

Letters of HOPE

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www.oadallas.org * THE NEWSLETTER IS NOW ONLINE !!!

"The opinions expressed herein are those of the individual OA member and do not necessarily represent those of the Director, DMI, or OA as a whole."

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"Living and Sharing The Program...One Day At A Time"



Step twelve: Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to compulsive overeaters and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

When I first heard "the most important message of our program is that we cannot keep it unless we give it away" I didn't really understand until I really started working the program and asked a lady that had what I wanted to be my sponsor. As my relationship deepened with my sponsor and working the steps together I then learned the true meaning of trust. Without trust I couldn't have made it this far in my recovery. Learning to totally trust a person with all my secrets and fears was an important step for me. For this I am so grateful.

My recovery is where it is today because my sponsor reached out her hand to me when I couldn't see or hear. She guided me each and every step of the way and continues to do so. I know I can pick up the phone on any given day whether it's not going so good or I may be overwhelmed with joy and she is there for the walk beside me. No matter what! She gives me strength. She knows the road I am traveling. How is this possible? When I hit a small bump or a large crater she is there for me. She is a remarkably amazing person. I apologize for all the gray hairs with my name! I feel so fortunate for all the wonderful people who have been placed in my path of recovery. It has not been an easy road to travel, but with the experience strength and hope I get from my sponsor and others I have the courage to continue on. I am so grateful.

My sponsor always tells me, *helping you helps me!* I asked myself on many occasions how is this possible? Well, I finally got it one day when a lady asked me to sponsor her! I was a little nervous at first to accept this HUGE commitment, but I spoke with my sponsor about this undertaking and she thought I was ready. Taking on this responsibility has given my recovery and life a new meaning. Just like it says in the Big Book..." To watch people recover, to see them help others, to watch loneliness vanish, to see a fellowship grow up about you, to have a host of friends—this is an experience you must not miss...frequent contact with newcomers and with each other is the bright spot of our lives. *Big Book, p. 89.* And o' what an experience it is!

How true and rewarding is the experience of sponsoring someone. It has added a whole new dimension to my recovery. Sponsoring another person in this spiritual journey reinforces and makes my program stronger...at times it is very challenging, yet worthwhile. I am so grateful.

For my program to keep getting stronger I know I must carry the message to the still suffering compulsive overeater. My sponsor has been telling me from day one...*together we can do what we cannot do alone.* Part of what keeps me in check is reaching out to my sponsor and when I guide and direct someone else in the program. By doing so, I am reminding myself of what I need...*to remain abstinent!*

I am forever grateful. Thank you OA, thank you God!

Karla K.

"OA Preamble"

Overeaters Anonymous (OA) is a fellowship of individuals who through shared experience, strength and hope, are recovering from compulsive overeating. We welcome everyone who wants to stop eating compulsively. There are no dues or fees for members; we are self-supporting through our own contributions, neither soliciting nor accepting outside donations. OA is not affiliated with any public or private organization, political movement, ideology or religious doctrine; we take no position on outside issues. Our primary purpose is to abstain from compulsive overeating and to carry this message of recovery to those who still suffer.

“A BLAST FROM THE PAST”

From the August, 1996 edition

“Working the Steps”



If I have heard it once, I have heard it 1,000 times. How is your Program going? Are you working the steps?

I have now been in Overeaters Anonymous for over a year. I am working my steps on a day-by-day basis to the best of my ability, and have worked up to 6 months of abstinence. I am completing step 4 now and ready for step 5, I hope.

I have sat in meetings and listened to people who have been in the program for several years. I am still amazed at the courage and peace they have in their lives, by working the 12 steps one day at a time.

Recently, two of my close friends have been through some hard times and grief. As a friend, I wanted to help, to reach out and do something about the situation. I just didn't want them to continue hurting. I was helpless and didn't know what to do. I was literally making myself sick over this situation. I felt myself slipping into the deep dark swirling

hole of depression, when I heard a voice in my head say, “ARE YOU WORKING YOUR 12 STEPS?”

It was truly amazing! This was the first time that my program was working on its own. Hearing the steps over and over again in meetings, and learning how to apply them to my food, was now working in other areas of my life. Red flags were popping up everywhere warning me of potential danger ahead. The warning was clear, if you continue on with this controlling you will end up eating or deeply depressed.

This sounds strange, I know, but I realized that my sickness was taking over because I was listening to my disease and not to my OA heart.

Well, it didn't take long for me to know that, yes I was helpless in this situation, and yes there was nothing I could do to fix things. All I could do was simply let go and let God!

I could hear my sponsor saying, “Cliff, God is fully capable of

handling this situation.” I quietly remembered step 3, *Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.*

There would be sadness for my friends and some for me, too, but that was all right. We have pain in life, both physical and emotional. I guess we have to embrace the emotion of sadness and pain or we wouldn't enjoy the good times. By working step 3, I began to let go of my weak efforts and let God do the rest. I now could pray for my friends. I could call them, send them a card, visit with them, and yes, I could love them.

Well you know, I don't have that smile of peace the long time members have, but for a single moment, a split second in time, I think I touched the tip of the iceberg called serenity. What a peaceful place to live in. Working the steps is a whole new way of life for me. Thank God for Overeaters Anonymous and sponsors.

Cliff

“How It Works”



When I first came into the program of OA I knew that in order to get the physical, emotional and spiritual recovery that I so desperately needed I was going to have to keep coming back and if I wanted it to work I was going to have to work it. I knew this because every meeting ended with the fellowship holding hands, saying a prayer and then saying, *Keep coming back, it works if you work it, and your worth it. How It Works*, which was read before the sharing started, let me know that what they meant when they said, *it works if you work it*, meant working *The Twelve Steps*. In other words if I wanted recovery from compulsive eating and if I was willing to go to any lengths to get it then I was ready to take certain steps. Well nothing else had worked and this program was beginning to make a lot

of sense so I figured I was ready and I did step one. I admitted that my life was unmanageable and that I was powerless over food, something I continually had thought and felt that I could and should manage on my own. I was then able to become accepting of my addiction to food.

By God's grace the acceptance helped me to believe that a power greater than myself could and would restore me to sanity, which was step two.

By reading out of the *Big Book*, especially the recovery section, I made a decision to turn my will and my life over to the care of God, as I understood Him, which was step three. By letting God direct my life, by applying and working the rest of the twelve steps to the best of my ability, by giving up and handing it

over to Him, miraculously, I became abstinent one day at a time.

It has not always been easy and because of adversity it is sometimes hard, but I know I have the steps, the traditions, and the tools of recovery to make it and at the end of each day I have been able to claim abstinence.

Today I am a better person because I use the principles of the program in all my affairs. This program does work if I work it. I daily ask and through Gods grace have received the willingness and the ability to work this twelve step program of recovery one day at a time. Nothing at the end of my day taste as good as abstinence.

Thank You God for the miracles of *The Twelve Steps* and for the perseverance, which brings me the reward of continuing abstinence from eating compulsively.

Dolores

“Region III Assembly and Convention”



“The Key to the Future ”

Hi my name is Dolores and I am a thankful, recovering compulsive overeater. At the Oklahoma City Assembly and Convention on April 3-5 Phyllis, Cilla, and I made plans to attend a workshop, *Meditation with Journaling*, on Friday night at 9 pm, but we got there 20 minutes late. The doors, we were told, were locked after a reasonable amount of time so that the people meditating would not be disrupted. We all felt that was reasonable, but felt a little let down because we had not been mindful about the time. We thought the next best thing would be to have a writing meeting in our room and we did, and it was great. We read out of the Big Book and then wrote for 20 minutes. We decided to share our writings with the *Letters of Hope*. The next two writings will be in the May and June Newsletters. Thanks for letting us share them.

“Self Will Run Riot!”

I have always been someone who wants to do what I want to do and do not like to take directions from anyone. Growing up I remember my Dad telling me that I needed to help Mom more, that they were getting

older. Of course at the time, I did not want to hear that they were getting older so I ignored him and also I wanted to do what I wanted. My Mom and Dad both would tell me that I did not need to eat this or that, that I had had enough to eat, etc. All that this made me want to do was to eat more. Once again I wanted to do what I wanted. Today I look back and wish that I had listened to them, but I also realize that I am a compulsive eater and could not have controlled my eating only from what they wanted. I had to want it also.

No matter how much I worried my Mom and Dad (and I loved them both with all my heart) about how big I was getting, I could not control my eating. It took me getting to almost 300 pounds, being on lots of medicine and my doctor and my therapist telling me that I needed to do something with my weight.

Overeaters Anonymous was recommended to me. I resisted. OA was again recommended. I finally looked it up online and made up my mind that I would try it. Never in my wildest dreams did I think that I was a compulsive eater but I found out that I was.

Before finding OA, I wanted to

lose weight so that I would not worry my Mom and Dad so much, but I did not have the willpower or willingness to lose weight. I would hide and eat so that I did not have to listen to them tell me that I did not need to eat that.

I wish that my Mom and Dad could see me today. I am in recovery, losing the weight and living life, as they would have liked to see me live.

I am only able to do this because of the program of Overeaters Anonymous, working the steps, following the traditions and using the principals in all my affairs.

I still want to do what I want and not listen to directions, but I have found that I do not want to overeat any more, that I can take my sponsors suggestions and that I can be happy doing this. The program of OA has saved my life. I am very thankful for everyone who was concerned about me and directed me to OA. They saved my life. I am off all of my medicine except one and I have lost approximately 70 pounds and am continuing to lose. This could not have happened if I had not found my HP (whom I choose to call GOD) and trusted him to walk me through life.

Thank you GOD and thank you OA for giving me a second chance.

Phyllis

“Thoughts On Tradition 4”

Tradition Four

“Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or OA as a whole.”

Most addicts long for autonomy. We want to do it our way, thank you very much. As addicts, being too independent drove us into the food, the wacky (insane) food behaviors and the isolation. As far as groups go, we recognize the need to have unity and carry the message. But we also want to be independent and autonomous.

How can we, as groups, be autonomous, yet be a vital part of

something bigger?

What sorts of activities, conditions or decisions could possibly affect other groups, or OA as a whole? I know of some OA groups that have chosen to have a portion of their literature table devoted to self-help books and workshops from outside enterprises (non-OA conference approved). Most of those groups have disbanded. Some groups have tried to re-write the 12 Steps. I have been in meetings where crosstalk is condoned, newcomers are ignored and sharing is discouraged if the

person is not abstinent. Could these actions discourage the suffering compulsive eaters from participating in the program and/or possibly weaken the OA message?

Just as I want to remember that every positive action I take toward recovery strengthens me, I believe that each and every decision made by groups can have an impact on Overeaters Anonymous. Studying the OA Twelve Traditions and striving to utilize them may be one of the best pathways to a healthy, balanced autonomy.

– Neva L., Dallas

“Fasten Your OA Tool Belt”



Ever gone looking for a pair of pliers or some other specialty tool like an awl or hex key and can't even remember where you stored it? You look in the *toolbox*, under the sink, in the garage and even under the bed. You ask your wife for help. She insists it's in the laundry room closet, but you know it's not there because you've looked in the closet three different times. So just to prove her wrong, you go to the laundry room. Your wife marches in right behind you. You open the door to show your soul mate how very wrong she is this time, and she simply reaches out in front of you and hands you the very tool you've been looking for. Ah well... If you can't be right, at least choose to be happy. If only my wife could help me find one of the eight OA tools of recovery when I really need A Plan of Eating, Sponsorship, Meetings, Telephone, Writing, Literature, Anonymity or Service. But she can't help me with my recovery. Only my HP and I can reach for the right tool when I most need it. It's funny because the one tool that I love "monkeying" with is my Plan of Eating. It's so easy to try this and limit that. To reduce this or count that. To use a new (bigger) measuring cup or (dare I say) diet. (Sorry for using the four-letter word.) Sometimes I have to turn to non-CAL sayings to keep me going like "if it ain't broke don't fix it." So to keep me from tinkering with my food plan, I have decided that before I "fine tune" my food I have to use every one of the other seven tools. By using the tools of the program, accepting the love of the fellowship and turning to my HP for guidance and strength, I'm gratefully building an abstinent life. So don't let any of your OA tools get rusty or God forbid, even lost. Use 'em or lose 'em. Use all eight or lose your abstinence.

Luis

P.S. If you want to sharpen your OA tools, join us for the new OA Men's meeting on Saturdays at 1 pm at DMI, 331 Melrose, Suite 116 or call 972-951-3611 for more tool tips.

Special Events

- **8th Annual OA Spring Retreat** *Enjoying The Fellowship* sponsored by OA Houston Metro Intergroup (HMI). Date: May 15-17, 2009. For more information contact Kelly C. Phone 832-247-4545 Email kellycowling@netscape.net
- **7th Annual Slumber Falls Retreat** *Retreat on the Guadalupe* sponsored by Heart of Texas and San Antonio IG Date: June 26-18, 2009. For more information contact Sharon C. Phone 512-392-7526 Email shacha@grande.net

Meetings

- **According to our third tradition**, we welcome anyone who thinks they may have a problem with compulsive eating and wants to stop. In most DFW – area OA groups, a "closed meeting" is open only to those who think they may have a problem with compulsive eating and have a desire to stop. However, many meetings do welcome health professionals to visit their meetings. Because all meetings are autonomous and can adopt different procedures, please contact the group a few days ahead of time to see if you, as a health professional, may attend a particular meeting.→ http://www.oadallas.org/meeting_list.htm

The Dallas Metroplex Intergroup

- **Meets on the third Sunday of the month.** Time: 6:00 PM at the DMI office, 331 Melrose, Suite 116 in Richardson. Location is on the West side of Central Expressway (between Arapaho & Campbell) Suite 116 is in the center of the bldg. Please enter through entrance 2.
- **Dallas Metroplex Intergroup Current Open Service Positions are:** Alternate Delegate, Workshop Director, 12th Step Within, Speakers Bureau, Outreach Director, Literature Director, Convention Chair, Board Advisor, Vice Chair.
- **Dallas Metroplex Intergroup (DMI)** is a service body of Overeaters Anonymous. DMI carries the message of OA to the greater Dallas area by maintaining and distributing meeting lists, serving as community outreach, acting as liaison with other Overeaters Anonymous service bodies, and providing guidance to local groups when requested.

Phone Hotline

- **The Phone Hotline** was manned by the Dallas Metroplex Intergroup during the month of March. Thanks to all that volunteered service. A job well done! To volunteer your service please call Jonathan at 214-952-9431 or email: dmsun10am@oadallas.org