



Keys to the kingdom

“You need to come to this diet club meeting with me. You are getting fat. You need to lose weight” I was eight years old. This started my career of weight, food and body obsession. To this day 40 years later, my mother has no idea how those words impacted my life. She would probably deny she even said them—the insanity of the disease.

To be totally honest, I was already hyper-aware of my body and weight by that time. I grew up thinking that what I looked like defined who I was—acceptable, loveable, or disgusting, shameful and hateable. Being thin, what I now believe is anorexically thin, was “beautiful and sexy.” If I could just be that, I wouldn’t hate myself and feel so

out of place in this world. But I couldn’t restrict and starve myself at that young age. It is something I perfected as a young teenager.



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I do believe the disease of compulsive overeating, /anorexia/ bulimia is a three-fold illness, as our literature tells us—physical, emotional and spiritual. The disease of compulsive overeating is rampant through-

out my family and I did not escape it. I have the genetic predisposition. I have the mental obsession that leads to the first compulsive bite that leads to the phenomenon of craving that leads to the out of control behavior (compulsive eat-

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Making amends

Made (to bring into existence by shaping or changing material; brought about; rendered; put in proper condition) **direct** (without intervening persons; personal, straightforward; candid) **amends** (reparation or compensation for a loss; improvement; recover) **to such people wherever possible except when to do so would injure** (damage; hurt; impair; wound or offend) **them or others.**

Now that is quite the bit to chew. This is where the rubber meets the road and the true test of faith comes. To go and face those I have harmed and humble myself before them and ask for their forgiveness and allow THEIR healing to take

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Let’s go trudging the road of happy destiny together

SEAZ Intergroup
St. David retreat is
coming in October!

The retreat experience is offered to you each year as an opportunity to deepen your recovery, and possibly to accelerate it. We meet in a simple

To register for the
retreat, grab a
registration form from a
meeting or from our
web site at
www.oasouthernaz.org
and send it in.

and spiritual setting--Holy Trinity Monastery—to share our experience, strength, and hope, study the foundations of our program, and be inspired by those who are “trudging the road of happy destiny” some steps ahead of us.

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To contribute to the newsletter or receive the newsletter by e-mail, contact Rae at newsletter@oasouthernaz.org or rstrozzo@gmail.com

Next Deadline: November 5

Events and Service Opportunities

OA meeting at Amity.

Second Thursday of the Month at 7 p.m. This meeting is always looking for volunteers. Call John W. for more information. 520-971-9353

2013 Convention Planning

Meeting 2013 Convention Committee Meeting will be in October after the intergroup meeting. For more in-

formation contact Janis at janisroth@msn.com or 325-4441

NEW MEETING!

A Youth and Friends of Youth meeting will start Tuesday, Sept 27th at 8:30 p.m. At 430 East 7th street. Please pass it on and please come!

Need another meeting? There

is a Big Book study at St. Francis Cabrinni on Wednesday mornings at 7:30 that could use your support. It's a small but excellent meeting! Come check it out!

For more events and updates visit the SEAZ web site at <http://www.oasouthernaz.org>

Tool Time

A many-sided treasure

OA offers us a tool belt full of tools to help us as we work towards abstinence and serenity. We will be taking a look at meetings and how they help us in our recovery process.

A meeting in OA is defined as a gathering of two or more compulsive overeaters who come together to share their experience, strength and hope. These meetings can occur in person, over the phone or internet. Meetings can include a variety of topics and focuses. Some of them include general sharing, big book study, reading from the twelve steps and twelve traditions of OA and more. Sometimes meetings have themes to them such as being geared towards newcomers or young people. Regardless, the only requirement for attending a meeting is a desire to refrain from engaging in compulsive eating behaviors.

As a tool, meetings benefit us in several ways. For many of us, compulsive eating behaviors have led us to isolating. Isolation often effects our spiritual and mental well-being in negative ways. Meetings give us a space to meet new people, be in fellowship with others and hear stories from other OA members. These stories can inspire us to take action within the guidelines of the 12 steps. Listening to others also allows us to see that we are not alone and that others have had similar experiences.

Many of us find studying literature as a group to be an enlightening and thought provoking experience that fuels our recovery. Each individual sharing their experience in relationship to the readings helps us see the readings from a variety of perspectives. Folks often express a sense of having a greater understanding of the readings by hearing other's interpretations.

There is also a sense that higher power speaks through others at meetings (and in many settings in life). When we find ourselves confused, upset or stuck within the desire to control that which we cannot, listening to others can be likened to speaking to a power greater than ourselves.



Image: hinnamsaiyul/Free DigitalPhotos.net

Stepping it up: Members and sponsors talk about working steps seven and eight.

Step 8

From a Member:

Who wants to make direct amends? I didn't. Being the perfectionist I am, I practically had to sneak into OA. Higher Power forbid that anyone I knew should see me and know that I needed this program. Those OAers were so welcoming – at first. But soon they started making SUGGESTIONS. They wanted me to find and develop a relationship with a Higher Power. THEN they "suggested" that I write a searching and fearless MORAL inventory... AND share it with another human being... THEN they wanted me to make a list of all the people I had harmed??? Wait a minute while I get over what they did to me – okay?

Alright, so now I have to face them and admit that I'm human, imperfect... and, oh yeah, I need to change.

Cleaning up my side of the street is much easier when I take my sponsor's suggestions. On my own, I got me into this mess. I most certainly need help getting out of it. Surprisingly – Step 8 taught me that Step 9 could be a much easier proposition IF I was willing to honestly, to the best of my ability, put myself in the other person's position – and view my behavior from their perspective. Wow... What a humbling proposition that is. So then, I needed to forgive myself for being human – before I could make direct amends. Not an easy thing to do. In fact, it is something that I have to work on every day (Step 10). If I don't, I risk going out there and doing the same harm over and over again... And, I don't really LIKE making amends... So, I think I'll take the easier, softer way and keep working the steps in my life on a daily basis.

The saddest lesson I learned in this whole process was that my procrastination has the power to do harm and destroy relationships. That applies as much in the making of amends for the



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Image: renjith krishnan / FreeDigitalPhotos.net

Some thoughts on recovery

Learning self-love as God loves us and learning self-care as God would care for us (the ultimate authority) including: Nurture, Nourish, Service, Exercise, Quiet time.

The welfare of the individual is served when we consider what's best for the group as a whole to be our primary concern.

We must be responsible for all of our OWN affairs without doing damage to the community as a whole.

As we carry the message, we must be an example of that message.

We must learn to separate the material from the spiritual.

We must each be fully self-supporting in our own lives.

We give service freely and get fair recompense for employment.

Having no authority we are guided in the spirit of service, we do not govern, we become useful.

We hire help when needed and provide service to self in the form of spiritual, emotional and physical health through surrender to God's will.

We need to distinguish between outside issues and our own issues (gossip, comparing, focusing on other's behaviors/actions). We oppose no one.

We practice attraction rather than promotion. There is no need to praise ourselves or seek praise by advertising weight loss, or food plan. It works better when people are attracted by our behavior, sharing and actions.

My genuine humility comes when we count our blessings AND express our gratitude for good orderly direction from our HP.

We need to develop a willingness, then make a decision (an act of our own will) for a sustained and personal adherence to God's will.

****Anonymous**



Image: Evgeni Dinev/FreeDigitalPhotos.net

THE PRINCIPLES BY STEP:

- STEP 1 - HONESTY
- STEP 2 - HOPE
- STEP 3 - FAITH
- STEP 4 - COURAGE
- STEP 5 - INTEGRITY
- STEP 6 - WILLINGNESS
- STEP 7 - HUMILITY
- STEP 8 - LOVE
- STEP 9 - DISCIPLINE
- STEP 10 - PERSEVERANCE
- STEP 11 - SPIRITUAL AWARENESS
- STEP 12 - SERVICE

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Praying for others as a group in meetings is also a powerful experience that many OA members find enlightening.

Some people may feel out of place at meetings, especially when first coming into the program. We urge you to reach out to other members, try out a variety of meetings and tell us

your experiences in the meetings.

Keep coming back. Keep using this powerful tool of recovery. Your story and your presence make recovery possible for us all.

****Anonymous**

Step *continued from page 2*

done in the past as it does to the responsibilities that I bear in the present.

I have an aunt who I was very close to in my youth. I was dishonest with her at one point about a financial arrangement that she was in charge of. I had a great fear of financial insecurity at the time, so it seemed okay to tell a small lie. Over time my relationship with her cooled. Not because she knew I had lied, but because I knew it and I could neither forgive myself nor (because of continuing fear of financial loss) could I confess. Eventually, in working these Steps I gained the courage to make amends – to the best of my ability – but, it didn't repair the distance in the relationship like I'd hoped.

We are not in charge of the results (darn it). Relationships do change over time on their own. That was not something I had an easy time accepting. Some get stronger, but some weaken and die a slow death. So while I do have things in my past I regret, I see them today as beacons to guide me in my recovery. Whenever I am getting ready to repeat some harm I have done previously, they stand there before me to ask – “are you sure you want to walk this way again?” Thank you, HP, the answer is usually NO. I haven't “shut the door” on my past, because it has become one of my greatest teachers. Like they say – “more will be revealed”, so “keep coming back.”

****Anonymous**

Step 10**From a Member:**

Let's face it – Step 4 is quite a jaw-dropper. We are to look back on our lives – and if that spans a few decades, it may seem an overwhelming chore – and figure out where we've gone wrong, when we've hurt others, and ultimately, when we've hurt ourselves. Once we go through that expunging experience and get clean from the inside-out – we become more sensitive to when we go astray. In this Catholic brain of mine, alarms go off – bells ring, the Inner Me points at the Outer Me and tsks-tsks. For Step 10, though, we're only looking at a day at a time. Certainly that's a far cry from the over arching lifetime review of Step 4. After we've listed our errors, we've contacted those who suffered because of us, and we've asked God to remove all of those defects of character, it's not over. Now we cycle through these steps on a daily basis.

I like to do this at night. Usually in the morning, I wake up with that clean slate. I don't do too much wrong in my sleep, at least not that I am aware of. After the day is done, I look back and see what has gone awry. Did I say something that didn't need to be heard? Did I do something that bothered someone else? Did I do my best? By humble reflection, I view the day during its last minutes and determine

if there is anything that I could have done better – or perhaps not done at all.

Let's be honest – for the most part, we want others to like us. We certainly don't think they need any reason to like us less, but we've got to keep that slate of ours clean. If we've done something wrong to someone else, we need to make amends. If we are continuing to do some of the same things that we had on our list from Step 4, we need to focus on that. We might want to consider that 6th step and ask ourselves if we were really willing to have God remove all of these defects of character. Sometimes I think we hang on to some of our errant ways. It's almost like we can be assured of our humanness when we have our faults. If some of those faults keep surfacing, we need to focus on those some more.

One way to do that is to journal. Here's a way that I make sure I have time to do this. I call it the One Minute Entry. A minute may not seem long, but if you stare at a clock for 60 seconds, you can actually see how you really could get something done in a minute. Besides, if you were right in the middle of a thought, you might not mind adding another minute to the task. At the top of the page – or the screen, if you'd prefer to keyboard it – put the topic, the error, the problem. Then just write. Even if you go off track, don't worry – just keep writing. Your Inner Me has a chance to speak. You've handed that too-often quiet self the microphone. You may be surprised what your Inner Me tells you!

Another way to focus on any problem-child errors is to talk about them. Maybe call your sponsor and let him or her know that this phone call is being “sponsored” by – and then mention the problem. (I know, I know. Terrible pun.) Once again, just talk. Let that Inner Me spell it all out. Your sponsor can help you take a closer look at it and provide feedback based on his or her experiences. The other part of this step is to promptly admit it. That means saying you're sorry. That means owning up. That means talking about it to others, to anyone who was affected by what you did – or by what you didn't do. Again, that reckoning really serves to refresh. We scrub ourselves often, trying to get the daily dirt off our Outer Selves – but what about an inner bathing? If we do this on a daily basis, how downright clean we will feel....in such a wholesome way.

Step 10 helps us keep the first nine steps current. We don't get stale. We stay connected. We stay abstinent. I can't afford to be anything but abstinent, so I'm banking on this step to make me feel good about myself. I don't have to be perfect – good thing – but I sure can keep the slate clean.....one day at a time.

****Joy**

www.oasouthernaz.org OA MEETING LIST – July/August 2011				
DAY& TIME	GROUP NAME & NUMBER	LOCATION	CONTACT & IR	NOTES
SUNDAY 11:00 -12 Noon	MIRACLES HAPPEN Literature Varied Format #23957	4180 W. Sweetwater Dr. (WEST) Look for OA signs	IR: Sally H. 429-5318	WC
SUNDAY 5:30-6:30 PM	HOPE, LOVE & ACCEPTANCE Varied Format #45377 Tradition/Step and 1-1/2 hr Big Book Study	Streams In The Desert Lutheran Church Classroom A in Fellowship Hall 5360 E. Pima (CENTRAL)	Elisa M. 299-3200 IR: Susan C. 747-5018	WC
SUNDAY 5:30-6:30 PM	SEEKING THE POWER 11 TH STEP MEETING #49744	University Medical Center, 1501 N. Campbell (CENTRAL) Rm. E/F at S end of Cafeteria	Janet G. 795-7492 or Andrea M 977-9980	Fragrance-free* WC **Parking
MONDAY 5:30-6:30 PM	GOING SANE Big Book Study Speaker 1 st Monday #39507	First United Methodist Church, Carillon Room (4 th & Park), 915 E. 4th St. (CENTRAL) Park behind church, enter lot from 4 th Street ,	Felice G. 891-8900 IR: Johnathan K. 609-0939	WC
MONDAY 7:00-8:00 PM	FAR EAST ABSTINENCE / STEP STUDY #40522	Abounding Grace Church, 2450 S Kolb Rd (FAR EAST) N. of Golf Links on W. side	Michele T. 784-3597 IR: Jan H. 790-2658	WC
TUESDAY 10:30-11:30 AM	RECOVERY #3 0601	Posada Del Sol 2250 N. Craycroft (NORTHEAST) Park at Safeway	Judith H. 323-9845 IR: Kathy P 296-4390	Fragrance-free* WC
TUESDAY 10:30-10:45 10:45-12 Noon	NW TENDER SOLUTIONS Newcomers meeting OA 12 & 12/ Sharing #40963	Dove of Peace Lutheran Church 665 W. Roller Coaster Rd. (NORTHWEST) West of Oracle Rd.	Neva S. 877-8420 IR: Nancy F. 219-9685	WC
TUESDAY 5:30-6:30 PM	TUCSON MEN'S SANITY #49144	931 N. Fifth Avenue (CENTRAL) 1 ½ blocks south of Speedway	Jim D. 250-0509 IR: Ron R. 320-9675	
WEDNESDAY 7:30-8:30 AM	GOING TO ANY LENGTHS Big Book Study	St. Frances Cabrini Church, Education Bldg. Rm. 3 (East of the church) 3201 E. Presidio (CENTRAL)	Wendy A. 955-0710 IR:	Fragrance-free*
WEDNESDAY 11:30-12:30 PM	WELCOME HOME #04330 Sharing	Streams In The Desert Lutheran Church, Ginsler Hall S. Side of Church 5360 E. Pima (EAST)	Sue R. 358-7358 IR: Barbara M 327-2709	Beverage only
WEDNESDAY 5:30-6:30 PM	VOICES OF RECOVERY Leader's Choice Literature #49188	St. Thomas More Newman Center Library 1615 E. 2nd St. (CENTRAL) Cherry & 2 nd Park & enter from rear No meeting July 13th & 27th	Andrea M 977-9980 IR:	
WEDNESDAY 7:45 – 8:45 pm	YOUNG PEOPLE #51639	Arizona Power Yoga 8567 N Silverbell Rd. (WEST)	Amy 250-2331	
THURSDAY 10:45-11:45 AM	SEEKING THE SPIRITUAL PATH Book study #00439	Oro Valley Urgent Care, Conf. Room 13101 N. Oracle Rd. (Oro Valley FAR NW)	Diane 638-5583 IR: Marie R. 270-9568	
THURSDAY 5:30-6:30 PM	OVER AND UNDER MEETING Lifeline/Discussion #50226	St. Frances Cabrini Church, Ed. Bldg., Rm.3 (E. of church) 3201 E. Presidio (CENTRAL)	Beth M. 577-8745 or 349-0810 IR: Ellen F. 290-3235	WC
THURSDAY 7:00-8:00 PM	BIG BOOK STUDY #47942	Abounding Grace Church, 2450 S Kolb Rd (FAR EAST) N. of Golf Links on W. side	Meg R. 546-1168 IR: Mary M. 248-6480	WC
FRIDAY 7:30-8:30 AM	FRESH START #49600	St. Frances Cabrini Church, Ed. Bldg., Rm.3 (E. of church) 3201 E. Presidio (CENTRAL)	Janet G. 795-7492 IR: Lynne L. 745-5954	Fragrance-free*
FRIDAY 10:30-11:30 AM	LIVING IN THE SOLUTION Sharing #14251	Streams In The Desert Lutheran Church Class Room A in Fellowship Hall 5360 E. Pima (EAST)	Don B. 325-7053 IR: Bev C. 628-8580	Fragrance-free*
SATURDAY 9:00-10:00 AM	FAR EAST SATURDAY GROUP Varied Format #45696	Eastside Evangelical Covenant Church 551 N Camino Seco (FAR EAST) (North of Broadway)	Meg R. 546-1168 IR: Deb B. 885-0249	WC
SATURDAY 9:00-10:15 AM	Saturday morning Study group #12117	St. James Methodist Church 3255 N Campbell (CENTRAL) (N of Ft. Lowell; W side of Campbell)	Michelle 219-9574 IR: Nancy K. 820-0399	WC

IR=Intergroup Representative

WC=Wheel Chair Accessible

**No parking fees at UMC on Sundays

*In consideration of members who suffer from allergies, please refrain from wearing cologne or perfume. XX=no summer meetings

OUT OF TOWN OA MEETINGS					
DAY& TIME	GROUP NAME & UMBER	LOCATION		CONTACT & IR	NOTES
GREEN VALLEY					
TUESDAY 7:45-8:45 AM	Discussion #49982	St. Francis of the Valley Church 600 S. La Canada Dr	Library	Marj M. IR: Marj M.	248-9043 248-9043 WC
WEDNESDAY 7:00-8:00 PM	Literature Study #37169	St. Francis of the Valley Church 600 S. La Canada Dr	Library	Marj M. IR: Marj M.	248-9043 248-9043 WC
SATURDAY 9:00-10:15 AM	Step and Tradition Study #34898	St. Francis of the Valley Church 600 S. La Canada Dr	Library	Marj M. IR: Marj M.	248-9043 248-9043 WC
SIERRA VISTA					
MONDAY 7:00-8:00 PM	Monday Night Miracles Literature study #17537	Church of Christ 815 El Camino Real	Room 3	Leslie IR: Jan F.	378-4238 678-0369 WC
THURSDAY 6:30-7:30 PM	Newcomers #39367	Church of Christ 815 El Camino Real	Room 3	Marilyn IR: Jane	417-1645 378-9406 WC
SATURDAY 11:00-12 Noon	Varied format #40592	Church of Christ 815 El Camino Real	Room 3	Jan F. IR: Nancy R. 3817	678-0369 227- WC
PATAGONIA					
TUESDAY 6:30-7:30 PM	Patagonia Tues. OA Varied Format #50474	United Methodist Church 387 McKeown Ave		Michelle S. IR: Leanne F.	520-604-6811 774-521-8932
THURSDAY 6:30-7:30 PM	Patagonia OA Big Book Study #51744	United Methodist Church 387 McKeown Ave		Adrienne IR:	520-404-3490
NOGALES, AZ					
				Ros V. Spanish/English Speaking	520-668-5950
BENSON					
TUESDAY 4:00-5:00 PM	Rotating Format #47074	Sobriety House 225 E. 6 th Street		Peggy IR:	520-456-1676 OPEN WC
YUMA					
MONDAY 1:00 – 2:00 PM	October thru April Only #47822	Gloria DeCristo Church 11273 E. 40th Street		Connie O. IR: Connie O.	928-305-0682 XX
TUESDAY 6:30-7:30 PM	Just for Today Rotating Format #49443	Central Church of Christ 651 West 28th St.		Lorraine IR: Lynn C.	928-782-1305 928-503-1229 WC
THURSDAY 12:00-1:00 PM	#00520	Central Church of Christ 651 West 28th St.		Lorraine IR: Open	928-782-1305

IR=Intergroup Representative

WC=Wheel Chair Accessible

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MEETING LIST CHANGES: Please send corrections or changes to Roger S. at: roger_s47@yahoo.com

OVEREATERS ANONYMOUS SOUTHEASTERN ARIZONA INTERGROUP #09078

P.O. Box 43221 Tucson, AZ 85733-3221 (520) 733-0880

SE AZ Intergroup meets the third Saturday of the month at 10:45AM, St. James United Methodist Church, 3255 N. Campbell Ave., Tucson

SE Arizona Intergroup Board

Officers			Committee Chairs		
Chair:	Roni B.	269-1025	PIPO Contacts	Janet G.	795-7492
Vice Chair	Marilyn B.	417-1645	Meeting List	Roger S.	404-6724
Secretary	Chris N.	721-1085/ 661-1991	Newsletter	Rae S.	239-784-9626
Treasurer:	Rhonda S.	370-5100	Special Events	Claudia P.	829-6968
Delegate (1):	Janis R.	325-4441	Tape Library/Lifeline	Pam T.	331-2107
Delegate (2):	Emily R.-S.	490-1409	IR Trainer	Jocelynn W.	982-0556
			Telephone	Susan C.	747-5018
			12 th Step Within	Wendy A.	955-0710
			Website	Nan B.	825-3867

WEBSITES: OA World Service: www.oa.org OA Region 3: www.oaregion3.org OA Southern AZ: www.oasouthernaz.org

We need a “Group Conscience”

SEAZ Intergroup will be hosting a Region 3 Assembly and Convention in Tucson in the Fall of 2013, and we are trying to select a “theme” for the Convention.

The theme is a catchy phrase or title that can be used to create a logo for flyers, T-shirts, etc. as well as cool names for the workshops that will be held during the Convention. Representatives from intergroups all over Region 3 will be attending and some of them will be speakers or lead-

ers who will share their experience, strength, and hope with us.

The Convention Planning Committee has narrowed the field down to three possibilities, but we want your input.

The three possible themes are: Soaring with the Spirit, Desert Recovery, and AZ You Like It.

There are two ways that you can contribute input to the selection of our convention theme. 1) Come and join the Planning Committee and add your voice to the discussion on Oc-

tober 15 at 1 PM (at St. James United Methodist – right after Intergroup meets), or 2) Brainstorm some artistic ideas for logos and workshop names for your favorite or for all three, and send them to Chris N. at rainbow.smiles@cox.net. Or both!!!

We have a great Committee going – and we could use a lot more help to make this a fun Convention that everyone in Region 3 will want to attend. So, please help us out if you can. Be a part of the group conscience. Help us carry the message. Remember - we recover together. Thank you.

**** The 2013 Convention Planning Committee**

Happy continued from page 1

This year's theme are the three aspects of recovery: spiritual, emotional and physical.

We have been fortunate to engage fantastic speakers and activities leaders, and believe everybody will find something of value to carry away with them. At this point in the planning, we are offering two yoga sessions, four meditation sessions, one workshop on writing for recovery, gentle stretching, a hike

to the river, karaoke and board games on Saturday night, and free time.

We are seeking assistance with scholarships this year. Presently there we have enough money to it to assist four people with half scholarships. We would like to provide even more scholarship opportunities. We are asking that meetings collect for the scholarship fund to help out. Folks have provided generously for the scholarships in the past, and we

know that we can count you to help with this again. Please encourage meetings to collect for the fund and give what you can.

If you would like to do service before or during the retreat, please contact Claudia P. at 520 829-6968.

Donations for the silent auction are also still being taken, as are gift baskets. Thanks for your service and donations, and SEE YOU THERE!

**** The Retreat Planning Committee**

Amends continued from page 1

place. To listen to their pain that I caused and to take the responsibility to change and right the relationship the way I can. It meant being the grown up in my relationship with my mother. To allow her to be her and no longer fight the fight I so long fought.

It means showing up at work and doing my best and staying honest with my time and to work efficiently and effectively when I am on their time (no personal email, texting, taking food, etc) It means being available for my friends and willing to do what they want to do sometime. It means trusting my God for emotional and financial security and no longer

running to mommy and daddy or looking for prince charming to swoop me off my feet. It means speaking up when I see an injustice, biting my lip and tongue when I want to share news (ok, GOSSIP) about a co-worker or even a friend.

It is about talking less and listening more. It's about not wanting forgiveness so badly that I go and hurt or instill fear in someone else's life. I made this mistake and it is a mistake I pray no one else has to make. It's about seeking counsel prior to taking actions and trusting wisdom over my own understanding more times than not.

It's about life really. It's about being

human and being uncomfortable and being a big enough person to admit that I was wrong.

Then receiving that in my wrongness I find the grace to carry on and the safety to grow more and more without the crutch of food and food behaviors that reeks nothing but havoc in the life of the compulsive eater and ALL those around him/her. The Steps are enough to chew---there is no need for excess food. Service is enough to keep my mind off of me and my plate and food—God help me serve more...Thy will not mine be done. Thanks for recovery today!

**** Anonymous**



Thank you, Big Book Weekend

Big Book Weekend...What a beautiful gift I bestowed upon myself by attending this event!

Thank you to the organizers, speakers and participants. I am reminded that my disease is my greatest ally. Using the prayers and principles outlined in the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous will bring me the promises that enrich this precious Life.

Befriending the addiction has enabled me to use self-awareness and self-examination as gauges of my spiritual condition (recovery). Fighting and denying it only keeps me stuck (relapse).

Blessings to all, with love and gratitude.

**** Chris B.**

Keys continued from page 1

ing, starving, bingeing, purging) that leads to the shame, guilt, remorse and despair. I felt empty and isolated (spiritually bankrupt) I have always been a spiritual seeker- longing to connect with the greater power, nature, other humans and animals- to belong. I sought relief and connection through food- the thought of it, the rituals around it and the ingestion of it.

I attended my first OA meeting at the age of 18, after having been diagnosed with Anorexia Nervosa at the age of 14, and being an active bulimic starting at age 15. I had just gained 40 lbs in 5 months and was desperate. Entering the dark church basement, I was frightened and at the same time hoping for a miracle. There was some kind of ritual going on with candles. I got really scared this was some kind of cult. I went to leave and a woman followed me, handing me a "Big Book" and telling me she was my sponsor. I did not know what a sponsor was, didn't want to buy any book, and I sure as heck did not want anything to do with these crazy people! I did not return to OA for six years.

When I did return to OA, I had furthered my destructive eating career, which included diet pills, laxatives, compulsive exercising and more bouts of binges and restricting. I was a young woman now and wanted to stop the insanity. I am so grateful that I found a meeting where the lights were on, no strange rituals were being practiced, the "Big Book" of Alcoholics Anonymous was studied and I heard experience, strength and hope of recovery from compulsive eating, anorexia and bulimia. I attended this meeting regularly, got a sponsor and started to work the steps and understand the traditions. My sponsor was an older woman who became my "grandma of choice". I loved her and she me. I followed her direction and guidance and began to experience the gift

of abstinence. I belonged with this group of women, even though there were few my age. They were my higher power at first- loving, accepting, and kind; gentle yet firm, and fun! So this was what home felt like. Thank you God!

I moved out of state a few years later and relapsed in my bulimia. I sought outside professional help in addition to working the steps and traditions in Oa and have been truly abstinent from bulimic behavior since January 1991. I have not eaten cake, cookies, or ice cream since December 1985 and have maintained a healthy body weight for the past 27 years.

The part of the disease that I have struggled with the most is restricting and body image obsession and distortion. As I write this, I have had freedom from them for the past 3 months or so and have had periods of time of freedom from them since I have been in the program. As I stated previously, I have also sought outside professional help on and off throughout my time in the program and I am grateful our literature supports us in doing so. My recovery would not be as strong or rich if I had not done this.

I live my life to the fullest today and have been doing so for a few 24 hours now.

I have a God that I don't understand, but who trust and feel very close to. I turn my will and life over to this God multiple times a day and focus on the compulsive overeater who is still suffering, in and out of the rooms. Service is a key component of my program, my spiritual

fitness and happiness. I love working with others and sharing what I have been given so freely. I have compassion for my mother and other family members today because I know they have the same disease I have. I utilize the 9 tools of the OA program to deal with "life on life's terms" today vs. utilizing food or obsessing about what my body looks like.

My truth is that of the author of my favorite story, Keys of the Kingdom. "The last years of my life have been rich and meaningful. I have had my share of problems, heartaches and disappointments, because that is life, but also I have known a great deal of joy, and a peace that is the handmaiden of an inner freedom. I have a wealth of friends and, with my OA friends, an unusual quality of fellowship. For, to these people, I am truly related. First, through mutual pain and despair, and later through mutual objectives and newfound faith and hope. And, as the years go by, working together, sharing our experiences with one another, and also sharing a mutual trust, understanding and love-without strings, without obligation- we acquire relationships that are unique and priceless.

There is no more "aloneness", with that awful ache, so deep in the heart of ever OA that nothing before, could ever reach it. That ache is gone and never need return again.

Now there is a sense of belonging, of being wanted and needed and loved, In return for compulsive eating and a hangover- we have been given the Keys of the Kingdom." (Pg 312 3rd edition of Alcoholics Anonymous)

**** Anonymous**