

# OA Desert Recovery

**Promise: We will not regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it**



## Neither Repeat nor Regret

When I first read the Promises—26 years ago—I’m sure I heard that word “regret.” But what I thought was “repeat.” As in: I will not repeat the past. That’s the only thing I was focused on. As a 400-pound, insulin-injecting type 2 diabetic, all I could focus on was not repeating what was killing me. I wanted to be free of the past and I believed OA could free me. And free me it did!

But then I learned I could also face the past. That I didn’t have to hate the past. I could be grateful for it. Grateful because it brought me into the fellowship of my OA fellows, into God’s sunlight, into a new, loving relationship with myself.

So I got what I had prayed for and then some. No more repeating. And no more regretting!

Michael A

When I reflect on the ins and outs of my life by looking at the questions in our *OA 12 & 12* for Step 4, I am humbled. I sure made a mess of things along the way. Over the years, people and situations also taxed me and stirred up resentment, anger, and sometimes hatred ... life was tough and rough on me. Now after working through the Steps, I feel as though I have a clean slate every morning – and every evening I look back and catch myself exercising some of those character defects which linger and I note things I could have said and done better. Overall, though, I’ve turned out sunny-side-up, and I can actually now say that I am grateful for every part of my past: even the bad times helped to create a new person in me. Had I not found this program, though, I might have aged into being a very grumpy, nasty, snarly old woman. This program works!

Joy V’Marie



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The "Year of Inventory" happened after I recognized the connection between my raging Phantom Arguments and subsequent compulsions to eat. There would be a small thought that I was incapable of something or anything. Not wanting to dwell on my weakness, I looked instead at someone who had hurt me in the past and raged loudly at them. Immediately, there was an uncontrolled drive to eat. But I did not understand why this happened, or how to stop it. That year, I did three resentment inventories, a fear inventory, a trauma inventory, and finally found some answers with a rewards inventory. I found acceptance that they, like myself, were doing the best they knew how. They, like me, were forgivable.

I needed to quit denying the bitterness, resentment, and fear that was inside me. My main stumbling block was my idiot ego, which kept telling me, all I gotta do is eat this or that... No, my part was giving up old rationalizations, blaming others, the angers. Instead, in my higher power's company, I can forgive them and myself and stay close to the sunlight of the spirit. That is when true abstinence, the absence of compulsion, happened. My past was a lesson, the translation of that lesson was a gift from my Higher Power.

Rebecca B

## Reality

Don't wish to shut the door on it---WHAT?

Of course I DID! Close that door, pretend it didn't happen, put on a cheerful face to mask the hurt, eat to numb the feelings! Ignore the nagging self-blame and shame and keep going. That was my coping mechanism taught from an early age but here I was at almost 40 yet again failing at another diet to acquire a 'normal body' so I could feel 'OK'.

I figured if I ignored 'it', 'it' would go away and not bother me, but 'it' turned out to be 'Critical Chris' who had high expectations and low tolerance for anything subpar including my sense of self-worth.

As painful as it was, my healing began when the door was cracked open with step 4 and reality replaced fantasy with hard work, time and gentle sponsors.

Have I reached this promise--YES!

Especially, currently, when a sibling's death has brought childhood forces together. By owning my part, I can be an adult, rather than a scared 4-year-old child AND practice accepting my siblings and myself as they were/are AND practicing breathing in ...'GOD' and breathing out ...'GOOD'!

Chris N