



## ***NEWSLETTER OF THE RECOVERY GROUP***

*Spring Edition - Into Action*

*April 1, 2011*

*Please Feel Free To Forward This Edition To Your 12 Step Friends*

### ***TABLE OF CONTENTS***

*From the Editor*  
*From the Administration*  
*NEW! OA Freethinkers ODAT Group*  
*Announcements*  
*WTS starts*  
*Newcomer's Orientation*  
*Shame*  
*The 12 Steps*  
*The 12 Traditions*  
*Founder's Corner*  
*Tradition Seven*  
*The Secrets of Exercise*  
*Not what I had in mind*  
*Triggers: Old & New*  
*I Used To Cry*  
*Spring!*  
*The Action of No Action*  
*When The Mute Speaks Up*  
*My Inner Child*  
*Bulimia and Its Dangers*  
*My Pain*  
*Human Blossoms*  
*The Second Quarter of the Big Bokk Study is Starting*  
*Action: How do I start?*  
*Action in the Kitchen*



## ***FROM THE EDITOR***

*I suffer from acute day dreaming and when the opportunity came my way to put together the Spring 2011 edition of Serendipity, I saw visions of spring, action and blossoming recovery. You see, I have been trying for nearly 54 years to bring my dreams to ground level practicalities. So when I put my hands on the keyboard for this editorial, my fingers were mute. Writer's block. But then I started to read the contributions to this edition... Wow, I relaxed and inhaled each word. This edition has the scent of fresh flowers, and rain-drenched soil. Then, a silent member of our family pushed her lovely head through the crust, and told a story, for the very first time. This is RECOVERY. In this edition you will discover more about action AND appropriate inaction. A beautiful kaleidoscope of recovery experiences, some truths on the value of physical activity in three-legged recovery, tears, triggers, joys and new life unfold, as you move your mouse pad down to the bottom and smell the aroma of fish bototi, a traditional South African dish. I hope you will enjoy this edition just as much as I did, when I put these ESH's together. The little one on my lap? My brand new very first grand-child... Jana. Enjoy the journey!*

*Susan B.*



---

## ***FROM THE ADMINISTRATION***

*The Recovery Group Administration is made up of The Recovery Intergroup, The Executive Committee, TRGAdm and other administrative offices. Each of our supports loops have Coordinators who make sure that the members have all the resources, privacy and safety to work their 12 Step Program. The Meetings Coordinator works with the leaders of our 56 OA Online Meetings of Overeaters Anonymous. All Coordinators, Administrators and Meeting Leaders are invited to join The Recovery Intergroup which is where policies are discussed and group consciences are taken on behalf of the members of TRG. It all makes for a very busy place as we serve our members one day at a time*

# **OA Freethinkers ODAT**

## ***NEW! ODAT GROUP***

*Are you struggling with the spirituality part of the program? Find it hard to relate to all this talk about God? Wondering how to fit your beliefs or lack thereof into the program? Then you've come to the right place! The OA Freethinkers ODAT Group is a support group for compulsive eaters with only one requirement - the desire to quit eating compulsively. We maintain a tradition of free expression and our group is a place where compulsive eaters may feel free to express any beliefs, doubts or disbeliefs they may have and to share their own personal form of spiritual experience, their search for it, or their rejection of it.*

*We do not endorse or oppose any form of religion or atheism. Our only wish is to assure those who suffer from compulsive eating that they can find abstinence and recovery without having to accept anyone else's beliefs or having to deny their own. Our primary purpose is to become abstinent and stay that way and to help others who struggle from the disease of compulsive eating.*

*The Coordinator of the Freethinkers Loop is Gina and she will be happy to answer any questions you may have. [Quarkincheri@gmail.com](mailto:Quarkincheri@gmail.com).*

*To join our group, please send a blank email to:  
[OAFreethinkersODAT-subscribe@yahoo.com](mailto:OAFreethinkersODAT-subscribe@yahoo.com)*

*For more information, go to:  
<http://health.groups.yahoo.com/group/OAFreethinkersODAT>*



## ***ANNOUNCEMENTS***

*Working the Steps aka WTS.*

*Working The Steps is a quarterly, in-depth e-mail study of the Twelve Steps of Overeaters Anonymous. Members actively work each Step with their personal sponsor, the WTS Step Leader and one another by posting their Step work to the loop.*

*Starting at the beginning of April - Duration: April, May, June 2011*

*To join, send a blank email to:*

*[WTS-subscribe-request@lists.therecoverygroup.org](mailto:WTS-subscribe-request@lists.therecoverygroup.org)*

## ***NEWCOMER'S ORIENTATION***



*It's that time, again. The OA Newcomer's Orientation is about to start!*

- + It runs from April 1 till April 30*
- + The Orientation introduces 12 subjects that aid in your recovery.*
- + The Basics, The TRG Website, Three Legged Stool, The 12 Steps and Traditions, A Plan of Eating, Literature, Meetings, Service, TRG Support Loops and Sharing.*
- + You will receive an email each day with the subject of the day and a few questions to answer.*
- + Enrollment ends at midnight on the 5th.*

*To join, send a blank email to:*

*[OANewcomers-subscribe-request@lists.therecoverygroup.org](mailto:OANewcomers-subscribe-request@lists.therecoverygroup.org)*

*I look forward to seeing you there!!*

*Robert, Coordinator  
OA Newcomers*



*Together We Get Better*

## **STORIES FROM TRG LOOPIES**

### **SHAME**

“The greatest obstacle to this learning process is shame. Shame is an excuse to hate ourselves today for something we did or didn’t do in the past. There is no room in a shame-filled mind for the fact that we did our best at the time, no room to accept that as human beings we are bound to make mistakes.”

#### **TODAY’S REMINDER**

*“Today I will love myself enough to recognize shame as an error in judgment.”*

~ THE COURAGE TO CHANGE

Shame has held me back in many ways, from walking around feeling ashamed of who I was, what I did or didn’t do ~ to living in regret and not able to make good decisions for myself.

I believe with all my heart that addiction thrives from a lack of self acceptance; the need to numb out and run from our negative beliefs about who we really are.

It has only been through a Power greater than myself that I have been able to see the truth about who I really am. I’m not a mistake ~ God doesn’t make mistakes ~ I do make mistakes because I am human; but I am able to learn and grow in awareness not to repeat them.

On the tokens we receive it says, “*To thine own self be true.*” I am learning that it is okay to stand in who I am and to be a part of the human race ~ that I do have value and I do have worth.

I am grateful to be a member of the Recovery Group and appreciate the shares of other members who walk this path with me ~ thank you for being a part of my recovery! As the literature says and I firmly believe – “Together we get better.”

Love to all,

*Teresa J.*

---

## THE TWELVE STEPS

1. We admitted we were powerless over food - that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood HIM.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so, would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong, promptly admitted it.
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these Steps, we tried to carry this message to compulsive overeaters and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

---

## THE TWELVE TRADITIONS

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon OA unity.
2. For our group purpose, there is but one ultimate authority -- a loving God, as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.
3. The only requirement for OA membership is a desire to stop eating compulsively.
4. Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or OA as a whole.
5. Each group has but one primary purpose -- to carry its message to the compulsive overeater who still suffers.
6. An OA group ought never endorse, finance or lend the OA name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.
7. Every OA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
8. Overeaters Anonymous should remain forever non-professional, but our service centers may employ special workers.
9. OA, as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.
10. Overeaters Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the OA name ought never be drawn into public controversy.
11. Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, films, television and other public media of communication.
12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all these Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.



## ACTION

Dear Recovery Friends,

Of all the tools ever used, of all the books and speakers and suggestions we have listened to as compulsive eaters, it is rather amazing that it has taken 50 years to add the 9th tool. Why I find this to be significant is because I believe *Action* is the most important tool, not only in recovering from compulsive eating, but in life. I seem to have lived a life in two parts. The first part was a creative, self-starter who never had a problem with taking action. If something was assigned, suggested, or asked, my wheels would begin turning, and they wouldn't stop until whatever it was, was done. And then, there was this other me ... and one that all too often has resulted in my finding myself overwhelmed and unable to finish a single thing. Somewhere in between action and inaction, I learned how to procrastinate, and it is a trait that I have to work on, day in and day out.

*"I have been impressed with the urgency of doing.  
Knowing is not enough; we must apply.  
Being willing is not enough; we must do."  
Leonard da Vinci*

The body of work done by this one man of action is staggering. One day in my traveling years, I stood in the Louvre in awe of just about everything I saw, but there were almost tears, when I found myself in front of the most famous painting in the world. And yet, this man who quotes so eloquently about action, said he never really finished a single painting. Taking four years to do the Mona Lisa, he worked on her until he died. Could it be, as some believe, that this enigmatic "woman" without eyebrows and eyelashes was really a man? And, if so, was it da Vinci's self-portrait, because he knew he wanted it to be his last work, and he didn't take action, so that he could finish it right before his death? Or had he forgotten his own admonition of his early life ... 'being willing is not enough; we must do.'?



We all know how urgent recovering from our disease is. We read volumes on the subject, and know exactly what we must do, and we have that drilled into us daily ... but is *knowing* all this, the answer? I think not. All the knowing in the world ... all the good intentions ... will just cause our quest to recover from COE, to fall by the wayside. I hope in the years to come, I will have the ninth tool drilled into my head as effectively as the other eight.

Happy Springtime, Loopbuds.

Love in recovery,

*Mari*



## TRADITION SEVEN

**HOW DO WE FINANCE OUR NEEDS?** The needs of our organization must be met by our own contributions. We may not accept donations from non-members. Our groups are urged not to hoard large sums of money, but to keep only a small reserve above running expenses. We are not profit-making, and money is not our goal.

As long as we pay our own way from our own pockets, we will have public respect, and our own. We will be free.

**HOW CAN YOU HELP?** You may make a contribution to The Recovery Group online here with a credit card or debit card on PayPal or mail a check to TRG's Bank. Full information can be found at: <http://www.therecoverygroup.org/tradition7.html>

The membership and needs of The Recovery Group will continue to grow. This growth will be fueled by our collective contributions. We are grateful that you are a part of our community.

The Trusted Servants of The Recovery Group  
[www.TheRecoveryGroup.org](http://www.TheRecoveryGroup.org)  
Contact Address: [TRGAdm@TheRecoveryGroup.org](mailto:TRGAdm@TheRecoveryGroup.org)



Donations Gratefully Accepted by Credit Card, Pay Pal or Mail.

---

## THE SECRETS OF EXERCISE



Exercise... many of us consider this to be just one of the many ingredients you need to lose weight, but is there more to this eight letter word? In this article I am going to shortly discuss six of the amazing benefits of exercise.

### 1. Exercise is good for your heart and blood vessels!

Exercise stabilizes blood sugar, lowers blood pressure and improves blood and oxygen supply to the body. There is a direct association between inactivity and *cardiovascular* mortality and it is interesting to note that the greatest potential for reduced mortality is seen in the sedentary who become moderately active. In other words, thirty minutes of moderate exercise daily can protect you from having a heart attack!

### 2. Exercise can make you smarter!

Studies on mice have shown that exercise (aerobic exercise in particular) enhances cognitive functioning, including memory and learning! As a student, I often complain that I don't have any time to exercise around exam times, but my best study sessions have always been after a session of moderate exercise! Exercise is also protective against many neurodegenerative disorders such as dementia.

### 3. Exercise is the cheapest anti-depressant on the market!

Endorphins act as a natural pain reliever and anti-depressant in the body. When you exercise, the circulating levels of endorphins are increased and these levels are known to remain elevated for several days after the exercise session resulting in brightening of your mood! Being overweight can also result in low self-esteem, stress and anxiety. Exercise and weight loss can help to promote and maintain a healthy body image and self-esteem.

### 4. Exercise can improve your sleeping!

Published scientific research suggests that exercise can improve sleep and prevent sleep disorders such as insomnia. The optimum time to exercise would be four to eight hours before bedtime. The only exception to this rule would be heavy exercise directly before sleep, which may delay or interrupt sleeping.

5. Exercise can provide a creative outlet!

There are various forms of exercise that can provide a powerful creative outlet and way of expressing who you are, such as gardening, dancing, hip-hop, yoga, pilates, etc. While exercising you can also listen to your favourite music, while brainstorming new creative ideas and dreams!

6. Exercise can prevent us from becoming “frail old Grammys”

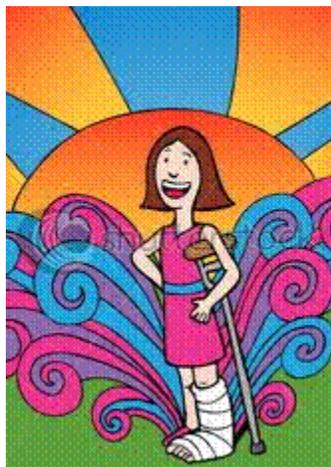
It was previously believed that losing muscle mass is a normal part of aging. It has now been shown that, with regular exercise and strength training, muscle strength, bone density and joint mobility can be maintained even into old age. This will prevent falls and fractures and enable us to fully enjoy our grandchildren!

God created our bodies to be fit, attractive and healthy. It is essential to find a program that is individualized for each one of us. We should not force ourselves to do exercise which we don't enjoy, as this will be impossible to sustain. With these six points, I would like to encourage the TRG/OA fellowship to create a unique exercise program that includes some cardio, strength training and stretching and combine it with a healthy balanced diet to become the person you were meant to be!

*Anonymous*

---

## NOT WHAT I HAD IN MIND



I am looking out the window at the daffodils, blooming in the snow. Not exactly what we had in mind when we planted them, but, that is the way it is sometimes. I am sitting with my feet up, looking at the big, black orthopedic boot on my foot....I got up from my desk, three days ago, to go get some lunch, and I rolled my ankle, and broke my fibula. Not exactly what I had in mind when I stood up, but, that is the way it is sometimes.

I had plans for much action this weekend...garden work, sewing, 4<sup>th</sup> step work, meal planning, going to a meeting, cleaning a room, going for a long walk. Mostly, this weekend, I spent at the hospital, or I slept. Not exactly what I had in mind for this weekend, but, that is the way it is sometimes.

I have discovered that this action step is an interesting one. For I am good at making plans for action—I am a master of To-Do lists. And, most of the time, I find them helpful. They keep me on track. They keep me focused on the next right thing. But, as I work on my recovery, I am beginning to see the value of INACTION sometimes. My sponsor, upon hearing of my broken ankle, implored, “Don’t fret over all the things you aren’t getting done.” I didn’t. Rest was the next right thing, and rest is what I did.

Before OA, I would have pressed through—Superwoman-like—and would have done everything on my list, and then some. My body was not something I revered and listened to. It was something to be subdued. It was weak, ineffective, sick and it was NOT going to get in my way. How very wrong I was.

My body, I am learning, is something to be respected. I am 56 years old. Healthier than I have ever been. Although in some ways this is the autumn of my life, in very important ways, it is my new spring. New growth, new birth is everywhere. I am getting to know my body as I drop the armor of excess weight and stubborn determination. I am growing emotionally and spiritually, as I finish up my 4<sup>th</sup> step and look forward to my 5<sup>th</sup> step. And, all this growth has occurred during a long winter in my life, where I have spent much time embracing INACTION—stepping away from the busyness of my life and taking time to just be. To think. To be open to my HP. To wonder. To feel. To make friends with hunger. To STOP long enough to FEEL.

And, in the midst of that time of INACTION, I am ready for some time of ACTION. Time to schedule my 5<sup>th</sup> step. Time to get my journal out and do some more intensive work. Time to write an article for Serendipity. And, more importantly, time to schedule more time for INACTION to balance the ACTION in my life. For both are critical to my recovery.

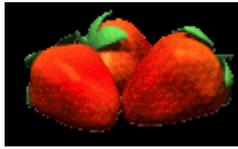
Thanks for being a part of my recovery. I need each and every one of you.

Hugs,

*Lainey*

---

## TRIGGERS ~ OLD AND NEW



When I first joined OA, I had no idea how I was going to "not eat" when I had to eat to live! I found the word, "abstinence," puzzling. But my sponsor helped me understand what "abstinence" meant for me as an overeater. It meant to abstain from eating compulsively, and it might entail giving up certain "trigger" foods [foods that, for me, tended to trigger a binge or eating in an out-of-control manner (i.e., compulsively -- eating when I wasn't hungry, eating too much/too fast, continuing to eat even after I was full, etc.)].

To get started, my sponsor told me to write down all those foods I thought might be my "triggers." My first list contained all the standard "sweets" (typical desserts, candy, pastries, etc.). It was an easy list to write, because I just sat down and wrote down all the foods I LOVED! All the foods I couldn't get enough of! All the foods I craved!

But then my sponsor told me I had to eliminate all those foods from my POE (Plan of Eating). EEEK! That was the hard part, of course, because those foods were my COMFORT! My immediate thought was, "But I could never give up THOSE!" BUT... I had hit bottom just before coming to OA, so I just did what she said. [That was my first "surrender" -- surrendering to a POE that was better for me than one filled with triggers.]

To be honest, the first few days with my new POE felt like a diet. There was some white-knuckling. But I was also working on the Steps with my sponsor at the same time, and I have to tell you, the "magic of OA" kicked in within a few days (maybe 4 or 5 days later). Suddenly, I didn't even WANT my trigger foods! I had no craving for them! They were still in the house (they were my husband's foods, too), but they no longer "called to me." That was my first "gift of abstinence" that I'd heard mentioned in OA meetings.

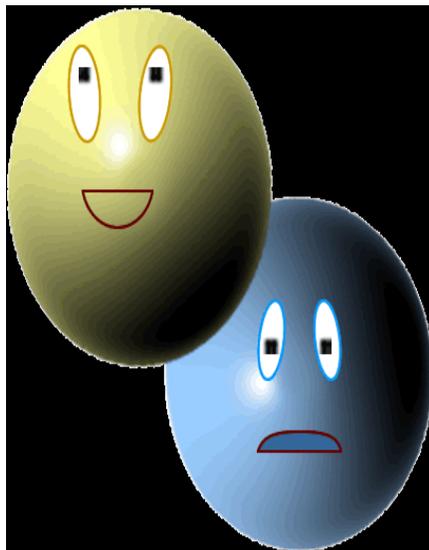
So now I had a list of "trigger" foods and "safe" foods. But something else happened several months later. Some of my "safe" foods (normal, healthy, non-sweet, "good" foods) started to "call to me." I suddenly wanted to eat \*them\* in compulsive manner. What was happening? Well, I learned from a loop leader that \*NEW\* triggers can pop up! I never thought of that!

So, when these "safe" foods began to "call to me," I put them on my "Trigger List," and I eliminated them from my POE. Sure, I balked at first, but as soon as I eliminated them, I was at peace again. So I've learned that a Trigger Food List is not a one-time thing; new triggers can pop up -- even "safe" foods -- and I have to be willing to surrender them to my list. Only then can I live in serenity around food, free from the obsession. Only then can I remain abstinent.

*An Anonymous COE*

---

## I USED TO CRY



I used to cry at sad movies, people I loved dying, children hurting, my own pain and confusion, feeling alone and empty. I used to cry to my HP: "What is it I need to understand, in order to get out of this pain?"

These days, I cry in a whole different way; I cry when I see the difference that loving one another makes in our lives, and when I see someone go out of their way to bring change in their world and succeed. I cry when I see happiness in my children's and grandchildren's eyes and hear it in their voices. I cry when I witness healing. I cry especially when my HP comforts me, guides me, and helps me see things differently and when it brings renewed faith and hope.

What is the difference? The difference is recovery. Before recovery I saw only the obstacles and I was always looking for the answers and not finding them. I was desperate to find the balance in my life only to fail. I did not have the courage to accept that I needed help. I needed daily help. I needed structure to work my healing around. I needed others' different perspectives to open my own mind and heart. I needed acceptance and caring. I needed my HP, who I call God, in every moment of my life.

When I came to OA and said, "I am willing to do whatever it takes to recover," my world changed almost immediately. My crying changed. I started to cry in great happiness. I started to cry for God's blessings, miracles and grace.

Recovery is so much more than stopping overeating compulsively, it is seeing the whole world from new eyes. A beautiful new world.

Thank you for listening and being there. You are all in my new world!!!!

*Coralee*

---

## SPRING

Today, the beginning of spring, I went outside without a coat. I think it is the first time this year I have been able to do so. I no longer hide inside my overcoat. I can walk outside and feel the wind in my face, and the warmth of the sun on my arms, and enjoy the feeling. I no longer wonder if my clothes will fit this spring. I have worn the same size for the last several years.

Spring also brings out the need to clean out stuff that has been accumulating. Since I have no issues to clear out since my HP is so ready to help me carry them, I have time and energy to clean out spare rooms and dusty shelves that seem to accumulate stuff. Before OA, my house just collected the stuff of life and it ended up on the shelf. Since OA came into my life and my house, the shelves hold mostly useful OA stuff and not the stuffing that my face would fall into.

On this beautiful spring morning I thanked HP for the incredible gift of Abstinence and got busy doing what I could to keep my life and my house in order.

Thank you for this opportunity to do service to the group.

Your in ESH,  
Jo

---

## THE ACTION OF NO ACTION



I have learned, after many years in OA that food thoughts come regardless of how strong my program is, and with these types of thoughts, it's not hard to simply accept them and change those thoughts to thoughts of God..... or being of service, or something wonderful like that, but..... and this is a big but, when cravings come, I am simply not able to take action, regardless of what plan I have in place to do so. The only action I take is toward food. What I do in this case, is feel the craving in my body. I take three conscious breaths (Step 11) and feel my body. I make sure I am not putting any thoughts around it. I just feel it. It is just energy, and I find that I can feel it without identifying with it. It just is, and then it is gone. I was right, it wasn't me after all.

Now when I first started doing this, consciously feeling and breathing, I found that the cravings wouldn't go away. I was told this might very well happen at first, and not to get tied into guilt.... but simply accept. Then, as told, after continuing to do this breathing and feeling and not identifying, it took hold and worked. I didn't and don't make a big deal out of it. I accept. This is something that by practicing, works well, at least it does for me. This type of inward work comes directly from Step 11. The greatest action I take, is the action of no action.....simple, easy meditation. I could not go inward in the way I described above without this program of recovery, the tools and all of you. I can be alone because I am not alone.

*Dharma Lee*

*Struggle with your lower self. Either you ride it, or it will ride you.  
~~ Al-Jilani*

---

## WHEN THE MUTE SPEAKS UP

Guess who I bumped into after my visit with Dr Barr? We were waiting at the elevator to leave.

A handsome older man looked so dressed up and seemed to be watching everything around him intensely. I guess I sensed something.

First I said: *"You look like you could be an entertainer."*

He replied, *"I am."* I asked what he had done lately and he took me by surprise when he said he was producing the Kennedy Center Honors. (A yearly event)

Then he went on to say he had written and produced "THURGOOD" - it is on HBO now and was on Broadway at the Booth Theater before it was a film. It is a one man show about Thurgood Marshall. He seemed to be strutting his stuff like the roosters I remember in Bermuda.

At the end, as we went on our different ways to get our cars, I asked boldly, *"What is your name?"* He said, "I am George Stevens Jr." His Dad, George Stevens Sr. who passed away in 1975, has credits for movie productions and about twenty Oscars!

I was so excited, as I told him one summer that his son, Michael Stevens was my student. He wrote a beautiful quote about his lessons with me for a flier I had then.

He was my only student that summer. It was an intensive; he would take 3 lessons a week for 3 hrs at a time before he joined his Dad as a producer in Hollywood.

As he hurried off, he mentioned he was about to meet Michael in a few minutes, and I told him my name a few times and then I sent a big hug. I'm sure he'll remember those lessons. We had a ball!

Years ago, this would not have happened. It is with new found recovery that I have been able to speak up, tell a story and even submit it for possible serendipity service.

One Day At A time.

AS

---

## MY INNER CHILD



As I laid in bed this morning and prayed and meditated, read a little, and meditated some more, I was getting the vibes from my Higher Power that I need to see my disease as something different than I have been, not viewing it as this evilness lurking within me that I hate.

I read an article in our OA Lifeline where a friend wrote a very loving goodbye letter to her disease. It was really moving. My goodbye letter to my disease was written early on in recovery. A very angry and assertive letter and the approach I needed to take at the time. I was overflowing with anger and resentment. I recently lost my mother-in-law to the disease and was still mourning the loss of my own mother.

Being in program has really helped to heal that anger, and I am starting to feel a need to move on. So I started meditating on the inner child idea and received insight from my HP to treat my disease as the child it is.

How? Well, first to not be harsh and critical with this disease. My HP gave me the insight to be firm and loving and to behave like an adult in recovery, whenever I dealt with this 'child' (disease). My HP would be there to help me.

And when this 'child' (disease) got rebellious? To be patient and calm, gentle but persistent. To help the 'child' know what needs to happen now. Especially to NOT be a pushover, but to stand firm and help this proverbial 'child'.

I also needed to remember that this inner 'child' (the disease) is used to being in control. Some things will need to be re-taught. When tired, give the child some rest. When the child struggles, decrease the demands, listen and feel empathy. Lack to recognize this crankiness may lead to more acting out.

What about this 'child's' food? The golden rule is not to force feed! Not vegetables all the time, please? Be reasonable, be flexible. Expect the 'child' to ask for things that might be 'unhealthy'. BUT: Set limits and do it gently and patiently. Don't force this 'child' to eat beyond satiety. Encourage her to stop and throw out the rest. Tell this child that this act is ok and desired. Reassure the 'child' that she will not be denied food if she did not eat everything. What if this 'child' wants more? Be firm and say "Not now, Sweetie. The food will still be available later. No need to reason and argue with a rebellious, frustrated 'child'.

Many of us are mothers, and we know how far harsh reasoning goes with a demanding 'child'. Here we bring in the all important Father figure. I let the 'child' (my disease) know I want to help with the intuitive voice of my HP. In other words tell the 'child' that we need to ask our father (God) to help us come up with a solution. Children often seem to listen better to their fathers.

The 'child' needs to know she is NOT alone. God (Father) is there. I am here to whisper words of encouragement and friends in program are here to help - just pause and ask.

*Amy*

---

## **BULIMIA AND THE DANGERS OF IT FOR COES**

Hello, my name is Ioanna and I am a recovering bulimic. I haven't purged since Dec. 2007 and my weight is steady and normal since Sept. 2008. This morning I woke up and something dawned on me. Some years now, I have been struggling with some kind of "anger" towards some of the structures that many OA members follow. And now I realized where this comes from.

I realized that most of the OA members don't know what the monster of bulimia is. And many just have a shift in their "symptoms". They shift from COE to bulimia without realizing it. This is what I need to share with you now. I suppose many of you have heard of Alcoholics changing into COEs, because they just didn't know this even existed! I even read in one newsletter of an AA intergroup, this weird suggestion:

"If you are invited to parties, keep some sweets with you" (to eat them instead of drinking)...

The same thing can happen with COEs, who don't know the dangers of BULIMIA. BULIMIA is all about CONTROLLING the body and the weight. ANYTHING GOES as long as we stay fit and/or thin. I NEVER was obese. So I don't know what this means. And maybe some obese people think that being "normal-weight" is everything. No it's not. I am normal weight. I always was. I am 29 now and I have struggled with bulimia from 15 to 27.

It's only normal that I get upset when I hear or read about food-behaviours that remind me of active bulimia, considered as "healthy". Maybe it's time to hit the alert button in OA and TRG. "Caution! BULIMIA AHEAD!"

Maybe that is why some bulimics and anorexics felt they have to go ahead and make "Anorexics and Bulimics Anonymous". I think that members have to know that it's easy to step into bulimia, while falsely thinking they are abstinent, only because they have a healthy weight now. I will gladly do my part and inform about this; because bulimia is not only about vomiting. It's mainly about taking countermeasures every time one overeats, like:

- ~ over-exercising (to lose the calories just taken)
- ~ dieting (all the time)
- ~ restricting
- ~ fasting
- ~ counting calories
- ~ counting points (weight watchers)

- ~ vomiting
- ~ using laxatives

...aaaaaa AND ACTING SUPER-NERVOUS AROUND FOOD.

I am sorry, but I see those symptoms in many OA members, in my home group, in meetings, even in OA literature. And I would be much much grateful if someone could explain to me the difference between the HOW food plan and a diet. Because I can't seem to find one.

I can't stay easy. Just like I could be if a member told me "Hey! I am fine, see I've lost all this weight because I vomit every meal I eat! Isn't that great!!!"

I hope this letter of mine will reach your hearts. I know I am one of the youngest members around, but this doesn't have to mean anything. The danger of bulimia has just risen only during the last decade to such a great level. Not that it wasn't before, it's just that people didn't know.

*Ioanna*

Bulimic in recovery

---

## MY PAIN

Like many of you here, I have known pain in my lifetime ... pain of all kinds. I've learned that there are degrees of pain, from that of giving birth to my children, of major abdominal surgery, from severe migraine headaches from ages 13-38, from extensive dental work in my 40s and Fibromyalgia pain which began in my late 50s. I've also experienced emotional pain that seemed to make me feel as raw as some of the physical pain.

This past week I experienced the most pain I can remember ever having, and while it sounds fairly trivial and commonplace to even write about, it left me screaming in agony. The pain was in my mouth and was caused by abscesses on either side. I took the strongest narcotic pain relievers that could be subscribed and they didn't even dent it, even combined with antibiotics. The pain began a month earlier, but instead of getting better with medication, it became worse, and by this past Friday, I knew that I could not go a single day longer, and the offending teeth were extracted. Now it is a different kind of pain, but one I have no choice but to deal with.

All of this brought new meaning to my vulnerability in this life ... and program thoughts filled my mind every waking minute. I substituted the word "pain" as I admitted that I was powerless over it, and that my Greater Power was going to have to take care of me, and I put my whole body and soul into His hands. I couldn't be put to sleep during the extractions, because the oral surgeon was working me in his schedule as an emergency, and didn't have time. But during the surgery, I felt spiritual, knowing that whatever was done or not done and the results of that, were not dependant on me. If I ever felt the need to control, I lost that need completely, sitting in that chair this past Friday.

In the days to come, I will be saying the Serenity Prayer a lot, and acknowledging that HP is ultimately in charge. And that those of us who have experienced pain, are the only ones who

can truly understand another's pain. And so, I must not rely on those around me who don't seem to understand.

May we all have a pain-free week as much as we possibly can. Thanks to all of you who give service, by sharing here and keeping this loop viable for those here now, and those who will come in the future. And for me.

*Anonymous*

---

## HUMAN BLOSSOMS



When my husband planted the bulbs I had bought last fall, I delightedly pictured in my mind, the rainbow of pastel colors that would be filling our flower bed, and surrounding our mailbox. When autumn faded into winter, the cold winds of December & January descended upon us, and the snowy, blustery weeks and months dragged by. I never gave a thought to my precious bulbs, buried deep within the soil. There they laid, in their deep, warm cocoon, protected from the winter elements, waiting.....sleeping.....waiting.....

Slowly, ever so slowly, Spring stuck out her toes, shy and uncertain of whether she even wanted to be here, hesitant, yet wanting to blend in somehow. She crept in quietly, gradually, ever so gently, so no one would notice. Ah.....but we did notice, and we joyously welcomed her with open arms! Spring had come at long last, bringing with her, the melody of birds chirping gaily in the air, flitting from tree to tree. Meanwhile white, gray & brown squirrels scampered about, exploring for nuts and seeds, squawking & barking to one another, much like us bigger critters happily greeting our neighbors, after our self-imposed hibernation.

But, what is this? Green shoots, poking through the soil, wide waxy looking leaves, and tall spindly ones. Could it be? Oh could it really be.....the tulips, hyacinths, and daffodils peeking their noses out? Hesitantly, checking for warmth, to see if they would be well received, nurtured, not rejected or injured by cold or wind, but wanted and loved. For several days, the greens continue to almost reluctantly grow taller and fuller, until.....until.....what is this? A bud appears, and another and another. One by one, they seem to poke out , then two by two....as though they sense the safety in numbers! The hyacinths are the boldest of the lot. They bloom and fill my garden with the heavenly scent of their own special perfume. In my enthusiasm and utter blissful joy, I cut a half dozen of them and bring them into our kitchen and put them into a cup of water. Their fragrance fills the room! M-mmmmmm! Finally, as if on cue from the Master Gardener, the tulips quietly and softly open up their delicate petals, but only a little at a time, still testing the "waters", making sure it is safe.

I consider how we humans are very much like these lovely flowers. We too, are fragile, insecure, hesitant to trust, unable to open up....to bloom or to blossom. Reluctant to acknowledge our dis-ease, our weakness, our frailty, our flaws. Some of us are outgoing, our lives like an "open book", our external facade animated, confident, and cheery. We wear our masks well. We admit there is something wrong, but quite sure it cannot be us! It's all the people, places and things in our lives that have caused us grief, forcing us to self-medicate. Others of us are quiet, shy, in our cocoon/shell, unwilling or unable to open up. We bury it all inside.....the hurt, disappointment, deep sorrow, pain, resentment, and anger....we often turn it inward, experiencing self-loathing, embarrassment, shame, and guilt. We rarely if ever show others who we really are, or even allow ourselves to see our God-given beauty, to smell our heavenly fragrance, or to acknowledge or appreciate our intricate, unique blossoms. Like a snowflake, we are one of a kind, from our outer shell all the way to our genes, chromosomes, and the tiniest cell! Lovingly hand-crafted by the Creator, our Higher Power, on purpose.....just the way we are! But thankfully, He loves us too much to leave us in our now-battered state, wounded and bruised by the atrocities of life, whether perceived or actual. One day at a time, moment by moment, as we establish conscious contact with our Higher Power, and maintain that connection by prayer, meditation, an attitude of gratitude, and an awareness of a Presence that is now re-creating us, we emerge as a new, whole being, a miracle in the making. Day by day, choice by choice, we learn to surrender to a Power greater than ourselves, so that we may be used by Him to reach out and touch others.....sharing the miracle.....watching it grow.....Ahhhhhhh!

*Sandie S.*

---

## THE SECOND QUARTER OF THE BIG BOOK STUDY IS STARTING



I'm Linda S, the coordinator of The Big Book Study loop. I'd like to invite you to join us for the second quarter of our yearlong study. It will be starting on April 1. We will study "More About Alcoholism" in April, "We Agnostics" in May and "How It Works" in June. "More About Alcoholism" talks about the hopelessness of alcoholism without a Higher Power. If you are an agnostic, our May chapter is for you. If you aren't an agnostic, reading this chapter will teach you how to help someone who is an agnostic, to incorporate this program into his or her life. "How It Works" is my personal favorite in the entire Big Book. This is where the Twelve Steps are laid out, and where the first few are thoroughly explained. The wisdom in this chapter is beyond belief! The language is beautiful.

Why do we study a book that was written for alcoholics when we are compulsive overeaters? It is simply because we are the same on the inside. Our drug of choice is different, but what the book, Alcoholics Anonymous says about alcoholics, is true for us as well.

While you may join our study at any time, it is good to start when we are starting a new chapter. Please click [here](#) in order to subscribe.

If the link doesn't work for you, please send a blank email to [TheBigBook-subscribe-request@lists.therecoverygroup.org](mailto:TheBigBook-subscribe-request@lists.therecoverygroup.org)

If you were subscribed for the first quarter of our study, you are still a member and it is not necessary to resubscribe.

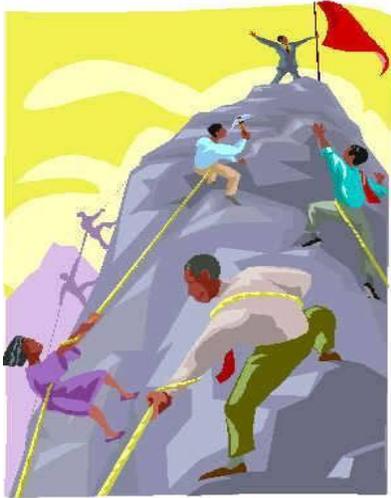
Please email me privately if you have any questions. My address is Linda Smallwood [the-smallwoods@PRIS.BC.CA](mailto:the-smallwoods@PRIS.BC.CA)

I look forward to reading your experience, strength and hope on these three chapters of this wondrous book, The Big Book.

*Linda S.*

---

## ACTION: HOW DO I START?



I'm Laura, I'm a compulsive overeater. I've been working on my recovery for almost 2 years now. It's a continuous process and one thing I can say about recovery is that it doesn't just "happen". I take part in my own recovery, through Action.

In the beginning, I kept hearing others "Just go for it!", "Take action and things will change!" and I totally agreed. "Yes, action must be the key!" But I kept going around the pool and hesitated to make the big jump in the water. I kept thinking about "Action" and how much it'll change my life and I truly believed what the other COE's were saying.

So my question was now "How do I start... anyway?" I wanted those Big Things too. I was planning Big Actions. Every day. Can you guess what happened? Right..., I never took those Big Actions.

Instead, at the suggestion of my first sponsor, I started one day with a small thing. It was a gratitude list. One Small Action. By the time I finished my 10 items gratitude list, I was sweating. That was hard work. But the next day was a little bit easier. I added a second list, of things "to do", where I could put anything, and more action came into my life, without me noticing or thinking about it too much. I remember one thing on my first "to do" list was "to wake up in a good mood". That didn't require too much action from my part, was supposed to be easy, and easy it was.

So, here I am, little by little, one day at a time, taking one small action at a time. Didn't even realize when or how things changed around me, but they did. My own Big Things happened too, and continue to happen. I have learned one important lesson:

***Big Things need time to change, one Small Action at a time.***

When I take an action, any action - no matter how small, things are really changing.

*Laura G*

---

## ACTION IN THE KITCHEN

### *Fish Boboti*

You will need the following ingredients:

- one can of pilchards (or any fish you like - about a cup full)
- one huge onion, chopped
- one slice bread (any type)
- one cup milk (any type)
- two eggs
- one tablespoon curry powder
- one teaspoon turmeric
- one teaspoon garlic (optional)
- one teaspoon ginger powder
- one teaspoon coriander (optional)
- half teaspoon salt
- four tablespoons vinegar or lemon juice
- one heaping tablespoon chutney or any jam (sugar free type will work)

#### METHOD:

Fry the onion in a little oil until soft and add all the ingredients except the bread, milk and eggs.

Dip the bread in half of the milk and crumble and add to the mixture.

Add on beaten egg.

Pour into an oven bowl and bake at 350 degrees for 30 minutes.

Beat the other egg with the remaining milk and pour over and bake for another 30 minutes.

Serve with cherry tomatoes

*SusanB*



*God, grant us the serenity to accept the things we cannot change;  
Courage to change the things we can; and the wisdom to know the difference.  
One day at a time.  
One step at a time*

---

The Recovery Group  
[www.TheRecoveryGroup.org](http://www.TheRecoveryGroup.org)  
Around the World ~ Around the Clock

\*Note: If you have the skills and would like to publish an issue of Serendipity Newsletter in the future, please contact:

[TRGAdm@TheRecoveryGroup.org](mailto:TRGAdm@TheRecoveryGroup.org)