

Fall 2014

SOAR 8

Southeast Overeaters Anonymous Region 8



Alabama
Arkansas
Florida
Georgia
Louisiana
Mississippi
North Carolina
South Carolina
Tennessee
Puerto Rico
South America
Caribbean Islands

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An OA Cheer!

For several months now I have been part of an e-mail group answering the "For Today Workbook" questions and sharing our responses with each other. I love waking up every day to read wonderful shares that help me in my own recovery. Often someone in the group will write something that truly explains things I felt about or experienced myself, but did not really understand.

Recently, in honor of college football, which is part of my story (learning to watch an entire football game without eating!!) I wrote the following little OA Cheer. After all, We aren't a glum lot. Hope you enjoy it!



Hey Hey Hey Hey
Start your day with OA!
You too can be living the dream
Life is great without ice cream!

Begin the day with prayer
And show others that you care.
We may be powerless over food
But that doesn't have to make us rude!

God can restore me to sanity
If I put him in charge of my vanity
With a higher power running my life
There is no room for storm and strife!

Take inventory in every nook and cranny
Tell someone else, even if it's Granny
Pave the way for God to remove bad traits
Then humbly ask Him to lift those weights

Make a list of those you have treated badly,
Apologize, change and love them madly!
Self check daily and make things right
Get closer to God with all your might!

Now that you are awake in OA,
Help someone else every day.
Spread the word here there and everywhere
We have a solution if you really dare and care!

Hey Hey Hey Hey
Start your day with OA!
You too can be living the dream
Life is great without ice cream!

Gloria M.

We are not a glum lot!

Spiritual Awareness

“But desperation was what I needed...”

I recently attended an OA retreat where the topic was, “Spiritual Awakening.” So here are my thoughts on the idea of a “Spiritual Awakening.” (emphasis supplied). The use of the words “*the result*” instead of the oft-read “*a result*” implies that our recovery is the result of a spiritual awakening; not just a side effect of it. Our physical and emotional recovery depends on our first having a “spiritual” recovery.

We often hear that compulsive overeating is a three-fold disease—physical, emotional, and spiritual. If all three components are out of balance, our recovery will fail, just like the proverbial, “three-legged stool.” In the past, over the last 60 years or more, I tried to tackle the physical aspects of my disease via diets. However, these failed as eventually the food became so tempting, I could not resist and I relapsed with disastrous results. I always gained back more than I had lost. I figured it was a psychological problem, so I joined diet clubs that taught me about “behavior modification.” These too failed as the temptation to binge outstripped my ability to apply the modified behaviors. I then trained in cognitive psychology, affirmations and visualization techniques, hypnosis; but these also failed as the temptation just to try one bite invariably sent me in a downward spiral.

Then in 2006, out of desperation, I walked into my first OA meeting and heard, “There is a proven, workable method by which we can arrest our illness.” A proven method? Where? What method? I thought I had tried them all. I was then told that OA offers a *spiritual program of recovery*. I was dubious. Was this

a cult? Was someone trying to convert me? After all, I was raised in the Jewish tradition and had experienced a lifetime of well-meaning religionists trying to convert me. Here I was, in a Catholic church classroom, with a crucifix on the wall, and posters on the wall with the Third Step and Seventh Step prayers; and others declaring that I needed to confess my character defects and to improve my conscious contact with God. However, I was desperate. My life hung in the balance. I was 150 pounds overweight and was suffering from high blood pressure, high cholesterol, depression, sleep apnea, and anxieties. One Internet web site even predicted that I had only three years to live.

But desperation was what I needed. Desperation and Surrender. In the first three steps, I learned that I had to surrender to the fact that I had a disease that was treatable. I was not morally defective and that my Higher Power, who I call God, could restore me to sanity. All I needed to do each day is to turn my life and my will over to Him and trust and have the faith that he will restore me to health.

My spiritual awakening began the day that I read in *Lifeline*, “When I see members who declare that they are having problems with abstinence, I think, ‘Where is God in their life?’” In Step 3, I made a solemn promise to God, that henceforth, in all areas of my life, I would do only as He would have me. I gave up my self-will and turned only to God to help me make decisions in my life—not just with respect to eating, but in all areas of my life. The “Big Book” (p.85) says,

(Continued on page 4)



You Know You're Abstinent When...

With half of my family from a very small town in Kentucky, there has been more than one occasion where Jeff Foxworthy's "You Might Be a Redneck If..." jokes have been shared at family events – no matter how many times I rolled my eyes in protest. Recently, during one of my daily conversations with my sponsor – the kind that you think will be simple, but turns out to be amazing – I shared about a mini-vacation from which my husband, son, and I had just returned. I made the comment that "You know you're abstinent when.....after vacation, you immediately unpack your bags and do your laundry." I shared this comment because so often, when in the food, I would come home from a vacation completely full of sugar and regret. Bags would be unpacked weeks "later", and laundry would be done "as soon as I feel better." I went on to share that I often think of filling in the blank of "You Know You're Abstinent When..." Almost immediately, my sponsor suggested I complete some of those blanks and share with our Newsletter. Since one blank could now read "You Know You're Abstinent When: You are up for a new challenge," I decided to take pen to paper – or in this case, finger to keyboard!

- You know you're abstinent when you no longer get bagged meals through a window.
- You know you're abstinent when you consider trying some-

thing as weird looking as quinoa. You REALLY know you're abstinent if you actually like it.

- When you realize there is more than one color of apple, and that "berry" is not just a flavor of candy...you might be abstinent.
- If you feel stuff – A LOT – you very well could be abstinent.
- You know you're abstinent when you've named your disease. Mine is named Hopper.
- When your trash can is a one way entry (things go in, not OUT), you could be abstinent.
- If your family and friends now know that you will NOT share your meals – they're weighed and measured and you want it ALL – then you just might be abstinent.
- You know you're abstinent when you "splurge" on Butter Lettuce.
- When you make a "To Do" list and actually DO it, you might be abstinent.
- In the event you find yourself envying other people's Tupperware and/or lunch bags, there is a good chance that you are abstinent.
- If you brush your teeth at night (because you actually stop eating before you fall asleep), you could possibly be abstinent.
- You know you're abstinent when you say things like "I just love my measuring cups."
- If you break out a scale at a restaurant, you might be abstinent.

- You might be abstinent if you no longer get angry at new binge food inventions.
- There's a chance you are abstinent if you:
 - ◇ have a new passion for life;
 - ◇ are present in each moment;
 - ◇ say "sorry" and mean it;
 - ◇ ask "how are you" and care;
 - ◇ are grateful;
 - ◇ have dates with friends, not food;
 - ◇ and you are open to growth and change.

How do **you** know when you are abstinent? How would YOU fill in the blank?

Jessica H.

Tampa, FL



Spiritual Awakening

(continued from p. 2)

“We can exercise our will along this line all we wish. It is the (only) proper use of the will.” Now, all I needed to do was listen to Him as He talks to me through my intuition and conscience, and then simply do as He asks. “Sander, put down the fork.” OK God. “Sander, stop arguing with your wife.” OK God.

So each day now, nearly without exception, I include in my morning meditation and prayers, per Step 11, “Dearest God, I pray only for knowledge of Your will for me and the power and strength to carry that out. How me your will today and I promise to follow it with all the strength within me; with every fiber of my being. And if I lack sufficient strength or will, I ask that You grant me even more. If needed, even more willingness to be willing, so that I can fulfill my promise to You and do as you ask of me this day. I ask also that You strengthen in my today the desire to take the actions You want me to take and remove from me the desire to take those You would not. Dearest God, reveal also to me today any further defects and shortcomings, so that I can freely admit them to myself, to You, to another person, and to made amends to any I may have harmed or wronged. Thy will be done, not mine.”

So today, as I compose this article, I stand before you, eight and one-half years later, one day at a time, 150 pounds lighter, with a normal blood pressure, and normal cholesterol, without a CPAP machine; free of antidepressants and anti-anxiety meds. And, I am living a life I had never before thought possible, physically fit, spiritually alive and mentally awake.



Sander B.
Marietta, GA

OA NASHVILLE

MIDDLE TENNESSEE INTERGROUP
is hosting the March 2015 SOAR 8
Recovery Convention and Business Assembly

CARRY THE MESSAGE

BE THE MESSAGE

WHEN: March 13 - 15, 2015 @ Nashville, TN
WHERE: Holiday Inn Opryland/Briley Parkway
2200 Elm Hill Pike, Nashville, TN 37214
(615) - 883 - 9770

OVEREATERS ANONYMOUS.

REGISTER ONLINE AT
www.soar8mar2015.eventbrite.com

Upcoming Events

- Nov. 14-16, 2014—SOAR8 Recovery Convention & Business Assembly, Bogota, Columbia
- Mar. 13-15, 2015—SOAR8 Recovery Convention & Business Assembly, Nashville, TN
- Apr. 27—May 2, 2015—World Service Business Conference, Albuquerque, NM

Tradition Seven Safety

When I first began attending OA meetings, so much of OA was alien to me. I wasn't used to being completely honest—especially not with myself. I wasn't used to treating people fairly, although as long as you complied with my wishes, I would have treated you nicely. It was following a phone call to my sponsor about the awful calamity that had just occurred when a group conscience didn't go my way that she suggested that maybe I should read about the traditions in the second half of the *12 Steps & 12 Traditions of OA*.

Since then, I know I can look to the Traditions for help in any area of my life: Tradition Seven is especially close to my heart. Before OA, I was so out of control in every way that putting even one dollar in the basket felt like a hardship. I would put my money in and watch it leave my hands with the underlying fear of not knowing whether I would be able to pay all my bills that month. My sponsor said, "Act as if." My sponsor said to "trust my Higher Power." My sponsor said, "Just do the next right thing."

In the time since those early days, I have filed several years worth of back taxes that I simply had not filed. I've paid off the resulting tax debts and penalties. I've cleaned up my other debt and gotten ahead on my student loan. All this while abstaining and getting healthier and slowly releasing extra body weight.

When I started putting three dollars in the basket, and felt happy about it, I felt so grateful to be able to give back to a program that has helped me so much. Later, I

noticed that some people never seemed to put any money in the basket, so I started putting \$5 in—a dollar extra for those still suffering in our rooms and an extra dollar for those still suffering out there. I didn't bring attention to this because I would never want anyone to feel bad about not having enough money to spare. I wanted to do it to help our group be self-supporting and to help carry the message.

And then one day, I thought about what I used to do with \$5. I would buy fast food or junk food with any money that passed into my hands. I could quickly and easily turn \$5 into 2,000 fatty, sugary calories and consume them before I had driven two miles (of course I would throw the trash away before I got home and then eat a full dinner too). I would do that day in and day out, not just occasionally, but every day. On the weekends I would do this more than once a day. How much money had I used up in that way? $\$5+ \times 365 \text{ days} = \$1,825+$ per year? And I thought I didn't have any extra money?

So I started thinking about my Seventh Tradition contribution as giving away harmful calories. OA turns those unhealthy 'calorie-dollars' into help for compulsive overeaters! Tradition Seven keeps me safe from outside influences and also safe from harmful extra calories!

Erica
North Carolina

Region 8 Trusted Servants

Voting Board Members

Chair—Gloria L.
Vice Chair—Sander B.
Secretary—Janet T.
Treasurer—Patti S.

Non-Voting Board Members

Trustee—Linda H.
Parliamentarian—Aleta P.

Committee Chairs

Bylaws/Electronic Documents—Marilyn T.
Intergroup Outreach (IGOR) - Andi S.
Public Information/Public Outreach (PI/PO) - Lonna C.
Technology/Website—Lynn P.
Twelfth Step Within—Donna D.
Unity with Diversity—Viviana G.
Ways and Means—Kat R.

Hello Friends!



Your Region 8 Ways and Means committee will have Serenity knots available for sale in Bogota. The cost is \$5.00 each. That's 4 for only \$20!! The knots can be worn on a chain, or carried in a pocket or purse. They make great gifts for almost anyone, even non-recovery friends and loved ones.

Please let us know if you want to purchase an OA Sweatshirt. We'll need to know what size you want as well. Those of you who have attended previous assemblies might remember how cold the assembly rooms can be.



you'll be toasty warm in a SOAR 8 sweatshirt!

I am looking forward to seeing all of you in Bogota! This will be my last assembly for a while, as I am rotating out of my service position. Thank you all for your continued support of our projects.

Your trusted servant,
Kat R.
W&M committee chair