

The OA

STEPPINGSTONE

JULY 2006

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Hi! I'm Joan, a compulsive eater and the editor of the Steppingstone. Just want to remind everyone that your written offerings, in whatever form they may take, are always welcome in the 'Stone. Writing is a tool of the program, and writing is a service for the Steppingstone, so you can actually kill two birds with one 'stone.

You will find enclosed a meeting list and mention of some future happenings around the area. Let's mark our calendars NOW so we can be sure to be available for those special days of abstinence and recovery.

For me today, it's all about HP and the way He is present in my life - ALWAYS available, ALWAYS dependable, ALWAYS supportive, ALWAYS loving, ALWAYS merciful and ALWAYS wrapped tightly around me and in me and through me.

I would love to receive stories of the "small miracles" you have observed or been part of since you have been in program. We see them every day - are you willing to share?

Yours in service,

Joan 410 483 4212

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Heard at meetings . . .

- ❖ Attitudes are contagious . . . is yours worth catching?
- ❖ If you don't share it, you'll wear it.
- ❖ Buried resentments don't decompose, they eat away at their containers.

SLOGANS . . .

- *I came, I came to, I came to believe (steps 1,2,3)*
- *If God seems far away, who moved?*
- *Nothing is so bad that some extra food won't make it worse.*
- *Willingness is the key.*
- *Before you say I can't, say I'll try.*
- *Don't quit 5 minutes before the miracle happens.*
- *We're all here because we're not all there.*
- *Make use of the telephone therapy.*
- *When all else fails, follow directions.*
- *To keep it, you have to give it away. Man's extremity is God's opportunity.*
- *Help is only a phone call away.*
- *Anger is but one letter away from danger.*
- *Bring the body and the mind will follow.*

Thanks, Terri!

Renew, Refresh, Reward: Retreat!

Reward yourself for your commitment to abstinence and the Twelve Step way of life: come to the Wellspring Retreat Center and join your OA friends at **Baltimore Intergroup's Second Annual Retreat, August 18-20, 2006.**

A retreat is both an action and an event: people *retreat* from daily routines and come to rest and renew themselves at a retreat -- a specially planned, safe, and nurturing environment. Wellspring offers a beautiful wooded setting and clean, abstinent food choices. And as I write this, the retreat committee is planning workshops and other activities to match the retreat theme of "Willingness and Action."

Here's just a "taste" of the workshops we have planned:

- ❖ Feel like giving up? Don't leave before the miracle happens! Try some of these ideas...
- ❖ Do you turn your will over—and then take it back?
- ❖ I've let go: now, I'm ready to receive.
- ❖ How can I trust a Higher Power I've never met?
- ❖ When I travel, how can I take my program with me?
- ❖ If I'm upset about something, that's MY problem: so, write about it!

There will be plenty of time to relax, chat, walk, and nap. Let group yoga start your day. Bring your embroidery or knitting, or learn to do something new (there will be a craft table on Saturday afternoon). And don't leave your talents at home: if you juggle, sing, dance or can walk on your hands (just ideas!), the talent show awaits! Our fellowship starts with meetings, but can become so much more. Even if you tend to be shy, you can quietly enjoy the company of others: we just *can't* do it alone. Come celebrate the sultry days of late summer at the Baltimore OA Retreat:

You deserve the recovery!

Cost is \$155/per person, \$115/if bringing own food. If you absolutely cannot pay entire amount, please email Lisa at **CONTACT INFO REMOVED** and let her know confidentially what you need. Anyone who can pay a little extra to help with scholarship will be doing a service for others. Make check to "Baltimore Area Intergroup" and send form to **CONTACT INFO REMOVED**.

PRAYER

Keep me from the fatal habit of thinking that I may say something on every subject and on every occasion.

Release me from the craving to straighten out everyone’s lives.

Make me thoughtful but not moody, helpful but not bossy.

Keep my mind free from the recital of endless details; give me wings to get to the point.

Seal my lips on my aches and pains. They are increasing, and the love of rehearsing them is growing sweeter as the years go by.

Teach me the glorious lesson that occasionally I may be mistaken.

Give me the ability to see beauty in unexpected places and splendor in unexpected people.

Author Unknown (reprinted from Penn-Jersey Intergroup Newsletter)

MY SURRENDER

Surrender is a daily, continual process, not a one-time event. Since it is infinite in nature there is no end to it. It is not about perfection, but about practice.

For me surrender is: no longer fighting, acceptance; opening the mind; shedding negativity; becoming teachable; removing barriers, reducing ego; relief; peace, faith.

Surrender is not submission. Submission is a temporary state of quelling the ego. Ego is the biggest single barrier to surrender, which is the key to effectively working the 12 Steps. Ego is the disease, and it lives in my head all the time. Surrender is the discipline that prevents the ego from being in control. With my ego in check, I will be able to open my mind to the practice of surrender. But I must always remember that I cannot get rid of my ego, or kill it. It will always be waiting inside my head for the slightest opportunity to take back control, thus closing my mind again.

What I have written above came to me very quietly one afternoon while doing some Step work. I have been coming to meetings for almost a year now. I am so grateful for the fellowship that I have found in the rooms. I am most grateful for a newfound courage to honestly start working the Steps, one day at a time.

Joann, Hershey (reprinted from SC PA Intergroup Newsletter)

The following are a selection of “Welcome Back” letters . . . participants at a marathon were asked to write a letter from their HP to themselves. Thanks to “Oasis”, the publication of North Jersey Intergroup.

Dear Ninfa,

Thank you so much for returning to the beautiful program I designed for your recovery. This program will show you step by step how to improve your life and remove obstacles that can cripple you emotionally and spiritually. Follow what you hear – Listen, and then, most importantly, Take Action – Be Thorough.

With love, God

Dear Ellen,

I know you didn’t want to come here today. I know you were resistant to returning here after lunch today. I have been with you all of your life and I have been especially watchful over you today. I have been steering you with my own loving hands and loving heart. You are my child and I welcome you back whenever you stray. I welcome you back today and I am surrounding you in the safety of your loving and supportive OA friends . . . stay close to me and you will be safe. I am so grateful you chose faith in me over fear today. You will be safe so long as you remember I am always with you. I can’t promise the road will be easy, but I can assure you I will be there with love and guidance always. And then – there will be days like today where I will provide the “neon signs” that you have asked for. Welcome home.

With unconditional love, Your Higher Power.

Dear Daughter,

I know you sometimes doubt me but I can assure you I have always heard your cries and prayers for willingness and I know how much your heart has been broken through your many losses this past year. I need you to know everyday you get down on your knees and speak to me I see a hint of your willingness. I love you, Deborah, so completely – every part of you I love and accept. You are my precious child, nothing you do will ever stop that love. However, your relationship with food will always filter our connections with each other. You pray earnestly for your heart to be open and then you just choose whatever food you feel will help you ease your discomfort. Today you prayed for the willingness and I brought you to this room. Now take all these gifts today and run with them. Even when some of these actions call you or your strong belief that you can’t live without – I know you can and will be okay. I will guarantee you that you will not only survive, but also flourish. Let go, Deborah – let go of your fears, just let me take them for today. Use the gifts of today to replace that fear. I will never leave you – I know you believe that but you don’t believe you can stand the pain and discomfort. You will – Welcome Back Deborah – thank you for starting to take the boat to shore.

Loving God

Meetings are an important tool of the program. I have always felt that healing takes place at meetings, it is where my messengers are for the truths I often need to hear. It is really fun and rewarding to venture out and go to a new meeting. Whether traveling, or just adventuring out in our Intergroup, I often get so much out of hearing the experience, strength, and hope of new OA friends.

Here are some suggestions:

Call the contact person before going to the meeting. Although we try to keep our directory current, there are sometimes changes we are not aware of.

Keep an open mind. Meeting formats vary, and I have a certain comfort in my home meetings. However there is no right or wrong format, it is a matter of group conscience.

If a meeting seems a little far, consider car pooling, and remember when we said we would go to any lengths for recovery?

Happy recovery, hope to see you at a meeting soon.

Anonymous

If a sane person feels bad, I assume they do something to feel better. Not the compulsive overeater! Give me any emotional state and I'll show you how to make it worse. If I'm sad, I can compulsively overeat to feel really miserable. If I'm angry, I can compulsively overeat to give me something to really beat myself up over. If I'm feeling fearful and insecure I can compulsively overeat to really make myself feel I can't function in this world. If I'm irritated, I can compulsively overeat to really irritate my system to the max. If I'm feeling isolated and lonely, I can compulsively overeat to really disconnect from others. If I'm procrastinating, I can compulsively overeat and really waste time. If I'm having trouble financially, I can compulsively overeat and really drain my finances. Yes, ours is a strange disease. It is truly a disease of dysfunction. I can blame my dysfunctional family of origin for not giving me the tools to cope with life, or I can thank my Higher Power for giving me OA and the 12 Steps to teach me how.

Rivka

We may not share religions or political parties, but we share a common disease. Your food plan may be different from my food plan, your needs may be different from my needs, but we understand each other completely. I share joy in your victories, and your failures are my pain. I accept you and you accept me for where I am at this moment. No where in this world is there the kind of unity I've found in OA. Maybe this is one of the reasons why we have this disease, and why we are blessed. Rivka

FIRST THIN SUMMER

I came into the OA program when I was 24. I weighed 300 pounds, and I was miserable. I was in a marriage that wasn't working. I tried everything and nothing helped. OA was my last hope. If I failed at OA, I knew there was no hope. It took me months in the program to catch on to what the OA members were saying, but eventually they seemed to make sense. They said things like, "Keep It Simple," "Let Go and Let God," "One Day at a Time." I discovered these were words to live by. I would put them into practice everyday. I started saying the Serenity Prayer as many times as I needed it. The "Big Book" and "Twelve and Twelve" were always at my side. Every time I had a free minute, I would read them.

All I knew was that something good was happening to me, and I wanted it to continue. I was changing. My attitudes were changing. My emotions were becoming stable, whereas before they were always wildly variable. My weight stopped going up and started to come down. I began liking myself, and then loving myself.

I had always been fat, from the time I was a child until the day I entered OA. I hated summer and the cute summer outfits that came with it. I could never wear them, so I stayed inside and wore slacks to cover my legs. If I did go out, I wore knickers, which were just as bad.

This year, thanks to the grace of my Higher Power and the support of OA, I can wear those cute little summer outfits. I can go outside and have fun. I can feel good about me. I don't have to hide anymore. I have lost 145 pounds and have gained a new life. I used to wear a size 48/50; now I wear a 12/14. At 26, I am just beginning to live.

It has been almost two years since I started coming to OA, and I wouldn't trade OA for anything. I love my life; I love my program. Thanks to OA, I am having my first thin summer! Am I excited? You bet I am! OA and my Higher Power did for me what I could not do for myself.

— Reprinted from *Lifeline*, March 1998, p. 9

**GOD, GRANT ME THE SERENITY TO ACCEPT THE THINGS I CANNOT CHANGE,
THE COURAGE TO CHANGE THE THINGS I CAN,
AND THE WISDOM TO KNOW THE DIFFERENCE.**

WHAT'S HAPPENING AROUND OA?

A new meeting has been started in Harford County Tuesdays 7:30pm Christ Church in the educational building 2100 ROCKSPRING ROAD, FOREST HILL, MD . . . It is at the corner of route 23 and 24 directly across from the Klein's grocery store. We are very excited to have a new meeting, and need your support. Please come and visit us, you may find it is not as far as you think! Besides, doesn't going to any lengths feel good? If you would like to be a speaker at the meeting, (second Tuesday of the month) don't be shy, give service. Call or email Terri if you have any questions or need directions: **CONTACT INFORMATION REMOVED FOR ONLINE PUBLICATION.**

On November 18, Overeaters' Anonymous will be honoring IDEA Day. What *is* IDEA day?

Since 1992, on the third Saturday of every November, members of Overeaters Anonymous all over the world observe an **I**nternational **D**ay **E**xperiencing **A**bstinence (IDEA). This day was created by the OA Fellowship to help members and newcomers abstain from compulsive overeating. This year, IDEA Day will be held on Saturday, November 18, 2006.

This year BAIG will be hosting an IDEA day mini-marathon from 10am-2:30 pm. It promises to be a day filled with recovery strength, hope, and experience.

- We will have workshops on a variety of abstinence topics
- Including abstaining from the food obsession
- Abstaining from negativity, self-pity, fear and resentment, and more.
- There will be an out-of-area keynote speaker with long term abstinence who will share their experience, strength and hope.

Location and details to be announced. Call Terri 410-459-9100 if you have any questions or to do service

More great slogans . . .

Before engaging your mouth, put your mind in gear.

OA is not something you join; it's a way of life.

We can be positive that our eating was negative.

Spirituality is the ability to get our minds off ourselves.

Faith is spelled a-c-t-i-o-n.

Backsliding begins when knee bending stops.

The first step in overcoming mistakes is to admit them.

Formula for failure; try to please everyone.

Willpower = our willingness to use a Higher Power.

OA is an education without graduation.

Be as enthusiastic about OA as you were about your eating.

Your editorial staff has a few thoughts to share . . .

This month we used stories of experience, strength and hope from other Intergroups in our area and from Lifeline. We feel, however, that there are just as many wonderful stories of experience, strength and hope in our Intergroup area as in any other Intergroup area. We hope that our membership will be moved to write a story, their feelings, what's abstinence like, how it feels to be a newcomer, how it feels to be an old-timer, relapse and recovery, common bonds between us, how one relates to one's Higher Power – so many topics to choose from! How do you cope with abstinence in the workplace? If someone notes your food choices and inquires about your plan of eating, how do you respond? There is so much we can share with each other, if only we will.

Also – it's been ages since anyone asked to be included in the Night Owls, Morning Doves, email loop, Willing Speakers and Sponsor list. We would like to see some folks step up to the plate and serve where they are able. This is your forum . . .

Thanks for listening!

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?
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BAIG Website: <http://www.obaltimore.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 15th 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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