

The Westchester

Serenity Times

Brought to you by Westchester United Intergroup

Letter from your editor:

Welcome to the WINTER edition of the *Serenity Times*. In this issue, local OA members graciously share their experience, strength and hope on staying abstinent one day at a time, moments of surrender and just starting out in OA. AND we have our first OA comic strip!

For me, the winter is a good time to reflect. Once the holidays have settled down, I feel like I can finally breathe and get back to my day-to-day routine. Sometimes I perceive this as boring, but I'm learning to replace the word 'boring' with peaceful or serene. I remind myself that the peace of abstinence, no matter how quiet, is a million times better than the 'excitement' of overeating. I also connect most with my Higher Power on those days when I'm not over-scheduled and can devote extra time to prayer and meditation. It's nice to spend time existing in the present moment without pressure to go and DO, DO, DO. Here is to being abstinent on the quiet, peaceful days when I can really hear my Higher Power's message for me.

Perspective from a Newcomer

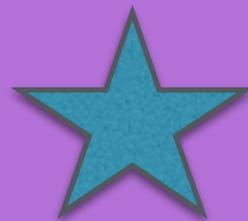
Written in September 2016

I've been in the program for about three months now, and I feel I'm making great progress. Someone asked at a meeting recently, "What's working for you?" The answer required some thought, because whatever else my experience has been, it hasn't been simple.

I haven't yet achieved stable, reliable abstinence, but I've been able to break some long-standing bad habitual behaviors and get a grip on portion control. My periods of abstinence have been punctuated by terrible nightmares though. Not so much the nightmare about breaking my abstinence, but dreams of nameless, faceless fears and things I don't understand. I have faith that when the time is right, I will understand them and break their hold on me with help from my HP. In the meantime, every day is a new opportunity to be abstinent, and one of these days it will last.

I've been working on the first three steps, reading them over and over. I understand more every time I go back and read them again. I feel that in my mind I'm ready to give myself over to my HP, but I might not be quite ready in my heart. I hadn't realized I had so much fear of giving up compulsive eating, but I do. Again, I have faith that it will go away when the time is right.

What is working for me in a big way is the fellowship that I find at the meetings. To know that I'm not the only one who struggles with compulsive overeating is comforting.



UPCOMING EVENTS

- Sat. FEBRUARY 25, 2-4:30 UNITY DAY @ Friends Meeting House in Scarsdale
- Friday, MARCH 17, HOTEL Deadline for Region 6 SPRING ASSEMBLY
- Region 6 Spring Assembly in Albany
- APRIL 21-23, WUIG Retreat in Holmes, NY

Register NOW for the October R6 Convention at oaregion6.org

Perspective Continued. .

For many years, I'd harbored the suspicion that I was a freak, and that nobody could possibly understand the misery I felt. To discover that there were others who have experienced what I've experienced and felt what I've felt was a shock and a huge relief. And then to learn that they've overcome the disease through working the twelve steps with the help of a sponsor and an HP gave me something I'd never had: hope. The program is a pathway out of a dark, impenetrable forest.

I'm at the beginning of that path, and I'm sure there will be obstacles. After all, I wouldn't be me if I didn't erect obstacles for myself. But that too will change.

~ Seth G.

- Moment of Surrender -

Although I started in Overeaters Anonymous on June 12th, 1975 – a day I remember vividly – it was not my moment of surrender. I did, however, feel an incredible sense of relief after attending that meeting and realizing that there was at least one other human being on this earth who understood what it meant to have such an unhealthy relationship with food. The woman who shared her story did so with such honesty that it gave me the chance to face my own experiences with food. This was a time long before people talked about eating disorders very much, or if they did, it was with a lot of embarrassment. All I knew was that I felt very ashamed about my eating, and I felt helpless and hopeless about ever changing it on my own.

I asked the speaker at my first meeting to be my sponsor and then began calling her daily, but I was nowhere near ready to give up the food in order to surrender to the program. That took another two years..... I had to find a food plan that would work for me.

I had just started a rigorous graduate program at night, so in addition to work and then classes four nights a week, I had many hours of commuting. I had to carry my lunch and dinner with me all day in addition to my heavy books for school. At first, I thought there was no way I would be able to do all this. Then I had some days of abstinence that stretched into more days of abstinence. I learned to make phone calls to talk about my feelings. I never knew just how many feelings I had about so many things.

I had prided myself on being strong and not needing much help, but underneath, I was still that young girl who felt alone and abandoned.

Whenever those feelings were resurrected by some small life occurrence, I would have to go through them. I learned to talk about them, write about them and pray about them; but even with all that I was doing, after a month or two, I would go back to the food. These slips were harder and harder for me to deal with, since long-term recovery (back-to-back abstinence) was what I wanted. It seemed to elude me no matter what I did. I made a commitment to go to as many meetings as I possibly could given my school and work schedule. Sometimes I went to two or more meetings a day.

Finally after one meeting, I grabbed someone who seemed to have what I wanted and spoke to her. She looked me in the eye and said, "You'll get it; I can see how much you want it." I don't know exactly why her words landed on my soul with such power on that particular day, but they did. It was as if she could see inside me, recognize all my pain, and know somehow that relief was on the way. I remember that moment like it was yesterday, but really it was about 40 years ago.

As we do the footwork required for recovery, we must leave the results to God; but somehow feeling that that one person had hope for me gave me the permission to have hope for myself. And once I honestly believed I would recover, I did.

- Anonymous

Skip the Resolution: How I stay abstinent one day at a time

It happened to be January in 2014, but it could have been any day in any month in any year. I was planning my summer trip well in advance, as I try to plan everything being the control freak that I am. I was speaking to my friend who I would see on the trip, a friend who hadn't seen me since I lost all the weight: "It'll be great to see you thin." My panic soon set in -- the trip wasn't until August -- who knew if I would be thin by then?

It was a friend from OA who pulled me back down to earth. He empathized with my fear, but added that I should remember: "It's one day at a time." I reminded myself that for me, it is often just one meal at a time, and there were about 500 'one meals' to deal with until my trip. Now it was just dealing with the next meal -- one after the other, until August.

My friend saw me thin AND abstinent. This was my first big vacation with no restaurants, and it wasn't always easy, but I found a way.

On January 16th, I had seven years of abstinence, though I find that the most meaningless statement I make in OA is my length of abstinence. Sure it feeds my pride, but pride can be a defect, and I think it is in this case. The bottom line is: I could have one day or one hour of abstinence, seven years or thirty years, and still I have to make it to the next meal. It doesn't matter if it is December 31, Thanksgiving, April 9th, or whatever -- it is one meal at a time.

If this sounds depressing, understand that my 2014 trip -- and many of my trips where it was "one meal at a time" -- have been among the best times I have had. They have been much better than any one meal celebration -- not that I haven't had some great meals. On that trip, I had one meal at the Marin Headlands with amazing scenery and music provided while I ate. One friend I was with finished early and played an instrument -- the whistle -- while I ate and looked at the Golden Gate Bridge below.

I have repeatedly made New Year's resolutions about my food and then violated them. I have no desire to violate my new lifestyle; it is the heavenly serenity I have sought.

- Eric P.

Our First OA Comic Strip!



Intergroup Trusted Servants

Chair	Mary T	wuigchair@gmail.com
Vice Chair	Mike C	wuigvicechair@gmail.com
Treasurer	Cindy C	wuigtreasurer@gmail.com
Corresponding Secretary	Kimberly C	wuigmeetinglist@gmail.com
Recording Secretary	Megan	wuigsecretary@gmail.com
World Service Delegates	Mike C, Don C	
Region 6 Reps	Don C, Mike C, Cynthia N	wuigR6Reps@gmail.com

7th Tradition Donation

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

60% WUIG
PO Box 125 White Plains, NY 10603
info@oawestchester-ny.org
Tel: 914.633.2988

30% OA World Service Office
PO Box 44020; Rio Rancho, NM 87174
info@overeatersanonymous.org
Tel: 505.891.2664

10% OA Region 6
PO Box 1792
Westfield, MA 01086

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



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 we're here and we care, and it helps your recovery too. If you are interested in working on the 12th Step Within Committee, contact Diana C.

– RIGHT SIZED? –

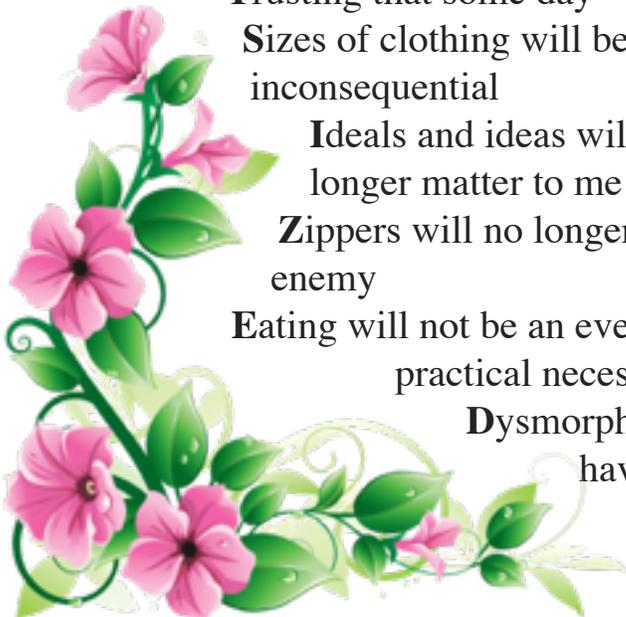
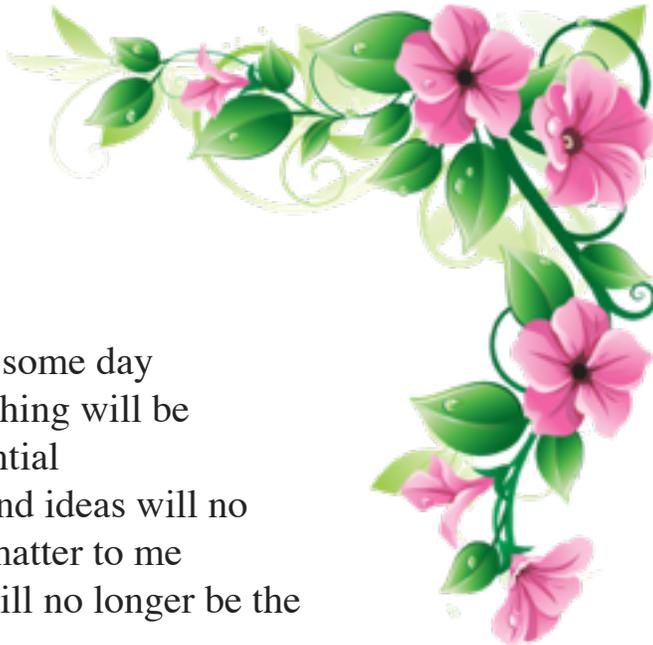
Resting in Grace
Independent of food
Giving thanks to my
Higher power

Trusting that some day
Sizes of clothing will be
inconsequential
Ideals and ideas will no
longer matter to me
Zippers will no longer be the
enemy

Eating will not be an event, but rather a
practical necessity

Dysmorphia will no longer
have a place in my
life!

~L.F.



The Serenity Times needs your service. It is written by local members for local members.

Without you there is no *Serenity Times*. Work Step 12 and use the tools of service & writing by writing an article of your choice. We welcome poems, stories, lists, anything!

Send all submissions to wuignewsletter@gmail.com

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