

January 2023

# OAS DESERT DIGEST

Issue 1

## Step One Principle: HONESTY

### THIRTY POUNDS OF HONESTY

Honesty is the principle underlying Step 1. But long after I took the first step, dishonesty continued to tempt me. The disease had a seat in every meeting, luring me to relapse and leave the rooms. But when that didn't work, it employed another strategy. It tempted me to game the system, to stay in the rooms but surrender to my disease, hanging on to thirty pounds of excess weight.

Here's what happened. After gaining eighty pounds in relapse, I returned to the rooms here in Tucson in 2016. A year later, I had released all but thirty of those pounds, but then the disease said, "That's enough." My heart knew it was a lie. Also, my doctor, and my joints. But I ignored all those voices and hung on to those thirty pounds for a long time, for five more years!

Fortunately, "Our Invitation to You" kept bugging me. Every time I heard it, I was struck with its simple, three-part definition of abstinence.

#### "Abstinence is..."

1. The action of refraining from compulsive eating and compulsive food behaviors
2. While working towards or maintaining a healthy body weight.
3. Spiritual, emotional, and physical recovery is the result of living the Overeaters Anonymous Twelve Step program."

For the longest time, for years, when I read that definition, I turned a blind eye to "healthy body weight" in #2 and "physical recovery" in #3. Eventually I surrendered and, seven months ago, finally released those thirty pounds of dishonesty.

It feels good to be in maintenance—one day at a time. I'm grateful and happy. My knees are happy too.

I got into recovery by admitting I was powerless over food. I will stay in recovery by staying open to the whole truth, praying for complete honesty and complete, three-fold recovery. --Michael A.



### THAT FIRST LIE

"I realize I lied because I did not want to face the consequences of my actions. Today, I want to move forward in my journey to peace and serenity. I no longer run from the consequences of my actions. I have learned to tell the truth, so I no longer have consequences.

It's the first bite that kills. It's the first lie that kills. I always had to have one more bite, one more lie...because of that FIRST lie." – Janet R.



When working the first step, I wrote a history of my eating behaviors and the things I did to try and control my food intake. The list was long and included some sane, and some crazy, approaches, but they ALWAYS ended in failure and weight gain. While I could tell myself I just needed to try harder or try longer, or I just needed to find the right diet, the HONEST truth, is I'm as powerless over diets as I am over eating certain or excess foods. I have a 100% failure rate when it comes to dieting!

Once I HONESTLY saw my powerlessness, I became willing to move on to the next step. If I could've fixed my eating disorder, I would have fixed it by now! Why try it my way *again*? Either there is a power greater than myself that will help me, or I'm stuck this way forever. Honestly admitting my lack of power gave me the Gift of Desperation and the willingness to rely on my Higher Power!--Lee Ann B



When I came to OA, I would have sworn I was honest. I was not a thief, no not I. Did I have a lot to learn. First lesson, check the weight I put on my driver's license. Second lesson, it was not Mom's fault, not my husband's fault, not my boss's. Then, there was the lesson of weigh and measure. And, telling somebody when I was angry, afraid, remorseful. Honesty, it was about me, my secrets, my inner self. Without honesty, abstinence was not possible. So, I practice honesty because I treasure abstinence. --Becki B

I love "How it Works" in *Alcoholics Anonymous*, and the line that always resonates with me is "Those who do not recover are people who cannot or will not completely give themselves to this simple program, usually men and women who are constitutionally incapable of being honest with themselves."

When my first few days of white-knuckle abstinence started clearing the food fog from my brain, I was shocked by how dishonest I had been in my own head. I manipulated information, justified decisions with elaborate mental gymnastics, and used creative calorie math to let me eat more food. My recollections of the past were biased—some only showing me as the victim without acknowledging my part while others left me feeling guilt and shame for things I had no control over.

Even though I was over 350 pounds, suicidal, and \$55,000 deep in credit card debt, I didn't see that I made poor decisions based on false assumptions and distorted facts.

I am grateful that I was able to put the food down long enough to finally get honest. That is when my life began to change, and I'm truly grateful for the miracle. --Michelle S.

“If you do what you’ve always done, you’ll get what you’ve always gotten!”

--OA Slogan



“If you tell the *truth*, you don’t have to remember anything”

Mark Twain

**Editor’s Note:** The focus for the February newsletter will be the principle for the Step Two – **HOPE**. Your submissions will be gratefully received by sending an email to [newsletter@oasouthernaz.org](mailto:newsletter@oasouthernaz.org) by February 15<sup>th</sup>.