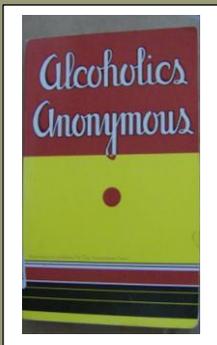


DESERT RECOVERY

July August 2013

Southern Arizona
Intergroup of
Overeaters
Anonymous



How can the Big Book apply to an overeater?

The Big Book, the solution to the problem, the “how to manual” to rid ourselves of compulsive overeating. It holds so much wisdom in each paragraph.

Yet I was not an instant follower of the Big Book. Yes, I admitted that I was powerless over food – that my life had become unmanageable. Yes, I came to believe that a Power greater than myself could restore me to sanity. And I even made a decision to turn my will and my life over to the care of God, as I understood Him.

But, really? Read the Big Book? I was not an alcoholic. My problem was not as great as an alcoholic’s. I could not comfortably substitute “overeater” for alcoholic. I did not get it when people said “Read the Big Book.” I was not ready. First, I had to develop a little humility. Then I had to accept that my compulsive overeating was not just a “problem,” but a disease.

After being in the Program about a year, a new sponsor suggested I read the Big Book. And guess what? The parallels to my life as a compulsive overeater were amazing. I can now see myself in each paragraph. And the Big Book has given me Step by Step Instructions for Recovery.

~Anonymous

There is a Solution

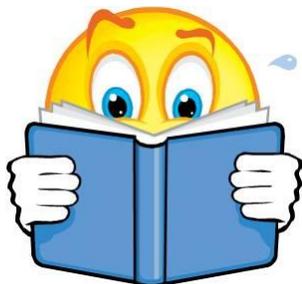
I had been a voracious reader of all manner of self-help books in an attempt to find relief from my mental and emotional distress but had found no relief until I read the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous. I immediately identified my relationship with food and the physical/mental addiction as being the same as theirs. In those early days we OA's always changed the word “alcohol” to “food” and “alcoholic” to “compulsive overeater” and it made perfect sense to me from my very first reading. I identified with the selfishness, the resentments, fears and the life out of control due to my obsession with excess food. The solution offered seemed unobtainable at first, but I held onto to OA because I could see in others that OA was working for them.

I firmly believe the only reason I am still in OA, still working the steps and still abstinent is because I read the Big Book over and over and over, as suggested by those AA’s. I have worked the suggested 12 steps over and over and have used everything in the first 164 pages that I needed to move my life in a positive forward motion one day at a time.

I am so grateful for the Big Book and for my life as it is today because of it.

~Michele

A.A. Big Book Reflections



***The Big Book tells me
I have to replace
the food
with the Steps.***

Three weeks ago (OK, maybe four) I was asked me to write what I like about the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous. ‘Piece of cake,’ I thought- especially to a compulsive overeater like me! I have been sitting in front of a blank screen ever since, with short breaks for abstinent meals and meetings.

How can I choose one single part from a book that literally saved my life?

The Big Book changed my life from the very first time I read it. I will never forget the relief I felt when I read The Doctor’s Opinion and learned that I am not weak-willed or stupid like I always thought I was. That I have a twofold disease. That I will never be cured of this disease. That as much as I want to, I could never stop eating unless I came to believe in a Higher Power- and that Power can be whatever I want it to be, so long as it isn’t me.

All I can say is that the Big Book is my textbook. It’s my life-manual. First, I had to learn what my problem is. My problem is described in Step 1, which is discussed in The Doctor’s Opinion and Bill’s Story. Step 1 has two parts to it. First, I need to understand that I am powerless over food.

This is described on page 44: “If, when you honestly want to, you find you cannot quit entirely, or if when drinking, you have little control over the amount you take, you are probably alcoholic”. Second I have to understand that “my life is unmanageable” not when I am bingeing. It’s when you take away my food, my crutch, I lose it. I don’t know what to do! The Big Book tells me I have to replace the food with The Steps.

Only after I know what the problem is can I start working on the solution. I can’t work at a solution to a problem if I don’t understand the problem. So, once I understand Step 1, I can move on to work on the solution. In my Big Book, the solution is described in Step 2. This is described in chapters 2, 3 and 4. Once I have a solution I can understand the Program of Action which will bring about that solution. The Program of Action is described in Steps 3-12. The Big Book covers those Steps in chapters 5-7.

For me the rest of the chapters and personal stories are the icing on the cake (pun intended, sorry). Like the Traditions, those later chapters teach me how to behave in the real world. The world that is not protected by the Twelve Steps and the Twelve Traditions.

~ Anonymous

Service is one of OA’s tools of recovery, and service is slimming! Members may serve their groups by attending meetings, talking to newcomers, putting out literature, or putting chairs away. If they meet the requirements, they may hold service positions at the group level, Intergroup level, or beyond. **Nominations are needed ASAP** to fill the board position of **Secretary** and committee chair positions of Twelfth Step Within (TSW), PIPO (Public Information/Professional Outreach), Lifeline/Resource Library, and Special Events. See <http://oasouthernaz.org> for more information.



Surprise! The AA Big Book Speaks to Me!

I came into OA 16 months ago desperate to get off the merry-go-round of yo-yo dieting. I had come into OA with very little knowledge of what a 12 step program of recovery was. I had a prejudice against AA because of an experience I had many years ago when I visited an AA meeting with my Dad. I had a lot to learn about myself and this new program of OA.

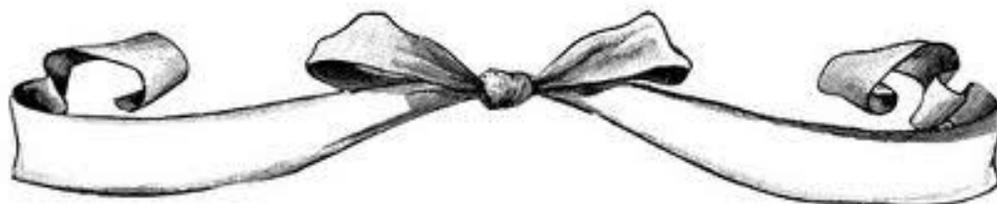
Finally, after 6 months of struggling through without a sponsor, I finally gave up my control and right away I was led to my sponsor. My sponsor slowly introduced me to the AA Big Book. She and my Higher Power have opened up the AA Big Book for me and helped me see how it is relevant to my recovery program. We have recently completed reading the 11 chapters of the AA Big Book.

The last chapter- A Vision for You was especially meaningful to me. I have underlined many passages in pink! pg.152 "Yes, there is a substitute and it is vastly more than that. It is a fellowship in AA (OA). There you will find release from care, boredom and worry. Your imagination will be fired. Life will mean something at last. The most satisfactory years of your existence lie ahead. Thus we find the fellowship, and so will you." In the next few pages I read some of Bill W. and Dr. Bob's stories and my sponsor told me more about their beginning struggles.

I found so much hope and many promises in this chapter. On the last page- 164, these words spoke to me. "Our book is meant to be suggestive only. We realize we know only a little. God will constantly disclose more to you and to us. Ask Him in your morning meditation what you can do each day for the man who is still sick. The answers will come if your own house is in order..... See to it that your relationship with Him is right and great events will come to pass for you and countless others. This is the Great Fact for us."

Read it and see if it speaks to you.

~ Annlee



The **AA Big Book** is what started the amazing 12-step process. It was the only tool OA had in the beginning. There is much wisdom to be learned from it, both in the instructional chapters and the recovery stories. If you haven't read it lately, I hope this issue will encourage you read it again. If you've never read it, I hope you decide to start.

Because of your generous sharing, I received more stories than would fit in this newsletter. This is obviously a topic of interest to many in our fellowship. So look forward to more about the Big Book in the September/October issue! And if you haven't shared about your favorite passage(s) and would like to, please submit your writings by September 5, 2013. Original poetry and art is also welcomed!

Submissions can be printed with your first name only, or as "anonymous." Articles may be edited for space reasons.

Thank you for all the amazing submissions!

~Angela, Newsletter Chair



***“So our troubles,
we think, are
basically of our
own making.”
(Alcoholics
Anonymous, 4th ed.,
p 62)***

Relapse Warnings from the Big Book

I have found it useful to sit with a copy of the Big Book and find these and underline them. An interesting exercise and a very useful reminder of how sneaky relapse can be!!

Some of the mental states and warning signs that precede a relapse into compulsive overeating can be found in the Big Book of Alcoholics anonymous, pages 35-43.

- Not accepting a spiritual remedy
- Failing to enlarge a spiritual life
- Ignoring or denying feelings
- Getting into slippery places, especially when not in a fit spiritual condition
- Thinking “a little can’t hurt me”
- Ignoring reasons for NOT eating compulsively
- Using trivial excuses
- Deliberately eating compulsively and feeling justified by nervousness, anger, worry, depression, jealousy, etc.
- Giving little thought to the terrible consequences that might ensue
- Getting a thrill out of compulsive eating despite warnings
- Continuing to overeat despite warnings
- Thinking it does not apply to me (“I’m not that bad!”)
- Telling myself that it won’t happen again
- Not admitting that I am a compulsive overeater

~Suzanne

Just for Today

Lately I’ve been struggling with staying in the present, and praying the 3rd step prayer sounds like giving up the rest of my life – especially because the last word is “always.” I can’t do “always.” God can handle eternity, I cannot. I can only handle today. Tomorrow, I may choose to return to the food, but today I am seeking God’s power to not do so. Tomorrow I may snatch back my defects of character (“difficulties”) but today I set them down. Tomorrow I may act selfishly, but today I will be of service. Tomorrow I may live in my own will, but for today, I’ll surrender to God’s. So here’s how I have been praying it:



God, I offer myself to Thee TODAY
 To build with me and to do with me as Thou wilt TODAY
 Relieve me of the bondage of self TODAY
 That I may better do Thy will TODAY
 Take away my difficulties TODAY
 That victory over them TODAY
 May bear witness to those I would help TODAY
 Of Thy Power, Thy Love and Thy Way of Life
 May I do Thy will TODAY!

~ Anonymous

New Meeting in NW Tucson

Keep it Simple Step Study Meeting Wed 630-730 pm
Mountain View Retirement village -- 2nd Floor (follow signs)
7900 N La Cañada Drive (at McGee)



**Congratulations to SARA J. on her
1 year OA birthday June 16 !!**



Friday Speaker Meetings ~

3rd Friday of the month at FRESH START 730 AM at St Frances Cabrini -
July 19 and August 16

1st Friday of the month at LIVING IN THE SOLUTION 1030 AM at
Streams in the Desert August 2nd

Retreats & Conventions -

Aug 16-18 – TUCSON - Fall Region Convention and Assembly
Oct 4-6, Northern New Mexico – Annual Silent retreat
Nov 1-3, St. David –Annual Fall Retreat



**For more events
and details,
visit
oasouthernaz.org.**

The Call



Food is calling out to me. It is calling out my name.
The food in the fridge, the food in the pantry, the food in the garage
All are whispering, "Paula, Paula, Paula."
All are calling, "Paula, Paula, Paula!"
All are shouting, "Paula, Paula, Paula!!"
I try to ignore them. It is about as useless as ignoring our kittens when they are meowing for wet food.
I text my girlfriend for help.
I wait for an answer, and wait, with the food jabbering my name.
Meanwhile, I make some phone calls to friends in program, but no one is home.
The food is chattering my name noisily...
I start to read a book and fall asleep.
After a while the phone rings, waking me up. It is a friend in program, returning my call.
We talk for a while, the food voices quiet down.
I hear recovery calling my name.

~Paula T.



All personal stories 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

My Experience with the Big Book

According to the foreword of the first edition to *Alcoholics Anonymous*, the purpose of the Big Book is "to show other alcoholics *precisely how we have recovered.*" I am a compulsive overeater, not an alcoholic, so why should I read the Big Book? Like alcoholism, compulsive eating is a disease that can be treated with a spiritual solution. The foreword to the third edition says, "The basic principles of the A.A. program, it appears, hold good for individuals with many different lifestyles" and if I look for how I can identify rather than compare, I can see my food behaviors in the descriptions of alcohol use. The spiritual program explained in the Big Book has worked for millions of people over the 74 years since its first publication and fortunately, I was desperate enough when I walked in the doors to be willing to try taking the steps "which are suggested as a program of recovery" (p. 59, *Fourth Edition*).

My first exposure to the Big Book was when I attended an open AA meeting with a recovering alcoholic. I heard someone read from page 24: "*The fact is that most alcoholics, for reasons yet obscure, have lost the power of choice in drink. Our so-called will power becomes practically nonexistent. We are unable, at certain times, to bring into our consciousness with sufficient force the memory of the suffering and humiliation of even a week or a month ago. We are without defense against the first drink.*" I knew nothing about alcoholism, nothing about recovery, and nothing about twelve step meetings, but I instantly thought that if alcohol was changed to food, it was exactly how I was feeling. I had recently lost a significant amount of weight and struggled to keep it off, but I seemed to have no choice when it came to bingeing. This chance encounter was the miracle that changed my life.

Because of that first experience, I was open to reading and discussing the first 164 pages with my sponsor at her suggestion. It was a great opportunity to discuss the program, get to know one another, and provide a course of action for working the steps. I have since done this same thing with each of my sponsees and learn more each time I read the Big Book with someone new. The Big Book put into words everything I had felt and what I had experienced, but much more eloquently than I ever could. Learning that my way of living was not working was humbling, and remaining open-minded and teachable allowed me to move forward in learning a better way to live my life. The first 164 pages explained my disease to me, how it worked, and how to learn to live in recovery.

~Anonymous

"...remaining open-minded and teachable allowed me to move forward in learning a better way to live my life."

DAY	TIME	GROUP NAME & NUMBER	LOCATION	CONTACT & IR	NOTES
SUNDAY	11:00 AM	Miracles Happen Literature/Varied Format #23957	4180 W. Sweetwater Drive Look for signs	Junardi 306-8225 IR: Cris P. Crispoole1@gmail.com	WC
SUNDAY	5:30 PM	Hope, Love, & Acceptance Varied Format: Tradition, Step and 1.5 hour Big Book Study #45377	Streams in the Desert Lutheran Church / Classroom A in Fellowship Hall 5360 E. Pima	IR: Susan C. 747-5018	WC
SUNDAY	5:30 PM	Seeking the Power 11th Step Meeting #49744	UMC 1501 N. Campbell Room E/F (S end of Café)	Janet G. 795-7492 IR: OPEN	Fragrance Free* WC Parking
MONDAY	5:30 PM	Going Sane Big Book Study Speaker 1st Monday #39507	First United Methodist Church, Carillon Room (4th & Park) 915 E 4th St. (Park behind church, enter lot from 4th St.)	Felice G. 891-8900 IR: Jonathan 609-0939	WC
MONDAY	7:00 PM	Far East Abstinence / Step Study #40522	Abounding Grace Church 2450 S. Kolb Rd. // N. of Golf Links on W. side	Debbie F. 312-7597 IR: Barbara 751-7801	WC
TUESDAY	10:45 AM	NW Tender Solutions OA 12&12/Sharing #40963	Dove of Peace Lutheran Church 665 W. Roller Coaster Rd. West of Oracle Rd.	Neva S. 877-8420 IR: Barb 229-6178	WC
TUESDAY	5:30 PM	Tucson Men's Sanity #49144	931 N. Fifth Avenue 1 1/2 blocks south of Speedway	Jim D. 250-0509 IR: OPEN	
WED.	11:30 AM	Welcome Home Sharing #04330	Streams in the Desert Lutheran Church / Ginser Hall S. Side of Church 5360 E. Pima	Sue R. 358-7358 IR: Beverly 628-8580	Beverage Only
WED.	6:30 PM	Keep it Simple Step Study	Mt. View Retirement Village 7900 N. La Cañada Dr, 2nd floor	Lana 270-0702	NEW MEETING
THURSDAY	10:45 AM	Seeking the Spiritual Path Book Study #00439	Oro Valley Urgent Care, Comm. Ed. Room 13101 N. Oracle Rd.	Diane 638-5583 IR: Paula T. 742-6657	
THURSDAY	5:30 PM	Over and Under Meeting Lifeline/Discussion #50226	St. Frances Cabrini Church, Ed. Bldg., Rm 5 (E of church) 3201 E. Presidio	Beth M. 577- 8745/349-0810 IR: Terre J. 977-1960	WC
THURSDAY	7:00 PM	Big Book Study #47942	Abounding Grace Church 2450 S. Kolb Rd. // N. of Golf Links on W. side	IR: OPEN	WC

DAY	TIME	GROUP NAME & NUMBER	LOCATION	CONTACT & IR	NOTES
FRIDAY	7:30 AM	Fresh Start #49600	St. Frances Cabrini Church, Ed. Bldg., Rm 5 (E of church) 3201 E. Presidio	Jim D. 250-0509 IR: Sara J. 343-3090	Fragrance Free* Svc Dogs Only
FRIDAY	10:30 AM	Living in the Solution Sharing #14251	Streams in the Desert Lutheran Church / Room A in Fellowship Hall 5360 E. Pima	Elisa R. 881-1670 IR: Sally H. 795-1022	Fragrance Free*
SATURDAY	9:00 AM	Far East Saturday Group Varied Format #45696	Eastside Covenant Church 551 N. Camino Seco (N. of Broadway)	Sue L. 885-2861 IR: Mike A. 445-6630	WC
SATURDAY	9:00 AM	Saturday Morning Study Group #12117	St. James Methodist Church 3255 N Campbell (N. of Ft. Lowell; W side of Campbell)	Chris B. 887-7188 IR: Barbara M. 327-2709	WC
GREEN VALLEY					
TUESDAY	7:45 AM	Discussion #49982	St. Francis of the Valley Church 600 S. La Canada Dr. Library	Marj. M. 248-9043 IR: Wanda 647-9076	WC
SATURDAY	9:00 AM	Step/Tradition Study #34898	St. Francis of the Valley Church 600 S. La Canada Dr. Library	Marj M. 248-9043 IR: OPEN	WC
SIERRA VISTA					
MONDAY	6:30 PM	Monday Night Miracles Literature Study #17537	Church of Christ 815 El Camino Real Rm 2	Jan F. 678-0369 IR: Jan F. 678-0369	WC
SATURDAY	11:00 AM	Varied format #40592	Church of Christ 815 El Cssue. o Real Rm 2	Jan F. 678-0369 IR:Nancy R. 227-3817	WC
PATAGONIA					
TUESDAY	6:30 PM	Patagonia Tuesday OA #50474	United Meth. Church 387 McKeown Ave.	Michelle S. 520-604-6811 IR: Leanne 774-521-8932	
THURSDAY	6:30 PM	Patagonia OA #51744	United Meth. Church 387 McKeown Ave.	Adrienne 520-404-3490 IR: OPEN	
BENSON					
TUESDAY	4:00 PM	Benson Tuesday Rotating Format #47074	Sobriety House 225 E. 6th Street	Peggy 520-456-1676 IR Darlyn 505-681-7478	WC

IR=Intergroup Representative // WC=Wheelchair accessible // **No parking fees at UMC on Sundays

*In consideration of members who suffer from allergies, please refrain from wearing cologne/perfume.

PLEASE NOTE: Meetings on temporary hiatus & in Yuma not included for space reasons in this issue . Complete listings can be found at <http://oasouthernaz.org/>.