

Spring 2014

SOAR 8

Southeast Overeaters Anonymous Region 8



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

The Beginning of Hope

Seven and one-half years ago, I remember lying in bed, with my abdomen pressing down on my diaphragm; with a CPAP mask over my face, praying, "God, see me through to the morning, and I promise I'll go on another diet." Yet, when morning came, I couldn't diet past breakfast. I had "hit bottom."

I tell this story often when I am asked to speak at a retreat or when I "qualify" at a meeting. Only recently did it hit me that God had indeed answered my prayer. He did see me to morning. And as soon as I reached morning, I took control back and tried again to "diet" on my own, forgetting that I had tried diets hundreds of times in the past 50 or more years, to no avail.

So what went wrong? Why didn't God help me? I realized just a few weeks ago, I had never asked Him to help me abstain from my destructive eating behaviors. I hadn't even prayed for the willingness to abstain. All I wanted was to live to the morning and then "I could take it from there." No wonder I failed. I never understood that I was truly powerless over food and that only He could restore me to sanity. I could have never done this on my own.

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Recovery in The Rock!

LITTLE R ROCK

March 21-23, 2014

SOAR8 Business Assembly & Recovery Convention

Little Rock, Arkansas

501-664-5020



God... Are You There?

"I realized that something more was happening to me..."

I was recently told the company where I have worked for 27 years would be closing its operations in Florida and moving to Pennsylvania. There is an option for me to move with the company however I have not fully made any decisions. I thought I was fine, talking to my sponsor, Fully Relying on God (Frog), listening, going to meetings and working my tools. My emotions were as high and low as a roller

coaster, with thoughts of what-ifs. I was trying desperately to come to terms with accepting things I cannot change. One morning at work, about two weeks after the announcement of the closing, I felt overwhelmed with tasks to be completed. I knew I needed to take a break, go for a walk, more like try and escape. My walking was brisk, back and forth outside in the parking lot. I was desperately trying to

clear my head and get quiet. I did not realize it was raining, my shoes were wet and my toes were cold at that moment I realized that something more was happening to me.

I decided I needed to drink some water to calm myself, I could now feel my heart racing and just under my skin every fiber of my flesh was pulsating. This body reaction was something I had never
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The Beginning of Hope *continued from front page*

I understand now that the guilt of having received God's gift of life the next day and then not having gone on another diet was devastating. I had promised God, and not delivered on my promise. I had "sinned" in God's eyes and was deserving of terrible punishment. The overwhelming guilt and hopelessness simply pushed me to eat even more.

I hit bottom with no hope in sight. So I went to my doctor and begged her to "staple my stomach." She said she would not approve the surgery unless I saw their therapist who specialized in eating disorders. The therapist said she would only take me on if I attended at least three OA meetings. I went to my first OA meeting on May 26, 2006, weighing about 313 lbs. Someone there read, "Our Invitation to You." I heard,

"... there is a proven, workable method by which we can arrest our illness." I began to have hope.

By the grace of God, I was "struck abstinent" at that first meeting. I got a sponsor the next meeting, never had to have the surgery, and lost 150 lbs within two years and have maintained my healthy body weight ever since.

Now, my prayer is different, "God, please grant me another day of abstinence, and a day of serenity. Grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, turn them all over to You and Your care. Grant me the courage to change the things that I can, and wisdom to know the difference." The bible says, "Ask and you shall receive." I asked and I have received. Thank you God.

~Sander B.



Accepting the Things I Cannot Change

Periodically I am sobered by the absolute reality that no matter where my recovery takes me, I am always rooted in Step One.

Sometimes I am proud of picking up chips for various milestone dates. Or have some bit of pride about having some clean time or working on a higher step than 5 which was where I stopped for more than 20 years.

I have that “built-in forgetter” that I hear about at meetings. I want to believe that I have “graduated”. Then I see someone I really admire slip and admit to their struggles in a meeting. Or I act out in a terrible way or my meals become sloppy for a couple of days.

I feel destabilized but I need to remember that we all have clay feet. That we deal with a cunning, powerful and baffling disease. That it is our weakness, **not** our strength that binds us together. Also that it is part of disease thinking to believe there is an “on” and “off” track to my addiction. I need to have compassion for myself as a food addict and get right back on that recovery horse. I need to smash the illusion of perfection. I am always on Step One – always powerless and that is something I have to accept and cannot change.

When an OA “star” admits to having trouble I am stunned by their bravery and honesty. My disease wants me to hide in the shadows. But as they pick up their white chip I just want to stand and applaud them because I know that

disease flourishes in the shadows and recovery flourishes in the light of honesty and sincere reaching out for help. Reinforcing the powerful connection to HP and other addicts working towards recovery is the best medicine I can take.

Before OA, I could not handle even a few hours of abstinence. I was beaten by food and obsession with eating. Even though I still cherished the idea that I could one day rally, I was clearly “down for the count”. I magically thought I would gain control on Monday. When I went back into relapse, I told everyone the same thing. I would start on Monday, January, after my birthday. The truth was that deep down, not even I believed it anymore but just wanted to go on eating no matter what the consequences. As the disease took over, I was adapting my life to serve its needs, no matter what price I paid.

Today I acknowledge that I am only able to remain in recovery through a continuous admission of Step One and connection to the healing I find in program, and in the Higher Power I see operating inside of me and this fellowship.

I cannot choose to change my past or the fact that I am a food addict. I can keep turning to the light of recovery and the hope I am finding in daily recovery in Overeater’s Anonymous.

-Anonymous Member of the
Twelfth Step Within Committee



“I am always on Step One—always powerless and that is something I have to accept and cannot change.”

God... Are You There?

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felt in my life. My throat began to close. I took my water and found a dark unused room and sat down and softly asked... *God, are you there?* and began to cry.

I felt God's presence first, and then heard a reply "I am here with you". I cried some more and a few minutes later, asked again... *God, are you there?* : "I am here with you". I kept this up about 30 minutes, asking God if he was there every few minutes receiving the same reply...." I am here with you" until I was calm and relaxed. I am grateful to have had GOD with me through my first ever-panic attack.

I know this sounds crazy, I am most grateful to have felt the experience of a panic attack. Being abstinent, I was able to FEEL, with full awareness, my body's physical response, my body's emotional response, and most importantly my spiritual response. Today I have a new reality of not having control over anything in my life. God is in charge and in control and I have found a new way of accepting what I cannot change. *God... are you there?* "Yes, I am here with you."

I have a world of gratitude, to OA and its members for my program of recovery.

~Toni W.

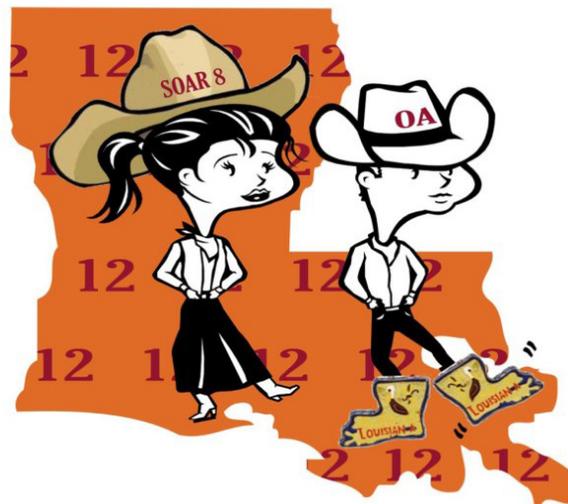
Region 8 PI/PO Chair



STEPPIN' IN LOUISIANA

SOAR 8 Recovery Convention and Business Assembly

JULY 11 – 13, 2014



Embassy Suites Baton Rouge

4914 Constitution Avenue
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70808
Tel: 225-924-6566

REGISTER ONLINE AT

www.soar8july2014.eventbrite.com

Upcoming Events

- Mar. 21-24, 2014—SOAR8 Recovery Convention & Business Assembly, Little Rock, AR
- Apr. 28—May 3, 2014—WSBC, Albuquerque, NM
- Jul. 2014—SOAR8 Recovery Convention & Business Assembly, Baton Rouge, LA
- Nov. 2014—SOAR8 Recovery Convention & Business Assembly, Bogota, Colombia

And That's All I Have To Do

I have a plaque on my wall that reads “Faith is taking the first step, even when you can’t see the rest of the staircase”. And that’s how I interpret Acceptance, the knowledge that what is happening is all part of God’s plan for me and that all I have to do is continue to do the next right thing, while letting go of the outcome. “That’s ALL I have to do?” you might say, but that is quite an order! Of course when experience proves time and time again that only the best outcomes occur when I let go of my will and trust in the God of my understanding to know what is best for me, than it becomes easier and easier to do.

A recent example occurred in November when our house sold after only a week on the market, and we were faced with the prospect of finding suitable housing within 30 days. I quickly found a townhouse for rent on Anna Maria Island which is where we wanted to move. I hadn’t been inside yet but I’d seen pictures online and had begun to arrange furniture in my head and picture myself there. It was across the street from a public beach but was three stories (so it had great views of the water) including a one car garage and just seemed perfect in my mind.

The day we were on our way to see it we called to confirm and the realtor said someone had already put a deposit down so it was no longer available. I thought I han-

dled my disappointment very well, knowing that it was apparently not meant to be. But soon the resentment began to rear its ugly head and I became angry with God, saying why me God, you know I really want this, why are you keeping it from me? I seethed about it for a few days but then came back to my senses and recognized that if my HP saw fit to deprive me of this opportunity that it must only be because there was something better in store for me.

So I prayed about it and talked to my sponsor and shared about it at my meetings and then took what I believed to be the next right step, and wrote an ad for the local newspaper, stating exactly what I wanted. And what do you know, a gentleman called me a few days after the ad ran and said, “I have a condo on the beach that is available now.” And viola, we went to see it and of course, it was perfect! If I had taken the other unit I would have been settling for second best, HP wanted the best for me J as always. All I’m required to do is work my program stay abstinent and turn over my will and my life to the care of God, as I understand him. It’s simple but not easy; however when I’m willing, nothing is impossible!

~Patti S.

Region 8 Treasurer

Region 8 Trusted Servants

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