

The Westchester

Serenity Times

Brought to you by Westchester United Intergroup

Letter from your editor:



Welcome to the *Independence Day* edition of the *Serenity Times*. In this issue, local OA members graciously share their experience, strength and hope on how OA has changed their lives and released them from the bondage of this disease.

Everyday, I see how this program has freed me to live a fuller life. Food no longer determines where I go (for instance to street fairs or any store that has free samples) or who I spend my time with (eating buddies). I have long periods throughout many days when I don't even think about food. I plan my meals and I (mostly) stick to the plan. My first sponsor told me, "Life is what happens between meals." That blew my

mind. My whole life had been about my next meal, or tomorrow's binge, or how I could eat the fewest possible calories in a day. Today, I don't have to live that way.

This program has restored me to a level of sanity around food that I never imagined possible. In addition, it has given me tools to use when I feel that sanity slipping. I can slow down by going to a meeting, meditating or calling a fellow. Then I can hear the message once again. Those times when I feel connected to my fellows, myself and God, rather than to a restaurant menu, are what I strive to live for now.

Relief from the bondage of self

One of the best things I've heard recently from someone in program is that "my life is not about me." The truth is, I spend a ton of time obsessing about me, about what my plans are, whether I'm going to be "okay," what I'm going to do next, how my actions might impact what others do, think, or say about me, or whether I'm doing the right thing. I just seem to love thinking about myself, though it seldom makes me happy.

However, slowly, I am receiving moments of freedom from this self-obsession. I get to stop obsessing and just be in the moment. I notice my surroundings. I pay better attention to the person or people I'm with. I breathe more deeply. I feel smaller because my ego isn't trying to take up more space than I actually fill.

This freedom frequently happens when I write a gratitude list. It can happen when I am taking the next right action, like calmly getting on with my day, performing an act of service, or doing my morning readings. Freedom from self-obsession also happens during meetings. I get the gift of turning off my brain and really listening to what people are saying without worrying about what I'm going to say next.

If my life isn't about me, I'm not sure exactly what it is about, but I'm excited to find out!

~ Joanna S.



UPCOMING EVENTS

- **Fri - Sun, July 7-9: NYMetro Intergroup 2017 Summer Retreat: The Promises, not The Maybes**
- **Thurs, August 3: Next WUIG meeting (No July meeting)**
- **Saturday, August 19th: Sponsorship Day Picnic at Stepping Stones in Katonah**
 - **Bring your sponsor and sponsee: 11:30am Brown Bag Lunch / 1pm Tour - details to follow**

Register NOW for the October R6 Convention at oaregion6.org

How I Got Well and Stay Well...

- From the August-September 2013 edition of the *Serenity Times* -

I was recognized recently at a meeting for my 29 years of abstinence. Each celebrant had 10 minutes to speak. This is what I said:

How I got well and stay well:

Step 1. I put down the food. Since food was the symptom, not the problem, I had to detox from food so I could objectively examine my life.

Step 2. From seeing and hearing recovery in the OA rooms, I gained hope that kept me coming back to meetings.

Step 3. I committed to working the program, i.e. the rest of the 12 Steps. For me, surrender wasn't so much giving up as deciding to cooperate.

Steps 4, 5, 6 and, 7. In these "change" Steps, I began rebuilding myself into the person God intended me to be:

- I began to face and deal rather than whine and eat. I began taking responsibility. No more blaming others or circumstances.
- I began to let go of self-centeredness and controlling. I stopped my mental master planning for the world — imposing *shoulds* and *oughts* on people and situations. This thinking set me up to always be frustrated because the people and situations didn't go the way I thought they *should*, i.e. *my way*.
- I began to let go of self-sabotaging perfectionism that ensured that I would always feel *not good enough*.
- I began to let go of selfishness. There was a gradual paradigm shift from ***How do I get what I want***

How can I be useful. The 11th step prayer exhorts me to seek comfort, to understand and to love rather than to be comforted, understood and loved.

- I began practicing acceptance and letting go of anger and resentment.
- I began to practice courage rather than fear. For a long time I was simply white-knuckling courage. Courage is not the absence of fear; it's taking the action anyway.
- I began to be authentic rather than a phony. I stopped always pretending, always seeking strokes.
- I began to put discipline and structure into my life - starting with eating - but extending into everything.

Steps 8-9. I took full responsibility for what I had done, made amends, and put the past away. New day, new life — a gift. The healing came. The obsession was lifted. Today I hold on to the gift of actively living in steps 10, 11, and 12.

Step 10. Every morning I inventory my emotional and spiritual condition and make the necessary corrections to my thinking or behavior. I continue to grow as well as keep the slate clean as I go. No need to accumulate guilt about bad behavior or harm to others.

Step 11. Every morning I seek to understand God's will for me through prayer and meditation. I say my own prayers as well as the Serenity, 3rd, 7th, and 11th Step prayers, plus the Big Book's "***Direct my thinking today, God. Keep it free of self-pity, dishonest or self-seeking motives.***" I also always say the OA ***Just for Today*** affirmations and do a gratitude list.

Step 12. I devote a great deal of one-on-one time to trying to help others who share my disease, as well as a lot of time doing service for Intergroup, Region, and World Service.

The disease is arrested but I still have it. I stay free only as long as I remain in fit spiritual condition, which in concrete terms means continuing to take the actions outlined in the 12 Steps. **Freedom is not free.**

~ **Don C.**, Then Chair of Intergroup

How OA Changed My Life

Reflections from the Tuesday Night Body Image Meeting

I have been abstinent since April 29th and an entire world of self-love and care has opened up to me. It is not as if everything is perfect, but abstinence is the ladder up to the diving platform.

I stand on the platform—at times terrified, at other times doing a double flip into the clear, blue unknown. My soul is free *to be* in any given moment:

To be
To feel
To live
To accept
To give
To take
To ask
To tell
To thank

I have begun to pray again. After almost three years of trying to live with only a cerebral grasp on an agnostic God concept.

After 3 years of licking my wounds and trying to act as if a broken heart wasn't real

After 3 years, I feel almost reconciled to my old way of believing and trusting.

Saying thank you God without asking for anything, yet also asking with a full heart for anything.

~ Anonymous



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1. OA made my life worth living
 2. It got me to stop eating in every room of the house
 3. It got me to be a welcome guest rather than the hostess's worst nightmare
 4. It got me a closet/bureau of clothes that fit season after season
 5. It got me to understand my portion
 6. It got me to look at myself in a spirit of forgiveness
 7. It got me to look at others in the spirit of acceptance and forgiveness
 8. It gave me true courage—I do work in a totalitarian country where I don't speak the language
 9. It gave meaning and purpose to my disastrous history with food in sponsoring other women
 10. It ultimately gave me the opportunity to right nearly every wrong I've committed
 11. It ushered me into a life in the sunlight of the spirit
 12. It finally, by reworking the steps since this meeting started, healed me from negative body image
- ~ Meryl M.

In the relatively short time since I've been here, I have begun to feel like I belong, and when I say this, it has nothing to do with food. It has to do with the group making me feel welcomed. I walked in with huge trust issues that had built up over the years, specifically because I trusted everyone and then found that most of those that I trusted weren't trustworthy. I was so hurt by what had happened that I went numb and into myself. It took me more than two years to come out of denial and begin to look at what took place. Bottom line because of each of you, I'm beginning to open myself up to others.

~ Linda H.

Intergroup Trusted Servants

Chair	Mary T	wuigchair@gmail.com
Vice Chair	Mike C	wuigvicechair@gmail.com
Treasurer	Pat P	wuigtreasurer@gmail.com
Corresponding Secretary	Deborah S	wuigmeetinglist@gmail.com
Recording Secretary	Megan	wuigsecretary@gmail.com
World Service Delegates	Mike C	
Region 6 Reps	Carol G, 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
OAHelps.org
Tel: 914.633.2988

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

10% OA Region 6
PO Box 1792
Westfield, MA 01086
OARegion6.org

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 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.

Hello Fellows. My name is Mike C. and I am a very grateful compulsive eater and currently serve as your Intergroup Vice-Chair.

In the spirit of the gratitude for our wonderful, life-sustaining program, I'd like you all to consider the Big Book's definition of our real purpose, "... to fit ourselves to be of maximum service to God and the people about us." I believe that this is our real purpose not only in program, but in life in general.

I am concerned lately that some of our meetings have been struggling. Attendance has been down and sometimes the new people coming in do not have the opportunity for recovery that they deserve. I'm asking everyone to take the responsibility to support the meetings, which ultimately support us. Call fellows you haven't seen and reach out to newcomers. The tendency sometimes is to let the other person do it, thinking that THEY will take care of it. This is a WE program; there is no THEY. WE are the THEY. If not me, then who? It is up to each one of us individually to maintain the fellowship. This is our Responsibility Pledge. Service is more than just helping set up chairs, leading the meetings, and making coffee. The essence of service is to extend a hand to those who are still suffering.

We have a great bunch of people who comprise our Intergroup and work diligently to create opportunities to carry the message of recovery through events and activities, but we are always looking for more people to do service. I encourage all to visit our Intergroup meetings and get involved. We meet from 7:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m. on the first Thursday of each month (there are a few exceptions so check our calendar) at Emanuel Lutheran Church, 197 Manville Rd, Pleasantville. Our next meeting is Thursday, August 3. Please come, have a voice and get involved. Each one of us can really make a difference. And by being of service to others, we are doing a tremendous service to ourselves as well. Together we get better.



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

The theme for the August/September issue is 'Back to Basics' and submissions are due by July 20th. 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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