

THE
OA
A

Stepping Stone

The Newsletter of the Baltimore Area Intergroup of Overeaters Anonymous Volume 34, No. 4

September 2009

LENSES OF GRATITUDE

I look through the lenses. The world is bleak and full of negativity. I focus on the wrongs of the past. My heart is full of resentments. I focus on the future, and I am full of fear of the unknown. My present is consumed with the past and the future and not with my actual reality.

I came to OA. The program wrote me a prescription for new glasses with 12 step lenses.



I look through the lenses. I see today. I see love, kindness, gratitude, peace and serenity. There are problems big and small, yet with these lenses on I know things will be okay. I appreciate the day for what it gives me and refuse to get caught up in the obsessions with the past and the future. The future is full of hope, and I face it with faith. Faith in a power greater than myself that can and will restore me to sanity as long as I keep these glasses on.

Aviva B.

IT IS FRIENDSHIP AND LOVE

When I came into OA, I felt bad and unworthy of pleasure or ease. I forced pleasure on myself, raced after it -- in multiple and conflicting directions (binge eating, while obsessing about having a sexy body, for example). I voraciously craved satisfaction, and not getting it, fled my own self in desperation.

I have a very strong deep memory of getting something that I had craved and sought and obsessed over, and not achieving any satisfaction. I had been told that freedom was to be found in surrender, and that satisfaction in giving it away. I couldn't take that in to a place that understood. Fortunately, humiliation and terror kept bringing me back into the rooms.

I prayed, I wrote, I did service, I went to retreats, I fell flat on my face, and out of self hate, purposefully hurt myself worse. It could only have been prayers that got me back up

again.

The veil of self hate and desperate desire was very powerful. But, I could only lie to myself so far, because there were moments when I had the grace to not put the next bag, box of stuff in my mouth, but I did it anyway, to punish me, and to keep me in familiar territory. I can't afford to regret those fatalistic decisions to hurt myself, because it is too late to change them. In fact, regretting them only feeds the lie that I can change reality.

Thank you G-d that I kept coming back, and that I remained alive on this planet, to learn what You have given to me to know, that satisfaction absolutely is here, tangible, real, now, complete. How many times did I hear that real unfathomable truth that satisfaction can only be received with open hands? When I finally do give it up: my schedule, desires, attachments, pride... (no small thing), and be still, and say "It is yours, not mine," this truth rises inside of me a radiant sunrise of pleasure, joy, and absolute and total satisfaction. The discipline of the steps, service, spiritual practices, becomes sweet and rich with enthusiasm. This is the way of friendship and love with myself and the Higher Power That can not be understood, but can be opened to and received in totality.



Scenario: I'm a preschool teacher for seven to ten four-year olds and I'm monitoring them play in the morning.

Alex and Ira start fighting. Ira tells her "no you can't come in my home" and Alex starts hitting him.

Conversation A, week one: I come in and pull them apart and tell Ira that Alex can play in the house and I tell Alex that she can not hit or she'll sit in a chair.

In this one way conversation, I had this pit in my stomach where I didn't feel right. I was fixing the problem through my force, and they weren't learning how to positively handle conflicts themselves. I heard G-d's intuitive voice in me telling me something is off balance. I went

home, and I prayed for G-d to put the right thoughts and words into my mouth. Scenarios like this pop up several times a day for several more weeks.

G-d also speaks through other people and things. I sought help and found it in a book on parenting, which told me to flip the situation into a positive and use positive reinforcement.

Conversation B, week two: I come in and pull their fighting apart again. I tell Ira, "you say 'I like you and I want to be nice to you'". He repeats. I tell Alex to do the same thing. She repeats. The tension and anger dissipates. I tell Ira, "say 'come into my home Alex! I want you to be here.'" He repeats it. I say, "Wow Ira and Alex, I'm so proud of you. You are being very kind to each other. You two are such good friends. You should feel proud of yourselves." They start playing together.

This time, I immediately felt relief. I giving the children tools to treat each other with kindness and patience. That was definitely G-d's voice speaking through me. I did not plan on what to say, I spoke in the moment and it worked. G-d is using me to be of service to these little children, so that they learn peace and security within themselves.

May we all create an atmosphere of patience and tolerance when bumping up on difficulties!

Rachel G.

FOOD HAD POWER OVER ME

It frustrated and depressed me for years...I seemed to have no self control when it came to food. I constantly obsessed about diets, my body, food that I was going to eat or not going to eat for many years of my life. I didn't realize that all my obsessing, binging, dieting, purging, compulsive exercise was actually a serious addiction no different from an alcoholic looking for his next drink.

Food addiction was hard for me to understand at first but I did understand the powerlessness I felt and knew I needed help. I was sick and tired of feeling bad. I reached out to OA where I found a program to follow and people to help. I eliminated sugar and flour from my diet and started eating 3 balanced meals plus 1 snack/day. I didn't really understand what this would do in fact it seemed like too much food but I was willing to try anything to feel better.

After a week of following the food plan I started coming out of my food fog and started to see how crazy I had been around food. I continued to go to meetings to learn how to live without food and deal with the issues that I needed to face in my life. I have been free of food obsession for 10 years and many of my dreams have come true. I know that by being abstinent anything is possible in my life and that is such a big change from being a victim for so many years. OA works but you have to follow directions and work it.

Kathy S.



NO MORE GRATUITOUS PLEASURE FROM FOOD

I love my food plan. It has endless variety in its combinations, sufficient quantities, it all tastes great, and it has kept me at my goal weight for many years.

After years of food-related suffering, I came to OA. Those destructive patterns of compulsive eating caused something in me to break. The buffer that I became dependent on no longer worked. No matter what I wanted, the time for gratuitous (unnecessary, empty, or excessive) pleasure from food was over.

I was told I needed a food plan. At first, it felt like I was having limits forced upon me. I rebelled. I defended my right to eat the way I wanted. People told me that my reaction was normal – compulsive eaters tend to see the cost rather than the value in anything that doesn't pay dividends right away.

I had lost the ability to differentiate between my wants and my needs. Where food was concerned, I was a selfish and immature child

I was asked to appreciate food as a gift from G-d, designed to nourish me and to give me energy. My lost self-esteem would never come from food. Getting abstinent, and pursuing a spiritual solution would definitely fix what ailed me.

Once I finished sulking about that piece of news, I learned that there was something called "enough". A blissful place of fulfillment that required nothing extra, no empty promises, nothing except what was necessary. I began to live within protective boundaries,

a spiritual domain where the selfish drive for excess was revealed for the outrageous lie that it was.

Limits, boundaries, discipline...how often I hear people try to call them a reflection of a diet mentality, or unhealthy perfectionism. That is not my experience.

Giving into my desires always left me feeling as if I'd settled for less. It eroded my healthy desire to thrive. The structure of my program restored my perspective.

Continuous, daily abstinence, and OA's twelve steps is the cure for food addiction. Anything else now leaves me feeling like I'm settling for less. And coming to OA and not pursuing that goal

is seriously shortchanging what OA has to offer.

Neil R.

Your OA community is building our speaker and night owl list. We are also taking Stepping Stones to local libraries, and letting news media know about our meetings. We talk about these projects, bring forward ideas, energy, and specific steps to take, at our monthly area meetings (Intergroup). Come and join us, be part of one of these, and receive the benefits that only committed service can bring. Intergroup happens the third Sunday of each month (some scheduling changes for holidays) at the Calvary Baptist Church in Towson.

There are spots for all of us, helping get retreats and other events together, getting the word out about recovery from compulsive eating. There are board positions open at this time for members with abstinence, including Editor of this publication! The benefits of committed service are real, and cannot be explained away.

See www.oabaltimore.org <<http://www.oabaltimore.org>> .



P O Box 20013 Baltimore, MD 21284 Hotline 410 764 3136

BAIG Website: <http://www.oabaltimore.org>

Other Internet Sources:

Region Seven: <http://www.oaregion7.org>

The Steppingstone is the bi-monthly newsletter of the Baltimore area Intergroup of Overeaters Anonymous.

Editorial Policy: This is your newsletter. Your contributions, comments, and experience in the OA way of life are needed and appreciated. We also would like to print news about your area or meeting. Publication of any contributions or editorial opinions expressed herein does not imply endorsement by OA as a whole, but only by the individuals who wrote them. Material submitted cannot be returned. We reserve the right to edit, and it is understood that other OA groups may reprint all items without permission. Deadline for submitting contributions is by the 10th of the month in which publication takes place in January, March, May, July, September, November. Submit your contributions by mail (call for mailing address) or by e-mail

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3500 S. DuPont Highway, Dover DE 19901

Overeaters Anonymous

Baltimore Area Intergroup - Meeting Directory (*updated 9/4/09*)

Sunday

SUNDAY 8:00 a.m. – Baltimore

Bnai Jacob Shaarei Zion Synagogue
6602 Park Heights Avenue
Contact: Neil 410-318-6737
We are requested by the Synagogue to honor
Dress Code: no shorts or revealing clothes.

SUNDAY 5:15 p.m. - Towson

Speaker Meeting
Calvary Baptist Church
120 West Pennsylvania Avenue
Side entrance, in basement.
Contact: Brenda 410-491-3446, HA, closed

SUNDAY 7:00 p.m. – Carroll County

St. Joseph's Catholic Church
Religious Education Building
915 Liberty Road
Liberty Road, Sykesville
Contact: JoAnne, 410-404-6403

Monday

MONDAY 5:30 p.m. – Baltimore city

"Homewood Abstinence"
First English Lutheran Church
3807 N. Charles Street at 39th Street
Use entrance on east side of building.
Contact: Tania 443-660-8299,
taniads@comcast.net or Sadhya 410-963-8741,
sadhya@jhu.edu, HA, Bus #8, 11

MONDAY 6:00 p.m. - Columbia

Serenity Center
Talbot Springs Community Center
9660 Basket Ring Road (Off Stevens Forest, off
Broken Land Pkwy)
Contact: Garr 301-829-8218,
garr@isaccopa.com, HA

MONDAY 7:30 p.m. - Bel Air (Harford County)

First Presbyterian Church
Main St. and Broadway
In main church building - basement
Contact: Suzanne 410-838-9353,
spy1020@comcast.net, call about HA

MONDAY 7:30 p.m. - Catonsville

Salem Lutheran Church
905 Frederick Road
Contact: Stuart 410-465-1914
srodes@comcast.net call about HA, Bus #2

Monday Continued

MONDAY 7:30 p.m. – Baltimore city

"Happy, Joyous, Free, and Fabulous"
Special Focus: Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender
Second Presbyterian Church
4200 St. Paul Street
*Harwood Youth Room, enter on Charlote Rd.
side behind the sanctuary*
Contact: Mike 443-610-7846,
MikeB1Bear@gmail.com

Tuesday

TUESDAY 11:30 a.m. - Baltimore

Big Book Meeting - Etz Chaim Center
3702 Fords Lane (Between Park Heights Ave. and
Reisterstown Rd.)
Contact Gail 410-764-2532; Avivah 410-764-3640
HA, Bus #M-3, M-10

TUESDAY 5:45 p.m. – Towson

Newcomers and Regular Meeting
Newman Center
7909 York Road (Across from Towson University)
Contact: Jane 410-375-7458;
timandjanes@msn.com

TUESDAY 7:30 p.m. - Pikesville

"Abstinence First"
Baltimore Hebrew Congregation, Rm 211
7401 Park Heights Avenue
Contact: Neil 410-318-6737,
neilrauch@comcast.net
call about HA, Bus #M-5

Wednesday

WEDNESDAY 6:45 p.m. – Federal Hill

"Powerflow" Dinner Friendly Meeting
Light Street Presbyterian Church
809 Light Street, Baltimore 21230
Contact: Jay K. 410-980-9624, Bus #1, 64

WEDNESDAY 7:15 p.m. - Timonium

Grace Fellowship Church, Room #160
9505 Deereco Road, Timonium.
Contact: Faigie 443-386-8728

WEDNESDAY 7:30 p.m. - Columbia

Serenity Center
Talbot Springs Community Center
9660 Basket Ring Road (Off Stevens Forest, off
Broken Land Pkwy)
Contact: Mary Pat D. 410-730-9294, HA

Please turn this page over for more meetings...

OA Baltimore Area Intergroup - Meeting Directory

Wednesday Continued

WEDNESDAY 8:00 p.m. - Pikesville

Step Meeting NEW LOCATION
Shomrei Emunah Synagogue
6221 Greenspring Ave
Baltimore, MD 21209
Contact: Sara 410-764-1970; HA
We are requested to abide by Synagogue dress code

Thursday

THURSDAY 10:00 a.m. - Parkville

Hiss United Methodist Church
8700 Harford Road
Room B under the Sanctuary. Please park in lower level lot.
Contact: M.C. 410-823-4337
mcroses@verizon.net HA, Bus #19

THURSDAY 7:30 p.m. – Monkton

The Monkton Group – Step Meeting
St. James Episcopal Church
3100 Monkton Road
Contact: Auds 410-329-6305

THURSDAY 7:30 p.m. – Columbia

9650 Basket Ring Road
The Serenity Center
Columbia, MD 21045
Contact: Carol 410-551-1149

THURSDAY 8:00 p.m. - Baltimore city

“Search for Serenity” Group
Church of the Redeemer, Room 41
5603 North Charles Street (just above Northern Parkway)
Contact: Yula 410-821-8180
Bus #11, 44; closed.

Friday

FRIDAY 10:30 a.m. – Columbia

Special Focus: Women’s Meeting
Medical Pavilion at Howard County
10710 Charter Drive, Suite 100
Columbia, MD 21044
Contact: Joanne 410-963-2102,
heiligmans@verizon.net

Friday Continued

FRIDAY 5:30 p.m. – Baltimore city

First English Lutheran Church
3807 North Charles Street at 39th Street
Use entrance on east side of building.
Contact: Mandy 410-464-1436,
Sadhya, 410-963-8741, sadhya@jhu.edu
HA, Bus #3,11, 22

FRIDAY 7:30 p.m. – Bel Air (Harford County)

“Big Book” Meeting
First Presbyterian Church
Main St. and Broadway
In main church building - basement
Contact: Daniel 443-655-6399,
danielroz@yahoo.com; call about HA

Saturday

SATURDAY 9:30 a.m. – Columbia

Serenity Center
Talbot Springs Community Center
9660 Basket Ring Road (Off Stevens Forest, off
Broken Land Pkwy.)
Contact: Jacqui 410-747-1401
jacqueline.l.dubois@gmail.com, HA

SATURDAY 10:30 a.m. - Baltimore city NEWCOMERS MEETING

prior to 11 am
meeting.
See 11 am meeting for location
Contact: Suellen 410-435-1155,
Aida 443-204-4091

SATURDAY 11:00 a.m. - Baltimore city

First English Lutheran Church
3807 North Charles Street at 39th Street
Use entrance on east side of building
Contact: Annette, 410-825-4639
HA, Bus #3, 11, 22

SATURDAY 11:00 a.m. - Lutherville

St. Johns United Methodist Church
216 W. Seminary Avenue
Contact: to be determined, call the Intergroup
Hotline at 410-764-3136 for information
Note: Building is not wheelchair accessible

ONLINE MEETING information: <http://www.oa.org/pdf/OnlineMeetingsList.pdf> and www.TheRecoveryGroup.org.

TELEPHONE MEETING information: http://www.oa.org/pdf/phone_mtgs.pdf

DOWNLOADABLE ONLINE SPEAKER MEETINGS: <http://www.oalaig.org/html/speakers.php>.

MONTHLY INTERGROUP MEETING: Third Sunday of the month, 3:30 p.m., Calvary Baptist Church, 120 West Pennsylvania Avenue, Towson

HA = handicap accessible. Numbers refer to MTA bus rtes. Closed meetings are only for compulsive overeaters and those with other eating disorders, and friends and family in support of them.