



NOTES OF HOPE



MONTHLY OVEREATERS ANONYMOUS NEWSLETTER (REGION 8)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

March 2010 Region 8 Business Assembly and Convention

I-Angie B. would like to encourage everyone to attend this convention in Memphis, TN. It is within driving distance and is a small intergroup that needs our support. You can go to the recovery part of the convention which will have recovery workshops going on throughout the weekend or you can go and attend the Business Assembly as a visitor and see what goes on. It is really amazing to see all the work that goes on at the Region level. One thing I realized is that not only me, as an individual can get isolated, but groups can get isolated without Intergroup and Intergroup can get isolated without Regions and Regions can get isolated without World Service. This is a "WE" program and together we can accomplish what we could never do alone. The forums that are usually held on the Friday night of the Business convention takes an issue or focus and asks specific questions, then the Business Assembly participants split into smaller groups and come up with suggestions and solutions. It is amazing to see the things that come out of those forums. Don't miss out!! Very soon I will be asking for donations for a scholarship fund that will send member/members from our area to the recovery side of the Convention who could not afford to go otherwise. This campaign is sponsored by the Region 8 Twelve



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Step Within Committee. Thanks and I hope you too will be "Walking to Memphis"!!

Join Your Fellowship as we March to Memphis!

The Greater Memphis Area Intergroup
Presents the Soar 8 Business Assembly
and Recovery Convention:

"Walking in Memphis: 01 Stepping Away the Blues" March 19, 2010 thru March 21, 2010
Held at the: Holiday Inn Select 5795 Poplar
@ I-240, Memphis, Tennessee 38119

New Meeting List

The website at www.oaregion8.org now has a new tab meeting list that links to the meeting lists for each of the meetings that our region supports, (this link is maintained by mtg. reps.)

10th Step Workshop

Will be in the Middle Tennessee Intergroup (MTI) Office on Saturday, January 16, 2010 from 1:30 PM to 3:00 PM.

Intergroup Meeting

Next meeting will be Held at the MTI Office on Monday, 1/18/2010, from 6:30 – 7:30PM.

Service Opportunities for Middle-Tennessee- Intergroup (MTI)

12-Step-Within Chair.

Involves spearheading outreach to membership by the membership – a characteristic of strong Intergroup organizations and one that we want to emulate. Helping people out of relapse and helping to prevent relapse.

Media Chair.

Download talks from OA website and burn cd's; populate the MTI "library" for loaner cds. Give others the gift of a "MEETING ON THE GO!!!"

"If you are interested in any one of these chair positions let Angie B know via e-mail at angieboo401@yahoo.com

FEBRUARY'S TOPIC

Do you have creative juices flowing? *Would you like to share on topic of*

APPRECIATION

for the February Notes of Hope edition? Drop off written material in the Notes of Hope Folder next to the front door of the Middle Tennessee Intergroup Office by 01/29/10. Also, you can e-mail Nila J. at capri3009@gmail.com with submissions.

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Rectitude

It has been a while since I used the OA tool of writing or gave serious thought to my recovery. I cannot reason why. There are periods of highs and lows, I guess. Intensity followed by temperance. I wonder if prolonged apathy is



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code for backsliding. When I feel so lackluster, I question my motives. I look at the reasons why I am or *am not* doing something. I get nothing. I don't let that stop me. Self introspection reminds me of the television series *'Frasier'*. In case you are unfamiliar with the lead character, Frasier Crane, was an ailing Boston psychiatrist who moved back to his hometown of Seattle after his wife, Lilith, (also a psychiatrist) announced she wanted a divorce. In her debut scene, Lilith called into Frasier's talk radio show disputing the advice he'd given his previous caller concerning the best way to lose weight. Frasier recommended his caller resolve the underlying psychological issues that caused the overeating while Lilith argued in favor of behavior modification- she thought the caller needed to change his eating habits and add exercise. And so an animated argument ensued between them.

I, like Frasier, am prone to seek out what I think are base beliefs. From there, I pass onto Lilith's motif about behavior modification. This time, I thought about recovery. I question means and ends. Am I using OA as a mean to an end? The mean being the 12 steps. The end is me being the person I want to be. Is that bad? Is it that the wrong motivation for working the program? Should not my motivation be to develop and maintain a closer relationship with my God? If I have other motives; say weight loss or not wanting to be alone, what happens once I achieve my goal? When I get my 'prize', will I stop OA? What if things don't go as I think they should? Do I stop, then? Is that why I feel so jaded about recovery? Because sometimes, I feel it's not working? Other times, I think joining the OA Fellowship is the best idea I ever had. Only answers are required of me- candid answers.

And the answers came. I could recover lost ground in terms of changing the food I put in my mouth but the basis of OA is Spiritual. Recovery implies that there is something that will be restored- regained. But it starts with integrity. When I am active in pursuing an abstinent lifestyle, not isolating; I do not feel at ease. I feel like a ship without an anchor. I feel like I am wearing masks- a nice mask, but a mask nonetheless. I have to spend a lot of time in

meditation to get in touch with my own judgments and needs praying for power to express them before I could represent myself mask-free to the world. Overtime, I began to resent this rigmarole so I stopped doing it. Instead of going through the labyrinth of my mind, I just as soon stay home! A therapist summarized for me that I was more comfortable with the pain of isolation than that of meeting new people. It's like Frasier said years later in his own thoughts, "*You mean, I'm alone because, I'm afraid to be alone!*" This is a fear. A fear of what? I don't know. But I have enough recovery in OA to know that if I don't get back with other abstinent people- my sponsor, meetings, and OA friends soon; I *am* going to relapse. Enter the Blue Book



AA Blue Book, pg 68:

We reviewed our fears thoroughly. We put them on paper, even though we had no resentment in connection with them. We asked ourselves why we had them. Wasn't it because self- reliance failed us?

Perhaps there is a better way- we think so. For we are now on a different basis; the basis of trusting and relying upon God. We trust an infinite God rather than our finite selves. We are in the world to play the role he assigns.

So there was another part of Step 4 for me to conquer- an inventory of my fears. As I think; mentally standing on a partition between movement and stagnation. I read on:

AA Blue Book, pg. 68:

We ask Him to remove our fear and direct our attention to what He would have us to be...

AA Blue Book, pg. 69:

We reviewed our own conduct over the years past. Where had we been selfish, dishonest, or inconsiderate? Whom had we hurt? Did we unjustifiably arouse jealousy, suspicions or bitterness?

Where we were at fault and what should we have done instead? We got this all down on paper and looked at it.

AA Blue Book, pg. 70:

We earnestly pray for the right ideal, for guidance in each questionable situation, for sanity, and for the strength to do the right thing.

The Blue Book also says that faith will do for me what I cannot do for myself, that would be progress into the next phase of recovery --> getting an anchor. *By Nila J.*

Passing Down Abstinence

On Thanksgiving day I was blessed to have been able to attend a 9:00 holiday meeting. If you have never been to a holiday meeting, I hope when you get the next opportunity, you will grab on to it. Every time I go, there are people there who share very solid experience, strength and hope. Does that mean they graduated the "12 step school"? Nope. That means that they have several days and years of abstinence and they share that with me and encourage me. I want what they have and to pass it forward to those who are still suffering.

I have been in the AA rooms also and have heard many people in that fellowship share about coming from a long line of alcoholics. I started in the program with a very big resistance to "I have a disease... I have an eating disorder". My eating disorder is compulsive overeating. I do believe now that I have a disease and that I do have an eating disorder. I also remembered last night while looking at old pictures of my family and seeing one of my great-grandmother that she was bulimic. I remember seeing her throw up after several meals when I was a young girl. When I mentioned this to my parents, they told me that my grandmother was also





bulimic and had gone to treatment for it. I had no idea about my grandmother. But a light bulb came on that my disease comes from generations. This is my family of origin.

Now let me tell you about my family of choice. At the Thanksgiving holiday meeting, I looked around the room and realized that there were "four generations" of abstinent family. My sponsor was there, her sponsor was there, I was there and I had two abstinent sponsees there. The disease may have been passed down genetically but the solution was being passed on 1 step at a time and 1 day at a time. I'm thankful for that "grand sponsor" who tells of getting up every day and choosing abstinence, I'm thankful for my sponsor who shares with me her struggles and triumphs with this disease, I'm thankful for my sponsees who remind me that to be of service to them and others... I have to choose abstinence every day and sometimes several times a day... tell my disease thank you for sharing now go back to sleep. One day at a time... one step at a time, we can do this together.

By Stephanie W.

Back to Basics



The Evolution of Abstinence?

According to www.oa.org

'Ask it' archive, in 2002 the basic definition of abstinence was as follows:

... Abstinence in Overeaters Anonymous is the action of refraining from compulsive eating.

The most recent (WSBC) Convention in 2009 amended the definition to read:

Abstinence in Overeaters Anonymous is the action of refraining from compulsive eating and *compulsive food behaviors*.

Questions



& Answers

ABSTINENCE—BACK TO BACK

• *What is "back-to-back abstinence"? Does it mean no slips of any kind?*

Some OA members use the phrase "back-to-back abstinence" to describe the length of time in which they have not deviated from their food plans, or have remained abstinent without a slip. Another interpretation of back-to-back abstinence is continuous abstinence. A member's food plan or plan of eating may change, but the member remains abstinent.
— August 2001

• *...Are there degrees of abstinence in OA? I hear the term "squeaky-clean abstinence."...*

In OA, shouldn't it be that one is either abstinent or not? What makes a slip different from a break in abstinence?

The term "back-to-back abstinence" refers to the successive period of time one has refrained from compulsive eating. Logically one could conclude that as recovering OA members, we are either abstinent or not, either eating compulsively or not. OA's primary purpose in part reads, "To abstain from compulsive overeating." To abstain means to refrain from something regarded as improper or unhealthy. If one is abstaining, he or she is refraining from unhealthy food practices, period. "Squeaky-clean abstinence" does not seem to enter the equation; nor can the degree of abstinence be left up to the interpretation of those who may decide to use the term. This term might be better applied to members' plans of eating and to how closely members follow those plans.

We can and do identify with the recovering alcoholic who lives in sobriety and remains sober by way of the Twelve-Step recovery program.

The key word is "identify." We serve ourselves better by not comparing how maintaining abstinence may or may not be similar to remaining sober.

It is plausible to describe a slip as making a mistake or erring in judgment regarding food and food-related issues. A slip is a temporary state. Returning to healthy food practices comes almost immediately, avoiding a prolonged period of a relapse—a return of a disease or illness after partial recovery from it. If we've slipped, we are not refraining; if we are not refraining, we are not abstinent. Others might have a different interpretation. Exploring different viewpoints can be instructive and conducive to OA unity through diversity. Above all, don't quit trying!

The January 13 meditation in *For Today* reads, "If I slip, I will try again. Practice makes perfect, and I expect to practice abstinence until I 'get it.' What is the alternative?" (p. 13). Page 6 of *The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous* says, "Denial of the truth leads to destruction." *Voices of Recovery*, page 357, states, "My compulsion to overeat is cunning, baffling, powerful—and patient. If I am wanting to eat inappropriately or to overeat, it will do me no good to deny to myself what's going on or seek to hide it from others. That kind of egotistical pride will surely lead to relapse."

Focusing on OA's primary purpose to abstain from compulsive overeating and to carry this message of recovery to those who still suffer will keep us on the road of recovery—working and living the program to the best of our ability—and in harmony with our fellow travelers.

— September/October 2006

**ABSTINENCE — MEANING OF "BACK TO BACK ABSTINENCE" Lifeline Ask It Basket Questions and Answers pg.2 -3.*