



THE STEPPINGSTONE

Newsletter of the Baltimore Area Intergroup of Overeaters Anonymous

Hotline 410-764-3136 BAIG Website: <http://www.oabaltimore.org> Region Seven: <http://www.oaregion7.org>

November/December 2012

HAPPY, JOYOUS, AND FREE FOR THE HOLIDAYS

It is a time for getting our priorities straight. I must always remember that abstinence and recovery must come first. If I don't take care of myself, I can't be there for anyone else. How do I get my priorities straight at this stressful time of year? I remind myself that I have Steps and Tools to support me through. I incorporate my recovery behaviors every day.

For an additive mind like mine, the happy times can be as challenging as the difficult moments. I have to remember 2 important OA slogans: "Failing to plan is planning to fail, and expectations are preconceived resentments." When I work my program, everything else falls into place, eventually.

Anonymous

THE REGION 7 CONVENTION: WORKSHOPS, SPEAKERS, MANY MEETINGS: MASSIVE RECOVERY

I was lucky enough this year to, once again, be able to attend the Region 7 Convention in Ocean City, MD on November 2nd-4th. The Convention is a combination of workshops, meetings, companionship, new friends, and inspiring recovery. I am in awe of the many people who have years and years of longterm abstinence and live this program every day. Our keynote speaker was one of them. She shared so much strength and wisdom that I began to see that all things are

possible. I felt like she was able to put words to feelings I experienced but couldn't explain.

I attended several workshops and will share some quotes I heard throughout the weekend. If I were to sum it all up, it was a great mix of relaxation and rejuvenation, a boost to get me through the upcoming holidays. I am grateful to all those who unselfishly gave their time and work, and to all who were able to attend.

Quotes worth repeating:

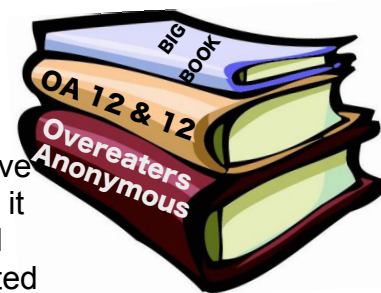
- * "Food, when used as a drug, has the shortest lived effects. The aftereffects, however, last a long time".
- * "I can't gain weight on the 14th bite if I never take the 1st".
- * "When I feel afraid, I act irritable and angry".
- * "Our problems are of our own making".
- * "Step 10 is like a Norton anti-virus, always running in the background to keep me safe".

- * "Make an effort to be quiet everyday, just in case God is trying to send you a message".
- * "My choices are not to have the disease or not, my choices are to practice the disease or not".
- * "I can't afford to be embarrassed about the program or that I need this program.
- * "When you want to beat the enemy, cut off the supply line."

Linda R.

LITERATURE FOCUS

Step Ten In The Big Book: Continually Clean It Up As I Go Along, The Principle Of Perseverance



Long before I ever got to this step I used it. One day I broke an expensive piece of equipment at work. I knew that I had to tell my supervisor about it before quitting time or I would be an emotional wreck from fear. I waited until late in the day, but I did it. Nothing happened. Imagine if I had waited for days or weeks. I could have lost sleep or, worse yet, eaten over it. Who knows how much weight I would have gained? In the past, I have gained as much as twenty pounds in two weeks.

Once I did reach this step, the first method I used was to get a steno pad with a line down the middle. On the left side I wrote the positives about my day. On the right, I wrote the negatives. After a while I made a discovery. On a good day I might have five or six positives and one or two negatives. On a bad day I might have five or six negatives, but there were almost that many positives. My black and white addict brain tends to maximize the negatives and forget any positives.

A slightly more structured approach is to use the OA pamphlet "Recovery Checklist" # 105 to help identify signs of slipping back into the food. My first relapse in OA started with the thought that I was tired of this growth stuff two or three months before I actually picked up the first bite.

Still another option is the Region 7 recovery journal available on www.oaregion7.org under "shop". This includes a fill in the blank daily inventory. Some parts are based on the *Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous*.

The *Big Book* gives specific directions for the tenth step on p. 84: "Continue to watch for selfishness, dishonesty, resentment and fear." This is followed up by suggested actions: talk about it with someone immediately, ask for the defects to be removed, make amends if appropriate and then reach out to the next compulsive overeater. Elsewhere in "Bill's Story" it says that reaching out to another addict works to prevent relapse when all else fails.

The tenth step promises follow and continue halfway down p. 85. I was astounded when my sponsor pointed these out to me. I had never fully embraced step two. I thought the best I could hope for was to want to eat, go to meetings where misery loves company and this would enable me to stick to a diet even though I was always hungry. But, the *Big Book* promises that the problem will be removed. In food terms it means I can get to a point of not wanting to binge. It means if tempted I

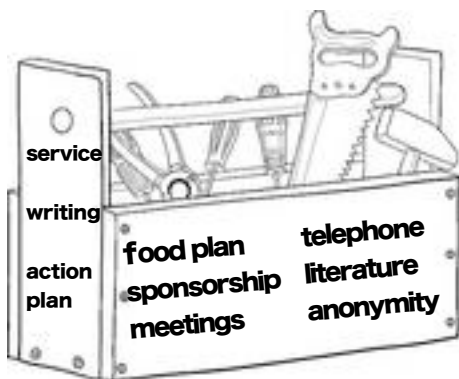
automatically recoil from the first bite. I became able to leave food on my plate. In the early days of my abstinence I even spit out the first bite before swallowing...not only once, but twice. This happened because of the steps. The best diet or food plan could not do this for me. It was certainly a start, an important start.

My mistake for years was thinking that a food plan was the answer for my whole life problem. I tried to ignore the emotional and the spiritual aspects of this disease and focus only on the physical. This did not work because this disease is about compulsively pushing away unpleasant aspects of life. I used the food/weight obsession: either obsessing about bingeing or obsessing about dieting. If I am struggling I need to do step work to start the process of diminishing the insanity. It is not an instant fix. The *Big Book* promised me neutrality around food if I was willing to do a few simple steps. I had stopped compulsive overeating many times temporarily. This new attitude allowed me to stay stopped.

What does this mean to me as a compulsive overeater? These days I rarely have to "white knuckle" the food. I don't have to obsess about my imperfect body or my next meal. Food has become nourishment for me rather than a quick fix for everything that is beyond my control in life.

As the principle of perseverance says, I have to persist in exercising spiritual muscles by taking the steps so that those muscles don't weaken from disuse leading to relapse. I have to keep in fit spiritual condition. I do this by taking the daily inventory in step 10, practicing step 11 meditation, applying the step principles in my entire life, and working with others in step 12.

All the diet tricks or the best food plan in the world could not help me in the long run. That diets and food plans were the answer is the lie the disease told me for years. **Continued on bottom of p. 3.**



OA TOOLBOX

TOOL 9 ~ ACTION PLAN

When I first learned that there was yet another tool to implement, I was a little disheartened. I have success in the program and felt that I devote plenty of time to it.

But this ninth tool was an invitation for me to develop “a new way of thinking, of acting on life rather than reacting to it.” In this program I’m taught that God will do for me what I cannot do for myself, but I also need to take action to succeed in OA and in life. Developing an Action Plan helped me plot and manage my life in a sustainable way that improved my program and my life.

The tool is described as “the process of identifying and implementing attainable actions, both daily and longterm, that are necessary to support our individual abstinence and emotional, spiritual, and physical recovery.” As I incorporate this tool into my daily program, it provides me with clarity on what activities are necessary to grow. I try to focus on what actions I need to perform in this program and forget about how it’s all going to turn out. Now I have one more reason to focus on what arrangements I need to complete to stay abstinent and connected to my Higher Power.

I thought action plan meant that I had to spend hours mapping out strategies and designing activities; but, in reality, the

appropriate activities flow from my pen or mouth as I talk with my sponsor or another OA member. This ninth tool provides me with daily direction and serenity. Just as the tool suggests, in the beginning of program, I planned the purchasing and preparing of my food. Now, I focus on what I need to do to stay in recovery. I make sure that I do the required tools every day and determine what other action I need to do to stay abstinent. This includes prayers, working the Steps, being kind and staying with God as consistently as I can throughout the day. Sometimes I feel the need to make extra calls or meetings, so I include those activities in my action plan and don’t back out of the commitment.

I now use the action plan to solve my life challenges as well. It helps me with my finances, family relations, planning my calendar, work and exercise. Now for the first time in my life, if I plan to exercise that day, I actually exercise. Before the action plan, I skipped the workout if I didn’t feel like exercising. Now, thanks to the ninth tool, I follow through with my commitments.

Lexie, West Jersey IG

Step 10: cont’d from p. 2

Step work gave me freedom from not only the food obsession but the flip side which is the diet and weight obsession. Obsessing about diets quickly can flip into obsessing about binge food for me. Either side of the food obsession is dangerous. Thinking too much about food planning again may be a sign I am headed for trouble.

Step work gives me 24 hours of relief from the food obsession. I have to keep working every day persistently to maintain this relief. This is not

perfect, but I am at peace with food most of the time. Even on the worst days in recent years I have had no desire to binge thanks to willingness to work the program harder during times of severe stress such as bereavement. I am not cocky: I need to keep working my program. I do not live in fear, but I have a healthy respect for this disease. Today I don’t try to get away with letting up on program work. Working the program is not a high price to pay for continuing 29 years of abstinence one day at a time.

Barbara G.

FAMILIAR FRIENDS

When I feel alone, without a friend in this world, I delve into my 12 Steps and 12 Traditions. I seek... I find 24 tried and true friends asking only that I commit to them.

Nancy

DIFFERENT SYMPTOMS, SAME ISSUES

Although I undereat rather than overeat, the motives for my compulsive behavior are often identical to my fellow OA's. Physically and emotionally, hunger has the numbing effect that others might get from a "food coma," for example. In terms of body image, though, I never would have guessed prior to OA that my restriction served a very similar function as the overeater's binges. I've heard many OA's share that they (consciously or unconsciously) hid behind food, because extra weight could be a buffer zone or camouflage so that others won't truly see them. The same logic fueled many of my worst years of anorexia: I restricted my food intake so that I would become smaller and smaller, hoping that I would become less noticeable and eventually disappear. I used to

think this was a self-esteem issue. Did I consider myself unworthy of attention or space in the world? Recovery has led me to the surprising realization that I hid, not out of fear that I didn't deserve attention, but because I was afraid to receive the love and appreciation that I DID deserve! My experiences with people showing that love in harmful ways led me to hide behind a life-threatening disease.

Today I am thankful to reclaim my place in the world, along with the amount of appreciation that I deserve, in the way I deserve to receive it.

Ariell W.

MY SIMPLE PRAYER

Dear God
Guide me through this day
that I live an abstinent way.
So when this day is thru
I'll be glad I trusted you.

Irma

OA CARAVAN

The OA Caravan is a group of OA's who will hit the road to visit any meeting that is in need of support. Whether your meeting needs support or you would like to give support, contact Chris at 443-834-8590.

OA UPCOMING EVENTS

February 23, 2013: Unity Day sponsored by DC Metro

April 29th-May 4th: WSO Business Conference, Albuquerque, New Mexico

August 29th-September 1st: WSO Convention, Cleveland, Ohio

The Steppingstone needs your service. It is written by local members for local members.

Without you there is no *Steppingstone*. Work Step 12 and use the tool of service by writing an article of your choice. See the *Steppingstone* for ideas on what to write.

Send all submissions to
tonia.g.4editing@gmail.com .

OUTGOING CONVENTION CHAIR EXTOLLS SERVICE AS THE ROAD TO RECOVERY

This is my last Region 7 Convention report as I am rotating out as chair of the convention committee. I am happy to say that I am now going to serve as the recording secretary of the Region 7 Board. I hope all qualified members (6 months abstinent, have attended 6 Intergroup meetings, present at IG meeting to be elected) will consider running for Region 7 Representative. It is a powerful way to not only do service, but to strengthen personal recovery. I have met some very dear friends at the Region Assemblies as well as having the opportunity to work on some pretty exciting committees. I suppose the most gratifying was to serve as Convention Chair for 2 years. Miracles truly abound in this program. For all that attended the convention, I believe you will agree that it was

an amazing weekend full of fellowship and recovery.

Below is the link to Region 7 Speaks, the newsletter that gives an excellent recap of the assembly business. Each committee has an article that sums up the results of their committee meeting. I recommend taking the time to read it.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to serve as an Intergroup Rep for the past few years. It has been a privilege. I look forward to continued service at the intergroup level. The only way to keep this program: GIVE IT AWAY! DO SERVICE!

Terri B.

http://oaregion7.org/pdfs/R7%20Speaks_Fall%202012.pdf

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Baltimore Area Intergroup OA Meeting Directory

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<p>8AM: "Rise and Shine" Baltimore Bnai Jacob Shaarie Zion Synagogue 6602 Park Heights Ave. Neil 410-318-6737 Dress Code: No revealing/provocative attire</p>	<p>10:30 AM Columbia Medical Pavilion at Howard County 10710 Charter Drive, G level</p>	<p>7AM Mt. Washington - Big Book/Newcomer (New Mtg) 6602 Chelwood Road 21209 Robin 443-742-9359 robinrocksinmd@yahoo.com</p>	<p>6:30PM Bel Air Focus: 12 & 12 First Presbyterian Church 224 North Main St. (Main and Broadway) Daniel 443-655-6399 danielroz@yahoo.com</p>	<p>10AM Parkville Literature Meeting - HISS United Methodist Church 8700 Harford Rd, RM C under the sanctuary. Park in lower level lot. M.C. 410-823-4377 mcrose@verizon.net HA, Bus #19</p>	<p>5:30PM Baltimore City First English Lutheran Church 3807 N Charles St. at 39th St Enter on east side of building Mandy 410-825-1782 HA, Bus # 3, 11 22</p>	<p>9:30AM Columbia Serenity Center 9650 Basket Ring Road (off Stevens Forest, off Broken Land Pkwy) 21045 Alex 410-489-2612 alexandchris@verizon.net Call about HA</p>
<p>5:15 Twpson Speaker Meeting Calvary Baptist Church (closed) 120 W. Pennsylvania Ave Side entrance - basement Brenda 410-491-3446 HA</p>	<p>5:30 Baltimore City "Homewood Abstinence" First English Lutheran Church 3807 N Charles St. at 39th St Enter on east side of building Tania 443-660-8299 taniamazaliss@gmail.com HA Bus 8, 11</p>	<p>11:30AM Pikesville Big Book Meeting Elz Chaim Center 3702 Fords Lane Gail 410-764-2532 HA, Bus M3 & M10</p>	<p>6:45PM Federal Hill, Baltimore, "Powerflow" Dinner Friendly Meeting Light Street Presbyterian Church 809 Light St., Baltimore, MD Jay 410-980-9624 Bus # 1, 64</p>	<p>7:30 Columbia Serenity Center 9650 Basket Ring Road (off Stevens Forest, off Broken Land Pkwy) 21045 Carol 410-551-1149</p>	<p>7:30PM Bel Air Big Book Mteeting Main St & Broadway (main building - basement) Daniel 443-655-6399 danielroz@yahoo.com HA</p>	<p>11AM Baltimore City First English Lutheran Church 3807 N Charles St. at 39th St Enter on east side of building Annette 410 825-4639 HA, Bus # 3, 11, 22</p>
<p>7PM "Hour of Power - Mixed Format" Bel Air Upper Chesapeake Medical Center 500 Upper Chesapeake Dr. Eva 410-273-1114 Terri 410 459-9100</p>	<p>6PM Columbia Serenity Center 9650 Basket Ring Road (off Stevens Forest, off Broken Land Pkwy) Garr 301-829-8218 garr@isacccopa.com HA</p>	<p>Noon St Peter's Evangelical Lutheran Church 7834 Eastern Avenue Baltimore Bob 410-335-7748</p>	<p>7:30PM Columbia Serenity Center 9650 Basket Ring Road (off Stevens Forest, off Broken Land Pkwy) 21045 Mary Ann 301 775-0422 HA</p>	<p>8PM Baltimore City (Closed Meeting) Search for Serenity Group (mixed format) Church of the Redeemer, Rm 41 5603 N. Charles St, N of Northern Pkwy Katie H. 856-506-1236 Bus 11, #44</p>		<p>11AM Lutherville Step Meeting St. John's Methodist Church 216 W. Seminary Avenue Phyllis 410-653-2264 lucindaruby@gmail.com HA</p>
<p>7PM - Carroll County St. Joseph's Catholic Church Religious Education Bldg. 915 Liberty Road Eldersburg, MD Contact: Joanne 410-552-9246</p>	<p>7:30PM Pikesville - Recovery From Relapse Shomrei E'munah Synagogue 6221 Greenspring Ave (Corner of Cheswolde) Shani 410-917-7466 Dress Code: No revealing/provocative attire</p>	<p>7:30PM Pikesville "Abstinence First" Baltimore Hebrew Congregation - Room 211 740 1/2 Park Heights Avenue (Parking lot on Slade) Neil 410-318-6737 HA, Bus M5</p>				
	<p>7:30PM "Beginners and Strugglers" Bel Air, First Presbyterian Church Main St & Broadway (main building - basement) Suzanne 410-8383-9353 spw1020@comcast.net Call about HA</p>					
	<p>7:30PM Catonsville Salem Lutheran Church 905 Frederick Road Stuart. 410-465-1914 shrodes@comcast.net Call about HA, Bus #2</p>					
	<p>7:30PM Parkron - Step/Discussion (New) St. James Episcopal Church 19200 York Road Karen 410-299-1675</p>					
<p>Abbreviations: HA= Handicapped Accessible; Bus # = Accessible by MTA Bus routes; Closed: These meetings are only for Compulsive Overeaters</p>						
<p>For Online or Telephone Meetings: http://www.aa.org/meetings/find-a-meeting-online.php</p>						
<p>If your meeting information changes, notify the World Service Office (WSO) at www.aa.org in the Meeting Registration/Change Information Section. In addition, call Tonia 410-665-5754 or tonia.g.4editing@gmail.com</p>						