

OA TODAY

FEBRUARY

2017



St. Louis Bi-State
Area Intergroup

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www.stlouisoa.org (Local Website)

www.oaregion4.org (Region 4 Website)

www.oa.org (World Service Website)

OA ANNOUNCEMENTS

OA CONVENTION IS COMING AND WE NEED YOUR HELP!

Please Donate the following for the Ways and Means Room at the Convention.

Requesting:

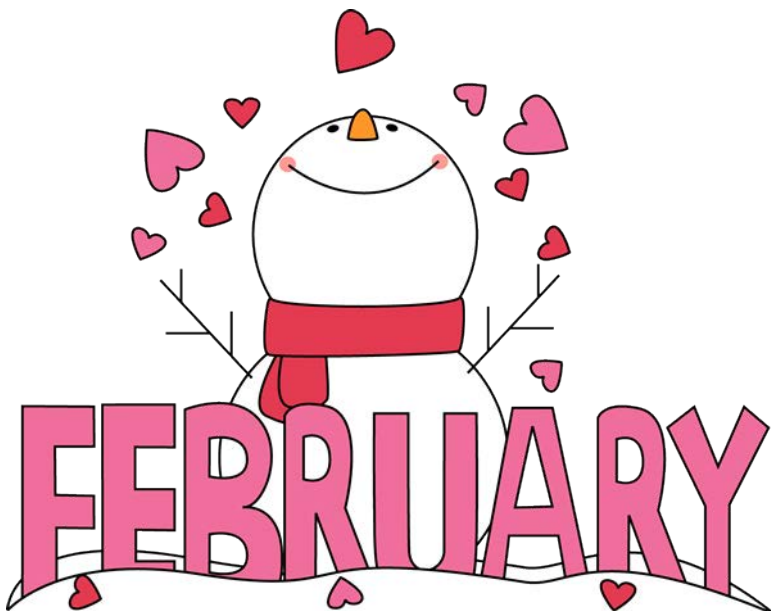
- ** CUP Raffle - Small items that are nice but that you no longer want. For example, books, candles, scarves, serenity prayer cups, plates, plaques, figurines, knick-knacks, etc.
- ** Gift Baskets- Please mark on the outside what is inside your special basket.
- ** Silent Auction-Items that cost more than the CUP Raffle. Items, for example, new DVD's, jewelry, paintings, etc.
- ** Live Auction-Handmade quilts, services offered, for example; massages, cut lawn, stay for a weekend. If you know you can donate something for this--please call me by March 30:

Jan D., 636-933-4241

Volunteers-Many needed to run this event. Please call Pat (Volunteer Coordinator) 314-581-9960

SORRY NO CLOTHING EXCHANGE!!

See Save the Date flyer for more information



Please help our intergroup find out how it can best serve the membership. Even if you are brand new, please take the survey! We want to hear from everyone. There are only 10 questions, so it will take 2-3 minutes. Just go to stlouisoa.org and click on the button that says "Take Survey" -- it's that easy! There is still time to be counted. The survey is still open - the end date has been cancelled. The password is 'bistate'.

STEP TWO

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

How Does This Step Work?

I love step two as it is where the hope starts to come in. After we take step one of admitting to ourselves that we are powerless over food and that our lives have become unmanageable; step two brings in so much hope. We are able to see beyond our food addiction and our own ways of coping with it to the idea that something or someone outside of ourselves can and will help.

When I first joined program, I had what I believed to be a strong relationship with my Higher Power, whom I choose to call God. However, I really had no idea that God cared about my food. I assumed my eating was this little problem that I just needed to manage on my own with discipline and willpower. Except despite years of trying, I could not handle this problem and it was becoming a big problem, not a small one. I weighed at least 220 pounds when I joined program. I had stopped weighing so I really don't know for sure.

Step Two changed my life! Just the idea that a power greater than myself could not only help me with this food problem, but restore me to sanity! The insanity of compulsive overeating was exhausting for me-waking up every morning with instant regret for what I ate the night before, swearing to never do it again, but of course I did. Why? Because I had not invited my Higher Power into this area of my life. I needed God's power all along to stop the craziness and restore me to sanity.

If you haven't yet taken step two, I encourage you to do so today. You cannot work this program or find any sanity from your food addiction without inviting your Higher Power in to help. I thank God for this program and for caring about this “little” food problem I have.

Tina W.

What Does This Step Mean?

In the beginning, this step annoyed me. This annoyance was nothing new to an angry addict that didn't want to give up her addiction. I did not see how this step would help me. I knew that I couldn't possibly be insane, so why bother with this step at all? 'Couldn't we fast forward to the Step on how to get skinny' I would ask my sponsor.

At this, my sponsor would patiently remind me that this is a spiritual program and, one day, I would see how my God restored me to sanity.

As I mentioned above, this meant little to me. I had grown up with a God and he was unfair. I knew he was still around, but felt as though he did not care about me. I was fat, after all. He hadn't done anything for me; why would he start now?

Thank God for my sponsor. She was loving and just asked, 'Do you believe, that I believe in something that brought me to sanity'. I knew this to be true. She seemed so happy and full of life. She was also abstinent! I was willing to believe.

I later found out that was the key to Step 2. I had to just become willing to believe that something could bring me to the peace and serenity that I saw in my sponsor. Slowly, but surely, I got there by staying abstinent and listening to my sponsor. I stayed honest and open. Now, one day at a time, I have that peace and serenity too!

AZ



TRADITION TWO

“For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority--a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.”

How Does This Tradition Work?

A couple of weeks ago, a newcomer arrived early to my home meeting. I was there alone to unlock the door and set up the chairs. “Are you in charge of this group?” She asked. I said something like, “No one is really in charge. We are a fellowship of equals. You are as much in charge as I am.” And we both laughed, although her laughter was tinged with nervousness. I then welcomed her in a more traditional way. Others began arriving and took her under their collective wings.

For each meeting we do have a leader, obviously, but that person is in service to the group, not exercising authority over it. Never is this more apparent than during a group conscience, where everyone who shows up to participate has an equal voice. I once took part in a group conscience with myself, one other veteran, and two newcomers. The four of us hammered out a very satisfactory solution to an issue concerning the group. The sum really was better than the individual parts. Whether this was God’s work or the collective energy of our little gathering is up to the individual’s understanding of his or her higher power.

Experiences like that have led me to see how Tradition 2 connects to Step 2’s promise of how I can come to believe that my sanity can be restored. By first trusting a sponsor and receiving wonderful loving guidance, I am able to extrapolate that to trusting the group, and eventually the world. Before OA I was a loner who rarely took advice or accepted help. I was alternately arrogant and self-loathing. At times I thought I was the smartest person in the room, and at others I thought I was a stupid piece of garbage. Sometimes I felt both things simultaneously. And I rarely put myself in the middle of that spectrum. It had to be one or the other. That is insane.

Now I surround myself with the love and good counsel of my fellows. Sometimes I may think I have a really good idea. If I come to group conscience armed with humility and openness, I can see the wisdom of the group decision if I am overruled after disagreement and discussion. It’s we, not me. What works for the group also works for the individual. And it gives me one more link to the psychic change I need to maintain my abstinence.

Jane C.



AN OA STORY:

I am a 46 year old mother of 4 living in recovery from bulimia. Bulimia is a disease, like cancer, diabetes or heart disease. Accepting that I have this disease was the first step on my road to recovery. Eating disorders are insidious, cunning and baffling, especially in a world where beauty is often defined as being a size 2.

My disease started at a very early age. First it was the constant obsession with being skinny, and then it progressed into purging after a large meal, and eventually it escalated out of control. If I could just get to the perfect weight, life would be perfect. Boy that was the farthest from the truth.

I remember being 7 or 8 years old and at weddings or any other special event I would eat so much my little body could not take it. I would vomit from eating too much. While at this early age it was not self-induced, it was certainly not normal behavior. My family would call me “Moo Moo” because I could eat so much and always remain “Skinny Minnie.”

As I approached high school the fear of gaining weight started. “I will not get fat.” I told myself repeatedly. The restricting began. I would over eat and then the next day would starve myself to make up for it. This process continued into college, and it was a vicious cycle. Binge, restrict, feel guilty, do it all over again. It was an obsession, the constant thought in my head “I cannot and will not get fat.”

AN OA STORY, Continued

Fast forward to the birth of my son. I was celebrating my 30th birthday on a weekend away with my husband. We enjoyed a delicious meal at this amazing restaurant. I proceeded to clean my plate and felt like crap. The shame and guilt I was feeling was overwhelming. The purging through vomiting began. That was the first of countless episodes. I would eat a huge meal, and purge because the fear of gaining weight was consuming. And so it continued for years through the birth of my two daughters. A glimpse into one of my worst days of living with this disease.

. . . I wake up, eat my little breakfast, and get the kids off to school. I would come home, eat the remaining pop tart, or grab a cookie, and then I figured what the hell, I just went through the cabinets. I would eat so much it hurt, then I would purge. I felt terrible, physically and emotionally. I was so ashamed, and hated myself. Sometimes I would hit Walgreen's, buy a bunch of candy, scarf it all down and just throw it up. I would do this sometimes 2-3 times a day. If something did not go my way, if I was upset or anxious about something, food was my escape. If we were having dinner at a relative's or wherever for that matter, I would start with a nibble here and a nibble there, then it continued with dinner, seconds, desert, seconds, then sneaking more food on top of that. Often times, I would wait until everyone was sleeping, binge, vomit and do it again. My body was weak. I was always tired and irritable. At times my face looked bloated. Others saw how thin I had become, I couldn't see it. In fact, I relished in it, and wondered if I could just get a little lower on the scale this would all just go away. This disease manifests itself in your head. I was eating to numb any and all feelings. If I was upset or angry I simply went to the food. I was filling this hole with food. When not bingeing or purging I was planning my next binge or exercising compulsively.

If I did not exercise a certain amount a week I was a complete failure. Not even a stress fracture in my foot could convince me I had a problem. If something went wrong it was my fault, and once again I was a failure. My head was in such a fog, I could not think straight. Instead of being high on drugs or alcohol I was high on food. I had never felt more alone or isolated in my whole life. I HATED MYSELF. To the outside world, I seemed to have it all together, but inside I was a complete mess. Finally, I realized that I might have a problem so I began therapy. I wanted to fix all my problems, but never admit I had this eating disorder. I was diagnosed with depression and continued therapy for years. The conversation always came back to the eating disorder and finally I surrendered.

I have accepted that I have a disease, and that I am different from most in that I have an abnormal reaction when I over indulge, I cannot quit. I found my recovery in a 12 step program, Overeaters Anonymous. Self-will gets me no where. I practice abstinence. Abstinence means: forbearance from any indulgence of appetite, the state of being without a drug, on which one is dependent. Abstinence is the most important part of this program. I must remain abstinent for me to recover. Abstinence for me means refraining from eating compulsively, exercising compulsively and bingeing and purging. In order to do that I establish a daily food plan without sugar and adhere to it. I cannot eat anything in addition to that, for that could be the first compulsive bite. I must stay away from my binge foods. They are deadly. I do not stay away from these foods because I am afraid of gaining weight, rather because I must. They are the drugs that feed my addiction.

My abstinence has changed over these 10 years in recovery; there are more foods that have been added to my NO list. That is OK; I am growing and learning in the program. I will do everything to protect my abstinence. Another vital part of my program is service; I cannot keep it if I do not give it away. This I learned from day 1. Abstinence is my greatest service in addition to sponsoring. I jumped into doing service at the group and IG level immediately. I was an IG rep and eventually was IG chair for 3 years. I have also held numerous positions in my home group and just pitch in when I can. It is the least I can do for all the OA program has done for me.

The depression has lifted, and my life is richer. I have been blessed with another child while living in recovery. The miracles are too numerous to count. While there have been many difficult times in recovery, I have survived without turning to the food. I have a disease, and I must do whatever it takes to treat my disease or I will not live to talk about it. I write my story because I know I am not alone. We who suffer no longer have to live a living hell. There is hope, there is OA. I just celebrated 10 years of Abstinence, and words cannot describe my gratitude. I practice Abstinence, work with my sponsor, practice the 12 steps to the best of my ability, and attend meetings weekly. I do this by surrendering to my higher power – GOD on a daily basis. I only have to do this one day at a time for the rest of my life.

Amy