



A Monthly Newsletter serving the Citrus, Hernando, and Pasco counties

www.oafreedom.org

Feb—Mar 2010

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STEP



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

HP

Before I came to OA, God showed me that I hurt my relationship with Him when I ate sweets. I was a glutton, & I couldn't eat junk food in moderation. I vowed that I would never eat these harmful substances again. Of course, I couldn't stick to my vow! I made the vow for the right reasons, knowing by then that my weight wasn't the main issue, but I was trying to keep the vow through my own strength. Thank God for OA, which brought the reality of steps 1, 2, & 3 into my life. I now trust God to do for me what I have never been able to do for myself. I am powerless over food & the rest of my life. By God's grace, I am able to stay abstinent & live in His will "one day at a time"!

When I first came into program eighteen years ago, I had skipped over some steps. These were steps I thought I had already completed. step 2 was one of

these. For instance, I already believed, so there was nothing more to think through—and so, onto step 3. A couple of years later, I was going through the steps again, & this time it was not simply a head exercise, but rather one involving my entire life, inside & out. One day, during this crisis time, I walked into a local art gallery, something I was not normally inclined to do. I stopped to watch in awe as a woman restoring a painting. I was completely taken by her care-filled movements as she worked. This image stayed with me, & the next day as I was doing my early morning lotion & moisturizer routines, it occurred to me that I was my Higher Power's artistic creation. My Higher Power was now restoring me through my step work with the same care & knowledge that the artist used to restore her painting in the gallery. My entire step 2 task was to believe that—be they

writing, going to meetings, taking quiet time, or phone time with my sponsor—and be a participant in this great restoration work. There was nothing to skip over any longer in step 2.

Years of praying, begging, & crying for release from this overwhelming need for more food have left me suspicious about the claims of step 2. But I ask myself, what do I have to lose by thinking about this—a concept of God that hasn't worked for me? Could my ideas about God actually be preventing my recovery? This thought not only assaults the pride I have in my spiritual development, it also shakes the very foundation on which I've built my physical, emotional, & moral life. As much as I recoil from such thoughts, a voice within me says that this notion may be an inspiration. Am I willing to free my spirit so I can envision a Higher Power that will indeed bring about recovery? Willingness is the beginning of the healing process, C

Believe

The opinions expressed reflect those of the writer and do not represent OA as a whole.

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Serve your group by sharing your experience, strength and hope in this newsletter. Please submit your article by the 20th of the month for publication in the next month's newsletter.

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*"I came for my body, I stayed for my head, I found my heart."*



& today I will let my mind & spirit go beyond the limits of my experience, education, & emotions to find a HP who is waiting to lead me to recovery. *from: 'voices of recovery'*

## 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. z

The newcomer may ask, "Who is the head of OA?" & be puzzled by the answer in tradition 2: a loving God. No organization in the world, except other 12 steps groups, is run in quite this way. It may seem thoroughly impractical—but it works! We ask God's guidance and then vote on concerns, and group decision is our authority. Not all our group decisions will be wise and practical. We do make mistakes. Then we must look for better answers to the problem. In time, we are likely to see we have learned and grown from our mistakes. No one person has all the answers in OA. It is only natural for the founders of a group to feel they must always guide and direct the group. But this is not so. The counsel of elder members can continue to be invaluable, but it is not good for the group or the individual for one person to hold authority long. A vital part of personal growth is

learning humility by yielding our self-will. As a group, we may think it is easier to follow a strong leader than to join in making our own decisions at the steering committee meeting. But group conscience must be our guide in making all decisions for the group. There is more strength in working out solutions together.

*from: "the 12 traditions of OA" pamphlet*

Service in OA has taught me many things. Perhaps the most important is that I can love and respect someone with a different point of view. We are members of the same fellowship; we share the same compulsion. We are both trying to do what is best for OA, and we can "agree to disagree." Through OA I've learned that we can have different viewpoints on an issue without jeopardizing our friendship. Just because someone disagrees with me doesn't mean that person doesn't love me or want my friendship. I don't have to take it personally. Our group conscience decides an issue. If I don't agree with the decision by group conscience, I can nevertheless learn to live with it. I trust that others also have the good of OA as a whole in mind, and I can learn something. I can learn that not only are there other views than mine, but they may be right.

As a long-timer, I sometimes think I know what is best for OA, I've learned over the years to reserve a decision until all viewpoints are heard. Often the newcomer presents a view no

one else has considered, & it changes everyone's mind. Our traditions state that we make an informed group conscience. To be informed, we must listen to everyone. If we are always to keep the good of OA in mind, we must ensure that every viewpoint is heard with respect & compassion. We listen attentively & with an open mind. We can then make a decision based on what is best for our group & for OA as a whole.

*from: 'voices of recovery'*

**CONCEPT TWO** is Conscience. The OA groups have delegated to World Service Business Conference the active maintenance of our world services; thus, World Service Business Conference is the voice, authority and effective conscience of OA as a whole. z With some 7,000 OA groups registered worldwide, a group conscience meeting that includes every OA member is a practical impossibility. To reach a group conscience that is representative of the fellowship as a whole, OA holds an annual business meeting—the World Service Business Conference (WSBC). We sent delegates we trust to work for OA as a whole to the WSBC. These delegates are representatives from intergroups & service boards worldwide, regional chairpersons, & members of the board of Trustees. For more information on World Service Business Conference please go to <http://www.oa.org>.

*from: "the 12 concepts of OA service"*

## STAYING IN RECOVERY WITH THE HELP OF 12TH STEP WITHIN

USING THE WELCOME BACK, WE CARE PACKAGE FOR  
THOSE IN DANGER OF GOING INTO RELAPSE  
OR ARE RETURNING FROM RELAPSE



### For February:

Topic: "Sharing the love of recovery"

Share what OA has done for you!! Make a commitment to make a 12 step call (call to someone to see how they are or let them know that you miss them) on the 12th & encourage others to do the same.

Do: Challenge others to make at least one 12th step call on the 12th.

Don't: Forget to thank God for the gift of recovery.



### For March:

Topic: What am I willing to give up or do to get out or stay out of relapse?

Do: Ask for the gift of abstinence every morning.

Don't: Forget to stay on your program.

It's the best gift you will ever give yourself!

## Sole Judge

Each OA member is the Sole Judge of:

- Z His or her own eating plan.
- Z His or her normal weight.
- Z His or her concept of a Higher Power.

It is extremely important to remember at all times that we each make a decision about what we should & should not eat, what we should normally weigh & the power upon which we depend for help. It is not up to other members to make these decisions for us, nor is it up to us to judge others or to "point a finger" when someone else's ideas don't coincide with our own. If there are medical problems, we suggest consulting a doctor. If a member chooses to regard the group as his or her Higher Power, this is a personal choice. We try to remember that the foundation of our program consists of Willingness, Sacrifice, & Love for each other & that it is only on this foundation that we can begin to recover & build new lives for ourselves.

anonymous

## Billboards



along recovery road

## Important Dates to Remember!

March 19-21, 2010: Soar 8 Recovery Convention & Business Assembly, "Walking in Memphis: 12 Stepping away the Blues", Holiday Inn Select, Memphis, TN (<http://oaregion8.org>)

April 29 - May 2, 2010: Annual Big Book Retreat, "The Promises", Franciscan Center, Tampa, FL, more info contact Jeannine 727-849-3048 or Barbara Joy 727-937-1964 (<http://www.oafreedom.org>)

August 26-29, 2010: World Service Convention, 50 Years of OA Recovery, Los Angeles Airport Hilton, Los Angeles, CA, more information (<http://www.oa.org/world-service/convention.php>)

NEW MEETING-serving Pasco & Hernando counties: Saturdays @ 2:30-3:30 pm, "A" Club, 18922 Titus Blvd., Hudson, FL 34667, for more information please contact Madeline H. @ 352-428-0815

NEW TELE-CONFERENCE STEP STUDY: presented by Region 8, every Tuesday @ 7:30 pm, (712) 432-0075, assess code 832569, more information (<http://oaregion8.org>)

**Next Intergroup Meeting - April 10, 2010**

## OVEREATERS ANONYMOUS ~ FLORIDA'S FREEDOM INTERGROUP



Step



Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over  
to the care of God as we understood Him

What freedom I've found in knowing that when I work step 3 & turn my will & my life & my food over to my Higher Power, I am no longer powerless. The Big Book tells me that a new power flows in. I am then empowered to make healthy choices. Abstinence is no longer the struggle it was when I was trying to abstain by willpower alone. Allowing this new power to flow in constantly and consistently throughout this day, I see that cravings are not commands, & relapse is never inevitable. I can do this. I can move through this day abstinent & free. I now affirm, Abstinence is the easiest thing I have ever done.

After telling my story at meetings, I get a flurry of phone calls from old & new members asking for the "inside scoop" on how I really did it. It's not just the 73 pounds I released; my fellow members want to know about the serenity, what keeps me centered and calm despite hair-raising

personal experiences in my life. What made the program's tenets click now, finally? Simple: The 3rd step corresponds to the principle of faith. Once we truly make the leap to believe, no matter what, that a power greater than ourselves will restore us to sanity & will take care of every other issue in our lives as well, we cannot ever fail to recover, & the compulsion to binge disappears. It has happened! That power, I now know, has always been there for me, like a bridge waiting to be crossed. It's so simple that most of us believe there must be more to it than that, some other trick or secret. There are no secrets, no magic. Anyone can have what I have. I've been cornered, trapped. The gate to freedom has closed behind me. I looked inward & there was honesty. I looked outward & there was hope. I looked up & there was faith. In my recovery, I am learning to slow down & listen to

the voice inside me that is my Higher Power. This presence is always with me, but in the chatter of everyday life & wanting to do things my way, this voice is often drowned out. When I slow down & tune it, I hear it loud & clear. In revisiting the 3rd step through these words whenever I need to, I live my recovery. That is a true miracle—to know that through these few words of supplication—let me do Your will—I move beyond myself to something greater. It always guides me & is always a gift—because when I ask for willingness to do God's will, I give up control of what I think should happen. I am always surprised. For many years, step 3 to me was nothing more than a decision to be willing. The principle of faith was the key I had been missing. This reminds me of the parable, "If only I have faith the size of a mustard seed—miracles can happen." When I applied

the God power I found in step 2 to the decision I made in step 3, I found the willingness to carry on with the rest of the 12 steps & to remain abstinent from compulsive eating. It was then I allowed the miracle to begin. Trying to understand step 3, I asked how to turn my will & my life over to God as I understand Him. What was I supposed to do? Then I read this passage - "What it takes to work step 3 is a real willingness to live by God's will, one day at a time." - A thought came to me, how often we are told to work the program? God was my employer! In following the program to the best of our ability, I wasn't making phone calls, going to meetings, sponsoring, following a food plan, & using the steps, I was doing a job. I could do my "recovery job" anytime, anywhere! This idea gave me tremendous comfort & a sense of usefulness & purpose. Is also showed that ☺

HAPPY ST. PATRICK'S DAY

I need to leave enough time in my life for program, just as I would for any job. And every day that I don't eat compulsively is payday!

*from: 'voices of recovery'*

### TRADITION THREE

The only requirement for OA membership is a desire to stop eating compulsively. z

Most organizations have rules for membership. We have only one: a desire to stop eating compulsively. A person cannot be barred from OA because he or she differs from others in race, political views, religion, economic status, interpretation of the program, or food plan. Weight is not a criterion for membership. A person is a member if he or her has a desire to overcome his or her compulsion. There is a place in OA for each of us. Here we are free to be ourselves & be accepted. Some groups have been troubled by members who were emotionally disturbed & tended to disrupt the harmony of the meetings. Yet they were not ousted from the group & were not denied the chance of recovery. They had the one requirement for membership: a desire to stop eating compulsively. Troublesome personal problems can be dealt with on a one-to-one basis through sponsorship. In time, these groups were seen to survive, stronger than ever. Note, too, that desire is required—

not success. Many people keep coming back even though they feel they have failed. The door never closes. As long as they keep coming back, they have a chance. *from: "the 12 traditions of Overeaters Anonymous" pamphlet*

I get so much from this—"The only requirement for OA membership is a desire to stop eating compulsively." I have the desire because I showed up at that very first meeting. I have kept coming back, abstinent or in relapse, because OA is the only thing that has worked for me. I have a "living" problem, & no diet has ever taught me how to cope with life. Food, people, or material things can always fail me. The only real thing I can count on is my Higher Power to see me through whatever today may bring. Some days I have to act as if. I must act as if I have the desire to not eat compulsively & act as if I believe that my HP is there for me. If I take this action, my HP takes care of my needs; the obsession is lifted, & abstinence comes. So for today, I will not give up. I will just keep trying, with my HP helping me along the way. I will become a much happier person with my life held in my HP's loving embrace.

When first introduced to the OA program, I was very weight-focused. I wanted more than anything to lose my excess weight as quickly as possible. I came to meetings sporadically,

spoke to very few members. I would lose a few pounds & then leave the program for a while. Years later when I did become abstinent, I remembered how I felt during those times—I had no desire to refrain from compulsively eating. Instead, I wanted to diet. I did not take the suggestions seriously. Tradition 3 illustrates the reason for my inability to grasp this program. I wanted the weight loss & even the pleasure of it without having to earn it first. Today when I watch newcomers struggle with the program as I did. I try to show them the same compassion & the acceptance as those before me.

*from: 'voices of recovery'*

CONCEPT THREE is Trust. The right of decision, based on trust, makes effective leadership possible. z  
Until we started recovering by working the 12 steps & 12 traditions of OA, many of us had felt anything but trustworthy. Recovery from compulsive overeating first helps us to trust ourselves & later to trust others. The third concept gives OA groups the right to bestow upon a trusted individual or group the authority to make decisions on behalf of the group when needed. More insight into the third concept of OA please go to <http://www.oa.org>  
*from: "the 12 concepts of OA service"*

## FREEDOM INTERGROUP MEETING LIST

| <u>GROUP #</u>           | <u>DAY</u> | <u>TIME</u> | <u>GROUP NAME</u>  | <u>ADDRESS</u>                                                                                       | <u>CONTACT #</u>             |
|--------------------------|------------|-------------|--------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <u>CITRUS</u><br>00114   | Monday     | 1:00 pm     | Voices of Recovery | Central Citrus Community Center<br>2808 W. Marc Knighton Court<br>Lecanto, FL 34461                  | Delores D.<br>352-746-5019   |
| 45245                    | Tuesday    | 3:00 pm     | Solutions          | Inverness Lakes Regional Public Library<br>1511 Druid Road<br>Inverness, FL 34452                    | Maralyn B.<br>352-726-9112   |
| 50475                    | Wednesday  | 10:30 am    |                    | St. Anne's Episcopal Church<br>9870 West Fort Island Trail<br>Crystal River, FL 34429 (mary chapel)  | Peg D.<br>352-447-5080       |
| 29089                    | Thursday   | 1:00 pm     |                    | Our Lady of Grace Catholic Church<br>6 Roosevelt Blvd.<br>Beverly Hills, FL 34465                    | Francisca B.<br>352-746-7749 |
| 40614                    | Friday     | 7:00 pm     |                    | Our Lady of Grace Catholic Church<br>6 Roosevelt Blvd.<br>Beverly Hills, FL 34465                    | Carolyn R.<br>352-341-0777   |
| <u>HERNANDO</u><br>50348 | Tuesday    | 1:00pm      | Bridge to Serenity | West Hernando Branch Library<br>6335 Blackbird Ave.<br>Brooksville, FL 34613                         | Belinda B.<br>352-293-3455   |
| 50203                    | Thursday   | 7:00 pm     | Road to Recovery   | Day Spring Presbyterian Church<br>6000 Mariner Blvd.<br>Spring Hill, FL 34609 (fellowship hall)      | Karen H<br>352-200-8433      |
| 08937                    | Friday     | 1:00 pm     |                    | St. Andrews Episcopal Church<br>2301 Deltona Blvd.<br>Spring Hill, FL 34606                          | Betty<br>352-666-1710        |
| <u>PASCO</u><br>27737    | Monday     | 7:00 pm     |                    | Calvary Chapel Worship Center<br>6825 Trouble Creek Road<br>New Port Richey, FL 34653                | Carole G.<br>813-920-2001    |
| 50159                    | Monday     | 5:30 pm     | Big Book meeting   | Florida Hospital - Zephyrhills<br>7050 Gall Blvd.<br>Zephyrhills, FL 33541                           | Sue<br>813-788-6479          |
| 20719                    | Wednesday  | 10:00 am    | Winners            | Unity Church<br>5844 Pine Hill Road<br>Port Richey, FL 34668                                         | Peggy D.<br>727-817-0017     |
| 45421                    | Friday     | 11:30 am    |                    | Florida Hospital - Zephyrhills<br>7050 Gall Blvd. (wellness conference ctr)<br>Zephyrhills, FL 33541 | Sharon T.<br>813-782-6005    |
| 17950                    | Saturday   | 10:00 am    | Pasco Pioneers     | Unity Church<br>5844 Pine Hill Road<br>Port Richey, FL 34668                                         | Jeannine A.<br>727-817-0017  |

Online & Telephone Meetings: The most current meeting lists can be found on the OA website @ [www.oa.org/online\\_meetings.html](http://www.oa.org/online_meetings.html).

Online meetings are held 24 hours, 7 days a week. ~ ~ ~ Hot Line Number: 1-800-544-6353

Freedom Intergroup Meeting: 2nd Saturday of each month ~ 9:00 am @ Unity Church, 5844 Pine Hill Road, Port Richey, FL34668