

THE "BACK TO BASICS" ISSUE

Back to Basics

Throughout my 20+ years in this miraculous, life-saving, all-encompassing program of recovery, I have on occasion strayed. When I have, I have woken up in the morning and said, "What am I doing?! How could I have landed in this awful spot again?"

Automatically, without thinking, I say, "God, help me! I don't want to go back to where I was." Of course I don't; that was 150 pounds ago. I don't want to go back to my obese body any more than I want low self-esteem, isolation, bitterness, devoid of a Higher Power who can offer me hope.

So what do I do to get back to basics? How do I reconnect so I don't end up going all the way down the rabbit hole?

The first thing to do came to me automatically - I did it already! I asked God to please help me; I remembered that I have a Higher Power who wants good health and serenity for me and I

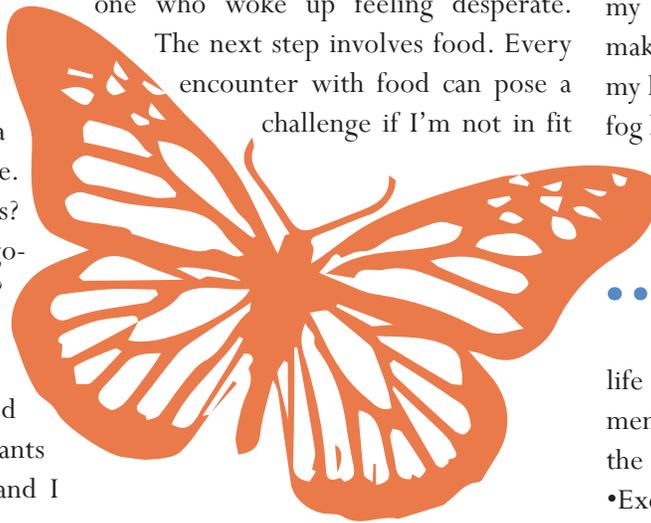
called to Him. Now I know I'm on my way.

That initial God-contact reminds me to be grateful, so I start counting my blessings and then I can't stop. It's everything within me, around me, outside my window. The food, guilt, shame, and extra pounds have now taken a backseat to the awe and wonderment of my life and of the universe. Already I'm a different person than the one who woke up feeling desperate.

The next step involves food. Every encounter with food can pose a challenge if I'm not in fit

spiritual condition. Back to basics I go: 1 packet oatmeal, 1 measured teaspoon flax seeds, one fruit, one protein, and ah... my spiritual coffee. Milk, no sugar. Nothing artificial, nothing superficial. One sip, one more ode to God: the same God who will restore me to the path of recovery.

One meeting, 3 outreach calls, 20 minutes of meditation, 2 pages in the Big Book (mostly 417), and 1 writing. I call my sponsor, owning my stuff honestly, making amends, forgiving and opening my heart. Then the day reveals itself. The fog lifts, the direction becomes clear, and humbly... I put one foot in front of the other. -Anonymous



Getting Back to Basics in OA

For me, back to basics means "keeping it simple." Here is a list of what is basic for me in this program of recovery:

- Wake up in the morning and meditate. Open and quiet my mind. Orient myself to my Higher Power and my recovery program.
- Speak to my sponsees. Listen more, speak less. Apply the principles of the program to what I hear. How is G-d in their day? How is food in their day? Is there acceptance? Do I relate

to their experiences? Do I have experience, strength or hope to share?

- Read program literature including the Big Book of Alcoholic Anonymous, daily OA meditation books, OA and AA step books, workbooks, and questions.

- Write a letter to my Higher Power in my journal. In the letter I speak to G-d about anything on my heart or mind. I review the day before and think about the new day ahead. I write about the steps. I answer step questions and do an inventory of the day before. I also do a daily gratitude search and write about what I am most grateful for that day.

- Call my sponsor. Speak with my sponsor about the ups and downs of

life and spiritual challenges, resentments. Plan and turn over my food for the day, share step writing with her.

- Exercise my body.
- Pray in the morning, at night, and throughout the day. For me, speaking to G-d, in writing or aloud, or in formal prayer, or even in thought is all prayer. All poetic, beautiful, reliant and surrendering. I say the serenity prayer over and over when I feel my pulse tensing or my head tightening.
- I go to at least three meetings every week. I love meetings. If I walk in tense, I walk out meditative, serene, breathing calmly and deeply. When I am in a meeting, my brain is fully engaged and firing on all cylinders. I seek what I need to learn from others and from the process of recovery. I have so much to learn.
- Repeat, repeat, repeat. **Thank G-d!!!**

Back to Basics

By Kate O.

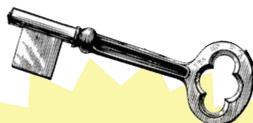
I am having to constantly remind myself that I need help and can't do it alone. In that same moment, though, I've never felt more alone. I've dug in and have made new rules with my family and friends even – those who need them – okay, it's more like *I* need them. These new rules are to help myself, but at times it feels like torture. This truly has been one of the most difficult times in my life.

I've watched people die, struggle with addiction, kill themselves from afar and I've helped people – I've helped everyone. Helping myself is the hardest and loneliest I've felt in years. We all know it's easier to face other people's problems than our own. Add to that fact and the unrealistic expectations of all the people I've helped and I feel like I'm waving an inverted flag for help and the response is deafening. Pour me! Pour me! Pour me another drink! Ugh! Spiritual work is exercise too! Gym or Church, it's still a workout! Commitment and consistency: two of my biggest defects.

So back to basics. Keep it simple for my sanity. Either way – it has to be done, if I want it – I'll have to do it. Keep my basic action plan simple and keep myself happy and centered with God in my heart.

Never did I think keeping it simple would help me become centered and less overwhelmed. Keeping my house literally in order, keeping a routine and honoring myself. That bare bones and no static would be so important to me: No distraction, but it is. I've disconnected the tv and I'm down to just the internet and news channels with Apple TV, okay Netflix and HBO too. Less distractions and more creative time for myself, which translates to less numbing and simpler enjoyment for myself. What's important to me? What do I want? I can actually hear myself, wow.

Then asking for help by stretching out a hand. The acceptance of help is self love, all of which has become easier with self worth. Through prayer and meditation and belief in God, I can find peace and serenity and fear less. That fear is the absence of faith and I have faith and love of God to help me fear less.

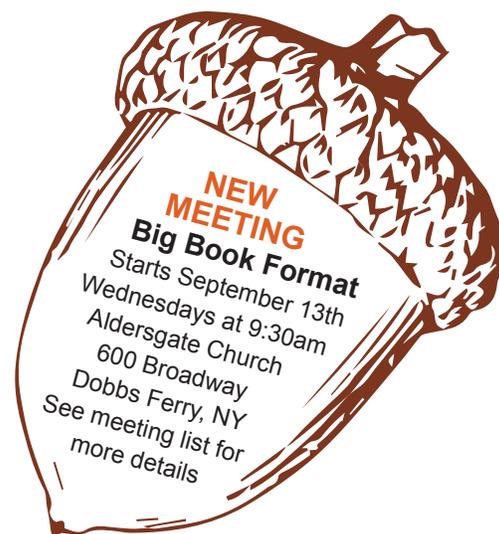


**Willingness
is Key**

“..I needed to check my ego at the door, unlearn a lot of what I thought I knew from my other Twelve step fellowship, and take Step One all over again. “How it Works” the Big Book says, “If you have decided you want what we have and are willing to go to any length to get it, then you are ready to take certain steps” (Alcoholics Anonymous, 4th Ed., pg. 58) The if/then nature of that proposition eluded me for quite a while as I selectively picked and chose the things I was willing to do.

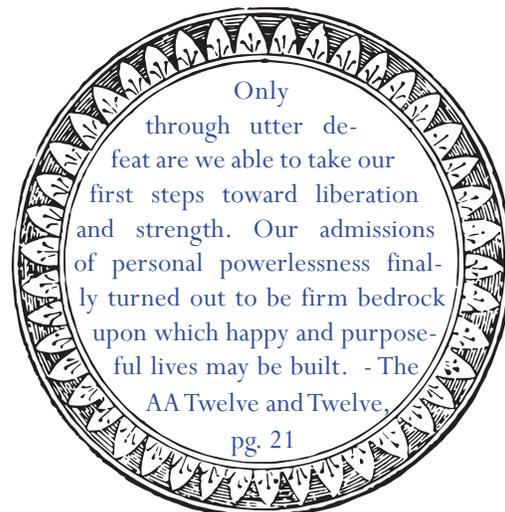
It took me five years in OA before I gained continuous abstinence. I had to surround myself with OA members who were committed to that goal each and every day; people who treated the first compulsive bite like a sober alcoholic treated the first drink. As long as I believed I could willfully jump back and forth over the blurry line that was my initial abstinence I would continue to fail. I had to stop fighting the diagnosis and embrace the solution...”

Excerpt from Overeaters Anonymous, Third Edition, Chapter 31, “The Best Defense of All”



CALL 5 TO STAY ALIVE

OA's population is shrinking and our meetings are getting smaller. One way to reach out to the struggling compulsive eater is to make phone calls. Go through the WeCARE Books at your meetings and find names of people you haven't seen in a while; CALL THEM. Let them know that they are in your thoughts and that OA welcomes all, regardless of where they are on their road to recovery. This is a simple way to let fellows know that you care, and it helps your recovery too. If you are also interested in doing outreach by working on the 12th Step Within Committee, contact Diana C.



UPCOMING EVENTS FALL 2017

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 2-5pm
 WUIG 2017 Recovery Workshop
 "Spirituality Made Simple"
 YWCA. 515 North Street, White Plains

SEPTEMBER 16
 Region 6 Fall Assembly
 9:00 am - 6:00 pm
 Hilton Garden Inn Albany Medical Center
 62 New Scotland Ave.
 Albany, NY 12208



NOVEMBER 18, 10am-4pm
 IDEA Day Marathon
 Pleasantville Presbyterian Church

OCTOBER 6-8
 15th Annual Walk through the
 Steps OA Retreat
 Marie Joseph Spiritual Center
 10 Evans Rd
 Biddeford Pool, ME 04005 United
 States

OCTOBER 20-22
 Region 6 convention in Toronto

Back to Basics Word Search Puzzle

S	E	F	H	U	S	E	T	H	U	K	R	S	R	H
G	C	C	M	U	C	D	O	L	O	Q	E	N	E	H
Y	N	P	N	Q	M	P	J	O	V	R	C	T	H	R
V	A	W	X	E	E	I	B	X	E	I	O	A	G	S
X	T	J	V	L	N	G	L	N	J	G	V	P	I	B
A	P	D	Z	T	I	I	I	I	K	U	E	J	H	T
V	E	K	H	B	R	T	T	N	T	C	R	U	R	W
A	C	R	A	A	Y	U	Q	S	O	Y	Y	E	Q	I
S	C	A	R	N	A	B	S	T	B	I	Y	Y	A	P
Z	A	E	L	M	H	R	Y	T	A	A	T	A	S	F
I	S	U	R	R	E	N	D	E	R	D	P	C	V	Y
M	P	O	W	E	R	P	O	P	Q	T	O	P	A	T
M	B	F	Q	I	G	O	Z	M	N	D	L	L	P	Z
L	N	R	B	M	Y	T	S	E	N	O	H	A	X	F
E	V	O	L	O	T	Z	R	O	G	O	B	N	B	T

AA Big Book
 Abstinence
 Acceptance
 Action Plan
 Higher Power

Honesty
 Hope
 Humility
 Love
 ODAT

Prayer
 Recovery
 Serenity
 Surrender
 Trust

7th Tradition Donation

We are fully self-supporting through our own contributions declining outside donations

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 OAHelps.org
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For increased security you are encouraged to make online donations to Region 6 via paypal

The Original Twelve Steps

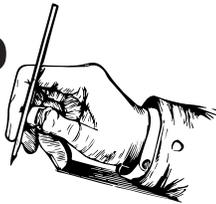
(from OA's first official piece of literature in December, 1960)

From *Beyond Our Wildest Dreams: A History of Overeaters Anonymous as Seen by a Cofounder* "On the second page of our new booklet, I presented the Twelve Steps of Overeaters Anonymous. They were the introduction to our recovery program for the first five hundred men and women who came into OA following the Paul Coates interview:

The Twelve Steps

1. We admit that we are compulsive overeaters. . . that our lives have become unmanageable
2. We admit that we need help--that a Power greater than ourselves can restore us to a normal way of thinking and living.
3. We have gradually learned to place our complete faith and trust in this power.
4. We shall make a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. We will admit to ourselves and to another human being the exact nature of our difficulties.
6. We are entirely ready to have these defects of character removed.
7. We humbly ask God (of our understanding) to help us remove our shortcomings.
8. We shall make a list of all persons we have hurt through our actions and gradually become willing to make amends to them all.
9. As we grow stronger within ourselves we shall willingly make amends to these people by changing our attitudes and actions toward them.
10. We will continue to take personal inventory, and when we are wrong, promptly admit it.
11. We shall seek through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understand Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the strength to carry that out.
12. Having gained a spiritual awareness as a result of these steps, we shall try to practice them in all our affairs

WE NEED YOUR VOICE!



The Serenity Times needs your service. It is written by local members for local members. The theme for the next issue is: **Enjoying the holidays abstinently and focusing on spirituality**. Submissions are due by October 20. Work Step 12 and the tool of writing and share your experience. We welcome poems, stories, lists, anything! Send all submissions to wuignewsletter@gmail.com.

Thank you!

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