

Desert Recovery

**Southeastern Arizona Intergroup
of Overeaters Anonymous**

June•1997

P.O. Box 43221, Tucson, AZ 85733-3221 • 620-9055

The OA Preamble: Overeaters Anonymous is a Fellowship of individuals who, through shared experience, strength and hope, are recovering from compulsive overeating. We welcome everyone who wants to stop eating compulsively. There are no dues or fees for members; we are self-supporting through our own contributions, neither soliciting nor accepting outside donations. OA is not affiliated with any public or private organization, political movement, ideology or religious doctrine; we take no position on outside issues. Our primary purpose is to abstain from compulsive overeating and to carry this message of recovery to those who still suffer.

Service Positions Available!

Intergroup has the following chairperson positions open. Requirements include that you are working the 12 steps, have knowledge of the traditions, and that you have intergroup experience.

Special Events: Plan and implement special events.

Telephone Committee: Recruit members to return phone messages from the answering service.

Professional Institutions and Public Information: Maintain monthly liaison with Sierra Tucson, and maintain contacts with the community.

For more information contact Fred. C. at 748-8108.

Intergroup Update

Every wonder what really happens at those monthly SEAZ Intergroup meetings? Come and see for yourself sometime! Everyone is welcome to attend—it's at 10:30 a.m. on the third Saturday of each month at Tucson General Hospital, 3838 N. Campbell Ave. (Second Floor, board room).

The Intergroup board, committee chairs, and representatives all attend and discuss business. However, only the representatives vote. This ensures that the wishes of the groups and OA as a whole are carried out, not the wishes of any small group or influential person.

If you've been wondering about giving service at the Intergroup level, why not volunteer to be an alternate Intergroup rep? Only groups with IRs present get to have their say in what's decided. During the summer, this could be an especially helpful service, and it's a great way to experience Intergroup meetings without the full commitment of a service position. Hope to see you there!

The next newsletter will come out in September, so you've got a little time to think about what you'd like to submit. The deadline will be around the first of the month, and I'll have your intergroup rep remind you as the time draws near. Please call or write with any suggestions or input. Elizabeth Campbell, P.O. Box 13894, Tucson, AZ 85732
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Surrender, not compliance, is this OAer's secret to success

My personality is clearly similar to that of the alcoholic. When I read the *Big Book* and the *12x12*, I identify absolutely. I believe that the difference is only in our choice of substance and its subsequent effects; our sick personalities are the same.

On what do I base this view? First, as the spoiled baby in desires and needs. Behaving as "her majesty the baby" I expect the world to stop and heed my every utterance. After all, my older sister and brother gave me their undivided attention and showed me off to their friends. Why doesn't everyone see how exceptional I am?

Another "alcoholic" attribute I possess is a low tolerance for frustration. I want what I want when I want it. When blocked from attaining it, I am vociferously vocal or sulkily silent.

Last, I become paralyzed and almost catatonic when it comes to decision making. The least important choices are the hardest.

The remedy for these shortcomings lies in surrender to the 12-step program. There was a time when I complied, but I did not surrender. I followed a food plan, made phone calls, read program literature, and attended meetings to please other OA members. But compliance is NOT surrender and can even be a block to surrender. When complying, I was deceiving not only others but myself. I played the role of recovering compulsive overeater and did not realize I was only halfhearted until I found myself back in the kitchen wondering how I got there.

I identified with the alcoholic; but I stubbornly fought the experience of other OAs before finally admitting I was more like them than different. Food knocked me senseless—or into my senses—I finally gave

up unconditionally, without reservations. I accepted that the program of Overeaters Anonymous is the path to recovery for me. I am grateful to be walking on this path one day at a time and now resisting the impulse to look back to see how much time has accumulated.

Her majesty the baby has been humbled. Higher Power controls the world which

includes me. Higher Power knows what is best for other people. Other people's behavior is not my business. I can relate to other people as a member of the human race, not better than, not less than, anyone else. The outcome of this is that I have lost a load of loneliness.

My low frustration tolerance changed as I discovered that easy really does do it. I also learned that what looks like a block in my path could be transformed into a stepping stone. If I yield to what is in front of me, I may see a better path. Now I can take things in stride. I can observe life clearly without necessarily reacting to it.

Where once I was unable to take action, I now respond to the creative urges that come from within, trusting them as God-given. Through my day-to-day experience of living the 12 Steps, my old compulsive personality has undergone a radical change. When my will is surrendered to the Higher Power, I feel relaxed and free of tension. I accept life as it comes. I cooperate with others. I am open to circumstances and eager to receive their lessons. By every possible criterion, the Higher Power's way is worthy of my surrender.

—Judith H.

"Food knocked me senseless—or into my senses—I finally gave up unconditionally, without reservations."

Starvation

The disease of food addiction is one wherein the host ultimately dies a slow starvation while the parasite within feeds on all sorts of unGodly things. If not my hunger, then, what? Fear and resentment. But resentment is only fear masquerading as anger. And anger is always roused by fear of danger to that which seems most fragile and vulnerable. And so I was enticed to build a fortress around my heart to "protect" that fragile Child of the Divine. Yet as I raged without and feared within, the stealthed enemy (parasite) had long since made its home beneath the covers of my infant crib—and ensorcelled me to provide an endless stream of mother's milk that never reached my starving child. If not for the grace of God received in a very real way through Overeaters Anonymous, I might have died of starvation, much like Kafka's Hunger Artist who with his final breath revealed the tragic truth of his starvation: "I couldn't find the food I like to eat." For without the intimacy of love there is only starvation. And without the courage to lay bare the gateway through the fortress around my heart, there is only fear—no matter what the party clothes it chooses to wear.

—Timothy



All roads lead to God

If you would have asked me at the age of seventeen what one needed to do to be close to God (and I DID care about those things at that age), I probably would have said something like, "Pray a lot, go to Church a lot, do good things for others, and lead an honest life." My experience, however, has not borne this out.

From the time I was about seventeen, I did most of the latter but with a much greater helping of heavy eating, smoking, spending, drinking, working, and lying. I did this for about ten years until I had wreaked havoc on my own life and the lives of those around me.

At the point of near death, God reached down and picked me up, took me in his arms, and brought me to OA. Never in my whole life previous, nor since, have I ever felt such a strong presence of God's hand in my life. In fact the times in recovery that I have been in the most pain have also been the times I have felt God's strong presence. That has been my experience of God.

But would I recommend this path to a seventeen year old? No, I think not. But I have come to believe that God would have me close to Him one way or another.

Try as I might, God won't let me stray far. Nudges, smiles, reminders, miracles. He employs so many things to remind me that I am His special one and that He has wonderful things in store for me. I just need to stay close, listen, and accept his will for me.

Oh, I try to build my own wonderful world of Special Gifts of my own choosing. I arrange, manipulate, plan, organize. But they never come out right. They don't meet my expectations, and they never come easy.

When I finally tire of having my own way, there's God patiently waiting, smile on his face, ready to walk with me down the more fulfilling path. A path often strewn with difficulties, but also with surprises and blessings beyond my wildest schemes.

—Anonymous