it was the God's-honest truth.

I have to keep coming back, because this sanity, this happiness, this serenity is so precious. And I simply can't have it without OA. Last year's holidays morphed from battling food demons to enjoying the company of my loved ones. How much luckier can those of us in program get, knowing we have that option?

Happy holidays, I'm doing it with you! ☺

A HUGE THANK YOU TO EVERYONE WHO WROTE AN ARTILCE – PLEASE KEEP SUBMITTING

Surviving Thanksgiving – Jenny C.

I remember my first Thanksgiving in OA. I drove to my mother's house with my food packed and ready. With almost two months of abstinence "under my belt" I was nervous about the occasion - all the food and people asking questions. Was my program strong enough? I was scared (and I think that is a good thing.)

When I arrived home, Mom was busy hanging out with my younger sister's friends - males. This had been an issue for me at that age - Mom being a buddy and not a Mom - so buttons were getting pushed all over.

I called my sponsor who reminded me that there was a 12 hour marathon meeting on Thanksgiving Day in Va. and I could spend the day with people who loved me. I did the unpopular thing - I came back and went to that marathon the next day. It was a wonderful, safe, abstinent day. I met new people and heard lots of recovery and had my first abstinent Thanksgiving -what a gift!!

The next hurdle would be Christmas. Another time when Mom would bake (boy could she bake!!!) and bake. Again, I went home with my food all packed and ready. This time I had checked out meetings in that area and

<p>Surviving Thanksgiving – Jenny C. (cont)</p> <p>Although Christmas Eve was a big celebration with my stepfather's family, I went to the meeting. Again, not the popular choice. But I was too scared not to go. I wanted to be willing to go to any lengths. Thankfully, others were at that meeting that night and I enjoyed my first abstinent Christmas.</p>	<p>found one on Christmas Eve. Do you know there are actually other people at these holiday gatherings?! And interesting people too. Amazing. I had been so stuck in the food - how to get it, how to not get caught, how much did I weigh now?, what did people think of me - that I wasn't able to enjoy the actual day and people.</p> <p>I am so very grateful to have celebrated lots of abstinent holidays with you and with my family now and I pray to celebrate lots more.</p>
---	---

<p align="center">How to Say “No” Over the Holidays - Amy</p>	
<p>When your Mother-in-law approaches you with a dessert in her hand and says “here sweetie, try some of this. It’s fat free,” what do you say? The pressure is on and you need to think of something quick! You know if you say “no thank you” she’ll just say “why not? oh just try one bite.” But what will work?</p> <p>I have learned from my Sponsor that I must always have a plan or plan to fail, so here are a few quick responses I have ready and waiting...</p> <p>“No thank you. I’m borderline hypoglycemic.” And quickly change the subject. “Wow, that is a fabulous dress you are wearing, where did you get it?”</p> <p>“No thanks. I’m full right now.” And quickly change the subject. “Hey is that Jim and Sue over there? Excuse me a sec, I need to chat with Sue about that project meeting last week.”</p>	<p>“Sorry, but I’m allergic to sugar.” And if the person wants ask more questions, just quickly respond by saying, “I’m not sure about all that, but it’s been that way for a long time and it’s not a big deal anymore. Oh, speaking of big deals, that presentation you did last week was fantastic. Where did you get the idea in the first place?”</p> <p>I have found that keeping it short, simple and using the distraction method works really well. Everyone loves to talk about themselves so if I distract them with a compliment or something that gets them thinking about something else, then I’m off the hook. My family, friends and/or co-workers will never understand my disease and I don’t need to explain it to them. DO NOT, I repeat DO NOT get stuck answering a bunch of questions. Just have your response ready and change the subject as quickly as possible. The bottom line is that if I don’t make a big deal out of it, neither will they.</p> <p>Good luck and remember, we are not alone, together we can do what we could never do alone. Your Higher Power goes with you to what ever function you go to and will help you get through it all.</p>

<p>Don’t Just Sit There, ACT!! – Amy – (cont)</p> <p>And when all else fails, I do what the AA 12&12 says to do on page 41, “In all times of emotional disturbance or indecision, we can pause, ask for quiet (which for me is often in a bathroom with a piece of OA literature in my hand!), and in the stillness simply</p>	<p>say: God Grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference. Thy will, not mine, be done.”</p> <p>Wishing y’all a blessed, abstinent holidays. Amy from Derwood, MD</p>
---	---

A HUGE THANK YOU TO EVERYONE WHO WROTE AN ARTILCE – PLEASE KEEP SUBMITTING