



Shares & Cares

GREATER OMAHA INTERGROUP • OVEREATERS ANONYMOUS*

July 2008 • Issue 14

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Living in the Present

In my meditations I have found a quiet place in my mind. A beach with noise of the waves; warm sun: with my toes in the cool moist sand. It is a place that I created years ago. (It use to have a hot dog stand before program!) It is the place that God has told me if I go there the voice I hear in my head will be His. It is in this place that He reveals Himself to me and points out what I need to hear from Him.

In my readings of the Big Book, He has enlightened me with key elements that I say and hear in meetings. However, because they are something we always say, they had not had much of an impact until lately. Elements that He has brought to me as I continue to work the steps and grow. All action words. All words in the present:

“May you find Him now;”
“God could and would if he were sought;”
“Came to believe;”
“Made a decision;”
“Sought through prayer and meditation.”

In my morning prayer this morning after all my usual babble, God spoke with me. As always, there was never any drum roll, no burning bush - just a calm and deliberate voice. Imagine that!

It is always my mind and my disease that seem to complicate this world and my recovery. When God speaks to me, He is neither loud, demanding, or boisterous. Adults know that when they want the attention from a child they can gain it by speaking so softly that the child has to be still to hear them. God is that way with me. What use to be an hour of one sided conversation about me with me speaking, He has shown me a better way. It involves silence on my part; relaxed breathing and a stillness in my head.

Today God spoke to me in one paragraph and it seemed so revealing to me, it took the messages that I was getting from my prayers and the Big Book and made them come alive. He said, “It is not the past nor the future that creates the desire to overeat. It is the utter inability to remain in the present moment (which is in my will).”

No fan fare. Simple, real simple. But then He always is that way with me. I must live in the present.

-Chris

Ask and You Shall Receive

Before I came to O.A., I read countless diet and self help books in hope for the secret miracle weight-loss cure. After trying protein diets, counting calories, exercising it off, diet pills, magical thinking, wishing and then counting calories a few more times, I finally admitted I have no control over my eating. Self help books taught self-reflection by writing my life story, my dieting history, my parents' relationship with food and with me and the reasons why I ate, but then gave no real solutions as what to do with all that self-knowledge. Some of the books suggested that as soon as I loved myself, the weight would fall off. Those books must have missed the memo that my misguided-mind sends me daily messages that I could not love myself *until* I was thin. Between those diet and self help books, I figured I was never going to lose the weight.

Last year I began to suffer extreme back and leg pain, and of course the weight was a big factor in its cause. My doctor asked me if whether was possible for me to really bunker down and lose the weight. I replied honestly and said no. He suggested weight-loss surgery but my insurance company said no. I knew at this point I could never lose the weight on my own. I could no longer deceive myself by believing the next diet held the cure. So I despaired and gained more weight with fast-food binges.

One day I was walking into work and I felt in my soul that if I continued on the path I was on, I was going to die. I actually felt my spirit slowly dying and it scared the hell out of me. So I told God I needed help, I needed a miracle. A week or two later, my friend asked me to come to O.A. (The miracle I had in mind was the weight-loss surgery, but God has Her own plan and delivered me to O.A. I am very thankful for Her ultimate wisdom and promise: Ask and you shall receive.

Since joining O.A., my spirit is fulfilled with the service I can give and receive from other members. For the first time in my life, I feel alive and have hope for the future. I no longer look to start living only after I lose the weight, but I live now in the moment. I am living the life God had in mind for me and there is no better miracle than that I could ask for.

-Linsey

God, grant me the serenity...

Who Am I Really?

As a teenager, my father took me to the Orpheum Theatre to see a touring production of "A Chorus Line." Even at that young age, when there was so much of my diseased brain that had yet to reveal itself, I remember being struck by one song in which a dancer stared into the mirror and mournfully questioned: "Who am I anyway? Am I my resume? That is a picture of a person I don't know . . ." Those words stuck with me and became true of my own life in evolving ways as I got older.

Despite living a life based on self-centeredness and self-seeking, I had no true sense of self - one of the great ironies of addiction. Depending on whom I was with at the time I created different personas, different tastes and interests,

even different fabrications of my personal history to attempt to feel a part of the group. Surprise, surprise, it never worked! When my higher power finally landed me - fat, miserable, and insane - in an OA meeting, I had no personality, no sparkle, no light in my spirit. And I wondered why all of my relationships were falling apart!

As I began working the steps and was relieved of the desire to sedate myself with compulsive eating, I found myself looking into the mirror and wondering: Who am I, anyway? What is my taste in clothes, now that I know I deserve to wear things I like, not just "what fits"? What music do I like, now that I don't have to just agree with the group? What interests might I develop in all the

free time left when the bingeing stopped?

My OA journey has taken me many beautiful places, even in the "low" times. But one of the greatest gifts of all is knowing that I EXIST today for more than a slow, painful death from disease. This program has given me a personality, has opened the door for me to discover talents and gifts I didn't know I had, has blessed me with authentic relationships I never dreamed possible for me. Today I know me, and you know me! And from that miracle I have arrived at the sane and happy usefulness promised in the Big Book. I belong at last. Thank you OA for introducing me to me!

- Anonymous

Fear & Inadequacy

Fear and inadequacy. Those two feelings can hold me back from so much! This morning I am taking a look at how deep it actually goes. What looks like procrastination is actually fear and inadequacy. What looks like being anti-social is actually fear and inadequacy. This weekend we are invited to a lake party. Yikes! Fear and inadequacy big time there. To be honest, even with some OA events I can feel fear and inadequacy. (I've been here a long time now, why am I not perfect yet?) The only thing I know for sure is that it's kind of like childbirth - **the only way out of it is through it!** And because of working this program, it has gotten soooo much better, but it still creeps in sometimes.

For today, I will not let it hold me back. I will get a difficult situation sitting on my desk resolved. I already RSVP'd "yes" for the lake party. I've made plans to go to Super Saturday with a good friend of mine. Life is short and this program has taught me to make the most of it. I really don't want to hold back. I don't want to miss out. So I'll face it. I'll go and do anyway. And amazingly, that is how it gets better. The anticipation is always worse. My sponsors, the Steps and the pages in the Big Book on Acceptance and Expectations have gotten me this far. All I need to do is keep walking, and not let it hold me back. Thanks to this program, I am recovering.

- Cheryl B

COMING SOON!!!! An August Dance Party!!!!

Speakers, Dancing, OA Friends and Fellowship

For more details, contact Kari at:
(402) 658-1810 or twelvesteps4freedom@yahoo.com

FLIERS WILL BE CIRCULATED SOON

For now, get your dancing shoes ready
and start practicing your favorite dance moves!

Memorable Quotes from World Convention

"I did the things I didn't believe and I got results I couldn't deny!"

"I wanted to be clean but I wouldn't take a bath."

"Love and service is the answer."

"I can't heal what I cannot feel and cannot feel if I am bingeing."

"Share it or wear it."

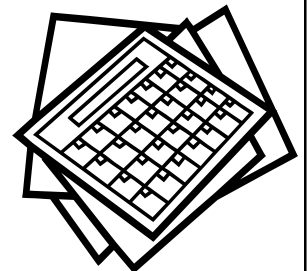
Mark Your Calendar ... Upcoming Intergroup Meetings:

- Monday, August 11, 2008
- Monday, September 8, 2008
- Monday, October 13, 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,

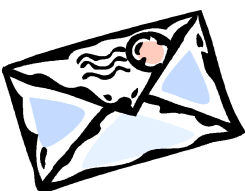
An Amends to my Body

Dearest body,

I'm so sorry I hurt you. I know that I have abused and neglected you for years and I regret all the pain I caused you. My battle was with my disease, not you. I blamed you for all my unhappiness but I was wrong. You were innocent, caught up in my obsession with food. I know you did the best you could. My insanity wasn't your fault!

I promise that from now on, I will do my best to stop judging you, whether by mirror, scale, or the size tags in your clothes. I will feed you when you're hungry, let you rest when you are tired, and bath you when you are dirty. I promise to take you to the doctor when you aren't feeling well and to dress you appropriately so you aren't too hot or too cold. You are important and you deserve to be taken care of! Even more than that, you deserve to be loved!

From this day forward, I promise to be your friend. I will, to the best of my ability, treat you with love and respect. I will listen to your needs and take the time to talk kindly to you. I will spend time with you, doing things we both enjoy like shopping for clothes, swimming and just laying in the sun. I will accept you for whom you are in this moment and love you. From now on, I will look you in the eyes!



I know it won't be an easy journey to undo all the damage I have done to you but I am committed to trying. As long as I stay abstinent, work the steps, and follow my Higher Power's direction, I know I will be able to live my amends to you, one day at a time. Thank you for your grace and beauty, your strength and endurance. You have been loyal to me throughout my journey and I am grateful for you!

Love, Jen

Lights, Camera ... ACTION!

"What character defects has your higher power removed from you?" Geez. That's a brutal question to get from your sponsor! Especially so when the answer is "I don't know." What character defects *has* my higher power removed from me? I was hard-pressed to list one. Was I doing it wrong? Did my higher power just not work? What was the problem?

Panic set in. It was a bit of a program-crisis for me, I must admit. It was a really difficult question not to be able to answer in the moment. But it forced me to honestly evaluate my program of recovery and how I was working it!

For starters—how "hard" was I working my program of recovery? I could come up with a pretty impressive list of things I *was* doing—like a resume, I sure could look good on paper! But what was far more helpful to me was to take an honest evaluation of what I *wasn't* doing. Just like everything in program, I learned so much by taking a really close look at what *my part* was in this program-crisis of mine. "LIGHTS!"

The Big Book says that "[i]t is easy to let up on the spiritual program of action and rest on our laurels" (p. 85), and that is exactly what I had started to do. I acted as though I was perfectly satisfied on my progress thus far—my weight loss, my step work, how much I used the tools, etc. It can be easy for me to get caught up in all that I am not doing and lose focus of the progress that I *have* made, but it can also be easy to become "satisfied" with the work I have done and fall into complacency about the seriousness of my disease and the consequences of it.

The Big Book tells me on page 85 that my daily reprieve from food obsession is "contingent on the maintenance of [my] spiritual condition." And just like the Big Book describes, I had begun to "sense the flow" of God's spirit into me, and to some extent had "become God-conscious" and begun to develop that "vital sixth sense." But more action is required! "We must go further!!!" (p. 85) And a close review at the film of my life revealed that I was not taking "more action" as the Big Book says I must. I needed to prepare for the show. "CAMERA!"

Fortunately for me, the Big Book provides very clear cut instructions on how to do this. On pages 86, 87 and 88, the Big Books gives me specific instructions on how I can begin, go

through and end each and every day so that I can stay in continuous, conscious contact with my higher power and be relieved from my obsession with food. It

is this daily action that truly allows me to feel freedom from my obsession with food.

I keep hearing in meetings, "This is a program of action," and, "Willingness is an action." Until I am actually taking action, how can I claim any willingness? I do know that as long as I am taking action, I experience recovery. It may not be what I want it to look like, or in the time in which I think it should occur, but I've long since accepted that my way doesn't work, so I will take it in God's time and I will take the action that I know I need to take in order to receive the recovery that God wants me to have. I declared long ago that I was going to let God be my director. Well, God speaks to me through the Big Book, and my directions are clear ... "ACTION!"

- B.J.P.

Important Notes from Intergroup:

- Special Events Committee is looking for meetings and/or individuals to host special events. Contact Jennifer L. at 332-2599 for more information or to volunteer.
- The 12th Step Within Committee is seeking donations of new or used OA-approved literature and past issues of Lifeline magazine to provide support for new meetings. The committee is also seeking volunteers to help with projects for the year. Contact Kari at 658-1810 for additional information.
- When was the last time you attended a new meeting? Omaha and Council Bluffs have many new meetings seeking support through attendance. Provide some service today and attend a meeting you have not attended before! And you can always find the most up-to-date meeting list on our website at www.omahaa.org.

the courage to change the things I can...

Our Vision For You: Seeing Your Recovery Grow

Nestled amongst the lush forest of the Platte River Valley a group of men and women gather every year to share their experience, strength, and hope and to carry the message of recovery from compulsive overeating. Join us to discover a weekend of laughter, tears and transformation.

Inspired by the chapter in the Big Book "A Vision for You," this year's Greater Omaha Intergroup annual fall retreat is scheduled for October 10-12, 2008, at Platte River State Park, Louisville, Nebraska. Our guest speaker has been in O.A. for 17 years. Her home group is in Iowa and she is looking forward to sharing her vast experience strength and hope with us all.

In addition to our guest speaker, other events planned for this year's retreat include large group sharing, big book meditations, arts and crafts, God walk, clothing exchange, raffle, talent show and our always-fantastic entertaining O.A. skit.

Here are what some O.A. members have said about their past retreat experiences:

"I went to my first retreat eight years ago and it absolutely changed what recovery meant to me."

- Kari H.

"I cannot state this strongly enough: Come for the entire weekend; spend the nights; immerse yourself in recovery. It makes all the difference."

- Barb P.

"Some of my best fellowship memories are of times spent at the fall retreats, not to mention the boost it brings to my program!"

- J.L.

"The OA Retreat is life changing. If you really want recovery, that's the place to find it."

- Molly K.

"A weekend of recovery can revitalize your entire program—it did for me!"

- Sheila N.

For more information, or to obtain a registration form, contact Kari H. at 658-1810 or visit our website at www.omahaoa.org.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

September 5-7, 2008: State of Iowa OA Convention: "It's In the Book." Stoney Creek Inn and Conference Center, Johnston, Iowa. 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. See above for more information.

October 24-25, 2008: Region IV Fall Assembly. Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada. Registration is due by August 25, 2008. For more information call (636) 538-1331 or email admin@oaregion4.org.

Journaling Topics:

1. Do I live in the present or do I spend all my time focusing on the past or the future?
2. Am I waiting for physical recovery before living my life or do I live life to the fullest *today*, grateful for the day today in which I have to live?
3. What have I learned in recovery about myself and who I really am?
4. Do I suffer from feelings of fear and inadequacy? What actions can I take to overcome these?
5. Do I owe my body an amends?
6. How do I practice improving my conscious contact with my higher power? Do I continue to take "more action" as the Big Book prescribes?



A Word From Our Trustee:

Hi, all! We have another podcast—Bob's story—up on the Web site and iTunes. Currently we have about 400 subscribers to the iTunes podcast series. We seem to get about another hundred every time a new one goes up. To subscribe to the podcast or to download the MP3 files directly, visit:

http://www.oa.org/get_podcast.htm

In addition to the new podcast, I'd like to call your attention to other new items on the Web site:

Latest issue of A Step Ahead:

http://www.oa.org/stepahead_3rdqtr08/index.html

Call for articles addressing the topic "Embracing Diversity in OA":

http://www.oa.org/pdf/Diversity_call.pdf

Strong Meeting Checklist:

<http://www.oa.org/pdf/StrongMtgChecklist.pdf>

Please pass the word along about these new items. They are also available from the home page: <http://www.oa.org/index.htm>.

Thanks!

Teresa K.

Region IV Trustee

***Send your article
submissions to:
oanewsletter@cox.net
Next deadline:
September 30, 2008***

...and the wisdom to know the difference.