

July 2011

Together We Can

A publication of the NYS Capital District Intergroup

*This issue's
special
focus is on
Spirituality*

Step 2

***Came to
believe that a
Power greater
than
ourselves
could restore
us to sanity***

Step 11

***Sought
through
prayer and
meditation to
improve our
conscious
contact with
God as we
understood
Him, praying
only for
knowledge of
His will for us
and the power
to carry that
out.***

.....

What keeps you Inspired, Grounded and Connected?

Finding the Sanity!

When I first came into OA many years ago, it was simply for the physical aspect of our program. When I returned 12 years ago after an 11 year relapse, I came back to work on the emotional aspect of my disease, wanting to not only stop eating but understand why I was eating.

Recovery is often described as a 3-legged stool - Physical, Emotional & Spiritual. Now that I have a better understanding of why I eat, I don't have to run to the food every time I struggle emotionally, so all that is left of that 3-legged stool is spirituality. Spirituality is the most difficult of the 3 legs; I've always been self-reliant, learning early on that if you want something done right, do it yourself. Also, while I come from a catholic family that went to Mass every Sunday, it was not a family that had a relationship with God.

It has taken me years to learn not only that the world does not revolve around me, but that I can have a relationship with the creator of this universe. Step 3 allowed me to "fire" that God of my childhood and hire a High Power of my own creation. I'm still learning to allow that Higher Power into my life and rely on that Power to make decisions and to work through things that need to be worked through, such as letting others into my life and specifically dating.

I don't know if it gets easier, but for today I get to let my HP into my life. -- G.H

God IS the Connection

A relative of mine began attending OA meetings in another state. He was really uncomfortable about the "God" part of the program. Knowing that I am not a religious person, he asked me how I had reconciled the spiritual leg of the physical-emotional-spiritual stool. I think that it is exactly because I am not "religious" that I find the spiritual part of the program to be easy.

I choose to call my higher power 'God,' but he's not a meddling being and he's not a person. The pronoun 'he' is just convenient. Yes, it's the same God from church, but without the filter or middleman of religion in the way. Organized religion often interferes with a person's ability to make a personal spiritual connection. I was raised in a Christian tradition, but I don't subscribe to most of it. I'm familiar with Bible teachings and I learn something new each time I open the book. I don't necessarily think that any one religion is the one and only right one. There are a lot of good insights to be gained from different faiths.

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***Did you know
Lifeline is now
available?
on-line?***

Lifeline is a publication of OA World Service and contains stories from OA members throughout the world. A Lifeline is often called a portable meeting – inspiration and support whenever or wherever you need it –

E-lifeline, is the online version of Lifeline magazine, is a PDF file that you can download or read online. Your subscription also includes access to the 12 previous issues.

Subscription prices for e-Lifeline are:

- 1 year (10 issues)
\$13.00
- 2 years(20 issues)
\$26.00
- 3 years (30 issues)

God is cont'd

For me, the concept of God is very simple. God is the connection to everything. God is the force that holds things together - people, relationships, objects, ideas, everything. Like magnetism or gravity, God is BIG. God is timeless. He's been running the show way before I showed up, and he'll be running it long after I'm gone. God also directs things like seasons, cycles, evolution, everything. I believe that if I want him to, he'll direct me too.

In terms of my recovery, I focus several times a day on my spiritual connection through prayer and meditation. I don't pray in specifics. It's more prayer for general guidance and insight to keep me moving in a positive direction with my recovery and with my life. I pray for the positive guidance and influence for all of you too. -- *Anonymous*

From Atheist to Agnostic to Believer

When I walked into my first OA meeting in 1989 I was an atheist. The prayers and the G-d talk really bothered me. If *that* had to be part of my recovery from compulsive overeating I couldn't see how this was going to work. It's a really good thing that there is literature for the non-believer. It told me I didn't have to believe in G-d; I only had to believe that a power greater than myself could restore me to sanity. The literature suggested that I take the group as that higher power. So I did. I listened and learned by hearing stories very much like my own. Part of what people shared was how their higher powers had relieved them of the compulsions that had brought them to the point where they had to admit they were powerless over food and that their lives had become unmanageable. Members shared about having to fire the punishing G-ds they acquired from their parents or from the churches of their childhoods and how they had come to understand a loving G-d that really cared about their pain and helping them recover.

A friend who came into program around the time that I did has a relationship with G-d that is at the core of her life. She told me that I could bring anything to G-d and that G-d would listen and hear me and not judge me; that I didn't have to be formal or even polite in my communication with G-d, that I could scream and curse because G-d could take it. She told me that the only way to do this recovery thing wrong was to try and do it myself, without a higher power or without other people. My friend Nancy talked about the G-d of her understanding as a Mother G-d who was so huge and all-powerful that she could hold the world in her hands. When Nancy's life was hard she pictured herself cradled in those hands.

I learned that there are as many visions of higher power as there are recovering people in the rooms. A subtle change occurred; at some point I stopped thinking of myself as an atheist and started to think of myself as an agnostic. I was no longer certain that there was no G-d. How could I be when all of these loving, helpful, recovering people believed?

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**New York
Capital District
Intergroup
Meetings**

**July 9
August 13
September 10
October 8
November 12**

**All Meetings are
held at 10:10am
following the
9:00am meeting at
the VA Hospital in
Albany, except the
May and October
meetings which are
in Saratoga after the
9:15 meeting at the
Nolan House Ne
Presbyterian
Church.**

**Each OA meeting
may send two
voting
representatives to
Intergroup, but you
do not need to be a
representative to
attend. All are
welcome!**

From Atheist to... – con't....

I expanded my concept of a higher power to include anything and everything that helped me not to eat compulsively.

But it was a cockroach that made me a believer.

I have never had a perfect recovery. Food still called, although not as loudly or as often as before, and occasionally, I still answered. I was on Long Island to visit family and the stress got to me. Too many feelings, too much chaos and off I went looking for my old anesthesia, food. I found my way to a buffet fully intending to binge. I was looking over the options, take-out container in hand, when a cockroach ran across the serving table. Repulsed, I put the container down and returned to my car.

Sitting there I realized that according to the new definition of my higher power - anything and everything that helped me not to eat compulsively - a cockroach was now my higher power. Very humbling. In retrospect, I have nothing but gratitude for that creature and its timing.

Every day I feel the tug that I now recognize as the loving will of my higher power. I hear it in the voice of the member in a meeting who shares exactly what I need to hear at that moment. I feel it with the clarity of my own heartbeat when I am able, against my very nature, to honestly express a need or an uncertainty and to ask for help. Whether the request is made to one of my fellows in recovery or to G-d directly, if I am able to sit with my discomfort and listen, I get an answer. It's rarely the one I want, but it's always better than whatever I would have come up with on my own. – *Anonymous*

My Greatest Joy

I never would have thought that my greatest joy would be from a spiritual connection. I thought it would be when I lost weight. Losing weight didn't help me feel grounded, connected, loved, cared for and accepted. Practicing the 12 Steps and 12 Traditions have. It is in the second step that I come to believe that a power greater than myself can restore me to sanity and in the third that I make the decision to turn my will and my life over. Daily (and sometimes several times daily!) practice of step eleven, seeking a conscious contact with God as I understand him through prayer and meditation, seeking to know God's will for me and the courage and power to carry that out has been such a source of pleasure and peace for me. It may not always be easy and I may not always be pleased or in agreement but I only need to try.

When I am unsettled, dissatisfied, rushing, angry or over confident and I feel like I am losing my connection, I turn my face toward the sun and feel the heat or listen to the rain and imagine it touching my skin which I think of as God's embrace and I begin to calm and center. After all, I am only a silly child of a Higher Power who could never stop loving me. -- *KG*

A Letter from HP....

Around three years ago. I was feeling really down and depressed. A friend suggested I write a letter to my Higher Power..... ***then write a letter to me from my Higher Power.*** This was one of the most powerful exercises I ever did for myself. My pen took over and what was coming out on paper could not possibly have come from my head. After lamenting to HP that I could not handle the pain and loneliness I felt, here is what my Higher Power wrote to me.

“You are Amazing, Loved and Precious. You struggle to be in charge of everything, when you are in charge of nothing. I don’t need help with things. Live, Enjoy, Love and Hope. Ask and I will give; Try and I will lift you; Love and I will protect you; Trust and I will make you safe.

Care for yourself like I care for you. You cannot fail. I am here and surround you with power and peace and strength. Pause and you will feel me; Breath and you will take me in; Speak to me and I will listen. You are a child meant to LIVE.

I will care for the rest and provide everything you need. Don’t push and tug against me – let life flow and take you with the energy. Don’t resist the tide...” -- HP

A New Relationship Developed

When I came into the rooms of OA, I had already lost a substantial amount of weight and had some Religious training. I also was an active member of the church of my childhood. However, Spirituality is not something I had ever really considered.

To me the Spirituality of the 12 Steps is much broader than any organized religion I know of. It has definitely enhanced my image of God. For now I know God as the one thing that is bigger than the ache that I tried to fill with food. My relationship with God keeps me sane as well as abstinent.

It is important to me to understand that I have to see that there is an emotional and physical piece too. I have to not ingest any foods that are in all honesty, a drug or poison. If I do that I lose the ability to think. If I do that, I have, in a real sense, made food my God. I have found that I can only have one of those!

Since being in Program I have developed a personal, intimate relationship with God. I now know that He is interested in ALL parts of my life. As it says someplace in our step book, God cares about everything including food choices and amounts. When I first was in Program, I believed that God had things like Somalia (see how long I have been around!) to take care of, I needed to take care of myself. Nothing can be further from the truth. God wants to be a part of everything, ESPECIALLY my food. If I am facing a tricky food situation, all I need to do is say, "You gotta help me with this." Not too much time passes before He does.

I love the end of the 11th step that says that God is the only one strong enough to pick us up and put our feet on the path of life. I think that really sums it up! *Anonymous*

God, Grant Me the Serenity to Accept the Things I Cannot Change, The Courage to Change the Things I Can, and the Wisdom to Know the Difference.

News From World Service

Delegates at OA's 2011 World Service Business Conference approved a definition for the action plan tool and expanded the definition of abstinence. Both are detailed below. See the World Service web site for a printable version for insert into Newcomer's Packets and Tools of Recovery pamphlets.

New Definition of Abstinence

In Overeaters Anonymous (OA), the Statement on Abstinence and Recovery is "Abstinence is the action of refraining from compulsive eating and compulsive food behaviors while working towards or maintaining a healthy body weight. Spiritual, emotional and physical recovery is the result of living the Overeaters Anonymous Twelve-Step program."

The Tool of an Action Plan

An action plan is the process of identifying and implementing attainable actions, both daily and long-term, that are necessary to support our individual abstinence and emotional, spiritual and physical recovery. While the plan is ours, tailored to our own recovery process, most of us find it important to work with a sponsor, fellow OA member and/or appropriate professional to help us create it. This tool, like our plan of eating, may vary widely among members and may need to be adjusted as we progress in our recovery. For example, a newcomer's action plan might focus on planning, shopping for and preparing food. Some members may need a regular fitness routine to improve strength and health, while others may need to set exercise limits in order to attain more balance. Some of us may need an action plan that includes time for meditation and relaxation or provides strategies for balancing work, personal interactions with family and friends, and our program. Others may need help to organize their homes; deal with their finances; and address medical, dental or mental health issues. Along with working the Steps on a daily basis, an action plan may incorporate use of the other OA tools to bring structure, balance and manageability into our lives. As we use this tool, we find that we develop a feeling of serenity and continue to grow emotionally and spiritually while we make measurable progress one day at a time.

Enjoy A Big Abstinent Bite Of The Big Apple!

The Greater NY Metro Intergroup and the R6 Convention Committee welcome you to the Region Six 2011 Convention of Overeaters Anonymous!

"Who knew that when we arrived at the threshold of our first OA meeting, that we were about to embark on a whole new way of living? And that one day we would say, *I ♥ Recovery!* Whether you arrive as a day tripper or join us for the entire recovery-and-fun-filled weekend, we want you to join us and discover that New York Recovery State of Mind."

This year's convention takes place in White Plains, New York, a 30-minute ride from the heart of Manhattan in NYC. We encourage you to sign up early to take advantage of the early bird rate and to take further advantage of a DISCOUNTED online registration with the ability to sign up for service and speaking opportunities, options for souvenir merchandise and discounted basket raffle tickets.

Go to <http://oanyc.org/iheartrecovery/> for registration and more information!

What's going on in Intergroup?

- Visits to outlying OA meetings continue by the Meeting Outreach group. If you would like to visit other meetings call Faye – 235-1110
- Intergroup is considering organizing transportation to the Region 6 convention in October. See your Intergroup Representative for more information.
- The Nomination Committee is forming in anticipation of Intergroup Trusted Servant elections this fall. If you are interested in service or have questions, contact your Intergroup Representative or join us at the next meeting.

Dates to Remember...

September 24 – Region 6 Assembly, Best Western, Western Avenue, Albany

October 21-23 - Region 6 Convention, Crowne Plaza White Plains New York

November 19 - International Day Experiencing Abstinence (IDEA)

December 12 - Twelfth-Step-Within Day

Editorial Policy

Together We Can is the newsletter of the New York State Capital District Intergroup of Overeaters Anonymous.

Submissions will appear with the author’s initials unless otherwise requested. Materials cannot be returned nor can payment be made. Together We Can reserves the right to edit submissions for length and clarity.

Other OA groups may reprint without permission. We ask that you cite the writer and Together We Can as your source.

The opinions expressed are those of the individual writers and not those of NYSCD IG or OA as a whole.

Please address all submissions and suggestions to the editor.
Maureen S.

Togetherwecan15@yahoo.com

Next Newsletter Topic –

Tools = When, Why and Which do you use?

Send Submissions Now! Deadline September 1st

About Our Organization...

The NYS Capital District Intergroup provides support to OA members and groups within the greater Albany, Schenectady, Troy, Saratoga and Glens Falls area.

We're on the Web!

Check It Out:

nycd.oagroups.org

Meeting Lists

OA Information

Inspiration

Event Calendar

Links

World Service

www.oa.org

Region 6

oaregion6.org

Capital Region

Answer Line

Meeting Information

(518) 292-0666