



Shares & Cares

GREATER OMAHA INTERGROUP • OVEREATERS

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Journey

*So far down and drowning
I could not be seen -
I knew despair in its truest form.*

Alone.

*Lonely in a sea of faces that swirled around me,
stealing my breath with easy smiles.*

What boat had I missed?

When did my course go so far awry?

How did I end up

here?

*Nights turned into days
turned into weeksmonthsyears
as I flailed,
my head barely above the torrents,
clawing for survival and meaning.*

*There were maps, but I could not read them,
my eyes blinded with disease.*

Ships passed near me,

*loving hands reached out with promise of survival,
but I always turned away,*

*too frozen from years of treading water to make contact.
I was done.*

Out of luck, off the radar, nearly gone.

Then, God sent a beacon.

*Deep, deep within me I felt a flicker of light,
Not the firecracker me of my dreams,
Or the imagined rocket blast me of my past,
But a true spark of spirit I had never known.*

*I stopped fighting the waves
and let them gently carry me.*

*Slowly and in a way I could never have navigated on my own,
I began to dry and thaw from the inside out.*

-Jennifer L.

God, grant me the serenity...

Redoubling My Efforts

I slipped last week and broke my abstinence of 6 months. When I willfully chose to eat something not on my plan of eating, my thoughts were very much in the moment. I wanted it NOW and pushed aside any thoughts of the danger of that first compulsive bite. I was engulfed in self-will and even though I heard the voice of God and knew He was with me, I chose to ignore Him. I wanted that food - seemingly at **any cost**, but afterward, the deep guilt and remorse that I felt made my earlier decision seem really petty.

What had changed? What had driven me to give in when God had given me the strength to resist on so many other occasions? I was surprised to learn, after talking with my sponsor later, that she had seen

“slippery” signs in my behavior over the previous few weeks, signs that indicated to her that I was allowing my self-will to creep back in, such as missing meetings, making decisions based on my own will rather than talking them out with her and just generally not taking advantage of all the tools that I could. I had my “reasons,” but I was still headed for a fall.

Today, I see with more clarity the need for both using the tools and working the steps in my program every day, even when I think I’m doing fine. (That was another big stumbling block for me - my pride and feelings of self-sufficiency.) Now I am doing as the program suggests and redoubling my efforts. I’m listening to my sponsor, doing the assignments she gives me and then consulting with her further

before making any final decisions. I want her experience, strength and hope. I hurt some at having to start over with a new abstinence date, but at the same time, I am **so** very grateful that my God saw fit to restrain me from moving into a full-fledged bingeing episode from which I might never have returned. Because I am not perfect and I have a disease that is cunning, baffling and powerful, I know that the potential is always there for a major crash. I just hope and pray that I will learn the lesson well. By the grace and hope of my God, my new abstinence will be infused with all the resources OA has to offer, and that includes especially the **people** in this program. I can’t do it by myself, and I hope I don’t ever want to try it again.

What My Abstinence Means To Me

- acceptance, not denial
- hope
- letting God have control
- freedom, not restriction
- knowing that I had a problem, not that I was the problem
- having room for thoughts that don’t deal with food
- eating to live, not living to eat
- taking action beyond the planning
- being able to sleep lying down in bed
- knowing that I can’t, and don’t have to, do this alone
- having all the information I need for recovery
- humbly following your suggestions
- having and doing and being **enough**
- being one step away from that first compulsive bite
- making it unique to me and my needs
- rigorous honesty
- progress, not perfection
- a close walk with God
- freedom from obsession
- clarity of mind and spirit
- knowing it’s not about what I want
- simple, not easy
- weight loss is not my only goal
- I still need help and always will
- being given the power to choose
- being given another chance
- focusing on God’s will for me
- a sound and simple plan of eating
- recovery
- refraining from compulsive overeating
- commitment, persistence, a sense of permanence
- being only concerned with today, not worrying about tomorrow
- doing without that first compulsive bite
- urges will pass as long as I don’t act on them
- freedom from guilt, shame and remorse
- no chocolate, no fast foods
- increasing my use of all the tools
- being dependent on working the steps
- having a sense of fear after having broken my abstinence
- freedom and joy

-Janie H.

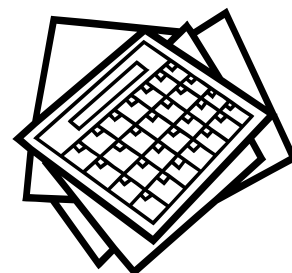
Mark Your Calendar ... Upcoming Intergroup Meetings

- Monday, May 12, 2008
- Monday, June 9, 2008
- Monday, July 14, 2008

Come Join Us for the Business Side of OA

**6:15 p.m. at Unity Church
3424 North 90th Street**

BABYSITTING AVAILABLE!!!!



...to accept the things I cannot change,

Twelfth-Step-Within

Fellow O/Aers,

My name is Kari and I am a compulsive overeater. I am currently the committee chair for the Twelfth-Step-Within Committee. You might find yourself asking...what is "Twelfth-Step-Within?" Twelfth-Step-Within service involves "reaching out to those *within* our fellowship who are still suffering." Basically, we reach out to O/A members who are either in relapse or struggling to find abstinence.

Today, although gratefully abstinent, I have days that are rough. Sometimes I feel alone. Sometimes I need to make a phone call. Sometimes I need to receive one. What I am suggesting is that we expand our view of Twelfth-Step-Within service work. Reaching out to all O/A members, abstinent or not, can only serve to strengthen our fellowship as a whole.

True story: I was recently at a meeting where someone shared that they were in a rough spot and had made several phone calls to OA members, but no one had returned their calls. They stated that making the phone calls had helped anyway, however, not long after that, the same member relapsed and lost their abstinence.

This story renewed my desire to take an inventory of my own Twelfth-Step-Within program. I asked myself: What am I doing for the program that saves my life each day? Whom am I calling? Whom am I not? Am I asking others to join me at O/A events? Am I initiating fellowship outside of the meetings? These are important questions that I have to ask myself. My sponsor taught me that "only God can quiet an addiction". Though this is true, I also believe that I have an

obligation to this program. Part of this obligation involves passing on all that was so freely given to me.

As the committee chair for the Twelfth-Step-Within Committee, I am encouraging each member of the O/A fellowship to take your own O/A Twelfth-Step-Within inventory. Taking a fearless and moral inventory of myself helped me to see all of my "fellowship character defects," if you will. I then invited my Higher Power to help me to see, hear and do all that is required of me.

The story of the person who relapsed outlined above was the catalyst for a new ONGOING Twelfth-Step-Within challenge. I call it "**Get a phone call, make a phone call.**" So fellow O/A members...the gentle suggestion is to pass on those phone calls! If a member of the fellowship calls you, the challenge is to pass that call on! I can imagine all the phones ringing now! :)

Also, there is the "**Fill Your Car**" campaign. The gentle suggestion is to invite one newcomer OR someone you don't know very well to join you anytime you go to an O/A event such as Super Saturdays. It's a "WE" program!

Want to help with Twelfth-Step-Within?

***Accept the "Get a Call, Make a Call" challenge and make the "Fill your car" campaign a reality.

***Donate old O/A or A/A Literature to me—I'll pass it on to others—new meetings, new members, etc.

***Volunteer to serve on the Twelfth-Step-Within Committee—currently there are just 2 of us (Thanks Karen!)

***Tell your sponsees about Twelfth-Step-Within and how it's a part of O/A service to participate.

***If you are struggling, in relapse, or needing fellowship---please let me know! Let's talk about it! Call me at (402) 658-1810—together we can!!!

My recovery has been strengthened thru outreach to others in O/A. I have gained great friends, good memories, and important spiritual lessons along the way. Thanks for your time and thanks for listening.

-Kari H.

Important Notes from Intergroup:

- The Saturday 10:30 a.m. meeting has determined Unity to be its permanent meeting location and also is now offering babysitting during the meeting. The Newcomers' meeting will also permanently be at Unity, meeting on the first Saturday of each month at 10:00 a.m.
- The Tuesday 6:00 p.m. Relapse & Recovery meeting is seeking additional support through attendance—please join them at First Presbyterian Church, South Calvin Hall, 216 S. 34th Street, Omaha.
- The Special Events Committee is seeking volunteers to help plan this year's fall retreat, as well as other special events. Please contact Jennifer L. at 332-2599 to volunteer.
- The 12th Step Within Committee is seeking literature donations to provide support for new meetings. The committee is also seeking volunteers to help with projects for the year—contact Kari at 658-1810 to donate OA literature or to volunteer.

the courage to change the things I can...

God's Grace, God's Terms

As I sit here and look back on the last 2 years of program I have to be faced with the certain knowledge that I am not where I am at today except by God's grace. It was His grace that taught me to be honest with myself. It was His grace that gave me the ability to communicate with Him in the way He would want.

God's grace. I have a cool life today compared to where I was years ago. I trust and pray, cry and scream and still stomp my feet in anger at Him. He lets me. He knows. Just as I know with my child that he is frustrated and hurt. Life is hard. Life can be crappy. The sheer frustration that I lived with and dealt with every day was painful.

Now if I have those days, they are gentler, milder and I have the clarity to see the lesson most times when it happens. Will I ever get hit by a stray ball? Will a rock cause me to trip and fall? Yes those are the things life is made up of!

I've heard it said many, many times that I need to live life on life's terms, but that last fall told me that I don't need to live that way. I need to live life on God's terms.

The rocks aren't so big now. My concerns are still here, but not so heavy that they can't be moved with prayer. I have a wonderful life today. It is great and beautiful and has more depth than I could ever have imagined.

God's terms; God's grace; God's freedom.

-Chris

An Amazing Program

I am coming out from underneath the power that food has had over me. As this power is diminishing, I have become aware of other behaviors that I "use".

One of these behaviors has been watching TV. The start of the fall season was an exciting time for me. All those series premieres that I had to watch just in case there was a series that I wanted to continue watching! Better yet, the new episodes of series I had already been watching so that I could see what would happen next! I would spend hours watching TV each day so engrossed that I would not notice if someone was speaking to me. Watching someone else live their make-believe life was so much easier than living my own real life. Wouldn't it be great if my life was as easy as that make-believe life?

I became quite concerned when I heard about the writers' strike. Of course, there is a break over the summer every year, but this was different. For many shows the summer break would be much longer and there were not enough shows for much of anything to have happened thus far in the

season. How was I going to spend my time now?

An interesting thing happened. I found things to do – journaling, reading (including OA literature), attending OA meetings, and doing hobbies. Now that the writers' strike is over and some shows are coming back, I'm finding that I have no desire to watch most of the series I've been watching. I've learned to live my real life filling it up with activities that promote my emotional and spiritual growth.

I have no doubt that this program gave me the foundation that I needed in order to experience a better way to live my life. I don't need the food or any other behavior that prevents me from experiencing my life to its fullest. I'm also finding that my connection to my Higher Power is becoming stronger. I didn't realize the disconnect that these other behaviors were creating. After being in this program for four years, I'm still amazed by what this program has done and is continuing to do for me. Thank you God for this amazing program!!!

-SJTD

Acceptance

We often hear "Acceptance is the answer to all my problems today" quoted from the Big Book. What I have come to realize is that acceptance is a process that sometimes requires lots of tears and many phone calls. It isn't easy, but it is more difficult and in fact often never comes, if I am eating compulsively. I have spent many months crying in the process of acceptance and just when I thought the tears would never stop, they did. Sure I still have sad moments about these situations, but acceptance smoothes the pain out. Acceptance for me is the process of coming to trust — trust in my Higher Power to take care of things and trust in myself to know and have the courage to do God's will. I spent a lot of unnecessary time beating myself up for my feelings even when my sponsor would remind me that it takes what it takes. Hopefully next time I will do that less and remember that acceptance is a process by which I can only get through one day at a time!

UPCOMING EVENTS:

June 27-29, 2008: Region IV Convention: "We Have Ceased Fighting—The Hidden Promises." St. Louis, MO. For more information, call (636) 326-2914; email admin@oaregion4.org; or visit www.oaregion4.org.

Note: Omaha is in charge of entertainment—please contact Jen at 706-7986 if you plan on going to the Convention and are willing to volunteer.

September 5-7, 2008: State of Iowa OA Convention: "It's In the Book." Stoney Creek Inn and Conference Center, Johnston, IA. Registrations due August 21, 2008; for more information, call (515) 848-3867.

October 10-12, 2008: Greater Omaha Intergroup Annual Fall Retreat. Platte River State Park, Louisville, NE MO. More information to follow soon—**SAVE THE DATES!**

**Send your article
submissions to:
oanewsletter@cox.net
Next deadline:
July 1, 2008**

...and the wisdom to know the difference.