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I'm Joan, and I'm a compulsive overeater and the grateful editor of the Steppingstone.

Thank you all for sending your contributions to our fund to send our two delegates to the World Service Business Conference, Mike B. and Wajeeha B. We are still collecting – and anything that is received over and above the expense money required will be carried over into the fund for next year's conference. Many wonderful suggestions have been made about how to raise money for BAIG on a consistent basis so that we can effectively carry the message to those who still suffer. EVERYONE is ALWAYS invited to the Intergroup Meeting held (normally) the third Sunday of every month – come and hear what happens and have a voice in the proceedings!

Yours in service,
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"If only you had my problems, you'd eat compulsively too."

I campaigned very hard to sell that particular brand of insanity to anyone who'd listen.

How many times was I frustrated and saddened at my circumstances? A grown man, humbled by the incontrovertible fact that I was unwilling to see the connection between my compulsive eating and my behavior, and unable to change my ways.

Early in life, I had made the faulty association that food was a comfort that I had "earned" during the hard times, and I chased that lie again and again, not seeing that in doing so, I had compromised my emotional development, and the ability to cope with pain.

After all, I LIKED the taste of food, and what is more natural when one is hungry than to eat? So, when my frustrations grew, when the pressure of daily responsibilities (like doing my homework, or practicing my guitar lessons) became "too much", I chose to run; away from my responsibilities, and towards the temporary relief I demanded from food.

All I did was postpone the inevitable, and reinforce a level of emotional immaturity that traded personal comfort over character building, and avoidance of the basic trial-and-error way of living that turns most healthy children into responsible adults.

OA has allowed me to reconcile my past mistakes. First I was asked to accept that I wasn't perfect, and that it was OK. None of us was. And the sooner I "got over myself", I'd find a world awaiting me that was everything I ever wanted. It all seemed too simple.

I was asked to accept that I lacked the basic comprehension of how much food was enough to maintain and sustain a healthy body, and that I should consider asking someone in OA who had found recovery in that area. It took me years of petulant refusal before doing so.

Eventually, after repeated failures, it became clear that surrender was a necessary ingredient to taking the first step in getting well. No sooner had I endured that forced humiliation (I always blamed external forces for my problems) before I was asked to do all sorts of weird things, like write down what I planned to eat (precisely) and check in with my sponsor to "commit" my food. What was I...some kind of child?? (...duh, YEAH!).

Anyway, at each fork in the road (pun intended), I wanted to rebel, and had to "get over myself" all over again, until finally it dawned on me that I was my own worst enemy when it came to viewing simple acts as an effective path to finding a spiritual way of life.

It's been over eleven years (and 12,000 consecutive meals) since I last willfully broke my abstinence, and I've replaced the big lie with a more reliable voice that says "quiet the disturbance, and see what G-d would want you to do".

In taking that simple advice, I have found most of the things that I always wanted; friendship, acceptance, a thin body, and the quiet confidence that I can endure emotions, setbacks and hardship without resorting to relief-seeking to get through it.

I still have days where the petulant child comes back, but now I tell him that sometimes life is tough, and that everything is going to be all right. I just need to ask for help, wait, and do the next right thing. The little guy just needed to hear that calm voice.

Neil R., Baltimore, MD

OA PHONE MEETINGS AS OF FEBRUARY, 2007

Time (EST)	Meeting Type	Call In Number	PIN #
Sunday 8 am	90 Day: Big Book	(712) 432-6100	223163#
Sunday 11 am	GLBT Friendly	(641) 985-8555	204757#
Sunday 8 pm	21 Day: Steps 1-2-3	(641) 297-8000	79822#
Sunday 8 pm	90 Day	(319) 256-0500	315108#
Monday 10 am	90 Day: For Today	(641) 297-5500	79822#
Monday 8:30 pm	90 Day: F2F in Miami	(605) 990-0400	699563#
Monday 9 pm	Medically Challenged	(712) 432-3000	304567#
Monday 10 pm		(620) 782-2200	22072#
Tuesday 8:30 am	Steps & Traditions	(402) 756-9000	599734#
Tuesday 8 pm	90 Day	(641) 297-5400	59002#
Wednesday 8:30 am	Speaker	(402) 756-9000	599734#
Wednesday 1 pm	90 Day	(641) 696-6600	14560#
Wednesday 7:30 pm	90 Day: F2F Dallas	(319) 256-0500	951766#
Wednesday 8:30 pm	H.O.W.	(712) 580-1800	12128#
Wednesday 9 pm	Big Book/Speaker	(620) 782-8800	85742#
Thursday 4 pm (?)	Iceland. 9 pm GMT	011 (354) 755-7755	3724253#
Thursday 5:30 pm	90 Day: F2F in Bangor	(641) 297-4600	1012606#
Thursday 8 pm	90 Day: Speaker	(641) 793-7500	135103#
Friday 10 am		(319) 256-0100	1047827#
Friday noon		(641) 985-8000	742371#
Friday 8 pm	Lifeline Mag. Study	(563) 843-5600	168643#
Saturday 8 am	90 Day: For Today	(712) 432-6100	223163#
Saturday 9 pm	Ebony OA/Speaker	(319) 632-1100	104217#

Directions: Dial the call-in number. Follow the prompt to enter the pin number, followed by the # sign.

Keep your phone muted except to share. Press 6 to mute/unmute your phone.

"F2F" are face to face mtgs w/ an open phone line so that people in other cities can call to participate.

Phone lines open 10-15 minutes prior to the meeting for fellowship & questions.

90 Day meetings suggest that those sharing have at least 90 days of abstinence.

From the 2006 World Service Business Conference Part Four - Workshops

There were some very informative workshops at the 2006 World Service Business Conference. Ten workshops were offered and I attended six of them:

- One discussed the stigma of membership and how members dealt with feelings of having to be a member of OA when nothing else worked. One member shared that she must share her OA membership. She can't let shame kill someone else.
- Hearing is Believing featured a powerful public information CD in which members discussed their experience, strength, and hope and what OA did for them. I bought the Intergroup a copy, which can be used in 12th Step work within and outside the program.
- A most informative workshop gave tips on how to deal with a disruptive member, whether it was a perpetual cross-talker or someone who threatening physical harm, stalking, or sexual harassment.
- All About Conference was for green dots, new delegates like me that explained how the business meetings are run.
- Review of Parliamentary Procedure was just that - a review of Robert's Rules of Order and OA's Standing Rules that are used to conduct the business meetings with the goal of running them smoothly.
- One of the most powerful workshops for me was the Cultural and Ethnic Diversity workshop. Several panelists spoke of the OA experience from their cultural, ethnic, or gender-specific perspective. Members were then invited to share of their own experience. It was a most enthusiastic group that shared some eye-opening experiences.

More details about all of these workshops can be found in the long form of the World Service Business Conference report that's on our Intergroup's Resources for Meetings web page at <http://www.oabaltimore.org/resources.htm>. I encourage you to check out the report as well as the other resources that are on that page. There are a lot of neat things there, including 100 ways to give service.

In the next issue I will wrap up this series with some of the things I heard at one of the 11 OA meetings I attended while at the Conference, a little bit about how we decided we can carry the message from the Conference to our Intergroups and meetings, and our conclusion. Since the next issue comes out in May, after the 2007 Conference, Wajeeha and I, the delegates this year, will be telling you about what happened this year. *Mike B., Baltimore*

Abstinence Prayer

Today is a new day for me, and with you, it can be a day of abstinence. With you I can handle anything.

I ask for your protection today from anyone and anything that may interfere with my abstinence.

I ask for your protection in case sometime during the day my desire to eat compulsively becomes stronger than my desire to abstain. I know that I am powerless over food and my life can become unmanageable again. I do believe that you will relieve my compulsion and restore me to sanity. Please help me to know your will for me today, and give me the willingness to carry it out.

I turn my will and my life over to you. Please guide me through another day of abstinence. God, I need you,. Please grant me genuine humility.

Amen

Steps in short form . . .

Steps 1-3 Give up

Steps 4-6 Clean up

Steps 7-9 Make up

Steps 10-12 Keep up

There is safety in numbers . . . 1 through 12 . . .

The Rewards of the 12 Steps:

1. Hope instead of desperation
2. Faith instead of despair.
3. Courage instead of fear.
4. Peace of mind instead of confusion.
5. Self-respect instead of self-contempt.
6. Self-confidence instead of helplessness
7. The respect of others instead of their pity and contempt.
8. A clean conscience instead of guilt.
9. Real friendships instead of loneliness.
10. Purpose instead of existing.
11. Love and understanding from our families instead of their doubts and fears.
12. Freedom of a happy life instead of the bondage of a compulsive over eater's obsession.

“Are we all alike in the rooms? Unity with Diversity”

I am a member of OA who is hard of hearing. I believe that my perspective has enriched the lives of others in the program. I don't know how many of them had ever met a hard of hearing person before they met me. I used to think my disability made me different from the others in the rooms, that they wouldn't understand where I was coming from. Boy! Did I ever find out I was wrong!

As compulsive overeaters, I believe we have more in common than differences with one another. There's a shared perspective and way we look at the world that is similar, particularly if we are in recovery. We all understand the pain of being enslaved to food on physical, emotional, and spiritual levels. We all can identify with each other's feelings. One doesn't need to be hearing or deaf to know the feelings of sadness, anger, and loss. We all have experienced them to varying degrees.

More importantly, as we grow in our recovery, we come to learn and understand what OA can do for us and what we can do for the greater good of OA. We understand that recovery lies in using the tools of the program, working the steps, and helping each other.

I can't write this article and not discuss using the telephone as one of the recovery tools. Admittedly, I struggle with using this tool, but not only because of my inability to hear as well on the phone as in person. I struggle with it for much the same reasons as some others in program tend to. It all comes back to my fears of reaching out to others in program. Thoughts such as, “Will I be bothering them?” “What will they think of me, picking up the phone and admitting to a weak moment?” “What will they think when I ask them to repeat something on the phone?” run through my head. My old fears of self and ego run riot surface and I have to realize that the phone is tool, just like any other in program. It's there for people to use, as needed, to reach out, and not isolate, and to stay or get into recovery, as the case may be. I feel more connected to my friends in program, to my recovery, and to my Higher Power when I use the phone.

I also supplement the phone tool with e-mail. My deafness is no impediment to my using e-mail during the week to stay in touch with others in my meeting. And sometimes in e-mail, we can go deeper and share more than on a superficial level or than is possible in the 3 minutes allotted in my meeting for sharing. I have sent my food to others via e-mail and have found that this keeps me accountable for what I am eating.

All in all, I have more in common with other compulsive overeaters than not as a hard of hearing person. And I always try and remember this when the differences may rise to the surface. I also further know that my Higher Power looks beyond the differences in people to see and acknowledge the ways in which we are similar.

NIGHT OWL – I can take calls in the evening or at night.			MORNING DOVE – I can take calls early in the morning.		
NAME	PHONE NUMBER	HOW LATE?	NAME	PHONE NUMBER	HOW EARLY?
Ann T.	410-435-8435	11:00pm	Ann T.	410-435-8435	7:00 a.m.
Jay K.	410 980 9624	24/7	Wajecha	443-271-2273	6:45 a.m.
Wendy S.	443-854-4522	anytime	Sheffi	443-858-7030	7:00am
Hinda	410 764 2279	1:00am	Alice	410-243-2314	9:00 a.m.
Rachel	410 913 1989	2:00am	Annette	410-825-4639	5:00 a.m.
Ashley S.	443 570 7890	11:00pm	Lisa M.	410-663-8219 443-677-7219	7:00 a.m.
			Laura	914-645-9839	11:30pm

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

Other Internet Sources:

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

World Service: <http://www.oa.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 to BAIG, P. O. Box 20013, Baltimore MD 21284 or by e-mail to the editor, Joan W. imwehberg@hotmail.com or ioanmwehberg@yahoo.com. Thanks for your support.

SPONSOR – I am willing to sponsor others.		SPEAKER – I'll share my story at meetings.	
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