

# RECOVERY

## *A Suitcase Full of Stuff*

The last eleven years of my life have been the best. That's when a friend dragged me to my first OA meeting. I brought along a huge suitcase filled to bursting with junk.

In my suitcase I had packed 237 pounds of hopelessness: I knew I would never get my compulsive binge eating under control. I knew I was doomed to gain and lose and regain huge amounts of weight. I didn't think I would live to see my kids grow up.

I included my sense of isolation too. My need for secrecy had forced me underground. My eating behaviors were abnormal. No one could possibly do what I did. I binged until I felt sick and then started all over again the next day.

I had remembered to pack my low self esteem and self disgust. I waddled when I walked and I knew people were repelled when they looked at me. I had packed my dismal dieting report card, which proved that I was incapable of learning from my past mistakes. Over and over again I had tried to control my destructive eating habits. What was wrong with me?

Eleven years later I have a new suitcase and the contents are vastly different. Wrapped in glimmering, sturdy fabric is my abstinence and my gratitude. Packed alongside them is my sponsor's phone number, my sponsees' names, my OA meeting lists, and my OA literature.

I rejected my body scale in order to make room for my plan of eating, my lovely digital food scale, my new attitude, and my size 4 jeans.

All of these precious objects forced me to dispose of my loneliness and self loathing and replace them with friendship, self- confidence, and serenity.

Of course before I packed anything I had to remember to pray to my new Higher Power. I prayed that I had packed the right tools and taken the necessary steps: The ones that would allow me to remain abstinent. I believe that I have packed well and I trust that my journey will go in the direction it's supposed to: One day at a time. ~Barbara, West Jersey Intergroup

## *Thoughts*

*Step 3:* Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.

*Spiritual Principle: Faith*

*Step 4:* Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.

*Spiritual Principle: Courage*

## *Freedom*

Today I have the freedom to live my life thanks to OA. I have freedom to choose a food plan that I can live with today. Since I have a healthy food plan, I have freedom to pick any piece of clothing out of my closet.

For the past six years, I have enjoyed going to meetings, and I have the freedom to go to as many meetings as I choose. I have the freedom to work the tools, steps, and traditions at any time. Today, I have freedom from the bondage of compulsive overeating. ~Anonymous

## *Why I attend World Service Conventions*

I attended my first WS convention in August 1985, OA's 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration in Anaheim CA at Disneyland. I had been abstinent since February of that year. I was living in the Philadelphia intergroup at the time and someone said, "Come with us." And I did. I did not have the prerequisite 1 year of abstinence required for being a convention speaker but I remember thinking perhaps next year I can speak. At the time WS conventions were every year, now they are every three years. I did have a wonderful time and met lots of people and attended workshops and encountered people with long term abstinence. My roommates, and there were several, and I had fun going to Disneyland and to Universal Studios before the convention opened. Our room was crowded because we were going on the cheap but we all got along and I learned a lot because they all had long term abstinence and did service. I stayed on in California, visited my brother, stayed abstinent and spent a whole day at Disneyland by myself. I took several buses to get there but school students had gone back to school and there were no lines. I just went from ride to ride having the time of my life and staying abstinent.

Over the years I have attended about 8 more WS conventions. I even worked on the one that was held in Philadelphia in 2007. That was so gratifying to have been part of the planning. Thanks to my HP, I stayed abstinent. Prior planning helps.

This year 3 other OAers and I rented a car to attend the WS convention. There was no question as to whether I would go or not. It had been 3 years since I had been to the OA 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Convention in Los Angeles and Cleveland was where the action was going to be!

This time my service was simply to be a room monitor, making sure that there were no people standing or sitting on the floor which violated fire department regulations. I was out of my comfort zone asking people to move to chairs and when the chairs were all filled, telling latecomers that the room was filled to capacity. I did not enjoy telling my peers to please do something, but everyone was pleasant. I stayed abstinent one day at a time, because a long time ago I relapsed for 3 years and it is not where I want to go again.

My roommates were great and we had some really interesting sharing.

I was able to have a long conversation with the person I have known the longest in program, about 31 years. We are still both here, "trudging the road to happy destiny." There were excellent speakers and workshops. Attending the World Service Conventions always gives a boost to my recovery.

In 2016 the World Service Convention will be held in Boston, MA. This is about a 6 hour ride from the Delaware Valley as the crow flies. I am staying abstinent one day at a time and I am saving a little each week so that I will be able to go. Why not you, too? Just a suggestion: Put \$5.00 a week in a safe place and you will have more than enough to go to Boston! ~Cathe S.

## *Six A's of Our OA Program*

Before I realized that I was a compulsive overeater, I was unaware of the existence of Overeaters Anonymous(OA). My awareness of OA came as a result of being referred to an Eating Disorder Group by my counselor. After attending that group one night a week for fifteen months, I was introduced to OA. In retrospect that was a beautiful gift !

So, the first A stands for Awareness. I can only try to do something about an issue which I am aware of.

Once I became aware of OA, I learned in the rooms that I needed to accept that I had a disease. Which brings me to the second A, Acceptance. This was a "bitter pill" to swallow and it didn't come easily for me. It also meant accepting that I was powerless over food and I had an addiction. I certainly didn't want to admit that.

After attending many face to face meetings during my first year in the program, I heard other members tell their stories and it became clear to me that I was a compulsive overeater and that I had a disease. It was a relief to find out that I wasn't alone and that there was a program which could help me arrest my disease.

It took me many years in the program to realize the necessity of asking God for guidance in everything I do in my life. So, "Ask" became the third A in my program. When I remember to ask God to help me with my choices, I make better decisions. I believe my choices will take me one of two directions. Either closer to my HP and recovery or away from my HP and toward my disease.

After asking God for direction and receiving it, then I take the "Action" (the fourth A) which God suggests to me in different ways. One gift I was given in the program( from a woman I call an "OA Angel" )was the suggestion of writing a letter to God and then immediately having God write a letter back to me. I have used that suggestion as part of my daily devotional time for the last fifteen years. That process has helped me gain a closer relationship with my HP and also guidance about what "Action" to take. Sometimes my HP will give me the answer through my sponsor or another member of OA.

The fifth "A" of my program is "Amnesia" . Even after being in OA for many years, my disease has a way of sneaking up on me when I leave a meeting and face life's challenges. I forget what I heard in the meeting or the promises of the program. Therefore, I have to keep coming back to meetings, working the tools of the program and working with my sponsor to deal with my "Amnesia".

The sixth "A" of my program is "Abstinence". That is the gift which the OA program and my HP gives me when I work all aspects of the program. When I'm abstinent, I have a strong connection with God and can hear His direction for my life. If I'm not abstinent, it creates a wall between me and my HP. I can't hear or see my HP in action when I'm into compulsive eating or compulsive behaviors.

Today, it is clear to me that I need my HP to help me work my program.

So, "Abstinence" is the most important thing in my life without exception.

Thank God for OA !

~Bob B.

## Faith Renewed

HMMPH!!! Turn my will and my life over? Who are they kidding? There's no way I am turning all my decisions over to that meanie: God. I can manage just fine all on my own. "Just for today", they said. "One day at a time", others echoed. How were these trite sayings intended to impact my life? Curiosity was the catalyst for weeks. Then the strangest thing

*I immediately realized God was doing for me what I could not do for myself.*

happened. After only a few days of abstinence, the sugar fog cleared. Even the air I breathed smelled different. Over the first few weeks, the clarity was deafening. I immediately realized God was doing for me what I could not do for myself. Before long, I found myself letting my defenses down. And within three short months, I was again trying to establish a conscious contact with my Higher Power. What a joy it's been getting reacquainted.

~ Anonymous

**Brandywine Intergroup:**  
 Have you checked out our website?  
<http://www.oa-brandywine.org/>

**For Information, Contact:**

[Info@oa-brandywine.org](mailto:Info@oa-brandywine.org)

**Email Addresses - Officers:**

[Chairperson@oa-brandywine.org](mailto:Chairperson@oa-brandywine.org)  
[ViceChairperson@oa-brandywine.org](mailto:ViceChairperson@oa-brandywine.org)  
[Treasurer@oa-brandywine.org](mailto:Treasurer@oa-brandywine.org)  
[RecordingSecretary@oa-brandywine.org](mailto:RecordingSecretary@oa-brandywine.org)  
[CorrespondingSecretary@oa-brandywine.org](mailto:CorrespondingSecretary@oa-brandywine.org)

**Mailing Address:**

Brandywine Intergroup of Overeaters Anonymous  
 PO Box 605  
 Bryn Mawr, PA 19010-0605

**Phone:**

610-565-9695

**Recovery Newsletter:**

We welcome all submissions for the next Newsletter by May 10th. Please send your thoughts to  
[RecoveryNewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:RecoveryNewsletter@gmail.com)

**WE ARE SELF-SUPPORTING THROUGH OUR OWN CONTRIBUTIONS**

WSO recommendations for group donations are:  
 60% Brandywine Intergroup, PO Box 605, Bryn Mawr, PA 19010,  
 30% World Service Office, P.O. Box 44020, Rio Rancho, NM 87124-4020,  
 10% Region 7, 3500 S. DuPont Highway, Dover, DE, 19901-6011.

*"Honesty with ourselves and others gets us abstinent, but it is tolerance that keeps us that way."*

*As Bill Sees It ~ page 312*