
RECOVERY TODAY

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"Together We Can Do What We Could Never Do Alone"
The Quarterly Newsletter of Greater Seattle Intergroup of Overeaters Anonymous

Introducing GSI's New Chair

I would like to introduce myself as your new GSI chair. My name is Barb M and I am a compulsive overeater. I first came to OA in 1983. At that time, I lost 100 pounds, quit going to meetings and decided I could do it on my own. I kept the weight off for a few years and then the bingeing started again. In the next 22 years, I tried every weight loss program including hypnosis, pills, commercial programs and all the crash diets in vogue at the time. I returned to OA in the fall of 2005. I knew there was a solution. I became abstinent in January of 2006. Again, I lost weight but lost sight of what the program was all about and used it as a diet. I was, in my mind, working the steps but had never totally, completely surrendered. I remained in relapse for 10 months wondering all the time why I couldn't have what others seemed to get so easily. I heard over and over again that service would help with abstinence. I became involved in working for the August retreat working as the registrar. It was to be a pivotal point in my recovery. In my desperation, I was willing to do anything to have some relief from this disease. I surrendered to my disease while sitting at a table with laughing, happy, healthy, abstinent members of OA. That weekend I also summoned up the courage to ask someone to be my sponsor. I was shocked when she said yes. It has been a perfect fit. I have been abstinent since 8/25/2007 by the grace of God, working the steps, using the tools and having a food plan the works for me. --Barb M.

Understanding Anonymity

Before recovery, the worst thing anyone could do to me was to bring up my weight. If they did, I always took it as a personal attack. I did many things to avoid someone mentioning my weight or food. I would eat before I left home and say I wasn't hungry at social events. I would change the subject or be completely silent. Deep down I knew I had a problem and I was ashamed because I thought it was my fault. I felt I had to pretend otherwise people wouldn't want to be around me. OA helped me to name my disease and showed me that there are people who recover and go on to lead productive and healthy lives. The OA 12 & 12 states that "in order to recover, we are going to have to reach out to others for help. As we practice anonymity, we begin this process of letting go. To be anonymous in OA means to be one of many, to accept ourselves as no better or worse than our fellows." (200) The tradition of anonymity helps me let go of my shame and false pride so that I can open up and become healed. It reminds me that I am no better or worse than anyone else. I still have days when I struggle with feeling badly about myself but those days are much lighter because anonymity gives me a defense. My new defense is that I am actively working to recover and become a better person. I may not do that perfectly but I am trying.

--Anonymous

From the Sponsorship Committee

As chair of the GSI sponsorship committee, I am thrilled to be writing about my experiences of being both a sponsor and sponsoree. One of the greatest gifts OA has given me is wonderful sponsors who have guided me through the program and gave me hope that I could live a happy life without obsessing over food. I looked for people that had what I wanted. I listened to how they did it. Then I did the same thing myself. Low and behold, it really does work!

Now I am a sponsor and, surprisingly, this has been the greatest motivation to keep me abstinent. When I had an extended period of abstinence, I wondered how I was going to keep it going for the rest of my life, one day at a time. Sponsoring others is the answer. Helping people to get abstinent is the best reminder of where I used to be, how miserable it used to feel to eat my toxic foods, and how much better life is now. Getting three calls a day from my sponsorees allows me to stay immersed in the program throughout the day, everyday. This tool helps me, it helps others, and it helps OA as a whole thrive and grow. I have been given the gift of sanity. I need to pass that gift on for my own benefit as well as to give back to the program that saved my life.
-- Tina

Meetings Give Me Hope

It was my third meeting. A woman got up and shared that she got abstinent. She said, "if she could do it anyone can." She was rail thin (or at least it seemed that way to me at the time). I didn't understand why someone so thin was sharing about being abstinent. She couldn't have had the problems I had. I was eating out of the garbage. I couldn't stop no matter what I told myself. She then told her story. She had lost many pounds and had found a Higher Power through the program. I said to myself, "if she could do it, I can." I got a sponsor that night and followed what she had to say. This was about 1974. I was visiting my childhood friend in New Jersey. I have been coming to meetings ever since, following program, believing in program. -- Hadiyah

Focus on Sponsorship

In thinking about using the tools sponsorship was the first one that came to mind for me. Isolation has been a huge part of my disease. Reaching out and allowing myself to be reached out to are important contradictions to my disease and they are critical to my recovery. Without the sponsors I have had, I would not have worked the steps or grown up. Without my sponsorees, I would not have the perfect reflection of the places my disease can so easily take me. I see myself in their eyes, and hear myself in their struggles. I am amazed by how often the issues they bring up are what I need to be reminded about in my own recovery. I often talk with OA members who are afraid to sponsor, because they aren't far enough along, or are worried they will do something wrong. But I try to remember what my sponsor has told me many times - I cannot say or do anything that will keep a sponsoree who really wants recovery away from it, and I cannot make someone recover, if he or she isn't ready yet. Whether my sponsorees get well is ultimately between them, and their Higher Power. I also try to remember that I sponsor because it is a tool for my own recovery - that may seem selfish, but I'm not a therapist or guru, I'm just another very sick compulsive overeater doing what I'm told to do to recover, and that includes being a sponsor who is amazed at all the gifts that brings my way. -- Katherine

COMING BACK FROM RELAPSE (The Tool of Writing)

“God, please help me use whatever tool is necessary to stay abstinent, even if it’s writing.”

My sponsor taught me the first part of this prayer and I added the second part to be funny—but, over time, it has helped me to use the tool of writing.

I have been in OA for 14 years, had 4 years of abstinence, but found myself in a deepening relapse last year. Over the years and especially during the relapse, many people suggested that I write. Secretly and sometimes openly, I refused. The truth is that I was afraid to write. If I opened the door, I didn’t know what I would find and I was afraid that it would be too much for me. I had this image of being sucked into a huge hole of emotions and thoughts -- an abyss. Thanks, but no thanks.

When I got a new sponsor last August, one of her suggestions was that I write a 10th Step at night and email it to her. I needed help to get out of relapse and I really wanted this sponsor, so I said I was willing. Little did I know how helpful this would be. I have written a 10th step review nightly since the end of August. I can write as much or as little as I want and there is a clear beginning, middle and end to it. Most days it’s pretty easy to do and it opens the door to help me think about my day, how I acted or reacted, whether I owe any amends or need to talk to someone. This writing puts me in touch with myself and connects me to my Higher Power. It helps me to be honest and helps me see if I am trying to avoid my feelings or reality (which was the primary reason I used food).

The second way I practice the tool of writing is through a ‘spot check inventory’. This I have learned to use on an as-needed basis. My sponsor has ‘trained’ me to do this writing first before I call to talk about it with her.

The format is four simple questions:

- a. What happened? (Just describe the facts.)
- b. What was I feeling?
- c. What’s causing my feelings? (What defects, defenses or things from my past are coming up around this?)
- d. Am I willing to pray about this? (Ask HP for clarity, a solution or better option).

Amazing things have happened to me as a result of this process. I have been graced with abstinence since January 1st and I think it may have a lot to do with my willingness to do these two simple pieces of writing. I realize today that I don’t know very much but I do know this. If I’m not working my new program, I’m working my old one...which inevitably takes me back to the food. Most days I pray for the willingness to use whatever tool is necessary to stay abstinent, even if it’s writing.

PS I only wrote this article because my sponsor suggested it. -- Sharon L

OA Literature Review: What’s in your toolbox?

- ☞ The Tools of Recovery Pamphlet & page 24 in the OA 12 & 12 give more detailed information about using the tools
- ☞ Refer to the Dignity of Choice Pamphlet for help with a plan of eating
- ☞ Ideas for writing a tenth step inventory start on page 85 of the OA 12 & 12
- ☞ “Freedom from Bondage” in the Big Book for help in dealing with resentments

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

June 6-8, 2008

Greater Seattle Intergroup OA-HOW Retreat
Camp Huston, Gold Bar, WA

June 27-29, 2008

Greater Columbia Intergroup Retreat
Lazy F Camp & Retreat Center, Ellensburg, WA

July 18-19, 2008

Region 1 Board Meeting and Summer Event
St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Port Townsend, WA
For more information, go to www.oaregion1.org

August 23-25, 2008

Pilgrim Firs Retreat
Port Orchard, WA
For more information, contact Martha at 360-769-9114

September 6, 2008

Central Oregon Intergroup Marathon
St. Edwards the Martyr Church, Sisters, OR
9am to 4pm
For more information email trish@feelingsfamily.com

October 29th - November 2nd, 2008

Region One Assembly & Convention 2008
Eugene, Oregon
For more information: <http://www.eugeneoa.org/>

Contribute to Recovery Today

The newsletter needs your contributions!
The topic for the fall issue is Steps 1-3 and Traditions 1-3.
Write about how these steps and/or traditions have helped you in your recovery.
Please send your shares to halora76@yahoo.com

Are You Willing to Speak at O.A. Events?

If you are willing to be included in a list of O.A. speakers, please download a [speaker information form](#) and return it by mail or e-mail.

Hotline Volunteers Needed

The hotline also needs several members who are willing to return calls to people who have left messages on the Hotline Message Center.

If you are willing to share yourself with another compulsive overeater by doing this valuable service, please contact Paula Jo at (425) 255-1781 or bravepj@yahoo.com.

WSO Business Conference

The WSO Business Conference ended last night about 8 PM. We had a banquet (abstinent of course). At the banquet, they announced the new trustees and the new Chair of the Board. These positions are two-year terms. The terms used to be three years, but they were changed to two years in order to give new people and ideas a chance. There was also a skit about a bunch of OAs ordering lunch together. Of course they all wanted separate checks. Some wanted skim milk and others wanted soy milk. Some wanted whole wheat bread and one person wanted to make sure that her bread had not touched any white bread. One person was talking on her cell phone and kept getting new calls. They all wanted take-home containers. It was funny and reminded me of many meals with OAs.

Yesterday, we ran out of time at the WSO Business Conference and did not have enough time to consider a motion to give \$20,000.00 to translate some of our main literature to Spanish and French.

So, yesterday the Board of Trustees made an emergency motion to pay for the translations. This will provide better service in the USA, Canada and many other countries in the world. -- Bob

Credentials: 15 Trustees, 187 Voting Delegates, 1 Alternate, making 202 eligible to vote. All the bylaw amendments required a 2/3rd's majority vote.

We had the traditional green dot ceremony where our new delegates got to remove their green dots and take the position of seasoned delegates!

Our 7th tradition netted \$838.63 or \$2,993.62 total for our 3 days in conference.

After lunch, the new BOT met and elected officers:

Chairman – Kayla Weingarten
First Vice Chairman – Craig Ramsey
Second Vice Chairman – Margaret Ann Brady
Treasurer – Robert Fisher

What a great WSBC. I highly encourage everyone to reach out for this level of service. You would not believe the spiritual experience just waiting for you!

Thank you for allowing me to be of service.

GSI Service Opportunities:

Intergroup Representative
Public Information/Professional Outreach Committee
Ways & Means Committee
Literature & Lifeline Committee
Bylaws Committee
Delegates (3 regular, 3 alternates)

If you are interested in any of these positions, please come and find out more. GSI meets the first Tuesday of every month at St. Paul's Church in Ballard in Room 2 from 7:00 - 8:30 pm.

Greater Seattle Intergroup Information

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