



THE STEPPINGSTONE

Newsletter of the Baltimore Area Intergroup of Overeaters Anonymous

Hotline 443-475-0443 BAIG Website: <http://www.oabaltimore.org> Region Seven: <http://www.oaregion7.org>

November/December 2013

EXPERIENCING THANKSGIVING

To me, Thanksgiving is not the sort of holiday you'd expect it to be for someone who calls herself a compulsive overeater. Traditionally, Thanksgiving was a day that I exhibited tremendous control over my food--because everyone was watching, right? It wasn't so difficult for me to do, because there was a light at the end of the tunnel: LEFTOVERS...some of the sexiest leftovers of the whole year, and so many that no one would notice what was being sneaked from the fridge. Heck, we were trying to get rid of it as fast as we could, the least I could do was help!

Working the OA program of recovery has changed my experience of this holiday. My second Thanksgiving in program, my cousin had just had a baby. While everyone else was busy requesting, distributing, and consuming dessert, I got to hold the baby. I have never felt so present, and so free of desire to consume my alcoholic foods.

Another year, I was living with a family in France. They had another boarder, a young Swedish woman. She'd been wanting to make them a traditional Swedish meal, and I wanted to have a family event on Thanksgiving, so we joined forces. I

explained my eating guidelines, and was thus able to share in her culture with respect for her traditions as well as a healthy respect for the power of my disease. It actually felt as though we were celebrating the original intention of the holiday!

OA has taught me that there is tremendous power in gratitude, so my new tradition for this holiday is to share that with my loved ones through the following game:

SUPPLIES: scraps of paper, pens/pencils, a bowl or basket

1. Pass out 1-2 scraps of paper and a pen to each person. Invite them to write something they are grateful for on each piece, and to keep it anonymous by not signing their name.
2. Pass around the bowl or basket to collect the notes. (Steps 1 and 2 can be done while people are dispersed throughout the house, watching football, etc.)
3. Gather everyone around and pass around the bowl, asking each person to draw out a gratitude to read aloud to the group.

Happy Holidays, Everyone!

Alexis T, Baltimore

Nothing tastes as good as abstinence feels!

ABSTINENT HOLIDAYS

Food, food everywhere and not a bite to eat. True? Not true.

A few years back, I attended an OA retreat. Participants were directed to categorize their food into three columns. The first column listed all the binge/trigger/addiction foods for each person. The third column included all the healthy/nourishing/no problem foods. The middle column listed all the "iffy" foods: those that I could eat safely under some circumstances, but not others. Those foods could sometimes be moved into column one or two.

My focus automatically went to the first two columns: all the things I could **not** have, had to "give up," must let go. I came to realize that I did a lot better when my focus was on the third column. That column is the key to successful abstinence. What tasty, satisfying foods can be prepared from the healthy column? Many, many recipes can be made from those foods. My job is to plan ahead and be prepared with those nourishing foods that are as much a treat as the first column: a treat because they taste good, satisfy, **and** support and celebrate my clarity and peace of mind. Those foods are not just good for **me**; they are good for my family and friends as well. It is okay to establish new traditions with foods that sustain my new way of life in recovery. At parties and other gatherings I can bring my column three foods for all to enjoy, especially me. I am not deprived; I am not giving up; I am not a

martyr. Abstinence is as much a mindset as a food plan. I am joyous, happy and free eating the good stuff which is far more delicious than the other stuff which poisons my holidays.

During the holiday season, the focus is very often on those first 2 columns. Today I understand that the dangerous foods that I think are holiday traditions and necessary for everyone's enjoyment are really mostly **my** focus. Would the family and friends really fall apart if I didn't make or have...? Are the holidays really about food? Or, are they about people enjoying each other as they gather to celebrate gratitude, togetherness, and beliefs? As a single person living on my own, the holidays can be lonely and depressing. Good excuse to reach for the wrong column. No. Abstinence works best when I reach out to others, when I decide to be of service, when I get out of myself and into giving. Are there ways other than food to express joy? Music, decor, small gifts, games, projects (other than cooking) that are completed together, cooking foods from the third column that all can enjoy, stories about family history, friendship history...

I can decide what foods are available to me by planning ahead. Follow the food plan: what, where, when, how to eat. It is a choice. I can choose to see deprivation, or I can choose to see celebration and fun. My food needs are my responsibility. Lots of good bites to eat for the holidays. Choose.

Anonymous

HEARD IN THE ROOMS

At the WSBC I was able to attend an OA meeting each morning at 7:00am. It was so cool to be in a packed room of recovering compulsive overeaters. Here are a few of the tidbits I heard:

- We are the message
- Have integrity-it feels better
- I do not need to be afraid
- This is a "We Program"
- What I think and feel may not be real
- As a sponsor I should be hard on the disease and loving to the person
- Living a life of principles is a result of this program
- How do I find God -- by seeking, Where do I find God -- where ever I look
- Tradition 7 is a prayer in monetary form

- Regarding sponsorship -- I can't do the work for them
- I should remember that sometimes I can act better than I feel
- I recommend 20 minutes a day of step work to my sponsees (and then do it myself)
- If you help someone cross the river you cross the river yourself

Questions to think about:

- Do I enjoy my life?
- How do I celebrate my recovery?
- Am I behaving like I have a spiritual recovery?
- What is my action plan for today?

Terri B, Baltimore

WHAT'S INSIDE?

There is something inside of me, the addict place in me, something that is totally incapable of taking care of me, no matter how much I want it to, need it to, and want to believe that it can. Leaving myself in the care of that part is like leaving an infant in the care of a four year old, a sweet, kind four year old who so wants to be loved and promises to be good. So we trust and let go, get comfortable

and forget. That part of us then takes over, steam rolls us away until we are lost and overwhelmed and there is nothing but to experience the consequences. And all we wanted was to be happy, like all human beings who just wanted to be happy.

Anonymous



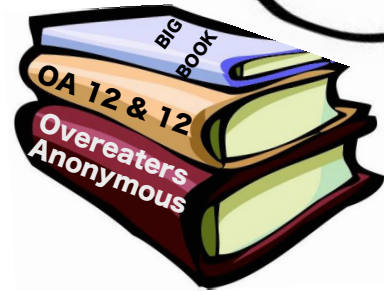
EXPECT A MIRACLE!
LET GO AND LET GOD

LITERATURE HIGHLIGHTS

A LETTER FROM [HIGHER POWER] GOD

I take the eleventh step and my spirituality seriously, so I have a running dialogue with my Higher Power throughout the day.

One morning at an OA retreat, I had been asked to do the service of leading morning meditation. I wrote exactly what I needed at the time. Here it is:



My Dear Child,

I know you have issues with trust, and it's often difficult for you to believe in me. So it may seem hard for you to accept my unconditional love and the idea that I am indeed concerned with every aspect of your life.

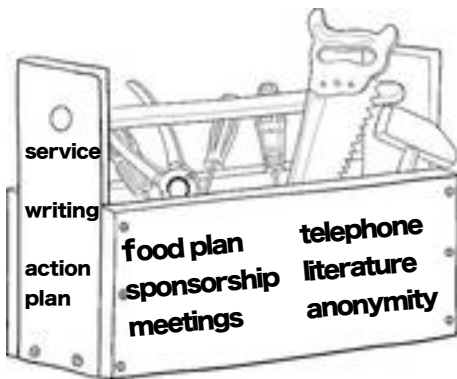
You are in this place because I brought you here. Be open to what I have to tell you, show, and give you.

Your disease helped you cope with life before. It made it tolerable, but now it's time to let go of the ways of the past. I have such big plans for you! Trust that these plans are good. I did not bring you this far to let you fall. You are at the edge of the cliff, and I keep calling to you to step off. You shout, "I'll fall!" but I'm telling you, you'll fly and soar like an eagle.

You are stronger than you know. I will empower you if you ask me. I will help you make all the difficult decisions and keep the commitments. I will put people in your life to help you. I will never allow you to be tempted beyond your ability to resist, or even ask anything of you that I have not already empowered you to do.

Those inner yearnings you have are also my desires for you: peace, love, and recovery. I want you to have them all.

Love, Your Higher Power



OA TOOLBOX



WRITING (AND LOVING) THROUGH A BINGE

One day in the winter of 2011-2012, I worked very late. So late, in fact, that I didn't even think to call my husband to ask him to make sure dinner would be ready for me when I got home. I was very hungry and I got home to a cold house. No warm food smells, not even leftovers. Yet, food was everywhere. Food that I typically do not eat; food not really on my food plan. I was not angry. After all, I was supposed to call before leaving. But, I was ravenous. I put some chicken in the oven and some rice in the rice cooker. I made sure I had salad greens ready to eat and then I stared at all the food there waiting for me to attack it. Instead of attacking it, I saw my journal sitting nearby. I picked it up. My daughter

was also nearby and you can see her influence in what came out of my heart and onto the paper. I call the original piece "The Food Binger's Blues." There are later verses that are more intense and explore the emotions, but these are the originals.

What is important is that my binge happened on paper. I wrote, consulted my daughter, wrote some more, and came up with a poem to express what I was feeling. It took so long that the chicken was actually a bit overdone when I took it out of the oven. It tasted perfect, seasoned with hunger and the sense of accomplishment that I avoided what I wrote about in the following poem:



THE FOOD BINGER'S BLUES

If I do not have my dinner
You may think I'd grow much thinner.
But in this you would be wrong.
As I'll tell you with this song.
If I don't get enough to eat.
I may reach for something sweet,
Or another kind of treat.
I might even eat my feet.
It all begins with hunger pangs
Right from my toes up to my bangs,
I'll grab whatever food I see.
Maybe not a bumblebee.
Apples, crackers, broccoli,
Peanut butter, lots of tea.
Nothing bad in moderation.

I eat enough to feed the nation.
And brussels sprouts. They have a stalk.
I'll eat that up without a thought.
My husband's snacks. My daughter's
cheese.
I'll eat until I cannot breathe.
And when at last this binge is done
The food is cooked. My family's come.
They say is it now supper time?
I look at them and say, "I'm fine."
"You go ahead and have some food.
I am no longer in the mood."
And that is why I won't get thinner
If I do not have my dinner.

Naomi B. from Baltimore

Phone Bridge 712-432-5200
 Pin number 4285115#
2013 HOLIDAY MARATHONS
SCHEDULE:
 8am – Midnight

DATES	HOLIDAY & THEME
Nov 26	Day before Chanukah – Count your blessings
Nov 27	Chanukah – Celebrating Miracles
Nov 28	Thanksgiving – Abundance
Dec 12	12th step within – Reaching out the hand and the heart to those in need
Dec 24	Christmas Eve – The Joys of Fellowship
Dec 25	Christmas Day – Open to Receive
Dec 26	Boxing Day and Kwanza – We are not alone in our journey

**SLOGANS TO LIVE BY THROUGH
 THE HOLIDAYS AND EVERY DAY**

- * HAPPINESS IS AN INSIDE JOB
- * ACT; DON'T REACT
- * TRUST THE PROCESS
- * PROGRESS NOT PERFECTION
- * A GOOD DAY: EVERYTHING GOES RIGHT AND I AM ABSTINENT. A GREAT DAY: NOTHING GOES RIGHT AND I AM STILL ABSTINENT.
- ★ KEEP IT SIMPLE
- * ONE DAY AT A TIME

Baltimore Area InterGroup Meetings occur monthly at the Calvary Baptist Church at 120 Pennsylvania Ave. in Towson from 3:30 to 5:00 PM.

Scheduled meetings:

December 15: Election of new officers.
Every meeting rep can vote. Make sure your meeting's voice is heard. Send a Rep.

All are welcome and encouraged to attend.

***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 tools of service & writing by creating an article of your choice. Call Tonia at

410-665-57 . Send all submissions to

tonia.g.4editing@gmail.com .

**BALTIMORE AREA INTERGROUP OF OVEREATERS ANONYMOUS:
 YOUR TRUSTED SERVANTS**

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7th TRADITION CONTRIBUTIONS

InterGroup is again receiving mail at the address below. Please resume sending contributions.

60% Baltimore Area Intergroup,
 Box 20013; Baltimore, MD 21284

30% OA World Service Office
 Box 44020; Rio Rancho, NM 87174

10% OA Region 7
 3500 S. Dupont Highway
 Dover, DE

DISCLAIMER: The opinions expressed in *The SteppingStone* reflect those of the individual writers and not those of Baltimore Area Intergroup or OA as a whole. Materials submitted cannot be returned. We reserve the right to edit. It is understood that all copy may be reprinted by other OA groups without permission.

Baltimore Area Intergroup OA Meeting Directory

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<p>8AM: "Rise and Shine" Baltimore Bnai Jacob Shaarite 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 Columbia, MD 21044 Tricia 410-489-0033 or Ruth 410-740-6955</p>	<p>11:30AM Pikesville Big Book Meeting Etz Chaim Center 3702 Fords Lane Gail 410-456-4306 HA, Bus M3 & M10</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. Pat 410-663-3670 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 Kathy 410-312-2742 moriarty.kathy@gmail.com 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</p>	<p>6:00 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 taniamarzalski@gmail.com HA Bus 8, 11</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>7:30PM Bel Air Big Book Meeting 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. 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@isaccocpa.com HA</p>	<p>7:30PM Pikesville "Abstinence First" Baltimore Hebrew Congregation - Room 211 7401 Park Heights Avenue (Parking lot on Slade) Neil 410-318-6737 HA, Bus M5</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 Eminent Synagogue 6221 Greenspring Ave (Corner of Cheswolde) Shani 410-917-7466 Dress Code: No revealing/provocative attire</p>					
	<p>7:30PM "Beginners and Strugglers" Bel Air, First Presbyterian Church Main St & Broadway (main building - basement) Suzanne 410-8383-9353 SVI1020@comcast.net Call about HA</p>					
	<p>7:30PM Catonsville Salem Lutheran Church 905 Frederick Road Naomi 443-838-7970 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>						