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# TOGETHER WE CAN...

*bring our bodies and souls back into synch*

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## A Long-Abstinent OAer's Guide to Lean, Clean, and Clear

### Care of Body Image

- Let go of the scale. My weight is none of my business.
- Release all clothing from my closet that is too big or too small.
- Buy an adequate amount of comfortable clothing that fits now.
- Delete judgmental thoughts about my body or others, avoid comparing.
- No full length mirrors, and no saying mean things to myself about my body.
- Say aloud, "This mirror cannot fathom my beauty or my worth."
- Express gratitude for all the things my body can do.

### Care of Stress Level

- Avoid rushing, avoid packing one more thing into unscheduled moments.
- Avoid shallow breathing, breathe deeply.
- Be sure my day includes some light moments and laughter.
- Balance work and down time, care taking and receiving care.
- Avoid isolation, talk on the phone or in person with someone who loves me and fills me up.

### Care of My Spirit

- Take some quiet time each day to listen and let my Higher Self send me ideas and intuitions.
- Watch for messages from my Higher Power through various people and events of each day.
- Keep in constant contact with my Higher Power.
- Attend OA meetings and any other 12-step groups for which qualify; work the steps with a sponsor.

### Care of My Body

- Follow my food plan, avoid trigger foods, weigh and measure food.
- Allow my digestive system 4-5 hours of rest between meals.
- Don't eat violently, take time appreciating my food, think of the people who raised it and transported it to me, eat with chop sticks when rushed eating behaviors surface.
- Give my body adequate hydration, don't mistake thirst for hunger.
- Get regular medical exams and recommended tests.
- Take vitamins, supplements and prescriptions as suggested.
- Get moderate, regular exercise, avoid violent exercise regimens.
- Give my body at least 7 hours of rest each day.

---Margy, Albany



## Blossom's Stem



As a survivor of child abuse, I have found it hard to consider my body in the vaulted position of soul carrier. Every act of violence against a child rents the spirit and body apart. Through my life I have habitually tried to ignore my body's needs, hide it in layers of fat and shove my spirit up into my head so that I could live from the neck up.

Program has gently invited me to step back into my body, feel its pain and place my anger on those who deserve it rather than on my body. As I overcome my body-hate and shame, I begin to experience my body as a spiritual and miraculous entity.

Accepting my body's needs and limits teaches me to accept my humanness. I find certain body-care essential to healing, wholeness and abstinence: rest, safe and loving touch, self-expression through movement, physical challenge and accomplishment, and connection with nature.

This spring when I plunge my hands deep into the soil of my garden I will gaze at the first daffodil and realize that without its stem the blossom would fall into the dirt rather than beam up at the sun. My physical being is the stem that brings my spirit closer to life. The earth feeds my spirit through the gift that is my body.

—Nan, Averill Park

## Get Jiggy with Intergroup...

One of Intergroup's recent projects is the publication of a new brochure for OA members, *An Open Invitation to All*. This brochure not only describes the benefits of participating in Intergroup, but also offers a Frequently Asked Questions section that describes what Intergroup does, when it meets, and what one can expect at a meeting. Pick up a copy at your local meeting!

Intergroup is pursuing projects intended to "carry the message" to those who might not of heard of OA. Look for a brief survey coming from Intergroup on how you came to "find" OA. This information will be used to help Intergroup prioritize its outreach efforts.

Intergroup is also looking for individuals with web building skills who might be interested in developing an Intergroup web site. Contact Intergroup Chair Kathy T at 438-8515 for details.

**Intergroup Meetings** are always the 2nd Saturday of the month...

- Albany: ODD months (March 14, May 9, July 11, Sept 12, Nov 14) 10:15am West End Presbyterian.
- Saratoga: EVEN months (Apr 11, June 13, Aug 8, Oct 10, Dec 12) 10:45@ New England Presbyterian Church, 24 Circular Street, Saratoga

### Grab a friend and attend!

March 21<sup>st</sup>: Annual Spring OA Conference: *Spring Forward: Hope, Change, Grow*. 9am to 3:30pm at the Unitarian Universalist Church at 624 N. Broadway in Saratoga Springs. Speaker meetings will take place at 9:30, 10:45, 1:00, and 2:15. A clothing swap of gently used, clean clothes will take place from 8:30-3:30. All are invited!

April 18<sup>th</sup>: Region Six Spring Assembly at the Best Western Sovereign Hotel on Western Avenue in Albany.

May 4<sup>th</sup>- May 9<sup>th</sup>: The 2009 World Service Business Conference, Hotel Albuquerque at Old Town, New Mexico.

October 23<sup>rd</sup>-25<sup>th</sup>: The Region 6 Fall Convention will be held in Stamford CT.

**Mirror, Mirror, On the Wall, I No Longer Heed Your Call**

Not seeing my body clearly or in a negative way is something that I have experienced forever.

I remember an incident early on in my recovery that speaks so clearly of what can happen. I was looking at myself before I went out of my room and thinking that I really looked good. I went into the hallway and had “words” with someone I lived with. I went back into my room, looked in the same mirror and thought that I looked fat. Now, even in my wildest eating days I could not put on weight THAT fast.

Surely something else was going on. Not seeing ourselves accurately is just another symptom of this disease, one that is truly physical, emotional and spiritual.

What do I do when I find myself in this place? First, I remember to see the mirror for what it is - a liar. In terms of telling the truth about *who I am*, a regular mirror is no more accurate than a fun house mirror. I am so much more than that two-dimensional image.

I sometimes ask God to let me see me the way He sees me. (This is a helpful tool when it comes to facing problems with someone else too, but that is a topic for another reflection!)

Recently I have been praying that God help me bring my size and attitude toward my size in accordance with what He knows is best for me. Knowing that he is the only one who can do that. I ask for the courage and the patience to let go of my will. I believe it is working, a little at a time.

As with all the symptoms of addiction, I need to look at what might be going on underneath when I am feeling negative about my body. Am I mad? Hurt? Frustrated? What is “eating at me?” When I look at those questions, frequently the symptom goes away, at

least for the time being.

May we all keep seeking to see ourselves and others as God sees us!

—Jude, Albany, NY



**OA Online**

**New OA World Service Web Site**

[www.oa.org](http://www.oa.org) has been revamped! The front page offers a daily meditation as well as a link to an intro section for newcomers. “Find-a-meeting” indexes not only the face-to-face meetings, but online meetings and telephone meetings. The online store is still available.

You can also listen to inspiring recovery stories from OA members in a five minute version of the audio program *Hearing is Believing*. The full version is available through the online store.

A sample of the *Lifeline* magazine (the entire January 2008 issue) is available on the site with subscription info. Check it all out!

**OA by Email**

The Service-by-Mail/Email program helps OA members correspond to share recovery and to work OA’s Twelve-Steps with other OA members around the world. You can choose to *be* a sponsor, *have* a sponsor or have an OA pen pal. Go to [www.oa.org](http://www.oa.org)

**Region 6 Web Site**

Another online resource [www.oaregion6.org](http://www.oaregion6.org). It has two entry points for new and returning members. Read online back copies of the *Region Six Messenger*, our semi-annual publication of the Region Six Assembly.

OA Western MA Intergroup 33<sup>rd</sup> Annual Retreat:  
 A Guided Journey through the 12 Steps of OA  
 May 29-31, 2009 at the Genesis Spiritual Life Center,  
 53 Mill St., Westfield MA...  
 offering speaker, meetings, relapse recovery,  
 fellowship. raffle. clothing exchange

**Editorial Policy**

Together We Can (TWC) is the quarterly newsletter of the NYSCD IG of Overeaters Anonymous. We seek to publish in August, November, February and May. Materials cannot be returned nor can payment be made. Submissions will appear with the first name and last initial of the author unless otherwise requested. TWC reserves the right to edit submissions for length and clarity. Other OA Groups may reprint without permission unless material is presented as copyrighted. We ask that reprinters cite the writer and TWC as the source. The opinions expressed are those of the individual writer and not those of NYSCD IG or OA as a whole. Please address all submissions and suggestion Kathryn A at 463-5938 [kathryna@nycap.rr.com](mailto:kathryna@nycap.rr.com)

**Online and Phone Meetings**

If you can't make face to face OA meeting, consider participating in an online meeting or a phone meeting. All telephone and online meetings take place in "real time" and are fully interactive. To be registered with the WSO and listed on its web site, they must fulfill the definition of an OA group, which means they meet to practice to Twelve Steps and Traditions of OA, welcome all who have the desire to stop eating compulsively, do not require members to practice any actions to remain a member or to share at a meeting, and as a group they have no affiliation other than OA.

**ALERT!** *The following poem contains graphic mention of foods that some may find triggering. It is the opinion of the Editor and her ad hoc board of consultants that, nonetheless, the poem carries a powerful message for compulsive overeaters.*

**The Border**

Food beckons: Come, I will fill you, warm you,  
surround your sorrows and devour them.  
Let me bathe you in my silken chocolate.  
Come lie down, kiss the crumbs of my tender cake.  
Mashed potatoes, savory stuffing will quilt you  
with the hot sliding kiss of soup, gravy, wine.

Keep eating. Your stomach says,  
"You're hurting me." But fear  
cries louder than pain. Belly, breasts  
hang down, tomatoes ready to drop and rot.  
Pant seams split, zippers burst, tooth by stitch.  
Buttons gape. You reach the border of horror  
where muumuus flower and seamed stretch pants  
form isolation's uniform.

Jacob thought he'd win his life's desire  
by wrapping his arms with goat skin to fool blind Isaac.  
He did, but that didn't stop him from suffering.  
And you, what do you want?

You dream of unwrapping fat, peeling great shells,  
pink and curved like cracked open balls.  
You'd strip layers off upper arms, buttocks, thighs.

You want to face the world direct  
With no intercession of flesh.  
But you could be hurt. And you don't want to  
know what is on the other side. Worse  
is the black hole that yawns.  
It says, *Feed me, or you'll die.*  
The biggest lie.

—Sue, Albany

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"Abstinence makes the heart grow fonder"  
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## **“Let Me Get My Phone List: A Dialogue with My Addiction” by Richard M.**

*Note: I actually had a conversation with “Sugar” once in therapy. The idea for this comes from that, as well as Kathryn A.’s request for something in a different format.*

RICHARD walks into his kitchen, and out of nowhere appears SUGAR, a Southern Belle dressed all in frilly pink and white frou-frou and smelling of baked goods. He is startled.

RICHARD

Oh, my! Oh. It’s you.

SUGAR

Charmed, I’m EVER so sure! Ya know, Richard, sweetums, I certainly do miss you, honey. As a representative of the bees’ product myself, of course.

RICHARD

Yeah? Well, I can honestly say that while moments arise when I miss you, they almost always seem to be when I’m not making my phone meetings or phone calls or being in touch with my sponsor.

SUGAR

Oh, pish! You can leave those nasty recovery people anytime. Powerlessness and unmanageability? You can do better. And face it, you really love the power I have over you! I’ll welcome you back with open arms. I am your Sugar, after all... And you know what they say about Domino—just push that first bite over, and you land in the bowl with me!

RICHARD

Well, as tempting as that offer may sound to me in my weak moments—you know, I’m just not in one now. So no. Good. Bye.

RICHARD’S BODY

If I may interject—?

RICHARD

Oh, but of course, my bod.

RICHARD’S BODY

I was always intoxicated with you Missie, and with your Evil White Powder sister Flour I felt I was being suffocated. I really was suffocating as the gluten from your sister’s residues gummed up these here intestines and true dizziness came with the ever-increasing exposure to you which could have led me to diabetes and chronic diseases, you wench!

SUGAR

Well, I never—I only mean to love you and cherish you, like the bowl of sweet somethings I always offer you.

**-OVER-**

RICHARD'S BODY

Yeah, cherish me right into the grave, my nemesis.

SUGAR

Oh, my stars, you just break my heart, sweetie. I just want to take you and sit you on the couch with my [censored] and offer you [censored] and we can sit on the couch together, just like you did with your mother, watching *MacGyver* and *Golden Girls* and *Father Knows Best* re-runs and of course, Oprah, who has a love-hate thing with me.

RICHARD

Oh, you make that so attractive. Can I marry Rush Limbaugh, pretty please?

SUGAR

You go on and do whatever you like, honeybunch!

RICHARD'S BODY

I have had enough of you. I say begone, Evil White Powder Demon!

RICHARD

Oh, I know just the thing, body of mine. Kale! And Collards. And Broccoli.

SUGAR

What are you doing? Stop that!

RICHARD'S BODY

Carrots, cauliflower, turnips, Brussels sprouts...

SUGAR

Oh, you vile things!

RICHARD & BODY BOTH

Butternut, acorn, carnival and spaghetti squash... Parsnips, zucchini, endive, chard.

SUGAR (screaming)

NOOOO!!!! FLEE! FLEE! RUN AWAY!

(And poof she's gone.)

RICHARD

Well done, body of mine!

RICHARD'S BODY

It's time we get to a meeting. Or call someone.

RICHARD

Let me get my phone list...