OVEREATERS ANONYMOUS® Sacramento Valley Intergroup

Valley Voice

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The Sacramento Valley Intergroup of Overeaters Anonymous (SVIOA) Serves:

The greater Sacramento Valley
Sierra Foothills, and Northern Nevada
Sierra, including the counties of:

- Amador
- Butte
- Calaveras
- Colusa
- El Dorado
- Nevada
- Placer
- San Joaquin
- Carson, Douglas, Inyo, and Washoe (NV)
- Sacramento
- San Joaquin
- Solano
- Sutter
- Stanislaus
- Yolo
- Yuba

STEP 6:

Spiritual Principle: Willingness

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

Like everything else that's good in my life, **willingness** is the key to happiness.

For Today, Feb 2

Letter From The Editor

As editor for the Valley Voice, I am dedicated to shaping content to reflect the principles of our OA program, alert you to upcoming events, communicate important Intergroup information to our OA membership and to provide a forum for our members to share their Experience, Strength and Hope anonymously throughout our readership area.

You can support this mission by sending in your comments and suggestions as well as your personal stories of recovery in the Program. Sponsors—help your sponsees to see that they have stories worth sharing with those reading the Valley Voice. All stories are anonymous.

Stories can be from 50-450 words. Note: avoid religion, politics, outside food plans, other 12 Step fellowships and non-OA approved literature . Please send to my email address either typed within the email or as a Word document if possible. 'Pages' docs can also be handled.

Mary L, Editor
marylush@comcast.net 707-330-9062

Overheard at Meetings

Welcome, we saved a seat for you. Welcome home!

How do I sum up my seven years of abstinence? I Pay Attention!

Not one thing about my past has changed. But everything I believe *has* changed.

I came because food was the problem. But food was the *solution!*

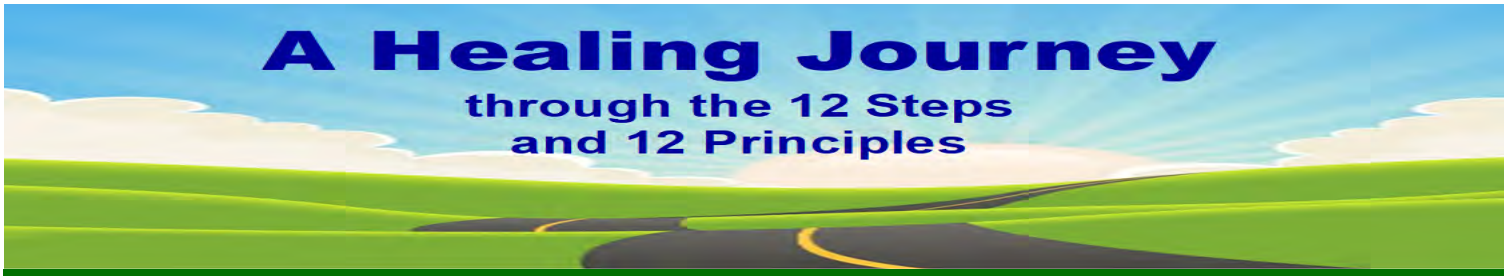
I found out that I have a mind that lies to me - and I believed it.

What a relief to leave the job of directing the universe to God.

Insanity is the inability to remember with sufficient force the pain and suffering caused by compulsive overeating.

We can always come up with a reason to eat. The secret is, how many reasons can we come up with to stay abstinent?

Take a PP break - Pause and Pray



WILLINGNESS

Principle of Step 6

This

From Our Literature

"Became entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character." - Willingness

Willingness is core to working and living the Twelve Steps of Overeaters Anonymous:

- "This willingness to act on faith then, was the key to Step Two. It was the beginning of the healing process and relief from the food compulsion. We began to see stability in our unbalanced lives. We responded to the love we had been shown in OA, by taking action and working the Steps. The result was a new faith in ourselves, in others, and in the power of love. We had begun to develop a new relationship with a Power greater than ourselves, and we were ready to move ahead with our program of recovery.
- From now on, we let go of our preconceived notion about what is right for us. When faced with choices, we earnestly seek guidance from our Higher Power, and when guidance comes, we act on it. Our new way of life begins with a willingness to adopt a whole new attitude about weight control, body image, and eating.
- In order to continue being abstinent, we have to have a Power greater than ourselves operating in our lives daily. This is always available to us as long as we continue working the Twelve Steps and living out our decision to trust God's guidance in everything we do. As we become aware of what our healthy eating guidelines should be, we ask God for the willingness and the ability to live within them each day. We ask and we receive, first the willingness, and then the ability. We can count on this without fail.
- Working the Steps will help us to let go of fear and indecision. If we are sincere, our Higher Power will give us the knowledge of our best course in life, along with the willingness and ability to follow that course, even when it seems difficult and uncomfortable.
- Honest common sense, and a sincere willingness to follow our new spiritual path are sufficient to show us the way.
- Taking Step Three shows our willingness to live by God's will, one day at a time.
- Once we compulsive eaters truly take the Third Step, we cannot fail to recover. As we live out our decision day by day, our Higher Power guides us through the remaining nine Steps. When we falter, we are reminded of our commitment to live by God's **will** alone, and we trust that the willingness and ability will come if we only ask for them. When we get off track, our Higher Power will guide us back, as long as we are sincerely trying to know and do God's **will**. We can confidently face any situation life brings because we no longer have to face it alone. We have what we need any time we are **willing** to let go of self-will and humbly ask for help.
- As we work the Fourth Step, we develop a new ability to see our own dishonesty and a greater willingness to live by truth.
- We spend some quiet time in meditation concentrating on our complete willingness to face whatever truths about ourselves God wants to show us… As we continue toward recovery, we'll find more shortcomings and more positive characteristics. Right now, however, all we need to do is list everything we are aware of in the present.
- A willingness to change is the essence of Step Six. Change is always frightening, even when it's a much-needed and long-overdue change for the better… As we work Step Six, we recognize and acknowledge our human fear of change. Then, because we are willing to go to any length for recovery from compulsive eating, we move ahead with this Step anyhow.
- In OA, we have discovered that humility is simply an awareness of who we really are today and a willingness to become all that we can be.
- In God's time, when God knows we're ready, we will be given new insights into our true defects of character—we will, that is, if we are honestly working our program. When this happens, we apply the Principles of the program, including those of Steps Six and Seven, willingness and humility.
- We have learned that a complete willingness to make amends to ourselves and to forgive ourselves for past mistakes has been essential to our recovery.
- The experience of OA members who have worked the Steps before us shows that recovery depends on completing Steps Eight and Nine. With this in mind, we turn once more to God, asking for the willingness to do the things we fear, to make the amends we owe. Having said this prayer sincerely, we are now willing, and we move quickly ahead to Step Nine.

The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous
Second Edition © 2018 by Overeaters Anonymous, Inc.

Paso a Paso

Paso 6 - Dispuesto

La buena voluntad

Recuerdo que al empezar a trabajar el programa, mi padrino me dijo que si estaba **dispuesta** a llegar adonde fuera necesario para recuperarme. Yo entonces pensé que si no era muy lejos, estaba bien; pero muy lejos, muy lejos, no. Ahora comprendo que no estaba hablando de distancia física sino espiritual. Más bien de la **voluntad** de hacer unos pasos sencillos, aunque un poco cuesta arriba. Con el tiempo me voy dando cuenta de que los mayores enemigos de mi buena voluntad son mis defectos de carácter. Sobre todo la arrogancia que dice que me voy a comer lo que yo quiero cuando yo quiero. Mi padrino, que era muy sabio, me decía también que para cada paso se necesitaba cierta dosis de humildad. Y la verdad que estoy de acuerdo con él. Necesito humildad para no comer lo que yo quiero cuando quiero y seguir un plan de comidas razonable a unas horas también razonables.

Pero la humildad no es tan solo con la comida, sino con muchos de mis defectos de carácter. Se acabó disfrutar de los cotilleos y de quejarse continuamente. Yo ya pensaba que no me iba a quedar nada de lo que hablar. Creo que con el tiempo he mejorado y chismorreo mucho menos. También me quejo más discretamente, sobre todo a mi madrina, lo cual me evita muchos problemas, sobre todo en el trabajo. En el pasado no podía dormir por la noche pensando que mis compañeros se chivarían a la jefa de lo que dije. Ahora cuando me noto muy resentida y quejica, hago los pasos, miro mi parte y si hay algo que necesito cambiar. Todavía soy parlanchina y tengo muchas cosas de qué hablar, incluyendo mis agradecimientos.

Pero todas estas mejoras, hacer un plan de comidas, seguirlo lo mejor que puedo, e ir renunciando poco a poco a mis defectos de carácter no existirían si no tuviera el deseo de recuperarme. Cuando llegué al programa me sentía muy miserable y estaba abstinente, no porque tuviera el deseo de recuperarme, sino porque no quería caer en la desesperanza y la desesperación. Eso me llevó a hacer un programa muy estricto y a perder mucho peso. Yo creo que con el tiempo, como veo que no voy para atrás, se me va olvidando lo mal que estaba y me voy relajando. Pero como sé que este es un programa espiritual, intento conectar con mi poder superior todos los días y rezo y medito por la mañana. A lo largo del día, cuando mi voluntad se queda corta, siempre puedo echar mano de las herramientas del programa, los pasos, los compañeros y sobre todo el poder superior.

-anónimo

Step 6 - Willingness

Goodwill

I remember when I started working the program, my sponsor asked me if I was **willing** to go to any lengths to recover. Back then, I thought that if it wasn't too far, it was fine; but really, really far, no. Now I understand that he wasn't talking about physical distance, but spiritual distance. Or rather, the **willingness** to take a few simple steps, even if they are a bit uphill. Over time, I am realizing that the greatest enemies of my goodwill are my character defects. Especially the arrogance that says I am going to eat whatever I want, whenever I want. My very wise sponsor also told me that a certain amount of humility was needed for each step. And the truth is, I agree with him. I need humility to not eat what I want when I want, and to follow a reasonable plan of eating at reasonable times.

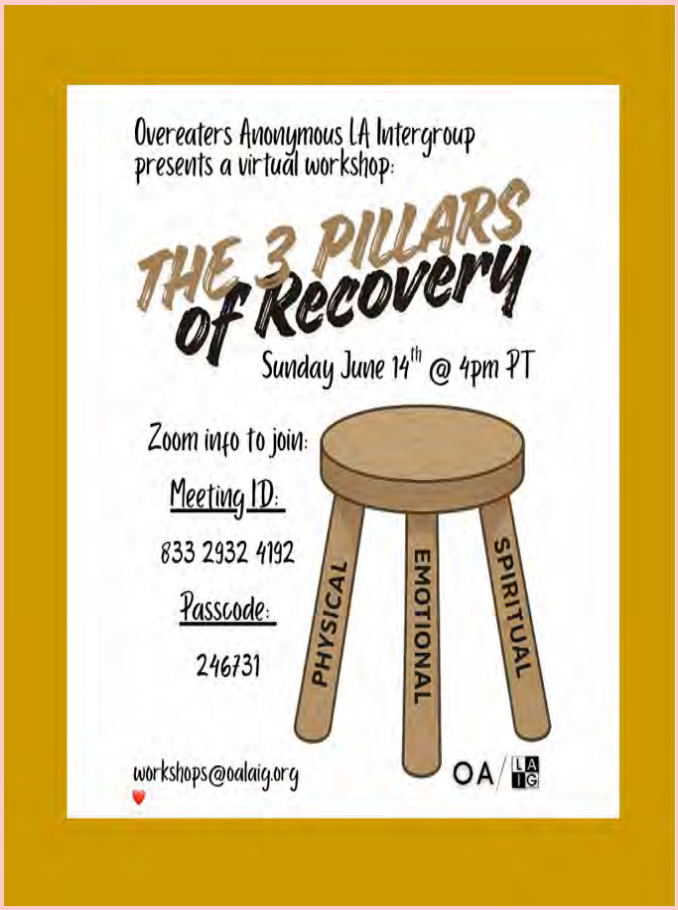
But humility is not just with food; it is with many of my character defects. Enjoying gossip and constantly complaining are over. I used to think I would have nothing left to talk about. I think that over time, I have improved, and I gossip much less. I also complain more discreetly, especially to my sponsor, which saves me a lot of trouble, especially at work. In the past, I couldn't sleep at night thinking that my coworkers would tattle to the boss about what I said. Now, when I notice I am very resentful and whiny, I work the steps, look at my part, and see if there is something I need to change. I am still talkative and have plenty of things to talk about, including my gratitude list.

But all these improvements—making a plan of eating, following it to the best of my ability, and gradually letting go of my character defects—would not exist if I didn't have the desire to recover. When I arrived at OA, I felt very miserable and was abstinent, not because I had the desire to recover, but because I didn't want to fall into hopelessness and despair. That led me to work a very rigid program and lose a lot of weight. I think that over time, as I see that I am not slipping backwards, I start to forget how bad off I was, and I relax. But since I know this is a spiritual program, I try to connect with my Higher Power every day by praying and meditating in the morning. Throughout the day, when my willpower falls short, I can always reach for the tools of the program, the steps, my fellows, and above all, my Higher Power.

-anonymous

Nature Proves
God is a
Great Artist!!

Upcoming Events



Stories from

DIVERSE VOICES

A Common Solution©

Stay for the Miracle!

I'm good at blending into the background. I've learned to "go along to get along." I wish I could do that now, but visibility is too important. My first sponsor taught me to put pen to paper, trust that it will be okay, and tell my truth. So, I sit with discomfort to write what I have just realized is a love letter.

Historically, OA members have been predominantly white, heterosexual, female, older compulsive overeaters (versus restrictors, bulimics, etc.). People who are not in those categories can feel much less welcomed in meetings. I can relate. In many ways I have felt at home here, but I have also felt like an outsider. I am mixed-race, queer, and nonbinary. I also have overlapping disabilities, including being neurodivergent (meaning my brain works differently than what is considered typical). I came into the program a bulimic and agnostic in my mid-twenties.

Having identities falling outside the mainstream, I feared I couldn't recover because I doubted I would ever feel safe enough in meetings or with a sponsor to share honestly. I am grateful that this wasn't true. I came into program weighing more than 300 pounds and in chronic pain. Finding abstinence gave me my health back.

For decades I've carried beliefs about how I could make myself acceptable enough to be included; usually, that has meant omitting huge swaths of who I am. I couldn't talk about surviving sexual assaults by men if I also talked about being queer or nonbinary (I feared people would assume the assaults were the only reason I wasn't a straight woman). I feared I couldn't be honest about the dysfunction on the Black side of my family around White people, lest people generalized. I feared I couldn't talk about the difficulty of navigating being mixed-race without risking bolstering the old "What will happen to the kids?" argument *Note: this multiracial kid is just fine). I couldn't talk about being agnostic or describe my concept of my higher power for fear of being told I'm working my program wrong. I couldn't advocate for the accessibility needs of myself or others without fear of being told that making meetings more accessible is too much of a burden (and by extension so am I). My fears fueled my disease.

"So, this is my love letter to me and people like me, to the newcomer, and to all who have felt they didn't belong."

But, little by little, I've risked honesty and learned it was mostly safe to share. Occasionally I've been told that even mentioning my experiences of marginalization was an outside issue. However, I've studied the Traditions. I understand that speaking truthfully about how my recovery is impacted by my lived experiences with racism, ableism, homophobia, and enbyphobia (prejudice against those outside strict gender norms). Is no different from someone who mentions how their experience being a parent impacts their recovery and influences how they must work their program.

Specific focus meetings feel safer for me, but I've learned that if I go to them exclusively, I miss the opportunity to welcome the newcomer who, like me, doesn't see themselves reflected in the rooms. Working the Steps and studying the Twelve Traditions and the Twelve Concept helped me first build resilience and safety within myself and then gain an understanding of the structure of this program.

So, this is my love letter to me and people like me, to the newcomer, and to all who have felt they didn't belong. We all belong in all our fabulousness and complexity, and we are all worthy of this journey. Stay for the miracle!

—anonymous

"A Snail Can Climb Mount Fuji"

I used to get so overwhelmed by my life. I wanted to make so many changes. But where to begin? I didn't want to work at the grocery any more. I always wanted to get a graduate degree so I had more options. But the thought of even applying for college, getting financial aid and spending years in school was overwhelming. The changes seemed monumental, so I just stayed in the food.

"One day at a time" was a new concept. But it saved my life. That's because I applied it to the most important change of all – getting abstinent. While the thought of staying abstinent for a whole month and then a whole year seemed unthinkable, I could manage the thought of staying abstinent that day. So one day at a time I put first things first, like praying in the morning to God to keep me abstinent. And I began accumulating weeks and then months of continuous abstinence.

I've been able to apply these lessons to other changes in my life. I did go back to college and earned my graduate degree. I did it one day at a time. I also learned to "take the next indicated action" when I became overwhelmed or afraid. It always keeps me moving in the right direction. Today, no goal or life change seems impossible as I remember how even a snail can climb Mount Fuji – one step at a time.

-anonymous

Willingness is an action I take when I offer my will, my mind and my actions to my Higher Power, whom I call Holy Other. I do this freely and gladly because each day I turn my will and my life over I am letting this Higher Power provide me with direction and support so I may live free of compulsive overeating.

I practice **willingness** by beginning each day in meditation, writing and setting my intention to be in "recovery mode" for that day. This helps me choose how to respond to challenges, rather than react to them. It helps me to make decisions with a clear mind about what, when, where why and how to eat because I no longer live in a perpetual sugar fog.

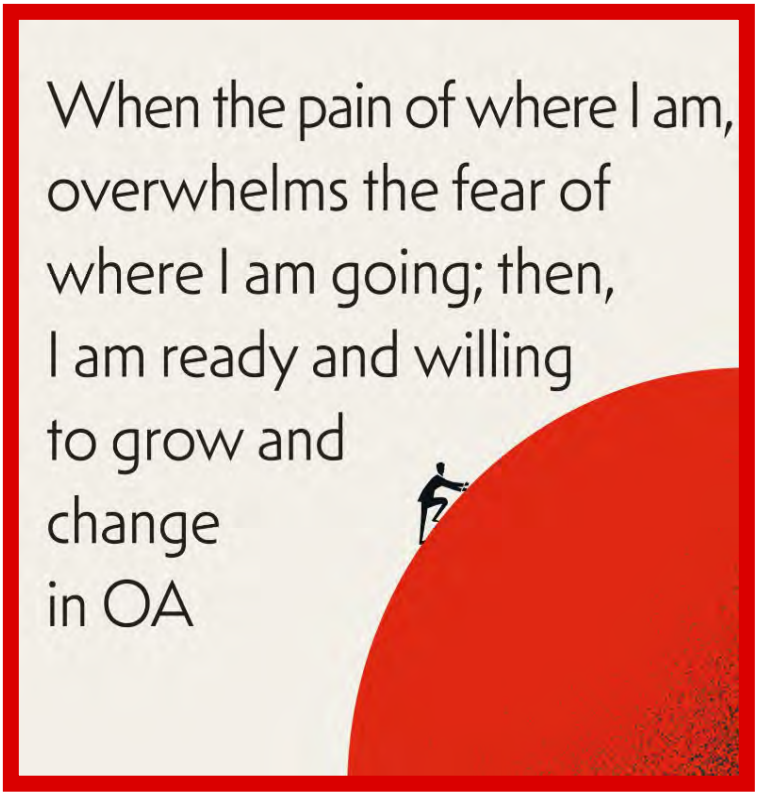
What also helps me is working the Steps, using the tools and connecting with OA fellows. However I will admit that at first I did beat myself up during my first Step 4 inventory of past actions. Clearing out the past and forgiving myself and others did cause me some angst at first. But sharing with my sponsor and hearing her say she had felt/acted similarly, and her offering suggestions…such as praying, acting-as-if, and viewing the past as a stepping stone to a new future… truly helped me to be more **willing** to dig deeper and to learn more.

I truly appreciate reading the stories of how other OA's have found a **willingness** to take the actions to set them free from the disease of compulsive overeating. And how many of them have been **willing** to support me on my journey. So thank you to everyone who is trudging this road of happy destiny with me. I so appreciate you all.

-anonymous

Abstinence: Trying Vs. Willing

I am *trying* to be abstinent.	I am *willing* to be abstinent.
A state of great frustration.	A state of great humility.
Implies that I should know how but can't come up with the right formula.	Implies that I don't know how.
Involves condemnation.	Involves acceptance.
I am closed to guidance.	I am open to receive guidance.
I will fear failure and judge myself as a failure.	Even "failure" may be used as a learning device.
Every setback reinforces that I will never find a lasting abstinence.	No setback becomes a problem, for I know I will be shown.
The responsibility is on me.	The responsibility is on my Higher Power.
It is like an act of separation.	It is like an act of prayer.
Implies resistance and struggle.	Implies acceptance and surrender.



Whose Will?

Lately, I've been praying to my HP to show me what to do to take care of myself today and what to do as I approach another crossroad in life. I ask to know God's will and be graced with the power to carry it out. I've been praying that my will aligns with HP's will. When I let go and let God, I'm much more serene, and staying abstinent is not a struggle.

What is my will, and what is God's will? Sometimes I'm confused. During quiet time, I've focused on a passage from OA's "Twelve and Twelve." It suggests in Step Eleven that I ask God to increase the desire for something if it is God's will and decrease the desire if it is not. My past prayers were lists of what I wanted. I never knew that the some desires were not good for me.

I've also meditated on a passage from page 559 of the Big Book: "We are taught to differentiate between our wants (which are never satisfied) and our needs (which are always provided for)" (*Alcoholics Anonymous, 4th ed.).* My disease is one of "not-enoughness." Before OA, nothing was ever enough. I was always waiting for something I wanted so I could be happy. Today, I usually have a sense of spiritual abundance and feel good in my skin. I am confident that God will fulfill my needs.

Some days I have the "I wants," and I pray and meditate on it. My Higher Power never says no, but rather yes, not yet, or I've got something better. Believing that HP loves me unconditionally has changed my life.

Pennsylvania USA Seeking the Spiritual Path
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Stories of Recovery from Relapse

Hungry, Angry, Lonely, Tired

How did I fall into relapse? Simply put, I forgot I was a compulsive overeater. I've been in OA for many years, known as a long-timer by many members, yet I do not have all the answers. I knew the program, but was unable to work it as I became tired and immobilized from a very demanding job. But I was attending meetings regularly! It still can happen to members in OA. It is very comforting to know I am always welcome at meetings. "Keep coming back" reminds me of the open arms, support, and understanding from others who have experienced similar highs and lows.

I still have problems with cravings for food, although I still attend meetings and use some of the tools of recovery. I no longer belittle myself for my relapse; I know I'm doing the best I can right now. My willingness is growing, motivating me to use the rest of the tools. Willingness is a prerequisite to abstinence. Today I know abstinence and recovery are the most important things in my life. I don't function well at home or at work without them. By re-prioritizing my needs, I created the following list:

- Maintaining Higher Power contact
- Focusing on abstinence and recovery
- Being aware of my health
- Practicing a workable fitness program
- Being honest and lovingly tactful in my relationships
- Developing my special skills, talents, and gifts in my career
- Setting limits around workaholism
- Making quality time for my niece and nephew
- Scheduling fun time for myself.

Unfortunately, the work addiction had consumed all my other goals and priorities. HALT—Hungry, Angry, Lonely, Tired—quickly became my first awareness of relapse. I was exceedingly tired all the time. I also realized how fast my "patience tank" was evaporating. I became easily agitated due to lack of sleep. Emotionally, my program was teetering, because I was simply too tired to attend meetings. Rest had become my priority. I had no one to help me with the incredible demands of my business. Today I am looking for a new job and have reduced my overtime hours to a half-day per week only. I am trying to revive my energies physically, emotionally, and spiritually.

My next step of willingness was to review all the tools to see which ones I was not using. I was going to meetings. I had a sponsor. I was reading my literature and using anonymity at meetings. I was writing in my journal. But I was not following a plan of eating. I was not doing service. I was not making phone calls.

I had to re-evaluate my relationship with my Higher Power. I was not praying in the morning before work. I was not taking the first three Steps every day. I'd let go of reading my daily meditation book. I saw that I needed to ask my Higher Power for help every morning to make it through the day. It had worked before: I knew that *"God could and would if He were sought."*

I had to think deeply about which Step I had last worked. Now, through this relapse, I acknowledge I am a compulsive overeater who is powerless over food (Step One). I know my Higher Power will restore me to sanity and help me (Step Two). My willingness must now push me to reach out and call other compulsive eaters when the cravings start. I now understand that abstinence begins with an abstinent state of mind.

I've had to address impatience and non-acceptance of others in order to achieve an abstinent state of mind. Without working on these defects, I knew that I couldn't hold onto any length of abstinence. When my mind is truly abstinent, the rest of the program is so much easier. I've renewed my program by working those "lost" tools and Steps. I've managed to attend another meeting during the week with the reduction of overtime, and I'm doing more service work. I feel as if I'm a part of OA again, and that I'm helping to keep OA alive. I thank all of you in OA for being there and for keeping me alive.

- Illinois USA—A New Beginning: Stories of Recovery from Relapse

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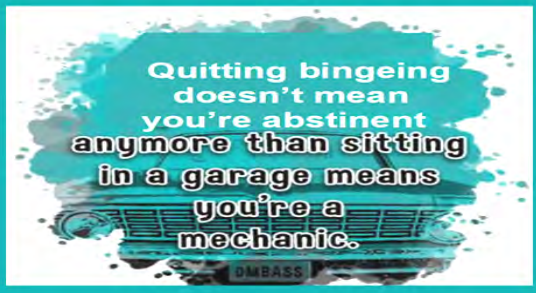

Talking to HP

When I had lost all faith in myself, the OA program, the world, and even God, I kept on talking with my HP. I kept on talking because I didn't want to lose the life I had earned and been given in program. This continual talking has worked from the beginning of my program, so even when I believe my HP does not exist, I continue talking to him.

I spoke to HP when I got up in the morning and fell in love with the way the sunlight illuminated the room, or when I saw the various birds dancing and fighting in the air with a grace that no manmade machine could possess. I saw the miracle of life in a patch of brilliantly colored flowers and thanked my HP And when I was alone at night an believed I had no one to talk to, could not life a pen or a book, and felt the black clouds of despair beginning to choke me, I shut my eyes and poured forth a string of heartfelt pleas to HP: please don't let me fall back into that black pit of compulsive bingeing and purging. I prayed for the strength to believe, even as I admitted my disbelief, and kept chanting inside my head, "I believe in the one who believes in me." I prayed until the pain and fear and caving left me.

As I progressed in program, I began to talk to HP as if he were my constant companion, thinking the best of me, supporting me, and telling me the painful truth in the most loving an constructive way for my growth and healing. HP spoke to me when I has a car accident on the way to a meeting (he kept me abstinent). HP spoke to me when I had two painful relationship breakups 9he kept me abstinent). HP spoke to me when banks of black clouds smothered me with aching depression (hi kept me abstinent).

I realize now that HP was always speaking to me, but I couldn't hear him until I began speaking with all my heart and willingness, even if the amount of willingness could not fill a thimble at that moment. However, as the promises of the program began coming true, along with the inevitable problems of daily living, I became too busy to speak to HP. Then I couldn't hear him until more pain drove me to more meetings and more sessions with him. And guess what! The burdens of life were easier to manage.

I don't follow this program perfectly. I don't have all the answers. I still have defects of character and pain in my life, but I also have a joy and contentment that were never open to me in my obsession. As long as I keep talking to my HP in whatever manner and with as much faith as possible, asking only for the strength to do his will for me, one day at a time I will hear him.

New York, USA Seeking the Spiritual Path

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The Real Work

We in OA have learned
that the emotional illness of
food addiction runs deep.

Abstinence is only the beginning
of the journey -
not the destination.

Putting down the food
was the first step.
Learning to live without it
was the ***REAL WORK.***

-anonymous

Accepting Myself and Others

Physical, emotional, and spiritual recovery has affected my body image dramatically. Once I stopped overeating, over exercising, and participating in other self-destructive behaviors, I began to love myself. As a result, I began to treat myself and others with respect. I stopped trying to control or manipulate others and began accepting them as God made them—and me. I became **willing** to express what I need in a relationship, and I began asking what my partner needs in a relationship in return. It felt wonderful to be honest, open, and **willing** to be vulnerable (being vulnerable is a difficult thing for me to do, even in recovery)

Once I stopped overeating, over exercising, and participating in other self-destructive behaviors, I began to love myself.

These changes have resulted in feelings of self-care, respect, love for myself and love for others. And perhaps most importantly, more meaningful relationships, peace, and serenity. I'm so grateful for OA, for an imperfect life, and for the **willingness** to be vulnerable.

Thank you, God! And thank you, OA! Keep coming back.

-Anonymous, Denver, Colorado USA
Body Image, Relationships, and Sexuality: Personal Journeys to Recovery in OA

The Willingness to Change

A while back I led a meeting and, during my pitch, I mentioned that it has taken me more than four years to get any decent back-to-back abstinence, and that it took nine years for another woman I know. If you're still struggling, or if you are a perennial "slipper," I said, don't give up and don't leave. You're not bad if you binge. You are the victim of your cunning, baffling, powerful disease.

Keep coming to meetings, I urged; keep writing your inventory even if you don't have the **willingness** to write until after you binge. Keep calling your sponsor, keep meditating, keep praying; and eventually you will acquire and maintain a sane abstinence. The Big Book says its main object is "to enable you to find a Power greater than yourself which will solve your problem." It does not say, This book is to be read and its suggestions followed only if you are abstaining. I could not stress enough, I told the group, that we are not bad trying to get good, but sick trying to get well. Later that week, a woman who has abstained from day one told me I was giving people license to go out and eat. Her accusation stuck in my mind and made me realize that one of the big obstacles to recovery for me has been the fact that, to many in OA, I am bad when I overeat.

What that experience made me see is that, if I am working the program, I need to show you love whether you are eating or not. That is what is meant by acceptance. If being thin, happy, joyous and free is not enough incentive to abstain, I don't believe my saying that I love and accept you just the way you are is enough incentive to make you binge. Only through acceptance do people change. I certainly run the other way when people tell me they don't like the way I am and to "Change!' But when someone says, "You the way you are," my defenses are down; my mind is open to self-analysis and I suddenly acquire the **willingness** to change.

The same day, a newcomer told me she was glad I had said what I did because she thought everyone else in the meeting was abstaining perfectly and she was the only one messing up; therefore, OA must not work for her. She said she was about to stop coming to meetings; because, you see, she has this funny disease called compulsive overeating and food has this incredible power over her.

Recovery is not an overnight job. It is slow. But it *is* achievable - if we work for it. If we keep coming to meetings, keep working the steps to the best of our ability, keep accepting our disease without judging and hating ourselves, we will recover.

I know I'm not the only one taking time to get a healthy abstinence. Many of my friends, with four to six years of consistent program, still struggle with binging. For me, it has gotten better. It's still not perfect, but I've lost 35 pounds and kept them off. I hope to lose 10 more. Slowly. And lovingly.

If you are still struggling or binging off and on — or just plain binging all the time — don't give up. You are in the right place; we are concerned with eliminating the causes of our destructive behavior and that can be a long, involved process which has lasting results. You are not alone and you are not bad. The answer is this program. You may not achieve food perfection today. And maybe not even tomorrow. But eventually it becomes easier to abstain than it is to binge. Take if from one with four and a half years of recovery in OA and much struggle. Welcome to OA; welcome home.

July 1983 Lifeline Sampler,
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An HP That Works for Me

I don't remember my first meeting vividly, but I do remember feeling I wasn't alone anymore. I also remember hearing that God (henceforth, HP) could be exactly what I needed and wanted. When I started working the program, my sponsor encouraged me to come up with an HP that was what my recovery needed.

I decided to have an HP named Rosie who was like a coach. She consoled me through painful feelings, encouraged me through struggles, and celebrated breakthroughs with me. She helped me achieve and maintain a healthy body weight, gave me relief from the obsession, and taught me the beauty of service in the fellowship.

Frequent, successive life changes interrupted my participation in the program and also my relationship with Rosie. I stopped relying on Rosie and fell back into my disease, eventually leaving the rooms of OA. I suffered greatly when I shut myself out.

Eventually I returned to the rooms and got a new Sponsor. I was still sick but Tradition Three meant I was welcome. My sponsor encouraged me to seek the aid of a Registered Dietician, as I was unable to adhere to a plan of eating of my own creation. I brought the recommendations to my Sponsor and together we created a plan of eating that was realistic, flexible, nourishing, and free from triggering ingredients. As I adhered to it and became abstinent, some excess weight was released. But I didn't have an HP.

I clung to my Sponsor but left the rooms again. Eventually I followed my Sponsor's gentle but firm suggestion; experience, strength, and hope were available in the rooms of OA. I went to a meeting and immediately felt at home.

I could no longer connect to Rosie or fee the presence of an HP in my life, so I created a new HP. For me, the disease was dark, hopeless, and trapped me in artifice and lies. My new HP needed to be the opposite.

My HP today is named Leora Nadia Valle, which commonly means light, hope, and meadow. My program needs light to drive away darkness. It needs hope to rescue me from circling the drain. And it needs a meadow to represent a natural, authentic self. Leora is always with e and gives me everything I need to stay in balance. Today, Leora has given me relief from the obsession and ten months of abstinence.

I am grateful for the gifts Leora has given me. I am grateful for my Sponsor's dedication to me when my grip on the program is weak. I am grateful for the Tradition Three and always being welcome. Most of all, I am grateful that OA gives me the grace to have an HP of my own understanding. I it wasn't for that, I wouldn't be here today. The promises are coming true for me, and they'll come true for you, too. Keep coming back!

anonymous

Two months after I picked up my four-year chip, I decided I was tired of meetings and resentful that I had a disease that required meetings. I rationalized that I could stay abstinent without OA. I heard the comment several times in meetings, "I come to meetings because I'm afraid if I don't, I'll relapse.

I chaired the discussion meeting of my home group and confessed that I had been debating in my mind whether I could stay abstinent without OA. The discussion started with "Joan." who shared that after five years of abstinence, she quit going to meetings and relapsed.

Next was "Susan" With 18 years of abstinence. I had really looked up to her when I came in. And I thought, "If this woman still comes to meetings after all these years, then maybe it will work for me."

Next, a "chronic slipper" who was in and out of the program and never able to stay abstinent over three months. She explained to me that someone might come through the doors of OA who needs me to be there. And it touched my heart because when I came through the doors of OA I didn't think I had anything anyone else could use or needed. I felt like worthless and useless. And now I have something someone else may want.

And the last person, the one who brought the tears to my eyes, was the newcomer at her first meeting. She trembled and shook. Her voice quivered as she told about running from herself and her food demons so hard and so fast for so long. Only two nights ago she felt that she couldn't go on anymore. But she felt something in this room, She didn't know what it was,. But she knew that we were there for her. And that somehow, we understood.

With goose bumps on my arms, I thanked my Higher Power for my answers and for the privilege of being a part of the Fellowship of Overeaters Anonymous.

-anonymous

Intergroup Board

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Public Outreach	Public Outreach Support	Nancy Mc
Retreat	Retreat Coordination	Angie
Special Population Focus	Special Population Support	Raven Y
Sponsorship	Sponsorship Resource Management	Dee G (775) 790-5690

Meeting List Link

https://www.sacvalleyoa.org/meetings.html

Intergroup Meeting

TUES JUNE 9

Meeting ID: 984 7782 1659
Passcode: 860953

7:00 — 8:00 p.m.

Submitting Stories of Personal Recovery

All stories are welcome! In addition, each month we will be highlighting one of the Twelve Steps and its Spiritual Principle.
In JULY

Step 7: Humbly asked him to remove our shortcomings.

Spiritual Principle: HUMILITY

Submit stories via email to marylush@comcast.net by the 15th of the month for inclusion in the next month's newsletter.