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OA TODAY



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10 Years, and Still Counting

On a Thursday in March, 2006, I entered St. Joseph's Medical Center, in St. Charles and found home. I weighed 236 pounds and my life was very unmanageable. I had no idea how much so at the time, but it was. I had tried everything I knew to lose weight, short of surgery. I was in an unhappy marriage, I was in an unhappy job, I was depressed for a (thankfully) short period of time. Life sucked.

But I still came in with one goal: to lose weight. As far as I was concerned, my only problem was that I was fat, so the only solution was to get thin.

Well, I have gotten thin. The "after" picture attached is three or four years old and miraculously, I am still at that weight. The foods that I built my life around, that were my higher power, don't call me anymore. I have met so many wonderful people that I can't even begin to mention them all. Some are still in program, some aren't, some aren't even alive anymore. Two people who were in the first meeting I ever went to are still the most important peo-

ple in my life. Some people came to 1 meeting and I never heard from them again. I love each and every one of them.

Each person in those rooms, each person reading this email, is a part of the chain that binds me to Bill Wilson, Dr. Robert Smith, Dr. Silkworth and Dr. Jung, Rowland Hazard, Ebby Thatcher, Rozanne, and the lady who started OA in St. Louis (never met her and can't remember her name!)

Overeaters ANONYMOUS

The fellowship can't keep me recovered, but it definitely kept me coming back until the miracle could occur. And it's definitely been more than 1.

I'm not perfect. I am human. I still struggle with surrender and powerlessness and the behaviors surrounding my disease.

But the people in OA have never given up on me; they've

never voiced judgment or disdain. Everyone in OA – no matter who – is my logical family. I believe I would be dead, at least spiritually and emotionally, if it weren't for this program.

I was thinking of posting these pictures and some of this writing on social media, but it occurred to me that the non 12-steppers are going to congratulate **ME** on my weight loss and tell **ME** how good **I** am doing and how much they admire **ME**.

Those are kind thoughts and certainly ego-boosting, but they don't get it. I didn't do any of this. My brain is the problem. And no matter how much I struggle at times, I really do believe something bigger than me is at work. Something bigger than me led me here. And keeps me here. Someone I love says I'm here to do God's work not God's job.

Thank you. I love you. May your Higher Power bless you and keep you as **WE** trudge this road of happy destiny, together.

Shannon

STEP SIX

“Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character”

What Does This Step Mean?

Every time I heard Step Six read in a meeting, I would stress about it. What if I’m not ready for my character defects to be removed? What if I cannot change? I was missing the point. I was not the one to remove the defects – that was God’s job.

Also, before taking Step Six, I had not really looked at all my character defects or realized how they no longer served me. My character defects were coping mechanisms I used as an addict to survive life. As I’ve come into recovery, I have realized that there are new and better ways of coping with life than with my character defects.

Step Six is a new level of surrender, and uncovers a new layer of powerlessness. I need God’s help to see my character defects, as well as to change them. I am powerlessness to change on my own. It requires trust – believing that my Higher Power has something better for me, and a new way of dealing with life that is much more effective than how I am doing it.

Step Six is important, because my character defects have not just disappeared because I am in program and have worked Step Six. I need to be aware of my character defects daily and ask God to help me to be ready to have them removed.

If I stop working Step 6, it would be so easy to fall back into old patterns. My character defects have a way of taking over if I let them.

Step Six keeps me dependent on my Higher Power, and reminds me to ask every day for God to bring my defects to light as well as show me new coping skills to replace them with. Thank God for OA!

Anonymous

How Does This Step Work?

Like so many others, my first impression of Step Six was that I had to make a list of all the character defects that I wanted to be rid of, and HP would wave a magic wand and I would be done with them.

Oh, if it were only that easy! Our intentions are good, but some of our more fun defects – envy, greed, anger – seem to re-appear on a regular basis despite our best efforts. We may truly believe we are “entirely ready” to have these defects removed, but, as we all know, change is difficult and certainly scary.

Habits that we have spent decades acquiring are not easily discarded, even if they’re negative traits. But now we see that they are of no use to anymore and we can, and do, live without them.

I would encourage all of you to read either the OA or AA “Twelve and Twelve” for a very good, very clear explanation of how to proceed with Step Six (for some reason I preferred the OA 12/12 for this step).

As the AA version states, “*We shall have to be content with patient improvement.*” That is to say, although we would love to have our defects removed overnight, unfortunately, like so many other aspects of our lives, it is a steady, gradual process.

As we discovered in Step One – that we are powerless over food, so we discover that we are powerless over our defects.

Now is not the time to try to re-assert that old control that we are so famous for. It is up to HP to remove these defects, on HP’s timeframe.

“When we work Step Six, we dedicate ourselves to a lifetime of growth and change. One day at a time, that is all we are asked to do, and to keep ourselves ready, with an open mind and an open heart, for “any transformation our Higher Power wants to bring about in us.”

The journey continues!

Anonymous

Alert! Alert! Alert! Mark Your Calendars for a Super Sunday !!!

Yes...you read that right...a Super SUNDAY, which will be held Sunday, August 7, from 2:00pm to 5:00pm at the Northbound Treatment Center Room at 333 South Kirkwood Road. Stay tuned for more information! Come!

TRADITION SIX

"An OA group ought never endorse, finance or lend the OA name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property and prestige divert us from our primary purpose."

What Does This Tradition Mean?

Tradition Six reminds us that OA ought never endorse, finance, or lend the OA name to any related facility or outside enterprise lest problems of money, property and prestige divert us from our primary spiritual aim.

As a fellowship, our primary spiritual aim is to carry the message to the still suffering compulsive eater. We do this by using conference approved literature, shar-ing with others, and using the OA steps/tools that have made our own recovery possible.

In meetings, we refrain from mentioning outside resources – no matter how helpful we have found them. We do this to keep the OA message clear and uncluttered. I may go to therapy or see a dietitian as part of my ongoing recovery, and may want to share about what I have learned from these professionals in a meeting. Tradition Six asks only that I share my learning, without referenc-ing it to the professional.

Instead of saying that, in therapy I discovered....or my dietitian suggested, we can say, "This week I discovered....or it was suggested to me that my food plan might work better if I did this....." What this does is it keeps the focus on our recovery not an outside expert.

We do not know the experiences others may have had with outside professionals, and some may be turned off of OA by believing that, in addition to OA, one must also get outside help in order to recover.

On a personal level, this tradition speaks to my relationship with Step Six as many of my character defects have to do with money and prestige. These two often let me know that I am being self-centered – it's my money; I don't need to put more in the basket. I give enough. The person next me to only put in a dollar and I put in two so I'm good (maybe better).

Prestige can be a stumbling block whenever I walk into a meeting and begin to look around and see who is there and who has a better program. (Some weeks I feel I'm the One and other weeks, when I listen to others share, I feel like I must be horrible because obviously everyone else is getting this and I am still struggling.) Either way, it is an issue of prestige and I need to be willing to let it go so I can achieve my spiritual aim of being a centered self rather than self-centered suffering compulsive overeater.

MarilynSue

CARRY THE MESSAGE!

How Does This Tradition Work?

OA should never endorse, finance or lend the OA name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.

I am very grateful for OA's sixth tradition. When I came into the rooms, I was angry and wanted to blame outside people, places and things. I had operated out of that reasoning for most of my life. If I started a particu-lar 'weight loss program' and it didn't work, well, I could simply blame that program. *'No wonder I am still fat; their program is structured for me to fail!'* Excuses had always been my way to handle the real fact: I could not compre-hend why I couldn't stop eating.

That method all changed when I joined OA. I want-ed the quick fix. I wanted the special pill to help me loose weight and still eat everything I wanted. But, alas, the program taught me that in order for my program to work, I had to work it. There was no 'special diet' or 'special food' that I had to eat to get the promised results. No. I had to get a sponsor, work the steps, and put the food down. For the first time, I felt that I had to make the decision. I could not blame the diet or the weight loss program any more. The only thing left for me to do was to move forward.

As I progressed in the program, I was still very sensi-tive about the word God. I am so grateful that no one preached his or her religion. I would have left OA. But once again, the fellowship taught me that the spiritual part of the program was up to me to develop however I saw fit. I was responsible for my program once again.

Tradition Six is a big reason why I stayed in OA. These traditions keep us together. Without outside enterpris-es, our fellowship is free to focus on how to get and stay abstinent. The traditions keep our program simple and in the solution.

Thank God someone, smarter than me, put these in place!!

Anonymous

**PRIMARY PURPOSE:
CARRY THE MESSAGE!**

The Principle for Step Six Is ... **WILLINGNESS**

Willingness is the key to my recovery. Am I willing to do whatever it takes to achieve recovery? I need to be. Recovery is the most important thing in my life. Being willing is one of the first steps.

Am I willing to put the food down, weigh my food, call my sponsor, and to do whatever it takes? I need to be willing to recognize that my Higher Power runs the world, not me. I need to know 100% that I need to take care of myself. It is not selfish. By taking care of myself, I am available for others.

Am I willing to set boundaries? To say no when asked a favor. To know myself and what works for me, what I need to stay abstinent?

I am willing to do whatever it takes: weigh my food, go to meetings, call my sponsor, confront my fears and resentments, and make amends.

Yes, I am willing to do these things to live the best life I can live, to be the best me, the happiest me, the most sane me. But, I'm only willing to do it **FOR TODAY**.

Anonymous

Positive Characteristic of Recovery: Humility

Honesty = Integrity + Humility

I have been active and abstinent in Overeaters Anonymous for almost four years, and in my working the 12 Steps I have experienced that one of the most important components of my recovery is **honesty** which is my willingness in thought, word, and action to be truthful and transparent, open and obvious, straightforward and sincere.

This honesty, however, has for me two distinct components: integrity and humility. Integrity is primarily, but not exclusively, an interior dimension; humility is more an exterior dimension. The two aspects are blended or woven together to form what I call honesty.

Integrity to me means that my “outside” (words and actions) conveys what is actually in my heart and that my “insides” (gut feelings and opinions) are not afraid to express themselves to others. For so long I lived in fear – and without integrity – a fear that froze me in time and situation into an icy silence, a fear of moving away from the comfortable, a fear of being completely candid and reveal the image of my true self, a fear of being criticized and put down. This fear led me to anger and sadness which sealed me in a fortress of isolation in which I craved companionship but at the same time thwarted any overtures to companionship.

I was miserable! But the fortress wall of fear was cracked when two events happened almost simultaneously: On the one hand, I could no longer deny and had to admit that I was powerless over my situation, that I was not able to manage my life, and that I was trying to maintain insanely a “front” that everyone saw through. On the other, as I surrendered to my H.P. and opened myself to others’ love and concern, I be-

gan to trust and to share and to be vulnerable. I was beginning to experience integrity.

Humility for me is a necessary aid to my survival because it positions me to stand in truth before others and before my world. It is the result of striving for peace with myself and with other people, and it is the catalyst for me of “living life on life’s terms.” Humility helps me realize that I am not the master of my universe; rather, for the sake of not only survival but also thriving, I readily accept suggestions and opinions from others, I embrace pain and learn from it, and I am willing to learn to be still and to surrender to the care of my H.P. I am teachable, I am malleable, I am able to surrender.

The word “humility” has the same root as the word “humus”, which is “dirt” or “ground” in Latin. Humility, however, does not mean that I am dirt, but rather that I have my feet on the ground in reality, truth, and genuineness. In other words, I am who I am, nothing more and nothing less, without gloss, without mask, without an alibi. And it’s none of my business what others think or make of me!

Abstinence in humility means for me to take on a food strategy and an action plan that curb my food allergy and mental/emotional obsession, to willingly let my H.P. guide me to know and do his will, and to eagerly seek the support of others as sponsors, as fellow sojourners, and as groups in fellowship.

For me honesty expresses itself as humility and integrity which in turn lead me to be completely willing to surrender and relinquish resentments, defects, and the “me-isms” of living, which ultimately brings me to serenity.

BF