

THE ROAD TO RECOVERY



Visit our Westchester Website - www.oahelps.org

September 6, 2008—Save the Date for a Marathon!

Rejuvenating The Spirit will be the topic for a Marathon planned for Saturday, September 6th from 10 am - 3 pm at the Mariandale Retreat and Conference Center* on 299 North Highland Avenue (Route 9) in Ossining.

Registration is open to the first 40 people who sign up. Jackie, our event chair, will reserve a place for you; please e-mail her at jacqcare@aol.com and let her know that you wish to participate. (Please include your phone number.) The suggested donation of \$10.00 per participant will be collected the day of the event.

A Clothing Exchange is also planned. Bring clean clothes in good condition that are no longer useable for you and exchange them for clothing that others find no longer serves their needs. If you wish to help or donate, contact Cheryl at Cmcd8749@aol.com.

** Mariandale is on the West side of Route 9, just south of Croton, near where 9 & 9A split for Ossining/Tarrytown & Briarcliff.*

What do we mean by Marathon?

Since a retreat usually involves an overnight stay, we have employed the term Marathon to indicate that the experience will be more like a lengthy meeting/series of meetings. Like a retreat, we will be removed from our usual environment in order to become immersed in our subject. We will be there for reasons related to spirituality, wellness, health, and the concerns of daily living.

Our marathon will be a community event, with some silence as well as conversation, as we share our experience, strength, and hope. We have chosen a beautiful Hudson River setting at a most wonderful time of year to enjoy this event and hopefully,

Rejuvenate Our Spirits!

WUIG

Monthly Meeting

Intergroup meets the first Thursday of every month—
Note earlier time - 7:00 pm
Emanuel Lutheran Church
197 Manville Rd.,
Pleasantville

All are welcome!

Next Newsletter Topic

*Share your Experience
Strength and Hope on any
topic and in any format.*

Do you journal in verse?

Is there something unique
about your use of the tool of
writing?

Share it with your fellows!

The Answer is in the Steps

I come from a long line of high functioning addicts. My parents came from Italy. My mother showed her love through food, because growing up they had little else to share. She went to market everyday and cooked everything from scratch, and I mean every-thing. The only things in our freezer were the ice cube trays.

With *Weight Watchers*, *Atkins*, and all the other weight loss programs I tried, after I lost the weight I was always terrified. I knew I didn't have the "skills" to keep the weight off –or– to follow a maintenance plan. I thought becoming a *WW* lecturer would keep me thin. I thought having to be accountable at once-a-month staff meeting weigh-ins would keep me thin. I thought rushing back to my corporate job in 3 months after giving birth to my son would keep me thin. It did for many years... or so I thought.

***I found
a spiritual life
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me anywhere else...***

My first encounter with OA was in my late 20's. I walked in the door and will never forget the overwhelming feelings of finding people who ate like me. They "got" me. I stayed in the rooms for 2 years and then took a 10 year sabbatical. Of course I was way too busy being a working mother and all (much busier than any of you) before returning in 1993 and never leaving again.

What kept me in this time is simple. I found a spiritual life that doesn't exist for me anywhere else, including from my religion of origin. There's a saying that people who go to church are afraid of **going** to hell, and people who go to 12-steps have **been** to hell.

I'm not doing this alone anymore. As a matter of fact, I'm not **DOING** this **MYSELF** anymore. My higher power, who I choose to call God, watches over me every day. I ask him everyday to show me what I need to do. I start everyday saying Steps 1-2-3 out loud as I get out of bed; I ask for help for my short-list of people who need extra support that day. Each night I review how I did, starting with the food I ate and if I was emotionally abstinent. A key component for me is that I know that if I don't maintain my emotional abstinence, my food will not be abstinent either... and it will all fall apart very soon.

The answer today for me is in the Steps, believing in a power greater than myself, believing in the mystery of it all, listening and not having all the answers. Most importantly, I am getting comfortable with being uncomfortable, with being a grown up. Today I have a life I could have only dreamed of, I love the work I do because it's 12-step work in disguise. That makes me feel real good that I can help others and sometimes they don't even know it.

Weight Watchers and all of the other programs taught me how to diet, gave me applause for weight lost and recipes for sugar-free cheesecake. At OA, I get a food plan, applause for being abstinent, and recipes for life. They can keep the cheesecake, we got something better!

Carmela

Finding willingness, honesty, open-mindedness and my Higher Power

Although many of the first stories in the Big Book describe sudden spiritual experiences, the onset does not always happen quickly for everyone. For some it is gradual, which is how it occurred in me. The elaboration in the “Spiritual Experience” appendix has helped me realize that my situation is not unusual, that many people have spiritual experiences in the same way.

My “educational variety” of spiritual experience began with a willingness to accept that there was a Higher Power. This slowly developed into a belief in God, and I became willing to pray and meditate. I didn’t know if my prayers were heard by anything, but I pictured myself releasing them into the universe. Like pitching a penny into a well, I had no idea where they went; what was important was that I made the effort.

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proceeded only because I heard people in the rooms say it *will* work. Had they said it *might* work, I wouldn’t have continued. So I tried it, and it did work. As I saw results from my willingness, I swung open the door that, up to this point, I’d only opened a crack. My willingness continued to grow, and my spiritual life grew along with it. It was on-the-job training for me, but it worked, and only over the course of a few months.

Even though I felt cautious during this profound transformation in my thinking, I remained as honest as I could about the process, including my doubt and skepticism about the existence of God. This honesty has been key in the process of recovery for me. These principles of willingness, honesty, and open-mindedness are what I strive for to continue the recovery process, three words I wouldn’t have ever used to describe myself before embarking on this journey.

Heather

Living in 10-11-and-12

I am grateful first of all for being aware that I am not perfect but am capable of picking myself up, with the grace of God, and seeking a path toward recovery. This is a welcome change from wanting to destroy myself with compulsive overeating and addictions such as smoking, drinking, and being emotionally out of control. OA has been a source of sober wake up calls as long as I stay in touch with another recovering human being who is working hard to keep the memory alive of how sick they were. And, as I continue to live in steps 10, 11 and 12 of the Big Book, these spiritual maintenance steps keep me mindful of what recovery is about for me. Writing a daily inventory of my feelings and about how I’ve interacted with others keeps me on track.

Prayer and meditation each morning -asking for God's guidance in my day- helps me stay calm in the midst of confusion. I was never a disciplined person before program, my self will ran riot instead. But program has had a way of disciplining my life. I now find life much more simple, focused and directed on the things that are really important. Rather than having that scattered feeling, not knowing what's going to happen next and being out of control, I feel my higher power is running the show. I just need to do the foot work for myself as well as help others in their journey, as I have been helped. This way of feeling and thinking has taken the desire for excess in my life away, *one day at a time*.

Words Can Hurt

I once heard that for every negative word we hear or say, we need five positive ones to compensate. Of course we grow up chanting sayings like “sticks and stones will break my bones but words will never hurt me,” but I do not believe that is true.

I recently had a phone conversation with a relative that really disturbed me. She complimented me on the weight I had lost, but added “not that you can’t lose more.” I know she didn’t mean to hurt me, but boy it still stings just typing it!

It almost reminds me of making the mistake of asking another woman if she is pregnant. Unless you are absolutely sure, (like you see the head crowning, my Ob-Gyn once said,) you just do NOT do it! There is nothing good that can come from it!

There is no way to take back what has been said...

I asked my daughter if anyone had ever said anything to her that hurt her feelings but she knew they didn’t really mean it. She asked me what had happened so I told her the story and explained the theory of needing five compliments for each negative remark. She took her hand and started to count five positives about her mother and I decided to enjoy her wonderful expression of love. What is most disturbing is that in writing this, I had to go back and ask her about what she had said. Again, that negative message I had received from the relative blocked out the positives that my loving daughter had told me.

There is no way to take back what has been said but I guess having been on the receiving end served as a reminder to me to think before I speak!
Jackie

PS. My daughter was able to tell me again: she said that I had lost weight; that I am kind; that I always put others before myself; that I wouldn't hurt a fly; and that I am a nice person.

Want the Latest Local OA News Flashes?

Last minute announcements of meetings opened or closed, Intergroup meetings, solicitations for the Newsletter, etc. all come through our webmistress, Beth. Just send an email to: uwigwebsite@gmail.com or to bklieg@gmail.com. to be placed on the anonymous e-mail broadcast recipient list.

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Call Roberta M. at (914) 423-4540 to volunteer to be a speaker — or to find a speaker.

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The Road to Recovery is a bi-monthly publication of Westchester United Intergroup of Overeaters Anonymous. We reserve the right to edit submissions for spelling, length, and clarity. Articles are the sole opinion of the authors and not those of WUIG. PLEASE do service and submit 300 to (max.) 500 word articles to Gerry M greenbean65@hotmail.com **Newsletter Deadlines: July 15** for Aug/Sept & **Oct 15** for