

OA Desert Recovery

February 18, 2021: Sharing Our Knowledge

“God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.”

Steps 1-3:

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

02. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.

03. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him

Spontaneity is Not My Friend

Seventeen years ago I came into Overeaters Anonymous morbidly obese. Today I weigh about 120 pounds (55 kg). Surrendering my food and weight to a sponsor, so I am out of the equation, has worked best to keep me at a healthy weight.

I’m the kind of low-bottom, high-maintenance compulsive overeater who needs direction. Because my disease is not only physical, but also mental, I don’t trust my best thinking. It helped me reach nearly 250 pounds (114 kg). I cannot outthink this disease!

My addictive thinking tells me things like:

- If she can eat it, I can eat it – never mind I’ve binged repeatedly on “it”; this time it will be different.
- I know better; I’ll never do that again.
- It’s a controlled environment; I bet I could eat just one.
- I’m doing well; I don’t need to go to so many meetings or make phone calls.
- I’ll just have sliver.
- I’m on vacation; I don’t need to make a plan.
- I’m feeling fat (or thin); I’d better weigh myself.

I have a compulsive eater’s Teflon™ memory – nothing sticks! I can easily forget the demoralization and pain the first bite causes, or maybe my desire to fit in overrides my self-knowledge. My disease feeds the idea that I can eat like other people. I do not make good decisions on the fly. Spontaneity is not my friend.

Using the tools of recovery daily helps me remember who and what I am. I commit my food to my sponsor before I eat, so I have a definitive plan for the day; then I cross it off in my book before I sit down to eat, so I don’t forget anything. All this helps me accept the gift of abstinence my Higher Power gives me each day when I ask.

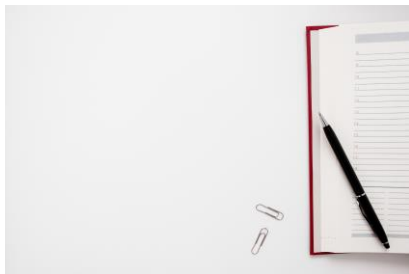
-S.D., by email (*Lifeline*, November 2004)

“God, I offer myself to Thee – to build with me and to do with me as Thou wilt. Relieve me of the bondage of self, that I may better do Thy will. Take away my difficulties, that victory over them may bear witness to those I would help of Thy Power, Thy Love, and Thy Way of Life.”

Third Step Prayer

Ideas for Discussing with a Sponsor or Journaling:

Have you had trouble **Working the Program at Work**? Keep in mind that the workplace can also be your home, especially in today's world. Examine your work environment and determine ways in which you can change the workplace to better assist you in achieving and maintaining your abstinence. List those changes and implement them in a reasonable time frame.



Next deadline for submissions: March 25, 2021

Theme: Recovery

Email

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I Don't Have to Act on It

I've faced many difficult situations since I came to OA 30 years ago. It's not always easy to resist eating over my problems. The compulsion to overeat has not left me. It creeps up on me when I least expect it. The difference is that I don't have to act on it. When I start feeling tempted by food, I turn to the Twelve Steps and the tools of the program for help. I talk to my Higher Power and my sponsor, and I write. At night I write a Tenth Step. I write about my fears, my resentments and the things for which I am grateful. One Step at a time, one day at a time the situation either goes away or changes. If it doesn't, I learn to accept it the way it is. My husband's death took years to work through.

I haven't returned to the hell I was in eating compulsively every day. For that I am grateful to God and this wonderful program. Keep coming back. It works if you work it.

-E.K., Mesa, Arizona (*Lifeline*, November 2004)

Meeting the Challenge

I became abstinent after four years in the OA program. Although I was in two other Twelve-Step programs, I had trouble with the first three Steps in OA because I thought food was bigger than God. When I became willing to do what I saw worked for other OAers and got down on my knees to say I surrender, I became abstinent. I found a sponsor, wrote down and called in my food, made two other OA calls a day, prayed and meditated, went to meetings and worked the Steps with my sponsor.

My first challenge was going on an escorted tour of Italy that included food. I first contacted the airlines and my tour guide to tell them I was allergic to sugar, wheat, dairy, caffeine, and alcohol. I packed my oatmeal, herb teas, and sweeteners. I contacted the World Service Office and got a list of meetings in Italy. I went to meetings in Rome and contacted OA people in Florence. I sent a postcard to my sponsor every day telling her what I had eaten.

I made it through my first European vacation abstintently because I was willing to go to any lengths. I'm grateful that OA exists around the world so I have a Fellowship of support no matter where I go.

-S.A., Brooklyn, New York (*Lifeline*, November 2004)

"My Creator, I am now willing that you should have all of me, good and bad. I pray that you now remove from me every single defect of character which stands in the way of my usefulness to you and my fellows. Grant me strength, as I go out from here, to do your bidding.

Seventh Step Prayer

Ideas for Outreach Calls:

Call a friend in Program and talk about ways you have both found to connect with others during this past year.

- Are you listening to OA speakers from Chicago?
- Are you signed up to attend a virtual Big Book study?
- Are you using FaceTime to talk with Program friends?
- Are you using an app to share your nightly Tenth Step with an OA friend?
- Are you studying literature with someone?

Call a friend and be honest if you are struggling.

- Are you isolating?
- What challenges are you facing?
- How might you partner with someone?



Stargazing

Have you ever had one of those days when everything goes wrong? I had one recently. It happened to fall on the day of an OA meeting. I was so depressed by the end of the day I thought, "Oh, I just won't go to my meeting. Something bad will probably happen there too; like nobody will come but me!"

So I called two of my OA friends and asked if they could come early to the meeting to talk about this so I could get over it. They both had other plans. They were coming to the meeting, but couldn't come early. Great! I ate an abstinent meal (a miracle of God after the day I had had) and went to the meeting place early. I decided to write about my day. A good Step One was in order, but I had so many bad things happen that I didn't know where to start!

I made a list of everything that had happened and ended up with 10 things. I was so down in the dumps I decided to look at the negative aspects of each event, and for recovery write the positive aspects. For instance, my dad was dying. I wrote that it was difficult to watch someone slowly die and not be able to do anything for him. I felt helpless and sometimes hopeless. Death is not easy to accept, especially when it is slow and painful for a loved one. I hate it.

Then I wrote down the positives of my dad dying. Yes, there were some positives! I discovered I had been given this opportunity to get to know my dad. I was always afraid of him when I was growing up. He was verbally abusive to us, and we were afraid of his temper. I never knew until the past couple of years that my dad has a wonderful sense of humor!

I had been enjoying his sense of humor and how he had been handling death. I had also been getting close to my dad because I had made my amends to him years ago and had no anger toward him. I could see him as he really was: a sick old man. I love him. Death brought the opportunity to say, "I love you"! It was never said much in our house; just always understood. To hell with that! I had been telling my dad all along I loved him. Just recently he started saying, "I love you too"! Wow! I had been waiting my whole life to hear those words. Death made that possible.

So I went through my list of bad things like that, listing the negatives and the positives. Amazingly, the positives far outweighed the negatives. Imagine that! I finished writing and took a nap. I needed some rest. I felt better.

We had 10 people at our OA meeting that night, three of them newcomers. (We normally have about four people.) Wow! Was that a blessing or what? We were working on Step Twelve, part of which says, "If you want to get out of yourself, start working with another compulsive eater." I heard you, God! It was a great meeting, and I felt like I was walking on air! I went home, and my niece who was visiting from out of town was there. I mentioned when I stepped in the door what a gorgeous night it was outside with so many visible stars. My husband, niece and I decided to stargaze. We found the Big Dipper first and went on from there. How could I feel bad when such beauty surrounded me? My bad day was just a small part of the universe. Real, but tiny.

I ended up spending the evening with people I love and having a good time. What changed? My attitude! I was no longer negative, so my day was better. I felt better, had an attitude of gratitude, and started counting my blessings instead of hanging onto the negative part of my day. I felt good because I focused on my recovery instead of my hanging onto the negative part of my disease. I am well and have so much to be grateful for! Thank you, God!

-D.H., Ottumwa, Iowa (*Lifeline*, December 2006)