

## Story Three - Overweight her Whole Life: 90 Pound Loser

*Southeastern Arizona Intergroup Web Excerpt*

[www.oasouthernaz.org](http://www.oasouthernaz.org)

I'm one of those people that was born a compulsive overeater. I was a chubby baby, a chubby kid, a chubby teen. I actually wore clothes called Chubettes for young girls. Most everyone in my family was overweight, and we ate whatever we wanted in whatever quantities we wanted. Everyone hid food. We didn't like thin people; they thought they were better than we were. That was my start to life.

My family also drank a lot of alcohol. I had done quite a bit of drinking in high school; in college I started smoking pot. I found a crowd who liked to "party" the way I did. I didn't gain more weight for many years as my addiction to compulsive overeating took a back seat to drinking and drugs.

I married an alcoholic who physically abused me. We moved across the country and I stayed with him until one night he slashed my clothes. I needed those clothes to look ok, so I finally left that husband and went out on my own. Today I know that I cared more about the clothes (and the illusion they provided) than I did for myself. I thought for a long time that my husband was the problem; I soon found out that I was the problem. I made my first attempt at a weight loss program, dieted and did aerobics, looked the best I had ever looked. But it was getting harder and harder to pass for ok. I was falling apart. I was drinking and doing cocaine every day.

In May of 1989 I checked myself into a detox program. At 5 feet tall and 200 pounds I was not the average cocaine addict! I got sober and dieted again. My sponsor suggested I try OA; I went to my first meeting in November 1989. I don't remember anything except that someone gave me the grey sheet during the break and that I planned the binge I'd have after the meeting. I dieted up and down for a few years, losing 30 pounds on a crash diet and gaining 40 back. In 1994 my current husband proposed marriage. I was so happy; I met the love of my life. He's a good man who treats me like gold! I didn't want to be a 2X bride, so I tried one of the pay programs, tried OA again, I couldn't stay abstinent for one day. That's when I knew I was powerless, but I still would not surrender. My wedding dress was a 3X.

After the wedding and honeymoon I decided to try an outpatient treatment program. I never once got abstinent, lied about it and sounded really good because I knew program-speak, but I still hadn't surrendered. During this time I asked someone to sponsor me. She told me to call my food in to her every day and I never called her again. I couldn't do that! I had practiced secrecy since I was a little girl, and I was terrified to come out of the closet.

I bounced in and out of OA and stayed sugar-free (and fat) for many years. In January 1999 I was on a committee of people I didn't know well. They brought a cake for my birthday and I decided a piece of cake wouldn't hurt. I was too full of pride to tell the truth and I didn't have a program, so falling was easy. I went on a 6-month binge in which I ate bags of candy every day. I was physically sick, depressed, thought about suicide and thought seriously about homicide more than once. I hated myself. I would get up in the morning and ask god for help and then go to the store and buy the stuff. I wanted the pain to stop but I didn't really want to stop overeating.

I was so powerless. I believed I would never get abstinent again. I began to ask god to help me accept myself just the way I was. I also made up a prayer, based on a reading on the For Today: "God, please help me surrender compulsive overeating and everything it means to me. I trust you to replace it with something incomparably better." That's how my recovery began.

Since that time I have attended OA meetings on a regular basis and I have a program. I have had times of slipping, but I have admitted it and got back on track. I am 90 pounds lighter than that day in 1999. That's a big deal, but I got a lot more. I got a real faith in a higher power. I got a group of friends who share my compulsion and we share our lives. I finally got it that I would never be perfect and that expecting perfection gave me a built-in excuse to be a failure. Today I am just another compulsive overeater, willing to work the program of OA and stay abstinent one day at a time.