



## MAY 2006

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### WHO WANTS TO DO SOME SERVICE? WE HAVE *JUST* THE IDEA!!

Do some writing for the Steppingstone! You can do it early in the morning, late at night, morning or afternoon break - ANY time is the RIGHT time to contribute to the 'stone! Don't be shy! Any submission can be anonymous! And thanks *soooooo* much to all of our faithful contributors!

Note enclosed the format for an OA Group Inventory - it's a very good idea for EVERY meeting! Also - we are including the meeting list in every issue -

**PLEASE MAKE SURE YOUR MEETING CONTACT INFO IS CURRENT! THIS IS HOW NEWCOMERS REACH US!**

This is the time of year when most meetings hold group conscience meetings to determine who will hold service positions for the next term. "Service is one of the tools of the program . . ." For meetings to continue and thrive, we each have a responsibility to support our meetings by "being willing" to serve.

*My own personal note - I greatly enjoyed the Mini-Marathon and sincerely thank the organizers. It was absolutely wonderful to spend an afternoon with my fellows in activity designed to enhance our programs. How about some more feedback? Would someone like to write his or her impressions of the experience for the Steppingstone?*

Yours in service,

Joan 410 483 4212

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#### STEP ONE

I am powerless  
Food, fears, joys, life, they have me  
In pain without help

#### STEP TWO

I seek God within  
I don't need an answer now  
Soul and self open

#### STEP THREE

I enjoy this moment  
Give God my fears  
and worries  
I can't act on now

Practicing the Twelve Steps in our lives on a daily basis is practicing the principles behind the steps, as it is suggested we do at the end of Step Twelve. The wonderment of the program's completeness always amazes me. We can only practice steps 1, 3, 7, 10, 11 and 12 on a daily basis because the rest of the steps are preparation for these. But then again, the 10th, 11th & 12th steps encompass all of them (maintenance steps).

10 = 4, 5, 8 & 9. 11 = 2, 3, 6, 7 & 12 -- Pass it on and keep working the program! The first is the only stand-alone step and I think the most important! We need to acknowledge our surrender every day. Joe

# THANK YOU, OA!!!

I never thought I would say this, but I wish I could just remain 10 or 15 pounds overweight. Of course, all my life I've longed to be at "goal" weight, but now that I'm there, sometimes an inner resistance creeps in to doing what I need to do to stay there. If I could just stay 10 or 15 pounds overweight then maybe once in a while I could have a little binge, be a little more relaxed with my food, be more like "normal" people. And 10 or 15 pounds wouldn't be such a health issue. I wouldn't even look so bad. People might not even notice something's "wrong" with me! But here's the problem. I can't stay 10 or 15 pounds overweight. I can only stay 50 or 60 plus pounds overweight. You see, I have this strange disease. I feel so good doing the things I need to do to get well that I can forget I have a disease. Then I start taking back control of my food. Left to my own devices, once I start eating certain substances I cannot stop and within a very short time I balloon up again.

I wish I could take "real medicine" for this real disease - just pop a pill and be all better. No such luck. There are only 3 treatment options available for relief of this terrible obsessive, compulsive, destructive disorder - surgical, chemical and alternative-holistic. The 2 surgical options available are either a frontal lobotomy (which has some definite drawbacks) or bariatric surgery, which also has many unpleasant side effects and probably does nothing to relieve the obsession anyway. The chemical option involves use of a white substance disguised in large brown bars. Downing 2 or 3 of these bars will relieve the obsession for approximately 1 hour (if I'm out of the house) until the need for the next dose arises. The drawbacks to this method are the expense and the many side effects which include fatigue, headaches, weight gain, bloating, terrible flatulence, diarrhea, brain fog, muscular aches and pains, disturbed sleep, increased viral, fungal and bacterial infections due to a compromised immune system, and early death due to diabetes and cancer. Not pleasant.

The 3rd option is the "alternative-holistic" approach (a.k.a. OA). This option involves taking 12 steps and using certain tools to maintain healthy, sane lifestyle changes. Side effects of this method include: a strong immune system, good health, energy, clarity, and achievement of proper body size, satiety and serenity.

Now, looking at these options, any sane person would, of course, choose option #3. The problem with this disease is that one of its symptoms is a peculiar "blind spot" mentioned in the Big Book. This blind spot - like the Bermuda Triangle - sucks its victims in before they know what's happening. It can make me forget I have this disease until it's too late, or it can tell me crazy lies like "You know you have a disease, but just one more binge will 'get it out of your system' and you won't be bothered anymore." If I fall for that, I'm soon in a wretched state with a painfully overstuffed stomach, sometimes to the point of vomiting, burping up "rotten eggs", having no satiety from the food, in a state of exhaustion and disconnected from everyone I hold dear. Yet, the insanity will continue, thinking more food will satisfy me, will "feel good"; will "hit the spot". Of course there's no spot to hit because the more I eat, the bigger the elusive "spot" grows. I forget abstinence is the only thing that satisfies me, and now it seems too hard. No, abstinence won't do it in my diseased brain, only more food will, and I don't stop until I'm sick. You know how insane this is? It's like being on the "abstinent" side of the street which is clean and beautiful and safe. The other side of the street is "normal eating like everyone else." It really looks neat, but to get there I have to cross over 4 lanes of high-speed traffic where I'm sure to get hit. Even though my side of the street is amazing and I feel happy and content, I still look over and think, "Wow, if I just cross the street I can do what those people are doing! Hey, that's a great idea! It's not too far, and if I just step off the curb here..." WHAM! "Oh, I didn't see that car, maybe if I just crawl a little further into the street..." BAM! "That 18-wheeler really hurt, but I know I can make it if I..." POW! I don't make it. I never make it.

The only way to steer clear of the "blind spot" is through the power, protection and help of my Higher Power. Without that I am powerless over poisoning myself. My HP wants me to open the door by doing a few things that keep me humble and honest. One of those things, for me, is to have a measured food plan. My willingness to plan and measure somehow sends a signal to my brain that it's all OK - I have enough - and that's the first step in opening the way for a restoration to sanity because it affirms my personal powerlessness over compulsive overeating.

A thought came to me the other day, that everything in this physical world has to be with a certain measure in order for it to contain a blessing. Rain that falls in a balanced, measured amount can be absorbed by the earth and is a nurturing blessing. Without proper measure destructive flooding can occur. A gentle breeze on a sunny day is an enjoyable relief. Wind without restraint can unleash devastating hurricanes. The same is with my food. In a measured amount, my food becomes a blessing, capable of nourishing my body and sustaining my life. Without measure it becomes a source of misery and destruction. I read a wonderful line written by a man with severe diverticulitis. He said that in order for him to live free of pain he must live with foresight, not with hindsight. So I ask myself - Do I want to experience the blessing in my food today? If yes, then I also must live with foresight, not with hindsight. I can't afford to "wake up" after a binge and say "Oh yeah, I have an eating disorder and that's an illness that will kill me." I have to bring blessing and satiety into my food with a plan, I have to work the 12 steps in all my affairs, I have to use the tools and remind myself daily what my reality is and what works for me, I have to keep going to meetings, writing, reading and making phone calls. That keeps me on the only side of the street that allows my life to work. As much as I might think I want to be on the other side, my soul needs me to be doing just what I'm doing on my side of the street. By maintaining contact with my HP and staying abstinent, I allow my soul the freedom and strength to shine.

One of my favorite children's books is "The Enchanted Wood" by Ruth Sanderson (the pictures are magnificent). It's about 3 princes who go off to save the kingdom from a terrible drought, but in order to do that, they must first find the "Heart of the World" in the midst of the Enchanted Wood. The secret of the Wood is that you must stay on the path or you're lost. It's easier said than done, as each of the older princes' obsessions lead them astray. Only the youngest succeeds through his humbleness and willingness to listen. What a recovery story! My path is the 12 Steps - it leads me to my heart and my wholeness. Thank you OA for helping me stay on my path. Rivka

**An Offering**

**Shame, self-pity, self-obsession, fear, food  
obsession and excess food.**

**My nearest and dearest companions,  
keeping me busy all day; sticking with me  
even through my dreams.**

**I place you on an altar.  
And I offer you to the Universe.**

**You came to help me survive in my life. Thank  
you.**

**I release you back to the Universe now.  
H.P., please take these offerings in your time.  
Let me rest in your care and open myself to  
your guidance and love.**

**-Anonymous, Baltimore**

TCCEEPACNA	A C C E P T A N C E
STNIPTESPONGE	S T E P P I N G S T O N E
LIESPTYF	S E L F P I T Y
BANUIREDOS	B O U N D A R I E S
AUREGTID	G R A T I T U D E
NECALAB	B A L A N C E
LNATOISIO	I S O L A T I O N
TTSUR	T R U S T
NNTIEESCBA	A B S T I N E N C E
EERALRUTTI	L I T E R A T U R E
NOIDACTID	A D D I C T I O N
NIRJALNUGO	J O U R N A L I N G
TANDISRIOT	T R A D I T I O N S
SOIRAVHEB	B E H A V I O R S
EEGAVNIT	N E G A T I V E
PIETOVIS	P O S I T I V E
RESPEOSNSLWES	P O W E R L E S S N E S S
	N O A M O U N T O F W O R R Y C A N C H A N G E
	A N Y T H I N G

**PUZZLE ANSWERS – THANKS AGAIN, MARY!!!**

Tomorrow is another day . . .

- Disease is calling.
- Picking up is putting off
- When the hen breaks wind.

4 – 22 – 06 Mark

**PLEASE BE AWARE THAT INFORMATION PACKETS SPECIFICALLY DESIGNED AND ADDRESSED TO HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS ARE AVAILABLE FROM BILL R., OUR PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER. IT IS AN EXCELLENT WAY TO SHARE RECOVERY WITH OTHERS THROUGH THE PARTICIPATION AND INTEREST OF THOSE WHO SHARE IN OUR CARE.**

**WHAT'S HAPPENING AROUND OAP**

The Retreat Committee of the Baltimore Area Intergroup invites you to join! This year's retreat, called "Willingness and Action" will take place August 18-20, 2006 at the Wellspring Retreat Center in Germantown, Montgomery County, Maryland.

There are literally dozens of service opportunities large and small that individuals or whole meetings can take on as we prepare for this premiere event! Like last year, we expect to sell out of available spaces quickly. Join in the fun of planning and putting on this incredible weekend of recovery. Remember that service is slimming and our recovery can only get better! The committee has begun the planning and will continue to meet every three to four weeks. Please contact committee chair **CONTACT INFO REMOVED** for further information and to join in the fun.

**Sheppard Pratt Sunday 5:15pm meeting Changes!**

The meeting room location has changed. We are still in the Conference Center however we now have a larger room. We realize the accommodations have been strained at best. Many weeks we have to move chairs and tables to name a few. Often the door is blocked as well and safety is always an issue. The center has agreed to allow us to move across the hall! The room is where we recently held that awesome Body Image workshop! It is set-up classroom style and they just ask as before that we leave the room exactly as we find it. The room has huge windows, allowing the sunlight to enter!! We may have to change the room a few times a year for business reasons with the hospital but we will be given adequate notice and directions will be posted. – Wajeeha

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?
CONTACT	INFORMATION	REMOVED FOR	ONLINE	PUBLICATION. PLEASE	GO TO LOCAL
MEETING FOR	PAPER COPY.				

SPONSOR – I am willing to sponsor others.		SPEAKER – I'll share my story at meetings.	
NAME	PHONE NUMBER or E-MAIL	NAME	PHONE NUMBER or E-MAIL
CONTACT	INFORMATION REMOVED		
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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 15<sup>th</sup> 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***

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