

OVEREATERS ANONYMOUS ~ FLORIDA'S FREEDOM INTERGROUP



A Monthly Newsletter serving the Citrus, Hernando, and Pasco counties
November 2010

www.oafreedom.org
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OUR TRUSTED SERVANTS

Chair:

Jeannine A.
727-849-3048
ja@tampabay.rr.com

Vice Chair:

Grace M.
727-815-0820

Treasurer:

Barbara Joy L.
727-937-1964
jarbyboy1@tampabay.rr.com

Secretary:

Julie A.
352-688-2877
ajlamb@tampabay.rr.com

OA Literature:

Nancy P.
813-715-4512
nancyrickpage@aol.com

STEP ELEVEN

Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.

Meditation Is Listening

Once again, I sat in a meeting listening to a frustrated member discuss her inability to meditate. It was clear she understood the word "meditation" in Step 11 as it is understood in popular culture: trying to empty our minds and sit still, perhaps reciting a mantra. This is not surprising. Even OA's book the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous describes this kind of meditation. I am convinced it is not what the founders of AA intended.

In the late 1960's and early 1970's, certain meditation practices and techniques became common in the United States, and this changed the meaning of the word "meditate." But Alcoholics Anonymous published the Big Book and their "Twelve and Twelve" book decades earlier, in 1939 and 1952.

To understand the meaning of Step Eleven when it was written, I looked at a dictionary published in 1948, which defines "meditate" as (1) "to contemplate; ponder; and (2) to intend; plan, to dwell in thought, to muse; reflect." It defines "meditation" as the "act of meditating, thought; especially close or continued thought."

This understanding is borne out by studying the AA literature. The AA "Twelve and Twelve" suggests relaxation techniques combined with pondering a prayer. What do the words convey? How do I internalize these lofty ideals? It is not a meditation of emptying the mind, but filling the character.

The Big Book describes meditation as reviewing our day in the evening, and it gives a number of Step-Ten type questions (p. 96-86). It also suggests that upon awakening, we include planning our relationship with God into our day. In today's language, we might understand this as the part of our "quiet time" not spent in actual prayer, but may include reading our program literature, engaging in religious study or even meditating in the contemporary sense.

The best way I have come to understand Step Eleven is that "prayer" is talking to my Higher Power, and "meditation" is listening to my Higher Power through spiritual writings, journaling, talking to wise program friends, and sometimes just sitting still.

Joanne H., Columbia, Maryland USA
Lifeline, November 2009



Tradition Eleven

Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, films, television and other public media of communication.



NO MORE HIDING At my first OA retreat, the leader, a sober member of AA for 32 years, introduced himself with his full name, phone number and address. He emphatically explained the importance of not hiding behind anonymity. He said we should be accessible to other members of our Fellowship and to people still looking for a way out of this disease.

Since then, I've tried to always be available to those who still suffer. Willingness to be known for who I am and not afraid and hide has helped me work Step Twelve and stay abstinent.

Anonymity is not here to protect me or keep me secret. My disease and crazy dieting were not secrets from others, no matter how well I thought I was hiding it. Anonymity is here to protect our Fellowship from ourselves -- in my case from my ego, expertise and well-intentioned grandiosity. Anonymity is important to stay focused on our common solutions: The Twelve Steps of OA.

If I'm a minister, rabbi or yoga instructor, and my membership in OA is mentioned in the media, it could lead to confusion. If I'm a public figure involved in public controversy and my membership in OA is broadcast, OA's credibility might be threatened.

I've been interviewed about OA by the media. While I would like to trust the media to understand our anonymity Tradition and its importance, I can't. To ensure anonymity, I've given a false name and provided an OA postal address, thus ensuring anonymity on the level of public media. Anonymity is my responsibility, not the media's.

We often hide behind another phrase in Tradition Eleven: "attraction rather than promotion." I'm attracted to beautiful flowers I see, not those growing in a secret garden. How will suffering compulsive eaters hear about OA's solution if we or our meetings are secret?

I travel a lot and appreciate that OA is listed in the phone book and in a town's monthly What's Happening booklet. And I can call WSO for OA contacts. But compulsive eaters who don't know OA and are alone in strange cities depend on us to post OA information. WSO has suggestions for phone listings, bulletin board signs and newspaper coverage.

Here are some ideas I've used to avoid secrecy and attract compulsive overeaters to our wonderful Twelve-Step program of recovery:

1. I stay abstinent. When people ask how I got and stay slim, I tell them, share my phone number and OA literature, and invite them to an OA meeting. (I keep OA "calling cards," available from WSO, in my purse).
2. I talk to my medical caregivers about my recovery in OA, and give them the OA Courier newsletter for professionals and brochures with contact and local-meeting information.
3. I ask permission to post OA meeting announcements with contact numbers on bulletin boards.

When we list a contact person, my group always designates a member who is abstinent and is working the Twelve Steps daily. What OA offers in that initial contact is a voice of sanity and gratitude. We share about a solution!

We in OA have something special. Let's not keep it hidden under a bushel. Let's share it boldly, without fear, so those ignorant of OA and still suffering have a chance to get well too.

-Anonymous
Lifeline, November 2009





CELEBRATING With Abstinence



Thanksgiving

For over three years I have enjoyed the blessings of abstinence and recovery from compulsive overeating. How do I get through holidays and events abstinely?

The answer is clear: no matter what the season, event or circumstance, abstinence continues to be the most important thing in my life without exception. "Whatever it takes," as we say in the rooms. We learn to follow spiritual principles and to live life on life's terms.

Societal pressure abounds with holiday celebrations. But for me, celebration is about maintaining solid and vigilant means of staying the course with my recovery. I don't waver from the way I live when holiday time is here. I've learned to replace comfort food with other comforts: relaxing with a warm bath; cuddling under my electric blanket with a good book; spending time with my sponsees; working with the various levels of program service; praying and meditating; spending time with my friends, family, hobbies and music ministry; and expressing myself as a budding writer.

The habit of staying close to these truths and living out the Steps has helped me maintain my footing and stability. In my addiction, I always found reasons to celebrate with food. Now I celebrate with abstinence! This makes holiday celebration a completely different experience. I can be available for others as well as take care of myself. I no longer live with the insane focus, pain and guilt of compulsive overeating. I can give thanks and celebrate this freedom daily, not just during holidays.

Because I've forgiven others and myself, I have a deeper appreciation of God's amazing grace and love. I find ways to give that love, appreciation and understanding to others.

The gift of giving is tied in with service and it keeps on giving year round. Nothing is more celebratory to me than seeing someone's face light up or getting an email message saying someone finally feels hope. It's not my doing, because my Higher Power is working through me in the lives of others, but I can be a messenger in recovery and help bring hope to those who feel hopeless.

I find joy and fulfillment and get back more than I give. My focus and lifestyle put me on a different playing field of a higher purpose for living.

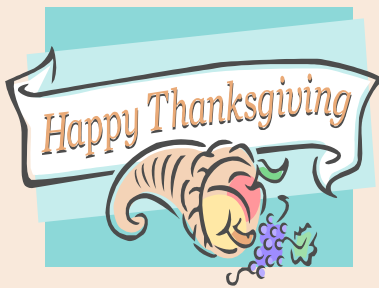
Celebrating with abstinence rocks!

-Diane H., Latham, New York USA

Lifeline, November 2010



Holiday Straight Talk



It was the first year we had the family over for the holidays. With our house situated near a hospital and a fire station, we were accustomed to the occasional wail of sirens. But the sound of emergency vehicles racing by with increased frequency on this holiday was especially unsettling. What was the reason? Accidents? House fires?



The next day, I read in the newspaper that the emergency ward was busy tending to people who had decided to celebrate the holidays by taking a break from following doctors' orders "just this once." Heart patients, who didn't want the side effects of their prescribed medications, didn't take them "just for one day"; diabetics ate too much sugar and made themselves dangerously ill; and alcoholics ended up sick or violent from out of control, celebratory drinking.

When I think I "deserve" to overeat during the holidays, I know I am in denial about the insidious nature of this disease. Sugar is my cocaine, my alcohol and, ultimately, my poison. I fool myself if I believe I can magically turn the switch on and off at will. The disease never takes a holiday. My body reacts the same way to food as it did yesterday, as it will tomorrow and 365 days a year.

Do I really want to deprive myself of a sane and happy holiday? I don't think so. Not this year.

-Elsa P., Saint John, New Brunswick, Canada

Lifeline, November 2009

OA Word Search Puzzle

R G G T E L E P H O N E D Q P Z K
 A U A M E B V F A N O N Y M I T Y
 S T E P S O O B L E S S I N G S A
 I Z S K S O B A X D T J R B F J Y
 P T G E C N E N I T S B A K G R F
 R R J J B B J P F E T F G O T G L
 I K O H R N Y J I R M N R O H Y H
 N G U I O O M T J U K A A B A S T
 C N R C S L Q T B T T C T G N G R
 I Y N H N K H A W A O K I I K N E
 P A A Q O W Q U Q R R H T B S I C
 L X L O P M Z J E E Y N U L G T O
 E A J F S F Z O T T O V D C I E V
 S I H Z S L O O T I I I E W V E E
 M X Y I O D H X F L J J W B I M R
 T R A D I T I O N S J M G V N T Y
 W S E R V I C E H D D N W W G J A

- 1. Gratitude
- 2. Blessings
- 3. Thanksgiving
- 4. Abstinence
- 5. Recovery
- 6. Meetings
- 7. Telephone
- 8. Tools
- 9. Big Book
- 10. Sponsor
- 11. Journal
- 12. Literature
- 13. Anonymity
- 14. Service
- 15. Steps
- 16. Traditions
- 17. Principles



FREEDOM INTERGROUP MINUTES
October 9th, 2010



OPENED with the Serenity prayer at 9:30AM Lead by chair - Jeannine

ATTENDANCE: Jeannine, Grace & Barbara Joy NPR; Sharon, Kathleen & Nancy Zephyhills.

MINUTES: Read by all who attended. Change Region 7 to Region 8 & correct errors. Accepted Nancy, seconded by Kathleen UNANIMOUS Motion to accept by Sharon 2ndod by Kathleen, vote UNANIMOUS.

TRADITION OF THE MONTH: Tradition 10 read by Jeannine

TREASURER'S REPORT: Checkbook balance forward \$1900.48 ,Total monthly Income \$125,Total monthly expenses \$34.68,Checkbook (9/10//2010) General Fund -\$806.93 ,Literature-\$158.15,Special events \$366.65,Retreat scholarship fund \$57.25,Reg.8 Scholarship fund\$11.50,Prudent reserve \$500.

REGION 8 REPORT: SUNDAY IG CONFERENCE CALL September 12th 2:00 to 3:00 PM Dial 1-712-451-61-- Access Code 531844# After you are greeted, please dial "6" to mute the line so as to avoid any unnecessary background noise. When you want to share, dial *6 again to un-mute the line. Special Region 8 Chair and Trustee will share their experience on their trip to Bogota Columbia as well as highlights of the 50th OA birthday in Los Angeles.

WSO REPORT: None

COMMITTEE REPORTS: Retreat report: one person registered for November still not too early to get reservations into Franciscan Center

SPECIAL EVENTS:

- ◆ November 5-7 2010 Region 8 Assembly
- ◆ November 19--20 Holiday Retreat Franciscan Center

INTERGROUP OFFICERS UP FOR ELECTION: Volunteers are needed from all ... groups need to share with members to be open to participate in Intergroup ... everyone is eligible to serve no abstinence requirement is necessary to hold an office in Intergroup just BE Willing.

NEWSLETTER: No one has volunteered as yet

12th STEP WITHIN: Still need volunteer

TELEPHONE HOTLINE: Still going well – discussion took place with Barbara Joy and a late fee. Everything all settled.

LITERATURE: Nancy still in charge of literature.

NEW BUSINESS:

Elizabeth is interested in going to Region 8 Barbara Joy made a motion to send one person to the convention, seconded by Grace UNANIMOUS

Discussion took place regarding abstinence and serving on Intergroup. Motion made by Barbara Joy and seconded by Nancy to wave an abstinence requirement. UNANIMOUS

PUBLIC INFORMATION:

GROUP REPORTS:

Wesley Chapel is having trouble staying open as well as Monday night NPR

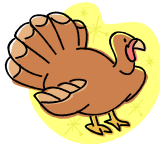
Wednesday AM in NPR going well

Zephyrhills poorly attended. Rent is an issue

NEXT MEETING: November 13th

Close with the Lord's Prayer





FREEDOM INTERGROUP MEETING LIST

Citrus

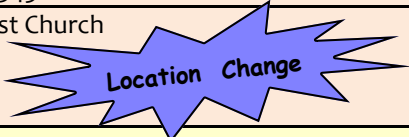
Day/Time	Name	Address	Contact
Monday 1:00 pm	Voices of Recovery	Central Citrus Community Center 2808 W. Marc Knighton Court Lecanto, FL 34461	Delores D. 352-746-5019
Tuesday 3:00 pm	Solutions	Inverness Lakes Regional Public Library 1511 Druid Road Inverness, FL 34452	Maralyn B. 352-726-9112
Wednesday 10:30 am		St. Anne's Episcopal Church 9870 West Fort Island Trail (Mary Chapel) Crystal River, FL 34429	Peg D. 352-447-5080
Thursday 1:00 pm		Our Lady of Grace Catholic Church 6 Roosevelt Blvd. Beverly Hills, FL 34465	Francisca B. 352-746-7749
Friday 7:00 pm		Our Lady of Grace Catholic Church 6 Roosevelt Blvd. Beverly Hills, FL 34465	Carolyn R. 352-341-0777

Hernando

Tuesday 1:00 pm	Bridge to	West Hernando Branch Library 6335 Blackbird Ave.	Belinda B. 352-293-3455
Thursday 7:00 pm	Road to Recovery	Day Spring Presbyterian Church 6000 Mariner Blvd. Spring Hill, FL 34609 (Fellowship Hall)	Karen H. 352-200-8433
Friday 1:30 pm		St. Andrews Episcopal Church 2301 Deltona Blvd. Spring Hill, FL 34606	Betty 352-666-1710
Saturday 2:30 pm		"A" Club 18922 Titus Blvd. (1 block south of County Line Road) Hudson, FL 34667	Madeline H. 352-428-0815

Pasco

Monday 7:00 pm		Calvary Chapel Worship Center 6825 Trouble Creek Road New Port Richey, FL 34653	Carole G. 813-920-2001
Monday 5:30 pm	Big Book Meeting	Florida Hospital - Zephyrhills 7050 Gall Blvd. (Wellness Conference Center) Zephyrhills, FL 33541	Ginny S. 352-796-5459
Wednesday 10:00 am	Winners	Unity Church 5844 Pine Hill Road Port Richey, FL 34668	Peggy D. 727-817-0017
Thursday 7:00 pm	Serenity Seekers	Atonement Lutheran Church 29617 State Road 54 Wesley Chapel, FL 33543	Beth M. 727-252-6441
Friday 11:30 am		Seventh Day Adventist Church 7333 Dairy Road Zephyrhills, FL 33540	Sharon T. 813-782-6005
2nd Saturday of each month 9:30 am	Freedom Intergroup Meeting	Unity Church 5844 Pine Hill Road Port Richey, FL 34668	Jeannine A. 727-817-0017
Saturday 10:30 am	Pasco Pioneers	Unity Church 5844 Pine Hill Road Port Richey, FL 34668	Jeannine A. 727-817-0017



The most current Face-to-Face, Online or Telephone Meeting Lists can be found at:
<http://www.oa.org/meetings/> or Call Our Hotline # 1-800-544-6353

