

Southeastern Arizona Intergroup of Overeaters Anonymous

DESERT RECOVERY

January – February 2010

<http://www.oasouthernaz.org>

Upcoming Events

LOCAL

Jan 23 Relapse Recovery Workshop
Jan 30 Tucson Public Info Event
Feb 6 Yuma Info Workshop
Feb 17 Unity Day, Sierra Vista

OUT-OF-TOWN

Jan 22-24 Winter Retreat ASDI
Feb 26-28 ... Texas 12-Step Convention
Mar 12-14 Region III Convention
Aug 13-15 Region III Convention
Aug 26-29 OA World Svc Convention

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Desert Recovery Newsletter

- 1) Deadline for next issue
March 1, 2010
- 2) Get your events listed or
submit an article
- 3) Receive the newsletter by e-
mail

Contact Beth M. at:
newsletter@oasouthernaz.org

2010: Beginning a New Decade

...One day at a Time (ODAT)

We admitted we were powerless over food – that our lives had become unmanageable.

At the beginning of this new year, I am reminded of the first step. Six months ago, when I walked into my first OA meeting, I certainly knew that my life had become unmanageable. It had been so for quite some time before I walked in that door, but I had never had the courage to let go of my tight controls and admit that I was quite powerless. Finally admitting to myself that I was really and truly powerless was a transcendent experience.

In that first meeting, I found myself overwhelmed by that truth. I struggled for every moment I was there to hold on, to maintain control of myself, my emotions, and my behavior. I did not want to embarrass myself or anyone in that room with a strong display of emotion and yet I could feel it bubbling up in me from nearly the first words of the meeting. All through that meeting, I had a constant inner monologue, telling myself to behave, to stay calm, to stay in control. In the last few minutes of the meeting, over the closing praying, I found myself at last bursting into tears. The ridged dam of my control was torn aside by the sheer reality of my powerlessness.

At the time, I was embarrassed but also relieved. I was deeply aware of the great weight lifted from my mental and physical self by that loss of false control. Losing that carefully constructed barrier allowed a wave of cleansing and healing knowledge to pass through my consciousness. As I became more aware of the knowledge passing into me, I found myself less and less embarrassed and more amazed at the powerful realization that I was indeed powerless. In the face of that truth, I could no more control my honest emotional reaction than I had been able to control my food or my life, and though at the time I did not understand it, I had my first moment of gratitude for my higher power.

Today, I continue to have moments when I struggle to admit I am powerless and to let go of my false control and let my higher power into my life. I will often send a quick and silent prayer to my higher power, asking for help to let go and for help to accept that I am powerless. Every time, my higher power answers, and I am reminded again that I am not alone, that in my willingness to admit I am powerless I have found the deep strength of OA. Today, even as I struggle, I am grateful to my higher power and for the fellowship of OA.

~Jocelyne W.

Did You Know?

Abstinence in OA was
Redefined in 2009?

Abstinence is the action of refraining from compulsive eating and compulsive food behaviors. Spiritual, emotional and physical recovery is the result of living the Overeaters Anonymous Twelve-Step program.



The Tools

At a recent meeting, I had a small revelation.

When the list of tools was read from **The Tools of Recovery** pamphlet, I noticed that they are listed in a specific order – a “suggested” order, perhaps.

While a newcomer’s first experience of OA is usually when they attend their first OA **meeting**, the meeting itself may not make much sense aside from that first experience of identifying oneself as a compulsive eater. Meetings start to make more sense after we have acquired and begun to use **a plan of eating**, which helps clear the body and mind of the anesthetic effect of food. And, once we ask someone to **sponsor** us and begin to work the steps, we find that meetings help us to better understand our disease and to learn how to live the new way of life embodied in the OA program of recovery.



From there, we can begin to acquire the skills needed to utilize **the telephone**,

writing, and OA/AA literature to deepen our understanding even further and begin to give back what we have been given through our experience in the fellowship.



Anonymity and service may seem simple on the surface, but they really aren’t the easiest concepts or skills at first try. It’s hard to learn not to gossip or interrupt others who are speaking, when those are behaviors that helped us feel “connected” or “a part of” in the past. And, recently, I have seen people relapse through doing too much service before they had finished their steps and were equipped to take on the responsibility and help others.

Abstinence and working the steps are the ways to recovery from compulsive eating. Using all of the tools in the order in which they are listed - *a plan of eating, sponsorship, meetings, the telephone, writing, anonymity and service* –helps us achieve that goal.

As I interact with newcomers to OA in this New Year, I will be suggesting the tools pamphlet, and that they try the tools in the order in which they are listed. **Get and use a plan of eating**, no matter how simple – my first was abstinence from my then “drug of choice”. It’s not written in stone. Mine has changed as more is revealed. **Get a sponsor**, and **work the steps** with them. **Go to lots of meetings** to share your own recovery and listen to that of others. Always remember that recovery is a process – one day at a time.

Keep coming back!



Thanks for letting me be of service.

Neva S. Chair, OA Intergroup of SEAZ

Looking Back: Some of my ‘A-has’ in OA

My abstinence anniversary is 1/1 so a new year always brings up memories of when I discovered the AA Big Book and 12 Steps for the first time. All the important concepts explained about the illness in the first 164 pages are as true for me today as they were then. "Either God is or he isn't, what is our choice to be" (pg53) really stopped me in my tracks.

Either God is or he isn't: What was our choice to be? That stopped me in my tracks.

And another of the most life-changing ones for me was, when resentful or hurt, "we invariably find that at some time in the past we have made decisions based on self (my emphasis) that put us in a position to be hurt" (pg62). Hey, that was eye-opening for a woman who had gone from one

victimization to another and could not figure a way out even after years of good therapy.

So when I got continuously abstinent, if I felt hurt by someone, I would walk backwards in my mind to find out how my self-centered actions had brought me to that place of pain. Usually worry that someone would not like me, or would leave me, I tolerated unacceptable behavior for my own reasons. I was responsible for what was happening in my life as an adult, no one else! OMG!! I realized the last thing I ever intended to do was step up to the plate in my own life, but I had to if I was ever going to recover from self-abusive compulsive eating. It seemed topsy-turvy, but how freeing it was to know that with continuous

abstinence, and clear-minded, I could create a life that I wanted rather than one thrust on me by old ideas. And, with continuous abstinence, I have cobbled together a pink life beyond anything I could have thought possible.

~Michele T.

Finding Strength in ‘Weakness’

In "Our invitation to You", it says that it is our weakness not our strength that binds us together.

During my first months in program, these words did not make any sense to me. I thought otherwise: that there was strength in our unity. Now, I see that our weaknesses--our common stories and our shared vulnerabilities are what bind us together and that these are our strength. Our weaknesses are our strengths because they create our fellowship.

We admit we are powerless when we take our first steps in OA. Just as we are powerless but not helpless, we are weak but we are strong in program. Before I came to OA, I valued my independence above all else. I believed that anything worth doing, I should be able to do on my own, without asking for help. Now, I believe that anything worth doing is worth doing any way that I can.

My weaknesses that I now see as my strengths are a reminder that I cannot recover alone, in isolation. This is a reminder that I am powerless without the guidance of a sponsor and the support of the fellowship.

~Wendy A.

Events: View all upcoming events on the OA Southern AZ website:

<http://oasouthernaz.org> Sorry but your new newsletter editor did not have enough time to do all of the events justice here.

But:: For a change of pace, how about this?!

WANTED: OA'ers for service positions of all sorts. Contact your nearest committee chair!

Email: oaseaz@oasouthernaz.org for information

OR! Visit our Call to Action Page at: <http://www.oasouthernaz.org/Docs/CallToAction.pdf>

Is FOOD a PROBLEM for you?



**OVEREATERS
ANONYMOUS®**
SOUTHEASTERN ARIZONA INTERGROUP

**Community
Information
Event**

Saturday, January 30, 2010 1:15 - 2:00 pm
2:15 - 3:00 pm **FREE**

www.oa.org Martha Cooper Public Library
Info? Call Janet 795-7492 1377 N. Catalina Ave.

Here Ye Here Ye: The Current OA meeting list is one click away:

<http://www.oasouthernaz.org/Docs/CurrentMeetingList.pdf>

ABSTAINING OR DIETING

(Reprinted from the March 1986 Tucson OA Newsletter) –

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
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, for our thin bodies are doomed to relapse. Moreover, our willpower will be less strong with subsequent efforts.
7. A diet ends.

Abstaining

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 occurs when we ... learn to deal with life.)
5. There are fewer thoughts of un-abstinent foods; 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 when we are thin, we are in a better place emotionally and spiritually. Our strength (though our higher power) grows as our efforts continue.
7. Abstinence, with God's help, is forever.

~Joyce T., Big Sky 301, 12/85

'Today I am grateful' 2009 OA Thank-a-thon

Today I am grateful for my disease of compulsive overeating, because through it I have been welcomed into this fellowship.

Today I am grateful because "after years of guilt over repeated failures to control my eating and weight, I now have a solution that works." (OA 12X12)

Today I am grateful for my abstinence which includes eating healthy meals and snacks at regular intervals, refraining from my binge foods and unhealthy behaviors, and choosing daily to not binge or restrict.

Today I am grateful for abstinence which has taught me to listen to my body so that I can learn and discover what is best for my body.

Today I am grateful for the freedom from obsession with food and weight. An obsession is something that preoccupies ones' thoughts-intensely or abnormally.

Today I am no longer so obsessed with sugar that I will dare you to dare me to eat candy off of the street or the floor, or to steal it from a store or a child.

I am grateful that today I will not steal your food which I have been obsessing over since I walked into your office/ kitchen/ pantry.

Mom, I'm grateful that today I will not steal your change to buy my latest sugary obsession. I will not steal your baking supplies or eat

Mom, Today I will not steal your change to buy my sugary obsession.

things that you had bought to make for dinner. I will not scoop the frosting out from the middle of the

layer cakes that you made for other people's birthdays.

I am grateful that today I will not sneak downstairs in the middle of the night the moment I think everyone else is in bed, to get the best dibs on leftovers or to eat a second, third or fourth dessert.

Today I am grateful that I no longer go to bed in pain and wake up in discomfort as the result of bingeing.

Today I am grateful for my family. Although my life story includes losing both of my parents by the age of 17, it also includes a loving, gracious step-mom and beloved siblings. Today I am grateful that I can be fully present in their lives because I am not drowned in my disease.

Today I am grateful that I do not need to hide my food



obsession from my mom, or anyone else in my life because today I am not obsessed, but I have the gift of abstinence and recovery.

Today I am grateful that I will not drive from grocery store to gas station to fast food chain to grocery store to gas station to fast food chain to fuel and feed my obsession.

Today I am grateful that it is no longer an option to obsess and cry and bemoan the size of my butt or the amount of cellulite on my thighs or the acne on my face. Today I am grateful for a strong and healthy body that does what it's made to do.

I am grateful that today I understand the concept of body dysmorphia; that I can see my body as it truly is. I am grateful that as I continue to grow in recovery I am gaining a clearer picture of what I truly look like. I'm grateful that it's much more beautiful than I ever thought.



Today I am grateful for the freedom from compulsion. A compulsion is an irresistible impulse.

I am grateful that today I will not buy, binge, throwaway, then buy, binge and throwaway certain foods.

Today I am grateful that it is no longer an option to shove half my

arm, combs, hair-brushes,

Today I am grateful I no longer go to bed in pain, and wake up in discomfort from bingeing.

toothbrushes, down my throat in attempts to make myself vomit. I am extremely grateful that even with frequent

tries; my attempts at bulimia were generally unsuccessful.

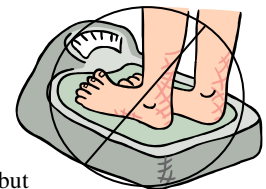
Today I am grateful that it's not an option to hurt and punish my body by compulsively exercising when I've eaten too much or look too fat in my bathing suit or look really good in my bathing suit.

Today I'm grateful that I have to eat my meals even if you're mad at me, even if I do something stupid, even if I'm sad or mad, or I feel ugly or cute.

I'm grateful that today restricting is not an option.

Today I'm grateful that I'm not allowed to waste my money on Dexatrim, Xenadrin, Slim Fast shakes and bars, or any other "diet aid."

Today I'm grateful that dieting is no longer part of my life, but



that I have discovered a plan of eating that meets the unique needs of my body.

I am grateful that I have been graced with a wise and gentle sponsor who did not require me to adopt her food plan or her abstinence, because the needs of her 60 year old body are very different than mine.

Today I am grateful for the many ways and many times that God has used my sponsor to tell me exactly the right thing at exactly the right time, to steer me toward the truth and guide me in the steps.



...to be continued!

~Rachel R.



Now Playing:
50 Years of OA Recovery
 2010 World Service Convention
 August 26-29, 2010 Los Angeles, CA USA



Mail Registration/Service Form to:
 World Service Office – Convention 2010
 PO Box 44020, Rio Rancho, New Mexico 87174-4020 USA
 For more information, please contact the WSO at 1-505-891-2664
 or email conventioninfo@oa.org. Register online at www.oa.org.

Convention Dates: August 26-29, 2010 Early Bird Registration Deadline: July 2, 2010

WC=Wheel Chair Accessible



Unity Day
 Saturday February 27, 2010

St. Francis Episcopal Church
 600 S La Canada Dr, Green Valley, AZ
 Chorus Room = watch for signs

The Suggested Donation is \$7.00

We eagerly look forward to another fantastic Unity Day

*Questions
 Marj (520) 248-9043 or Mary Anne (520) 393-0169*

10:30 - Registration
 10:45 Morning Session
 12:00 - 1:00 Lunch Break
 1:00 - 3:30 Speaker, Open Share, Closing

Please bring your lunch
 In the Spirit of Fellowship - We'll all eat together
 Green Valley will supply:
 Coffee, Tea, Water & Soda for a nominal amount

WELCOME FROM PEOPLEPC

St. James United Methodist Church
 3255 N. Campbell, Tucson

Saturday, January 9, 2010 from 1-5PM

AND

Saturday, January 23, 2010 from 1-5 PM

Plan to attend both days!

Have questions? Call Michelle S.
 at 520-604-6811 or email her at
seberrteachers@peoplepc.com