

Southern Arizona  
Intergroup of  
Overeaters  
Anonymous

May June 2013

# DESERT RECOVERY

## Abstinence

I recently attended IDEA Day (International Day Experiencing Abstinence) in Green Valley, AZ. Some of you may not be aware of it, but 2013 has been declared by OA World Service to be the “Year of Abstinence Awareness”. “Abstinence is the action of refraining from compulsive eating and compulsive food behaviors while working towards or maintaining a healthy body weight. Spiritual, emotional and physical recovery is the result of living the Overeaters Anonymous Twelve-Step program.” I guess the operative word for me in that definition is “working.” Abstinence is not something that we can just sit back and wait to be struck by – although that may occur once in a while. It is something I have to work for.

The question often comes up – do I have to be abstinent to work the Steps? Some people say we do. Others encourage beginning to work the Steps in spite of failing to maintain abstinence. Since, after many years in OA, I still often question whether I am abstinent (emotional stress makes even a planned meal feel like an exercise in compulsive eating).



I usually advocate working the Steps, and the Traditions, and using the Tools as much as possible in order to both achieve and maintain abstinence. It just makes sense to me. Isolating and keeping secrets, especially about my food and eating behaviors, can really get me in trouble. And, sometimes, I am downright rebellious – I just do not want to do

it. Giving in to the craving is usually the last step, after all of the twisted thinking has taken hold.

Have I been talking to my Higher Power lately? Do I ask for help direction? Am I afraid that HP will interfere with my eating? Do I look for opportunities to be of service to others – in and out of these rooms?

If you would like to receive this newsletter via email, please contact Angela at newsletter@oasouthernaz.org.

## Abstinence *(continued from page 1)*

Has there been a major transition or change in my life? Watch out. It's good time to increase my use of the tools, especially meetings, telephone and sponsorship.



Am I bored? Am I feeling like I don't fit in? Am I afraid? Have I forgotten how bad I felt the last time I overate/starved/purged? If I hear myself saying "it's just..." – look out! When I start seeing food as something other than food, I need to reach out and ask for help.

Am I blaming situations or others for my difficulties with food and with life? Am I being conscious of my food while I eat or am I distracting myself with other activities (television, reading)?

Finally, I want to share something else that I'm sure you've come across and used in your own recovery, but it never hurts to be reminded. That is the acronym – FROG – "fully relying on God." When eating compulsively, most of us have found that we were really trying to "fill a God shaped hole." OA has given us a way to stop eating compulsively and fill that hole with God as we understand God. I actually have a little stuffed frog sitting next to my computer that a sponsor gave me several years ago. I don't always notice it now, but when I do – I know exactly what it means.

Remember that I am only sharing what I heard and found meaningful for me at the IDEA Day event. I didn't invent any of this stuff. You gave it to me. And, I am forever grateful that you let me keep coming back. Thanks for giving me an opportunity to share.

~NS (Oro Valley)

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*Isolating and keeping secrets, especially about my food and eating behaviors, can really get me in trouble.*

## REFLECTIONS on recent WSBC suggestions ~

\*Members give \$3 at each meeting attended. When I consider how much money I'm saving by eating less, this seems more than reasonable. My binges cost more than that!

\*Highlight abstinence. I attend a meeting here in town that has members with 1 or more years of abstinence raise their hands. To see all those hands brings so much hope to me!

\*Earlier sponsoring (after Step 3). The Big Book says "...nothing will so much insure immunity from drinking as intensive work with other alcoholics." *Nothing* has boosted my abstinence and recovery more than working with sponsees.

HOPE...We are losing some meetings and numbers, but others are thriving! Our intergroup operates, and has operated in the green! Let's keep working it and giving it away. We can congratulate ourselves on what we are doing well, and be challenged where we may need to grow. Thank you, God, for recovery and grace.

~Anonymous

## A LETTER TO THE DISEASE

Disease,

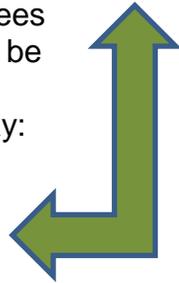
You are losing. Your strength continues to cease,  
 my self-less thoughts are making you decrease.  
 God will always be with me, no matter where I go,  
 Together we see love and continue to grow.  
 Family, friends, and loved ones, they are my shining light,  
 I'll take everything you got  
 and we will make decisions that are right.  
 You were there for me in the bad times,  
 leading me to no good  
 that was before I understood.  
 You served a purpose. There was a reason.  
 It is now time for high treason.  
 You will lie to everyone and say recovery is not real.  
 You are simply looking for precious souls to steal.  
 Recovery comes in many shapes and forms.  
 We return to a lovely place, secure, beautiful, warm.  
 You will try to turn me, from the truth I now see.  
 But I open my arms wide, I now set you free.  
 Like fire without air, like the world without trees  
 me without rationalization, you will cease to be  
 Well, you can go now, just be on your way  
 but listen close, I have one more thing to say:  
 "There ain't nuttin' so foul, ugly, or dirty  
 that intense light cannot make purty."

~Amanda (Tucson)



## God with Skin On

As I write this, I'm sitting on a plane returning home from Bolivia. It was exactly 2 weeks ago today that I set out on my journey to the remote mountainsides of Bolivia to offer my professional services to an organization aimed at helping children receive dental care.



I had many reasons for wanting to participate in such a program. It has always been my wish to give back in this way. "Those to whom much is given, much is required" is one of the adages I live by and I have been given so many gifts. Also, the conditions promised to be foreign, rugged and challenging and that spoke to my adventurous side. I'm grateful that I was able to maintain my abstinence the entire time and I am indebted to this wonderful program for giving me this way of life. It made the difference for me between simply existing and fully living in the moments. I experienced a richness and depth of experience that would never have been possible if I were still a slave to my eating disorder. Keeping my disease at bay allowed me to stand in the sunlight of the Spirit and to feel the warmth of its rays.

To all my fellow OA members who have helped me along my journey of recovery, I thank you.

~Vivian (Nova Scotia)

# Save these Dates

DATE *****	TIME *****	ACTIVITY *****	WHERE *****	
06/15/13	10:45 AM - 12:30 PM	SEAZ Intergroup Meeting	St. James Methodist Church 3255 N Campbell Ave. (N of Ft. Lowell) Rm #5 - Education Building	<i>All are welcome.</i>
06/22/13	10:30 AM - 2:00 PM	BIG BOOK Workshop w/Guest Speaker	Rim Country Health and Retirement Community Room 807 W. Longhorn Road Payson, Arizona	<i>This is a beautiful drive for an OA Road Trip!</i>
06/29/13	10:30 AM	Brainstorming & Planning Meeting for this fall's retreat	St. James Methodist Church 3255 N Campbell Ave. (N of Ft. Lowell) Rm #5 - Education Building	<i>Volunteers needed. This is a great opportunity for service.</i>
08/16/2013 - 08/18/2013		Fall Region III Convention and Assembly	TUCSON, AZ	<i>Sign up now for a discounted rate! <a href="http://oasouthernaz.org">oasouthernaz.org</a> *****</i>

For more activities and volunteer opportunities, check [oa.org](http://oa.org) and [oasouthernaz.org](http://oasouthernaz.org)

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*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.*

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## RECOVERY THROUGH ANONYMITY

What is anonymity? Until I read a few of the articles in the current (May 2013) Lifeline, I could not have explained to a newcomer or new sponsee what anonymity is! I could not have explained how “anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all of our traditions,” even though I could have recited that statement word for word. I had heard that statement followed by “ever reminding us to place principles before personalities” but what does it mean? I did not really know. I would have said that we need to be open to learn from what was shared and not worry if we liked the person who shared it. I know that this is a very small part of what anonymity is.

Anonymity allows me to be who I really am without worry about being talked about by others. Therefore, anonymity frees me from isolation and protects me from gossip. Anonymity allows me to trust again, to open up and share what is truly in my heart without fear of ridicule or stigma. I do not have to try to please people or promote myself. Anonymity allows me the freedom to truly be myself, to surrender fully to a loving power greater than myself, and not be concerned with self-protection. Anonymity allows me to cast off my terminal uniqueness and allows me to care for my fellow sufferer. When I am practicing anonymity, I am not trying to put myself above or below anyone else. I needed to learn how to be part of a group, and yet still be conscious and aware of my role and my responsibilities to the group. We are all unique but when we focus on our uniqueness, we are either inclusive or exclusive.

Anonymity is a tool that enables me to use the other tools. The nine tools of the OA program of recovery are: a plan of eating, a plan of action, **sponsorship**, **literature**, writing, **meetings**, the **telephone**, anonymity, and **service**. Without the promise of anonymity, I would not be willing to share at **meetings**, on the **telephone**, or with a **sponsor**. We would not have any **literature** to read; no one would be willing to share their stories, to **sponsor** or to give **service**. Without the tool and principle of anonymity, we would have no recovery. That is why it is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles over personalities. I could not learn how I can benefit from another’s experience. I would not be able to disconnect enough to hear the strength and hope of what was being shared.

Program says, “Whom you see here, what you hear here, when you leave here let it stay here.” It makes no difference who was involved, when the circumstances happened or where. What truly matters is the growth achieved and received when we can hear progress made. I can tell you what I was like before and what I have learned to do now, instead, so that I keep and maintain my abstinence.

I am so grateful for the experience, strength and hope that have been shared with me, and I pray that I will always remain willing to share my experience, strength and hope with others.

~Anonymous





To contribute to the newsletter, please email Angela at [newsletter@oasouthernaz.org](mailto:newsletter@oasouthernaz.org). (Or catch me at a meeting!) Include your name and phone number. The submission can be printed with your first name only or as anonymous. The next deadline is July 15, 2013.

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*Articles may be edited for space reasons.*

## SERVICE GIVES PEACE

When I got into OA, read the Big Book and started working with a sponsor, one of the first things that was drilled home to me was this: we do service to save our lives. We will not recover unless we give back what was so freely given to us. What I did not realize, however, was that because of the service I do, I am happier with a self-esteem and purpose that I never had before, and without which I would NOT be able to recover. The singleness of purpose that my program of recovery requires is to carry the message of OA and to help the compulsive eater who still suffers. Of course I have a full life outside of OA. BUT! I could NOT have that life without working the entire program. That includes a full and healthy 12<sup>th</sup> step in service, sponsorship and practicing these principles in all of my affairs'.

The health of the fellowship depends on how well each of us practices the 12<sup>th</sup> step. My freedom from food obsession and my ability to maintain a healthy weight is God/Higher Power given, but dependent on the work I do each day to maintain a fit spiritual condition. This spiritual condition is maintained in large part through the actions the 12<sup>th</sup> step prescribes. I wish for us all to have the happiness and fulfillment that comes from a well-worked (not perfectly worked☺) daily 12<sup>th</sup> step.

*~Anonymous*

## OA Service

I have been blessed with food recovery! I am grateful to lead a full happy life without binging on food. I am grateful to get to know individuals in this program. I find it interesting that I can turn to the steps and individuals to enhance my recovery. I used to be so scared

to get close to anybody. Now in the OA program, I am finding that people are not that scary and we are all equals in this journey. We each have our own life journeys and we are there for each other during times of stress. I love hearing others experience, strength and hope regarding resentments and difficult times in life. It helps me normalize my problems. My fear of people has decreased due to the love that I have found in OA. Thank you for being my equal.

I would like to mention another area that has enhanced my recovery, it is service. I was asked to place an application in for Jr. Delegate/Region Rep. I thought, why not? I never knew the blessings that would come from doing service at the Intergroup and Region level. I have been able to see how OA is a worldwide organization that is healing many from the disease of compulsive overeating, I have made new friends, I have met members from different states, I have heard amazing recovery stories, and I have been able to feel like I am making a difference in the world and Tucson. I strongly recommend service at any level to help OA. It is amazing to get out of my head and into actually helping. I am not perfect, but I no longer want to sit on the sidelines of life. I want to be included and I am blessed to have the experiences I have by doing OA service. Thank you for making a difference in my life and for keeping this organization going for the next compulsive overeater.

*~Jill S. (Tucson)*

DAY	TIME	GROUP NAME & NUMBER	LOCATION	CONTACT & IR	NOTES
SUNDAY	11:00 AM	<b>Miracles Happen</b> 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	<b>Hope, Love, &amp; Acceptance</b> 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	<b>Seeking the Power</b> 11th Step Meeting #49744	UMC 1501 N. Campbell Room E/F (S end of Café)	Janet G. 795-7492 IR:	Fragrance Free* WC Parking
MONDAY	5:30 PM	<b>Going Sane</b> 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	<b>Far East Abstinence / Step Study</b> #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	<b>NW Tender Solutions</b> 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	<b>Tucson Men's Sanity</b> #49144	931 N. Fifth Avenue 1 1/2 blocks south of Speedway	Jim D. 250-0509 IR:	
WED.	11:30 AM	<b>Welcome Home</b> 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
THURSDAY	10:45 AM	<b>Seeking the Spiritual Path</b> Book Study #00439	Oro Valley Urgent Care, Comm. Ed. Room 13101 N. Oracle Rd.	Diane 638-5583 IR:	
THURSDAY	5:30 PM	<b>Over and Under Meeting</b> 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	<b>Big Book Study</b> #47942	Abounding Grace Church 2450 S. Kolb Rd. // N. of Golf Links on W. side	IR:	WC

DAY	TIME	GROUP NAME & NUMBER	LOCATION	CONTACT & IR	NOTES
FRIDAY	7:30 AM	<b>Fresh Start</b> #49600	St. Frances Cabrini Church, Ed. Bldg., Rm 5 (E of church) 3201 E. Presidio	Jim D. 250-0509 IR: Alison B. 437- 2861	Fragrance Free* Svc Dogs Only
FRIDAY	10:30 AM	<b>Living in the Solution</b> 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	<b>Far East Saturday Group</b> Varied Format #45696	Eastside Covenant Church 551 N. Camino Seco (N. of Broadway)	Sue L. 885-2861 IR: Cheryl L. 747- 2387	WC
SATURDAY	9:00 AM	<b>Saturday Morning Study Group</b> #12117	St. James Methodist Church 3255 N Campbell (N. of Ft. Lowell; W side of Campbell)	Chris B. 887-7188 IR: Chay B. 917- 388-5441	WC
<b>GREEN VALLEY</b>					
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	WC
<b>SIERRA VISTA</b>					
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 Camino Real Rm 2	Jan F. 678-0369 IR: Nancy R. 227- 3817	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 not included for space reasons in this issue. These, along with meetings for Patagonia, Benson and Yuma, can be found on <http://oasouthernaz.org/>.