



# Shares & Cares

Greater Omaha Intergroup • Overeaters Anonymous

September 2007 • Issue 11

## I'M STRUGGLING ...

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I haven't written an article for months for one simple reason: I'm struggling. Who would want to read an article from someone that is struggling? Then it occurred to me; isn't that what the fellowship is for? To help members not only when things are going well but also when they are struggling? So, here it goes...

I've had what I call "partial abstinence" for a couple of years. I haven't had a full-out binge for that long and have maintained an approximate 15 pound weight loss. The problem? I'm still overeating. The fact that I'm still 35 pounds over my goal weight is the evidence. (Yeah I know it's not about the weight but I consider weight to be a benchmark of how well I work the program.)

Don't get me wrong; I'm grateful I've maintained the 15 pound weight loss and haven't binged, but at the same time, I'm frustrated that I have not made more progress with elimi-

nating overeating. I've had many days of perfect and imperfect abstinence but I've also had many days of non-abstinence. Oh ... I just remembered, this disease is cunning and baffling isn't it? Even though I don't eat over events or people anymore, the wonderful feeling I thought I got from eating food is still ingrained in my mind. I don't necessarily eat because I'm feeling bad but because I subconsciously think I'll feel even better!!

So, why do I keep coming back? Because there is nothing else to do. Because I've seen changes in myself for the better — not only with food but with my life in general and how I react to life.

So there it is — I'm struggling. I know I'm not the only one. I suspect there are those that will identify with this article. The good news is that there is a solution — work the program!!!

-SJTD

Greater Omaha Intergroup's Annual

## FALL RETREAT—Oct. 12<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup>

### Back to Basics—A Big Book Study

Platte River State Park, 14421 346th Street, Louisville, Nebraska

**Out-of-town speaker with many years of abstinence  
and several hundreds of pounds of physical recovery  
to speak on recovery basics—the twelve steps and the Big Book**

We'll also have large and small group sharing, raffles, arts & crafts, God walks, fabulous entertainment, a clothing exchange, and LOTS and LOTS of RECOVERY!

Can't make it for the whole weekend? Join us on Saturday for a day full of recovery! And bring a brown bag lunch for a fun & fellowship group picnic lunch.

QUESTIONS AND/OR REGISTRATION—EMAIL [INFO@OMAHAOA.ORG](mailto:INFO@OMAHAOA.ORG)  
OR CALL DEBBIE @ (402) 209-3277 or DALA @ (402) 210-3755



*God, grant me the serenity...*



## Special Delivery!!!



Thinking about my first OA retreat, I am filled with gratitude and awe. It is a story of a higher power working in my life, even when I was not working my own life in program.

I honestly don't remember much about the speaker. She was blonde, had twenty-plus years of abstinence, and an adult son. I remember that. I remember standing outside the lodge talking to my husband on the phone, crying, feeling homesick, and missing my daughter. I remember some clothes I got from the clothing drive, and staying up late talking with my cabinmates. Mostly, I remember that I wasn't really willing to give myself over to recovery. I was there, but not present. So much so, that when I left on Sunday morning, earlier than anyone else I might add, I nearly swerved off the winding state park road because I was reaching behind me for a carton of cookies that I knew was in my backseat.

I didn't reflect much on my time at the retreat after leaving. The following year brought a lot of change for me. In fact, when October rolled around again, it had been months

since I had been to a meeting or had any contact with my sponsor. Then one crisp fall day, I trekked to my mailbox to find a unique looking letter waiting for me. It was in an envelope with oddly familiar looking lettering, pictures of butterflies and leaves adorning its back. I curiously peeled open the fold – *it was from me!*

Memories of the OA retreat the year before flooded my brain – I had written this letter to myself as a retreat activity, wishing myself health and growth and love in the OA program. In the letter I encouraged myself to read a passage from the Big Book and make an OA phone call. Although I intellectually knew that I had participated in this activity, I had no real connection to the words in the letter, as to most everything else from that retreat. It seemed as if the words had somehow formed on the page independently of me. The handwriting didn't even look like mine, and the voice of the writer was not familiar. I knew instinctively that a power greater than myself had been there, near the fireplace in that cozy lodge under the orange and golden leaves, sending me a message.

Pain filled my heart standing there in my driveway. Since having written this letter, I had turned my back on recovery and was now living in my disease. There was no denying it. This letter from the retreat found me at just the right time—I was willing to reconnect, to try again, and to see where OA could lead me. It took awhile, but here I am.

I was not ready or willing to fully give myself to that first retreat experience. I was scared and lonely and unfocused. But with the help of a power greater than myself and my disease, I showed up, and as it turns out, I received what I needed. My Higher Power got me there, my Higher Power gave me the words to write to myself for when I would need them most, and my Higher Power used that retreat experience to teach me that even when I feel that I am not ready to hear the messages being sent me, the Universe will always find a way to get them delivered. I can't wait to see what messages are in store for me this year!

~ Anonymous

### RECOVERY BOOSTER

Retreats have been a time for me to let go of the status quo and open up to something new. I've laughed, cried, danced, and played at retreats. I've had heart-to-heart discussions with people I barely knew in the fellowship, that have blossomed into great friendships. Somehow for me it has been easier to open up my heart and soul to God while walking the trails or sitting alone in the midst of nature after listening to a speaker, or doing a recovery exercise. I look forward to each retreat as I know it will be a recovery booster for me.

~Debbie

*...to accept the things  
I cannot change,*

### TENTATIVE RETREAT SCHEDULE\*

(subject to change—on h.p.'s time)

#### Friday p.m.

7:00 p.m. Welcome, Fun Activity  
8:00 p.m. Speaker (with breaks)  
9:45 p.m. Large Group Sharing



#### Saturday

8:00 a.m. Meditation  
9:00 a.m. Speaker (with breaks)  
10:45 a.m. Small Group Sharing  
11:30 a.m. Picnic Lunch  
1:30 p.m. Entertainment  
2:00 p.m. Speaker  
3:00 p.m. Raffle  
3:20 p.m. God Walk Assignment and God Walk  
4:00 p.m. Small Group Sharing  
5:00 p.m. Dinner  
7:00 p.m. Speaker (with breaks)  
9:00 p.m. Candlelight Meeting



#### Sunday a.m.

8:00 a.m. Meditation  
9:00 a.m. Speaker  
10:15 a.m. Closing Activities



## Farewell, Dear Scale ...

Dear Bathroom Scale,

It's been a long and rocky road for us, hasn't it? To say we've been through a lot of "ups and downs" would be an understatement. However, I'm announcing today that our relationship is over!

I know the seeds of my co-dependency with you began in childhood. I remember going with my mom to a diet club as a child and watching her weigh in. She brought home the crown one month for losing the most weight and let me wear it on my birthday. I'll never forget how excited I was to wear that crown and the impact it had on me – losing weight was good! Not the best lesson for a little girl to learn.

Then there was the horror of being weighed once a year by the school nurse in front of all my classmates. And to add insult to injury, the school nurse was my grandmother! There was no escaping her or the humiliation I felt over everyone - boys and girls – knowing exactly what I weighed, which was usually more than most of the girls my age. Yes, it was in grade school that the obsession with you really took hold.

For years I let you control my life and emotions. The numbers you spit out would dictate if the prior day had been a "good" day or "bad" day. Even when I had eaten healthy and exercised, you could dash my positive mood in a flash! A good report from you in the morning would set the tone of my day.

This relationship of ours turned ever more twisted as I learned how to manipulate you. Weighing in the morning, with clothes off, after emptying my bladder – that was the gold standard! Skipping meals, taking diuretics, exercising like crazy, using diet pills, enemas and laxatives, purging – all these were tactics I used to fool you into saying I weighed less, even if only for a minute.

As I entered OA and received the gift of freedom from compulsive overeating, your presence in my life took on monstrous proportions. First, I began weighing every morning. Then I soon began weighing at night. After that I began moving the scale around the bathroom to find just the "right" spot where I'd weigh the least. **Insanity!** I can never truly be abstinent as long as I continue my compulsive behavior with you.

With the help of my sponsor, I have realized that there is a place in my life for a scale. Regular, monthly weigh-ins are a part of my program that keeps me accountable. Those weigh-ins will take place on a monthly basis, fully clothed, using a doctor's scale. I will remember that the scale simply provides information. It is not the source of my joy, my sorrow, or any other emotion in my life. I will remember that no scale can measure my abstinence or my worth as a human being.

Thank you for providing so many years of service. I bless you with love...and I release you and let you go now.

~Tracy D.

### Your turn! Journaling Topics:

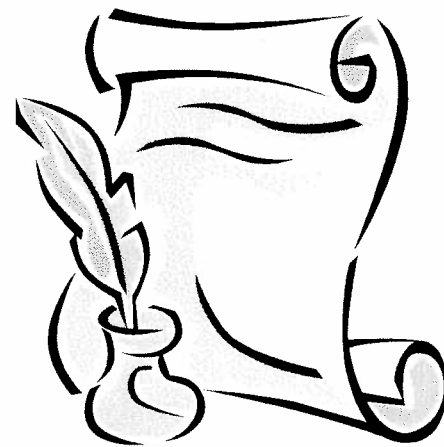
1. **Am I struggling? What can I do today to work my program?**
2. **How do I hear my Higher Power?  
How do I know that my Higher Power hears me?**
3. **How do I balance my physical recovery, my emotional recovery and my spiritual recovery?**
4. **How do I become entirely ready to have God remove all of my character defects? What is God's part, and what is mine?**
5. **How does shame play a roll in my life? How do I turn things over to my Higher Power?**
6. **How does my Higher Power work in my life?**

### TO RETREAT OR NOT TO RETREAT ...

is that the question? My first retreat experience was ... not an experience. I didn't go; I just decided I didn't want to. The following year, I did go. I didn't exactly have the time of my life, but it was definitely worth it. I was scared and feeling shy and often felt totally alone despite being in a room full of people. But when I *did* open up, I was amazed to find that others were feeling the same way I was! How could a room full of people be filled with people who all felt like they were alone? Because we are all more alike than we are different. I made friends at last year's retreat that I am still close to today. It is a life changing experience that if you will open yourself up to, you will learn more than you can imagine.

~Anonymous

*the courage to change the things I can...*





## What I Practice, I Become



What a novice concept—what I practice, I become. I heard a speaker say this once and I wrote it on a little sticky-note and posted it so I can see it every morning in the mirror. It really applies to all aspects of my program. The more I focus on doing my stepwork and using the tools, my recovery gets stronger. The more I focus on non-recovery things, the weaker my recovery becomes.

When I completed my fifth step, I felt an enormous sense of relief. Not only did it feel good to have all of those secrets out, and to have someone love and accept me despite what I had deemed as the “worst things ever,” I also felt a *tremendous* sense of accomplishment! My fourth step

had been looming over my head for far too long! But similar to the initial sense of relief after step three, all good honeymoons come to an end! And it wasn't too long before the acute awareness of all of my character defects began to overwhelm me.

Step six says, “Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.” I did not know how to simply become “entirely ready.” I knew that I *wanted* my character defects to be removed—I am, after all, a perfectionist! But feelings can't be forced and wanting character defects to be gone and being ready to have them gone are two very different things. I needed something *tangible* that I could work on to help me be-

come ready to do things differently and to cope with life in a new way.

Then my sponsor suggested that I make a list of my character defects and their corresponding opposites. For example, the corresponding opposite of dishonesty is *honesty*, and the corresponding opposite of being judgmental is being *accepting*. And so begins my practicing—my job is to practice being honest and to practice being accepting, among many other things, because what I practice, I become! And with all that practice, as well as my Higher Power's help, I know that I *will* become entirely ready to have God remove all my defects of character. Practice makes ... almost perfect!

~Barb

## Overcoming Shame, with my Higher Power's Help

It's Monday. I have been thinking about this weekend all morning. This weekend I attended my 15 year class reunion. This is the first reunion I have ever attended. I refused to go to the other two that were held but this time was different. Why? Well, this year is the eighth year I have been in OA. I have been working the steps for about seven out of those eight years. I have had growth in lots of areas, but this is the first time I've ever seen growth in the area of shame!

This morning I became aware that guilt and shame are different for me. Both cause me to not be able to look people in the eye. However, guilt

is an emotion, a sense that I've harmed someone by an action, words attitude, etc. Steps eight and nine have helped me with my feelings of guilt. I've made amends over the last seven years, and although I have some more to do, much of the guilt has been released. But I couldn't figure out why I still couldn't look people in the eyes.

Several years ago I started working on shame. Shame to me is a sense of worthlessness – not being good enough. It is not about action or harm, just about who I am. I really have felt hopeless. I thought often, “Why am I putting myself through this pain trying to work through the shame? I'm

not getting anywhere; I'm not getting any better.”

I didn't realize that my Higher Power really was working on me – I just didn't know it. It wasn't one big character change. It was slow. It happened over the last seven years, little by little. I realize this now looking back at this weekend. I wanted to go to the reunion! I was a little nervous, but very willing! I could look everyone in the eyes. I didn't put on any shows – I was me and I liked me. And they liked me too! I wasn't less than or more than anyone else there. I was good enough.

~Molly

### ATTENTION BABYSITTERS!!!

7:30 p.m. Thursday Night meeting  
is currently seeking a babysitter.

Meets at St. Timothy's Lutheran Church,  
510 North 93rd Street, Omaha.

Contact Sheila @ (402) 208-4332 for info.

Send your article submissions to  
[oanewsletter@cox.net](mailto:oanewsletter@cox.net)

Next deadline:  
December 1, 2007

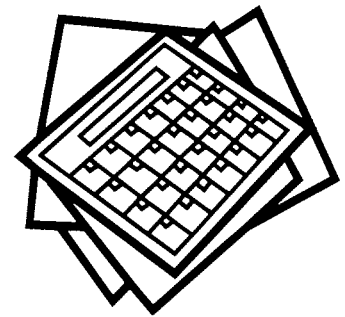
### Mark Your Calendar ... Upcoming Intergroup Meetings

- Monday, October 8, 2007
- Monday, November 12, 2007
- Monday, December 10, 2007

Come Join Us for the  
Business Side of O.A.

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

BABYSITTING AVAILABLE!!!!



...and the wisdom to know the difference.