
Desert Recovery

The Magic A's

As I celebrate my 8th birthday in OA, I feel jubilant and full of gratitude. This is due to the freedom and happiness I have found in this Program.

The MAGIC A's - ACCEPTANCE and ABSTINENCE go together for me. When I accepted my powerlessness over my disease of compulsive eating, and came to believe that only my Higher Power could restore me to a sane way of living if I were willing to go to any lengths, I was able to be abstinent one day at a time.

I had been free from purging by use of diuretics, laxatives and other meds for ten months before I got to OA. I had eliminated these things because of the paralyzing fear I experienced after my husband's death. He had abused his body, and I also had memories of my trips to the ER because of diuretics.

Even after I was introduced to the OA Program, however, I could not be free of obsessive thoughts and ways of restricting and/or bingeing until I truly listened to the beginning of the Third Step Prayer . . . "God, I offer myself to Thee - - to build with me and to do with me as Though wilt. . ." Only then did I surrender and begin to ask for willingness daily in Steps 1, 2, and 3.

In those years, we had a food plan pamphlet in OA called Dignity of Choice. At first I had to follow the Basic Four Plan from the pamphlet because I did not know what I was supposed to be eating. I did not believe I was worth having a whole plateful of food! Little by little I learned to plan menus, committed my food to a sponsor, abstained from foods which called to me, and got my eyes off the scale. I began to

have longer and longer periods when no thoughts of food entered my mind!

Abstinence became eating to feed my body in a healthful way and not to feed my disease. Because I've learned to like my body and love myself, I know I deserve the best care. Abstinence for me is NOT much ado about food. My abstinence is a well-balanced way of eating. My head now knows realistically what is best for my body, and my spiritual program provides the willingness, strength and courage to eat this way. I feel a new freedom around food. Also, my whole attitude has changed because I learned early on that freedom from negative and destructive thinking and behavior was just as important a part of abstinence as following a food plan.

Complacency is the worst enemy of abstinence for me. When my first three steps get slipped over, and my 11th Step gets slighted, food begins to call and my thoughts are not positive. I am diverted from my primary spiritual aim. Humility, centering myself with my Higher Power, reading, sharing, meetings -- all get me back to the MAGIC A's -- ACCEPTANCE and ABSTINENCE, which lead to Freedom and Serenity.

One Promise tells us we will not regret the past or wish to shut the door on it. The healthy fear that I can easily be back in that insane, unmanageable, bankrupt way of living stems from remembering that old sickness of the past, and helps keep ACCEPTANCE and ABSTINENCE uppermost in my consciousness.

The Promises of the Program are coming to pass in my life because I now believe God does for me what I cannot do for myself!

KG - Tucson OA

The Lie versus Abstinence

On Saturday, May 19th, 1992 I willfully and compulsively overate. By the grace of God and the fellowship of Overeaters Anonymous I was 64 months away from a sugar binge up to that point. I now see that I lost my physical abstinence because my emotional abstinence was shaky. I must have both to be in spiritual recovery. What happened is that I listened to the Lie. The Lie has many voices. In this one, he kept saying so seductively "Eat this and you will feel better." I had been feeling down, negative and depressed beforehand.

No, emphatically no -- food did NOT make me feel any better. I still felt the same right after I overate. Then, 20 minutes later, I started to feel nauseous, drowsy, drained, guilty, self-pity, tired, bloated, throbbing head, bricks in the stomach, and aches and pains all over my body. I overate for ten minutes at 4:30 p.m. Remember, I had listened to the Lie and it promised I would feel *better*. The Lie lied as I was constantly swamped with emotional mood swings and physical pain till 10:30 p.m. A six hour price tag of misery yet again.

I ended that day by sharing with another member, then surrounding myself with OA literature until I was calm enough to sleep. Upon awakening, the Lie was still with me and insisting I go to the bank and withdraw \$500 and do this binge right! What an insane thought! Instead, I went to an OA meeting, for I knew I *had* to share this publicly. I shared and got support and felt strength returning. I stayed late for extra fellowship. I did service by giving a fellow member a particular piece of literature he had ordered. I made and shared two outreach phone calls. Before I was honest at the meeting, the Lie was whispering strongly to me "The heck with this OA stuff, just don't go anymore and you'll never have to feel pain again. The pain of being honest/truthful in front of people."

After I shared, the Lie had no power over me

and faded out of hearing range. Oh, it is still there, somewhere -- probably. By sharing, I improved the maintenance of my spiritual condition which silenced it for now, day by day.

If I want to overeat and do overeat, then I get weaker. If I want to overeat and don't, then I get stronger. Thank you, OA fellowship, for the "Clear Vision" to come right back to you where my safety and sanity is restored daily. Three people in one day suggested I write about my experience, so I share it freely with you.

- Steve B. Tucson OA

World Service Policy Statement on Abstinence:

According to the dictionary, the word "abstain" means to refrain from. Abstinence in Overeaters Anonymous is the action of refraining from compulsive eating. Recovery is the result of living the OA program.

Abstaining or Dieting?

I have given a lot of thought to just how abstinence differs from dieting because of my desire to explain the OA program to newcomers. In OA, we always insist that we are not on a diet! We hate dieting! We have no willpower! But -- to even the most liberal listener, our three weighed and measured meals a day with nothing in between certainly sounds like a diet. Wherein, then, lies the difference?

The difference comes not in what we eat while we are abstinent, but how we *think* while we are abstinent. I like to think in terms of abstinent thinking versus dieting thinking. Here are some of the points of difference I have found significant:

Dieting

1. There is an initial "psyching up" or mental preparedness. A sort of willpower build up takes place.

2. Food obsessions dominate each day. Excessive time is spent in special preparations and menu planning. Food is the primary focus of each day.
3. The end of the diet is the primary goal. The future (how many more pounds to go) dictates our time frame.
4. As the diet progresses, anxiety increases as willpower decreases.
5. Thoughts toward the end of the diet dwell on what we can eat that we were denied when dieting. Food fantasies increase.
6. When the diet ends, we are no better off than before our thin bodies are doomed to relapse. Moreover, our willpower will be less strong with subsequent efforts.
7. A diet ends.

Abstinence

1. There is a "letting go," as though a burden has been lifted. The body and mind relax and flow.
2. Food thoughts are lost between meals. Eating is an activity of the day but not a focal point. Meal planning and preparing are kept simple.
3. There is no goal. Each day is a day unto itself.
4. As Abstinence continues, serenity becomes greater. Emotions are calmed (except for the emotional flare-ups that occur when we...learn to deal with life).
5. There are fewer thoughts of unabstinent food; fantasies decrease as we surrender to abstinent eating on a day to day basis.
6. As abstinence progresses, we are changing. New ideas are replacing old ones so that we are

in a better place emotionally and spiritually. Our strength (through our higher power) grows as our efforts continue.

7. Abstinence, with God's help, is forever.

Joyce T., Big Sky 301, 12/85

Next month's topic will be **sponsoring**. If you have any stories of experience, strength and hope to share regarding your sponsoring or use of sponsors in OA or on any other topic, please submit it by the second week of the Month to Lisa G. 1210 E. Big Sky Road, Tucson, AZ

Help Us Celebrate Your OA Birthday!

Pat	March 16	1 year
KG	May	8 years
Jay	April 7	1 year



Please call Lisa at 7-551-1111 or send your name in even if the birthday month has passed. We want to acknowledge your success in OA!!

UPCOMING EVENTS

OA A Safe Harbor. World Service Convention

July 10-12, Baltimore, Maryland. Contact your Intergroup representative for more registration information.

OA Retreat

Next Scheduled OA retreat for Tucson Area Intergroup is at Picture Rocks Retreat House on the weekend of Halloween. More details will be forthcoming in future issues of the newsletter. Start saving now, as this is sure to be a great weekend!

HANDLING THE MONEY

OA INTERGROUP makes donations to REGION and WSO in the name of all the groups. Please send donations after expenses and \$25.00 for reserve. Use the form below for proper credit for your group's contribution. Also, please note that individual contributions are accepted (and gratefully) as well. These contributions are tax-deductible. Feel free to mail your donation to the address provided below.

GROUP NAME _____

MEETING DAY & TIME _____

TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED _____

Make check payable to Tucson Area OA Intergroup. Mail form and donation to:

[Faint, illegible text, possibly a stamp or address]

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Principles of the Twelve Steps

1. Honesty
2. Hope
3. Faith
4. Courage
5. Integrity
6. Willingness
7. Humility
8. Discipline
9. Unconditional Love
10. Perverserence
11. Awareness
12. Service

MEETING CHANGE

The Tuesday night "Free to Be Me" meeting will be held in the UMC Santa Cruz dining room through the end of June. Beginning July 7, the meeting will be permanently moved to the OK or Not Bookstore at Speedway & Wilnot. Please share this information at your meetings.