



Desert Recovery

March April 2014

SOUTHERN ARIZONA INTERGROUP OF
OVEREATERS ANONYMOUS

Defiance vs. Reliance

“No man, we saw, could believe in God and deny Him, too.
Belief meant reliance, not defiance.” (AA 12 and 12, pg. 31)

This makes me think of the part of the Big Book where it says either we believe God is everything or we believe God is nothing. What will our choice be? (my paraphrase) I choose to believe that God is everything. So, if that were the case, I would desire to have full reliance on him. Unfortunately, I am an addict and I want to ‘have my cake and eat it too.’ I want what I want when I want it. But this does not work well when it comes to reliance.

Do I fully rely on God to relieve my compulsive overeating? The answer is, “no.” I think early on in the program when I started recovery that I did more of this. Then my food and my abstinence became more of a habit. While it is not bad to have a “clean eating” habit it also promotes me not relying fully on God for my recovery.

Recently, the food has really been calling my name and I have been eating more than I need at meals. I know that I am doing this, but I am too defiant to ask God for help. When I do break down and put my reliance on God, He helps me and relieves my need to eat foods that are not good for me or that cause me problems. The catch is that I have to be willing. Willing to give up my will of eating whatever I want, and willing to rely on God’s will for my life which is to not stuff my face with more than I need or with foods that cause me problems. It is a daily struggle. Actually more like a meal-to-meal struggle to humbly ask God to help me eat only what I need to eat.

The great thing about it is when I choose to be willing and to put my reliance in God it really works. God does not want me to struggle with this temptation to over eat. He wants me to be successful, but he also wants me to put my trust in Him and rely fully on His ability and not my own. Only with this willingness can I turn defiance into reliance.

~Sara H.

Heard & Seen at Unity Day

(February 22, 2014)

We had a great turnout for Unity Day this year. To all those who came, thank you so much and to those who couldn't make it we hope to see you next year. We had a total of 27 attendees from as far away as Safford and Sierra Vista and as close as Green Valley, who hosted the event. And of course OA'ers from all over the Tucson area were there as well.

Our youngest attendee was not quite 2 and anonymity keeps me from sharing the age of the eldest. It was a great day with lots of sharing and caring, laughter and some tears. The speaker told an amazing and inspirational story of recovery. Her willingness to share was much appreciated.

The afternoon session was spent writing and sharing as we worked our way through the pamphlet "A Commitment to Abstinence." If you've never read it or haven't read it in a long time, I highly recommend it.

I'd like to share just a few of the inspirational, uplifting and thought provoking things that were shared that day.

The speaker shared that Tibetan Monks do not eat sugar because if they do then "they can't hear God."

"I issue an invitation every day to my God to spend the day with me."

"I release the food I eat today to the love and the light of God."

"Am I looking for the magic bullet?"

"My choice today is to LIVE instead of working my way to DYING."

See you next year in Green Valley on Saturday February 28, 2015!

~Marj M-M, Green Valley



LESSONS

Earlier tonight,
not paying attention,
I cut myself-shaving.
Not too badly
it bled for a bit.
Then I stopped it
with a styptic pencil.

Later, after a poetry reading,
I shared iced tea
and conversation
with an old friend.

And sometime,
during lulls in conversation,
my mind would wander.

And I would wonder
at the paths our lives had taken.

Ideas of what might have been
(or should have been?)
Anger at the loss I felt.
A re-experience of pain.

(This friend and I
had once been married-
to each other.)

And as my mind returned
from its brief sojourn;
returned to the iced tea
and conversation,

I felt the trickling dampness
on my neck

My wandering mind had spurred
my wandering fingers.
In idle picking
they had found the shaving nick-
and opened it.

Life has many ways of teaching me:
Live in the NOW
Pay attention
Don't pick at old wounds
HEAL!!!

~Chris. C.

FROM THE EDITOR...

Thanks, everyone for the awesome writings! I received more than I could fit in one newsletter! On page 31 of the AA 12x12, it reads "defiance is the outstanding characteristic of many an alcoholic...God has not delivered us the good things of life which we specified, as a greedy child makes an impossible list for Santa Claus."

Recently, I've been mad at God for not providing for me the way I thought He should. I was angry that my life experiences were difficult and others seemingly got "easy rides." I spent a couple days in the food, "providing" for myself. But then a clear thought came. "It's only food. And what you want is connection with and provision from God. Food only gets in the way of that."

Today, I am more grateful, relying on God to provide the freedom, clarity and strength to live in abstinence.

~Angela N., Newsletter Chair



ME FIRST!!

When we think about defiance, it's usually regarding young children. It's an attitude of "me first" to the exclusion of all others. As the child grows and matures, ownership of their feelings can often reduce defiant behavior.

However, here in OA, our obsession with food is the defiant means in which we cling to our self-destruction.

"Me first!" keeps us locked into a thought process that keeps repeating itself. Like a child, we fail to see beyond ourselves.

That is where Reliance comes in. Surrender is the first step to truly seeking a reliance on God. Instead of "me first" we should shift our thinking to reflect "we first".

Given this "we first" mentality, we move beyond the isolation to a fuller living experience. We welcome newcomers and enjoy seeing our OA friends at meetings. Not only do we rely on a HP for abstinence, but also our physical, emotional and mental well-being.

Reliance is a gift. We must ask to receive this gift with the willingness needed to have it replace any remnants of defiance.

If one defies God, he has no lifeline, no connection, and no assurance that His promises will be fulfilled.

Reliance opens the floodgates of love God has for each of His children. Learn to rely on God with your whole heart and He will never forsake you!

~Rebecca

Unexpected Gifts

I had to write when I heard the topic for this issue of our newsletter was “reliance vs. defiance” as most of my 15+ years in OA have been spent in a state of open defiance and self-will run riot. As the 3rd step prayer says I was in a “bondage of self” I spent most of my time in open warfare with my HP trying repeatedly to lead me down the safer road, running as fast and as hard as I could in the opposite direction. I finally came face to face with my defiance this past August when I celebrated 1 year of abstinence for the first time ever and realized I was almost exactly the same weight as a year previously.

I know we are not a “calories and diet club”, but my issues with food and my defiance have caused me to add 120 extra pounds to my poor body. So, after a year of abstinence when I realized I still needed to lose 100 lbs. I had to do some heavy duty soul searching about my food plan, and in fact my whole OA program actually looked like. I mean if I wasn’t losing weight, as heavy as I was, then how abstinent was I, or at least how clean was my food plan?

Given that defiance is my fallback position I started out by eating more and praying less. What changed? On February 5th of this year, I was diagnosed with early stage breast cancer and for some mysterious reason, that diagnose cleansed all the defiance and stubbornness right out of me. I have been sober, sane, safe and truly free ever since. I have finally, finally surrendered all of my life to the control, protection and love of my HP. He/She surrounds me with love, acceptance and protection every minute of every day.

The more I surrender, the better my life goes. My HP has sent me little miracles on an almost daily basis that remind me that someone with way more power than my defiant-self is way better at running my life than I ever dreamed I could be. HP send me proof over and over, to remind me that someone stronger, safer and more loving than anyone or anything else in my life has me safe within His/Her grasp. These miracles are reminders to me that as long as I am working my program to the best of my ability, as long as I am surrendering my entire life, my entire existence into HP’s hands all is not just okay. It is amazing and wonderful in ways undreamed of by me. And because I am sane and sober I am able to notice these miracles instead of being bogged down by the fog of too much food, especially sugar, which I have finally given up since my diagnose.

I certainly don’t wish cancer on anyone, but for me, it has turned into a wonderful gift. It has turned a once defiant, willful child into a grateful sane, sober, safe and free compulsive eater who has had her compulsion removed on a daily basis. It has healed a year-long rift with my eldest daughter; it has made a great relationship with my husband even greater. It has also let me know how much I am loved in this world which, because I spent so much time in my various compulsions, I never knew before. For that I am extremely grateful, and I am especially grateful for the love, prayers and support of my OA fellowship and that I kept coming back to meetings even when my disease tried repeatedly to get me to quit. I kept coming back until the miracles promised began to happen. However, that couldn’t happen until I surrendered my defiance and switched to a total and complete reliance on my HP...I wish you all, the blessing of the same.

~Marj M-M

Please consider writing for the next issue, due out May 2014. (Deadline May 4th)
Send your writing to newsletter@oasouthernaz.org
(or give me your hard copy at a meeting).

Original art and poetry are welcomed, as are OA related announcements.
Submissions can be printed with your first name only, or as “anonymous.”

Articles may be edited for space reasons. All personal stories in this newsletter express the experience of the individual member and not of OA as a whole.

Any other OA group is welcome to reprint an article without permission.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Disclaimer on last issue's crossword puzzle It seems the version I submitted to you for the newsletter was missing another box for question 1 on top and question 13 on the bottom and made me shift the right side up one box. Anyway, no one could finish the puzzle the way it was presented! ~ Chris N.

Here are the answers: 3 progression, 6 miracle, 8 faith, 9 unmanageable, 10 serenity, 12 principle, 13 balance, 14 anonymity, 15 sponsor, 16 admitted, AND 1 acceptance, 2 honesty, 4 omnipresence, 5 humble, 7 awakening, 11 unity, 13 boundary, 14 amends

12th Step Opportunities with PIPO

- OA has been invited to send a few members to an event on March 22 from 9 to 3 at the San Xavier Rec Center near the Mission. The event is called "NOT SIMPLY RED" and is being put on by a group of agencies active in providing services and health care to Native American people. *(All people are welcome to come and learn more about HIV/AIDS. Free testing is available, too.)* We need two or three more OA members help us carry our message of hope to the people who attend this event. NO...we are not about AIDS....but this is a comprehensive event in so many ways and the organizers are very interested in helping suffering people find all the help they need....in every area of need.....and compulsive eating causes people everywhere to suffer.
- Looking for a way to do some 12 step work on a Thursday morning...with a few other OA members? Join us in making literature packets!!!! Fun and easy and great service! It is a PIPO committee event. Thursday March 20 from 10 to 11:30 midtown. Hoping to assemble 250 packets.

For more information, or to help, please contact Mollie at 271-3754 or hunter8040@yahoo.com.

WANTED IN TUCSON

OA members who are interested in working the 4th step in a safe committed group.

Meet weekly for approximately 4 weeks.
Time and place to be TBD by group.

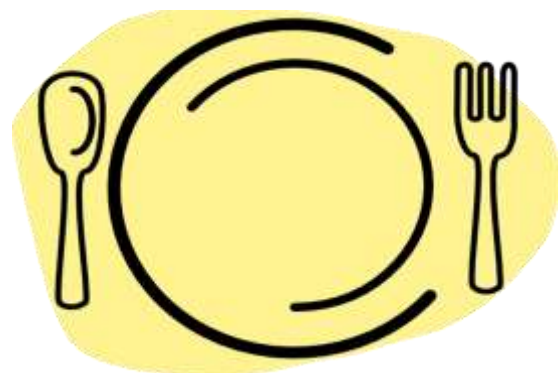
Call Suzanne F. at 520- 477-6166
and leave message.

Speaker, Workshop and Sharing on Abstinence

Saturday, April 5

10:30-3:30

200 S Alvernon Way, Tucson



From Defiance to Reliance: A Lifelong Journey

I used to say my middle name was rebellion. Then I learned my first name is derived from a Hebrew name which means “rebellious,” and from a Greek root which means “bitter.” That makes sense to me: bitterness breeds rebellion breeds guilt breeds defiance... If I can’t live up to (or “down to”?) what others expect me to do, or be, I sometimes see my only other option as rebellion. So now I guess I have to say that my *first* name is Rebellion, which is just another word for Defiance.

My rebelliousness did help me avoid becoming even more enmeshed than I already was with some very unhealthy people. Of course, I tended to take a 180-degree turn away from whatever or whoever I was trying to avoid, and, as many of us have learned, “180 degrees from crazy is still crazy.” Now that I’m an adult (well, chronologically, anyway), I don’t need those defenses anymore. Most of the family crazies are dead, and I don’t seem to attract unhealthy people as much as I used to. So now I get to try and unlearn some more old outdated defenses.

Am I defying my Higher Power’s will for my life? Hell, yeah! That’s scary stuff, and I run away on a regular basis. Even though I know God’s plan works better, I get scared, and check out for a while. Not with food so much anymore, but I still have my share of other escapes and addictions. Fortunately, I don’t have to do it perfectly, and seem to be able to pick up where I left off. Good thing, too: if I had to re-start my Fourth Step every time I lost my nerve and took a break from it, I’d be in big trouble!

Am I resistant to my sponsor’s suggestions? Or do I just not call her when I’m afraid she’ll say something I don’t want to hear? Rationalizing that I don’t want to bother her, afraid that she can’t handle it, afraid that she’ll drop me as a sponsee if I’m too high-maintenance, afraid to let another person get that close to me or know me too well? But she tells me I’m *supposed* to “use” her. Just like I’ve told sponsees: I *am* one of the tools of the program—there to be used. And when I do call her, she encourages me to find my own way, and somehow inspires in me the hope and trust I need for the step work I need to do, and the changes I need to make.

Am I resistant to change in any way? Hell, yeah! Because life is bad enough already and I *know* that any change will make it worse. And just writing that down helps, because I know it’s not *always* true. OA has been a big change, and it’s made my life immeasurably better, not worse. And when I switched insurance plans, and obsessively second-guessed myself into thinking that had been a mistake, I’ve found that (so far!), it’s actually been less expensive than the old plan. So, okay, not *always* true.

Am I relying on HP for the power to overcome my addictions? Well, sometimes. More often than I used to. Often enough that I’ve received the gift of abstinence, am maintaining a healthy weight, and am no longer obsessed with food. Often enough that I’m sometimes able to notice before I default into unhealthy old behaviors, and stop and pray “HP, please remove this _____, and show me what you would have me do (or be) instead.” Or, if I’m not that clear-headed, “Help!” works, too.

Am I relying on HP’s guidance for this day, to live it soberly and fully? I seem to be doing okay with abstinence. But I also want a life of sane and happy usefulness, and it’s difficult to be very sane, or useful, if I’m obsessing over, or engaging in, compulsive behaviors. Back to Step One, each and every day! And, when I’m feeling overwhelmed, praying for the “next right thing” often helps me to let go of obsessive worrying and just get on with it, already.

Am I remembering that my own power and guidance gets me into trouble? I’m being reminded of that again and again as I work on my current Fourth Step, especially in the area of relationships. Oh, yeah, what messes I’ve made! And, in the true spirit of an inventory, I can also see some progress, most of it due to this (and other) Twelve-Step program(s), my loving Higher Power, and my awesome sponsor (who promises me she’s not planning to die before I’m ready to do my Fifth Step! I’ll bet you’d never guess I have a long list of fears!) So I guess I’m in for the Long Haul. If nothing else, I want to see how it all turns out, and who or what I’m capable of becoming...