



### FROM THE EDITOR

Summertime in the Recovery Group finds a different ambience around here. Our members seem somewhat more relaxed and settle in as though they were in a comfortable mode of life. This is reflected in their shares with the loops and in the meetings. Our programs and studies continue as always but the summertime difference is noticeable to those of us who have been here a long time. This issue of Serendipity will reflect that mood ... more casual ... less structure .... peaceful yet mindful of what brings us all together. This issue may arouse some out of that summertime lackadaisical attitude and find you beginning to review and pay more attention to the latest addition to the OA Tools just voted on by OA. ACTION! This issue of Serendipity will feature a story by one of our members on dual addictions. Following this will be a treat. Have you ever wondered what topics on some of the loops you might not be a member of were like? We've spotlighted a few of those. Enjoy.

### RECOVERY OA ONLINE MEETINGS

The Recovery meetings of Overeaters Anonymous are amazing. The schedule is full, the leaders are leading with gusto and there is a list of potential leaders waiting to be trained Linda E., TRG's Coordinator of Meetings, has become the guiding force of the Meetings Program and if you ever have any questions or suggestions, you will find her one of our most enjoyable Trusted Servants to talk with. Hope many of you will be heading to L.A. to meet her at OA's 50th Birthday Party. Questions? [MtgAdm@TheRecoveryGroup.org](mailto:MtgAdm@TheRecoveryGroup.org)



Our meeting room is open 24/7 and can be reached by clicking the above doorway. There seems to always be someone there to greet or chat with you and OA meetings are daily at Noon, 3, 6, 9 PM Midnight 3, 6, 9 AM. All meetings are Eastern time.

### FROM THE ADMINISTRATION

The Recovery Group Administration is made up of The Recovery Intergroup, The Executive Committee, TRGAdm, MTGAdm and five support loop administrators The Director of Administrators works with the Administrators who work with the Coordinators of each of our support loops. The Meeting Coordinator works with the leaders of our 56 OA Online Meetings as well as with TRG's Special Focus meetings. It all makes for a very busy place as we serve our members one day at a time

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### TRG OA Telephone Meetings

TRG does not have telephone meetings scheduled this summer but there are an abundance of them listed with Overeaters Anonymous on their website at [www.oa.org](http://www.oa.org). If you would like to host a meeting, you're welcome to use our facilities and we will announce your meeting time to all. Write to [TRGAdm](mailto:TRGAdm) or [MTGAdm](mailto:MTGAdm). Hope some of you can do this. It's fun, fulfilling and needed.

### A SUMMERTIME POEM *Bed In Summer Poem*

*In winter I get up at night,  
And dress by yellow candle light.  
In summer quite the other way,  
I have to go to bed by day,*

*I have to go to bed and see  
The birds still hopping on the tree,  
Or hear the grown up people's feet  
Still going past me in the street,*

*And does it not seem hard to you,  
When all the sky is clear and blue,  
And I should like so much to play,  
To have to go to bed by day?*

by Robert Louis Stevenson



### COME JOIN US IN L.A.

Leading the way to OA in L.A. will be Linda E., member of Excom and OA Meetings for TRG. If you would like to attend one of the most special birthday parties ever. In 1960 we began and 50 years later amazing growth has taken place. Everything you need to know about registration, the hotel, and the part can be found [here](#). Be sure and let [Linda](#) know if you're going to be there so you can meet your friends from The Recovery Group.



### NEWCOMERS

Dear Serendipity Readers,

Today we begin one of our most valued and valuable programs - OA Newcomer's Orientation. If you are a newcomer to the program of Overeaters Anonymous or know of someone who would be interested, please give them this link. You will find an article about newcomers in general later in this edition of Serendipity ... but I'd like this month's Founder's Corner to be about its beginnings.

Somewhere along the way, the rose became special to me ... I think it was because it was such a complex flower but all grown became simplicity personified, much like our program.



### THE ROSE SEED

When we plant a rose seed in the earth, we notice that it is small, but we do not criticize it as "rootless or stemless". We treat it as a seed, giving it the water and nourishment required of a seed. When it first shoots up out of the earth, we do not condemn it as immature and underdeveloped; nor do we criticize the buds for not being open when they first appear. We stand in wonder at the process taking place, and give the plant the care it needs at each stage of it's development.

The rose is a rose from the time it is a seed until the time it dies. Within it at all times, it contains its whole potential. It seems to



*For Today page 248:*

*Nothing that happened yesterday or that may happen tomorrow is more important than NOW.*

When I was a child, I was fat. Of course, I liked when people called it baby fat and that I would grow out of it. Food was my nourishment and it was my friend. I could count on food to be there when everything else in life was falling apart.

And I had a system worked out to salve my thinking. I would look at someone else who was fat and say to myself, "At least I'm not THAT fat." Or "I'm tall, so my weight is well distributed" "or muscle" "or glandular." I learned that this kind of thinking was called denial. And denial worked when I needed it to work. My relationship with food was not very healthy, and denial helped to keep it that way.

It took living one day at a time to get into recovery. "I could do something for one day that would freak me out if I had to do it for my whole life." It takes living one day at a time to stay in recovery. "I only have to do this for one day. Tomorrow I may eat a truckload." It also takes living one day at a time to deal with the cancer diagnosis.

My mind wants to take trips. It wants to take me to the past. "If only I had not used products containing artificial sweeteners." "If only I had paid more attention to my stomach problems." "If only the doctor had told me I had to have my gallbladder out rather than making it optional." Staying in the past and beating myself up about past events will only give my compulsive-eating disease an opportunity to re-possess me.

And my mind wants to take me to the future. "Oh, my! What if I am terminal?" "What am I going to do if I have to stay in the hospital for a long time and can't pay my bills or man age my finances?" And my favorite, "What am I going to do if all my hair falls out?" (I love the fact that my hair is 99% brown at age 64. I don't have to color it. And I love my haircut.) Living in the future is no healthier than staying in the past.

What I have is today, and today is a gift from God. I want to live it in ways that feed my recovery. This morning, I ate my healthy, weighed-and-measured, planned breakfast. Then I went to my regular Saturday morning meeting. I'm going to do a little housework, make a few phone calls, write a few e-mails, watch a movie I borrowed from the library, and maybe go down to the pool for a while. My meals are planned, so that is out of the way. When I start to go visiting the past or the future, I ask my Higher Power to keep me in the present. And it works.

Your grateful sister in recovery,  
Janet C.

Ormond Beach, Florida

(Maintaining a weight loss of approximately 250 pounds by the grace of God and the OA program of recovery.)

*Editor's Note: Janet wrote this in August 09. If you would like to be a part of the About Today group and receive a daily writing, please join this announcement only list by clicking [here](#).*

be constantly in the process of change; yet at each state, at each moment, it is perfectly alright as it is.

And so it is with us. As sweet as a rose petal, as prickly sometimes as a thorn, a fragrance that soothes and evolving in something so beautiful at times our breath is taken away . . .

We are as a precious rose seed. May each of us always know that we are exactly as we are supposed to be.

Love in recovery,

Mari 

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## 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 a mends 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.

## THE THIRTY QUESTIONS

Many of you who have been around Overeaters Anonymous are familiar with the "Thirty Questions." These questions take us through the first three steps of the AA 12+12 and the Big Book so thoroughly that we emerge from them not quite the same. Usually a sponsor will use them with his/her sponsee as they proceed through these steps before they begin to "launch a course of vigorous action, the first step of which is a personal housecleaning." That, of course, occurs when we begin the "action" steps ~ Steps 4 through 12.

One of the most visited sections of TRG's Website is devoted to the questions and can be found here:

<http://www.therecoverygroup.org/qu estions/index.html>

Here is the second of the thirty questions:

### QUESTION TWO:

- A) *Why do you need to stop overeating in your life right now?*  
B) *Why did you come to OA/12 step recovery loops (or both)?*  
C) *Is slimness the most important thing?*

Dear Friends,

**My name is Shana and I am a compulsive overeater. I am grateful to have found the OA program of recovery and part of my program is sharing it with others.**

**The 30 Questions as given to me in years past have helped introduce me to the first three steps of OA, and helped me name ... and claim my feelings about myself and my disease of COE. In a study of the Thirty Questions you will need the AA Big Book and the AA Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions book to answer many of the questions. The purpose is to get you involved in the books and what is between their covers; the purpose also is to help you reach physical, emotional and spiritual recovery.**

### QUESTION TWO:

- A) **What is well?**  
B) **Is fat acceptable in your life?**  
C) **Can you accept the way you are?**

**A) Well, to me it is pretty simple. Well is to wake up in the morning without my first thoughts being of my weight, fear, desperation and resolutions. Well to me is having my focus on life and the present, not on inward struggle and the past and future. Well to me is being humble to a HP, being excited to see what this day will bring, and well to me is knowing instinctively what to do in any situation without acting out of panic, resentment and fear. I can be well with HPs grace and blessings, one day at a time, doing the footwork ..and knowing that my HP would never give me more than I could handle.**

**B) Fat is just not acceptable in my life. I feel imprisoned in a fat body; the real me shaking the prison bars screaming to set me free. I feel judged in my poundage, I feel "less than" in my skin, I feel so caught up in my nightmare that I can not live in the day. No, fat is just not acceptable. Sure, my health issues (as in cholesterol, arthritis, etc.) also make it difficult to find fat acceptable...but more than that, well, I wanna be thin..ner.**

**C) Now, you have to remember that I am answering this question (once again) 26 years into program. So, do I accept the way I am? I do accept the way I am, and I will tell you what I went thru over the last few years before I came back to OA and Journey to Recovery, so that you will understand why.**

45. Each group has but one primary purpose -- to carry its message to the compulsive overeater who still suffers.
46. 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.
47. Every OA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
48. Overeaters Anonymous should remain forever non-professional, but our service centers may employ special workers.
49. OA, as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.
50. Overeaters Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the OA name ought never be drawn into public controversy.
51. 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.
52. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all these Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.



### OA PODCAST INSANITY

One of the features many love most about the OA Website is the section on Podcasts. We especially love knowing that those who make these podcasts are one of us and tell our stories. In this issue of Serendipity, we invite you to listen to Charles tell his story. Matt asks some interesting questions and Charles responds with gut-level honesty. When asked about his relationship with food, Charles describes it as "insanity" and explains by saying that for 50 years of his life he was either "cycling up or dieting down." He talks about how eating affected his life ... and how much time eating took. If you click the OA Podcast logo above, you can hear Charles' [podcast](#) in its entirety. Please also visit the [OA Website](#) for many more wonderful podcasts.



### HOW TO BECOME A TRUSTED SERVANT

The Recovery Group exists to serve compulsive eaters. We would cease existing without those same compulsive eaters giving service back. The training is mainly on the job and easy. More importantly, it is fulfilling. If you'd like to know more about how you can help, send your biography and let us know what you enjoy doing and any skills you have to us. [TrustedServantsPoolsubscriberrequest@lists.therecoverygroup.org](mailto:TrustedServantsPoolsubscriberrequest@lists.therecoverygroup.org) or Click the Logo Above.

I realized a few years back that if I was ever to attain abstinence again I needed to begin loving and accepting myself now (this was back in 19--, I believe). I knew that by not loving myself exactly as I was, fat and all, that I could never expect that I would give myself the gift of abstinence over any long period-- That I would always fall back into the fat because I had not attained the ultimate purpose of life...to love myself the way that my Higher Power does love me. I didn't want to be "sick" anymore, and part of that sickness was to look into the mirror and give myself hateful faces and stares. My self-absorbed ego would find disdain in every face I met, in every word that I would misconstrue against me, resentment was my middle name. I knew it was all to do with the fact that I couldn't love myself, wouldn't love myself, the way I was.

I began by looking into the mirror and saying directly to myself: "I love you exactly the way you are." OH, yes, I really did that. I looked at my body and found parts and pieces of me that I could think of as "okay." I always dressed in clothing that became me, always put on my make-up, did my hair, bought myself jewelry and fun accessories, went for manicures and, well, I just decided that if I waited for me to be "okay" enough in my eyes to have these things and do these things...I may die before I got there. So, I "acted as if" ...and it worked.

My self-esteem started to grow despite the weight on my body. In fact, this is so funny (but sad), when I would look at pictures of me taken at a party or vacation, I would be downtrodden for a day or two because I didn't know who that person was! I didn't see myself that heavy anymore, and this was a difficult part to pass through. But, I did. I did because I knew I had to in order to live and be well.

So, when you ask me today "Can you accept yourself the way you are?" YOU BETTER BELIEVE IT! And I hope that you can find it in your heart to give yourself this gift. The road, for me, in losing the weight is slow, but I am there already...in heart and mind and soul. Yet, I have no illusions, either, of how I look in reality...and I love me anyhow.

Love in recovery,

A Member of TRG

### ADDICTION



### FOOD ALCOHOL

I'm afraid of living. I've been afraid of living for as long as I can remember, and that spans at least 49 years. I really can't say what inspired this fear, whether it was a single event or a gradual build up of events. I only know that at some point in early adolescence, I knew I needed a friend to help me bear the painful daily business of living.

My first friend was Scotch. I became acquainted with Scotch when I was about twelve or thirteen years old. My aunt was having a party and while the adults were gathered in the living room, the children

## THE RECOVERY ROSE

@-)-)-----

I have lived a life in which I came to mistrust people who were \*supposed\* to love me but actually treated me with disrespect and on occasion even meanness. Normally, an outgoing person who loved to hug and touch, I gradually became a person who died a little inside. I mourned the death of my emotions and went on with my life. I actually functioned at a pretty high level; however, there came a time when I realized I had quit feeling. I had learned to stuff my feelings with my drug of choice. Food.

In the summer of 1994 I walked into these cyber-rooms strictly by accident. I found one recovery loop. There were 34 men and women there. I even bought the Big Book. And I listened to what I considered then to be rhetoric. I kept coming back, day by day, month by month and during that time I would listen to the "love you's", the "I love you's", the "{{\${{\${{\$}}}}}}", the "I cares", the "dear this" or the "dear that", the God talk, the "Let me love you until you can love yourself." And, at first, I would almost gag.

Little by little I found myself feeling. I would read a letter from someone hurting and I would hurt too. I questioned this because how could I care for someone I had never seen and I might never see? I made friendships. To this day, those friendships remain. Some of them are no longer loop members. Many of them are. My love for them has grown deeper and I would do just about anything to help them when they hurt.

Someone wrote the other day ~ someone new here with whom I had not even had a perfunctory correspondence ~ but she told of being alone in a hospital and I wrote her and was just about ready to hop on a plane to be with her.

I can't explain our recovery program. I'm not sure what happens when a group of addicts get together. But I do know that it is meant to be. I do know that because of our common denominator, our compulsions, WHEN WE BEGIN TO LOVE SOMEONE ON OUR RECOVERY LOOP, WE ARE LOVING OURSELVES.

As I began to love more people here, I found myself loving me more. I'm not about to try to explain to you precious people who are visiting this Web site how this happened because actually I don't know. What I do know is that you should never question the sincerity of a hug or an "I love you" on any of these Recovery Group loops. Our loopies are the most authentic people on the face of the earth and, while they may disagree with you, fight with you, pester you, flame you, bore you ~ ~ ~ when they say "I love you", they truly mean it!! Recovery has a way of making one honest. And loopies just don't say "I love you" and not mean it. Count on it.

What I found here is the most important gift of my life. I have told young girls who are drug addicts I love them.

were in the den watching TV. I remember going into the kitchen for a drink and noticing a half empty cocktail glass on the table. I got past the initial shudder with the first sip and emptied the glass. Not long after, I felt euphoric. That is when I knew I had to have alcohol in my life every day. Thus began a period in my young life when I started the day with a shot of Scotch, and also brought an empty aspirin bottle to school with another shot of Scotch for later. Around lunch time, I would enter into the girl's bathroom, go into one of the stalls and have my second drink of the day. I began to water down my parent's bottles of liquor so they wouldn't notice it slowly disappearing. That meant I had to take my quota from different liquor bottles equally. So I also became well acquainted with Gin, Vodka, and Brandy. The taste really didn't matter, it was the euphoria I was after, and it's numbing affect. What I really loved about drinking was how nothing mattered for awhile. There was a total absence of fear, worry, or anxiety.

At some point, I knew I couldn't keep up my little secret without discovery. Eventually the liquor bottles would be more water than liquor. Amazingly, I could stop drinking, but I plunged into a deep, murky pond of depression. Try to imagine a twelve year old child lost in depression. I had no friend to help me get through the day anymore.

I remember one day coming home from school and craving something sweet. Pulling open the cookie drawer, I saw a bag of shortbread cookies. I ate about six, but still didn't feel satiated. However, I knew I couldn't finish off the bag without facing consequences. So I had a great idea to bake a batch of cookies for myself. I was already a pretty good baker, and my mother wouldn't be home until five. I quickly whipped up a couple dozen sugar cookies, ate them all, cleaned up, and went downstairs to watch TV and fall asleep. While I was eating those cookies, I realized I had found a new and better friend. This was a friend I had a much better chance of hiding from everyone. Even more amazing, I could achieve euphoria and pass out to a dreamless sleep. At last, a vehicle to euphoria that I enjoyed right from the first taste. I no longer had to brace myself and shudder it down the hatch. I was in love!

Thus began a long secret, dependent relationship. As I grew older and became a high school student, I still got together occasionally with my first friend alcohol. However, I could no longer just go for the buzz and euphoria. Now I would drink until drunk and I would get sick. Sick wasn't good because that was dangerous for discovery. I turned to my new friend food more and more. I could binge on food and get away with it; I couldn't say the same for alcohol. I didn't know the word binge back then, I called these excesses "pig-outs."

Eventually, I started to put on weight. Plumpness was not tolerated in our family. Beside, I wanted very much to look good, and be accepted by my peers. Even though I was very athletic, I began an even more strenuous activity schedule. In between my binges on carbohydrates, I would not eat, or eat very little. I became an expert on the calorie content of food and how long I needed to work-out to burn off the calories ingested. I'd never heard of the word Bulimia at that point in time, and if you told me I was a Bulimic, I would have laughed in your face anyway. I just loved to pig-out on food.

Time went by and my weight went up and down. I followed all kinds of diets, exercised very strenuously, and became addicted to prescription diuretics. I weighed myself three to six times a day, often stripping off clothing, emptying pockets, urinating first; a nothing to make the scale read what I needed to see. I was both obsessed with food and body image. Those two things dominated my

I've told hurting mothers who were in tears because they had abused their children that I loved them. I've told anorexics who were starving themselves to death and 500 pounders who had given up hope that I love them. I have even told grown married men I loved them and meant it. Lesbian women and I meant it. Gay men and I meant it. People I didn't like very much but I felt love for ~ and I meant it. But telling these people that I feel love for them has brought me far more than it has given them. It has made me a more loving person with my family. With people around me. It has enabled me to look for ways to fill voids that I might never have searched for otherwise. And it has opened places in my heart that have been closed for a long, long time.

My rose means that. My rose means "I love you". I used it when I simply could not say the words. My signature was just my name. Because I couldn't say the word "love," I just signed my name, Mari, and put a little cyber-rose above it. The rose meant love. And it still means that.

And it will always mean that.

Such a simple thing, this rose.

@-}-)-----

Such a difficult thing for me before recovery to say "I love you."

Thanks to a little place in cyberspace, I can now say it. I can now feel it. I can now give it. I can even now receive it.

Love!!

But I still use my rose.

@-}-)-----

Love in Recovery ~

[Mari](#) 



### SPOTLIGHT ON JOURNEY TO RECOVERY

Hi,

*"Sometime they'll give a war and nobody will come."  
... Carl Sandburg*

For thirty-five years of my adult life, I waged war against food addiction. Every battle (diet) began with the hope that this one would do it. This battle would make me thin and give me the ability to control my food. Sometimes the battles were long and drawn out, sometimes they only lasted a day or a few hours. In my younger days, my twenties and thirties, I lost vast amounts of weight in each battle. Always, the day came when I lost the battle and the food took control again. The weight came back on plus more. Once I was out of my thirties, the battles were shorter and shorter until the day came when I could battle no more.

thoughts and my life. I was a slave to both food and body image. I made time for boyfriends, but had very little time or interest in friends. Friends didn't give me the feedback on my appearance that boyfriends did, and I needed that validation.

When I reached my forties, I realized that my bottom line weight was slowly rising. My bottom line weight was the absolute highest weight I would allow myself without serious starvation and exercise to get that number down. It was creeping up over the last few decades to a number that was now alarming. I didn't know then that eating disorders are progressive. They don't get better by themselves; they get more dangerous; all addictions have that fact in common. My long-time friend was beginning to turn on me. I wasn't getting the same high, and I was riddled with remorse soon after. I had to eat more during my binges, and focus on sweets and simple carbohydrates. My use of food began to feel like I was letting something dangerous out of a cage, and then trying to get it back inside and under control. It was becoming more and more difficult to accomplish as this little kitten grew into a full grown lion with sharp claws.

You see, all along, I thought I was in control, but I never was. That is the cunning part of addiction. One starts off believing they have control over their addiction, and by the time they realize they do not, it is far too late. Now there is a dependency on the drug of choice; be it alcohol, drugs, food, gambling, sex and others. Any substance or action that takes the pain of living away for awhile becomes the drug of choice. Some people try on many different "friends" until they find the right fit. Others use more than one to get by. In my case, I also became addicted to spending money. I spent my way into a bankruptcy, but still couldn't stop. Still, food, especially sweets is and always will be my drug of choice. It fits the best and soothes me the greatest.

Though I may become abstinent, or some refer to it as remission, I will always have the disease of compulsive eating patiently waiting to claim me when I've lowered my defenses. In recovery, the disease of compulsive overeating is referred to as cunning, baffling and patient. Anyone who has suffered from any addiction will well understand this concept. One is never completely free of the compulsion. It takes a lot of dedication, perseverance and work to be able to live with lions every day of one's life. It was so easy to slip into my addictions way back then. Now I'm in a battle for my life to escape their deadly talons so rooted in my soul. There some difficult concepts I have to accept in order to achieve a bstinence, and I must remind myself daily to sustain abstinence.

They are:

- I will always be an addict, I will never be cured.
- I have to find a middle ground in my life instead of the concept of good or bad.
- I am a good person whom bad things have happened to, not the otherway around.
- I will make progress every day, though I won't be perfect; no one is.
- I have to stay in touch with God on a daily basis.
- I have to stay in touch with myself and what is going on inside on a daily basis
- I need to meet or talk to people regularly who suffer what I do, many have great recovery to share, and my sharing will help others.
- I have to believe that I am loveable and deserve happiness.

As I continue on my journey of recovery, I am learning new living

I may have given up the diet battle but I still retained the illusion that one day a miracle would happen and I would be thin again and able to eat normally. Is that not the illusion of all food addicts? We want to believe that some day we will be normal eaters. That is a different kind of battle but in the same war. Mentally I continued the battle of illusion, hoping against hope that something, anything would happen. It did.

OA happened. I rejoined OA in January of 02 and began to work program. Yet, the battle of illusion continued for two and a half solid years. I could not and I would not give up the dream of being thin and able to eat whatever I wanted. The war waged on and I suffered terribly emotionally. I wanted so badly to be able to stay abstinent and to be in good recovery. Still I hung onto the hope that each day my dream would come true. By the end of those two and a half years of working program, I was battle weary. The war continued and I saw no end in sight. It had been a long, cruel, vicious war and the cost was the person I was meant to be. In my exhaustion, I found the little white flag and wearily I raised it in defeat. I surrendered the illusion of being a normal eater. I gave up the fight against my obesity and admitted I would never be able to control my food. Only then was my Higher Power able to step in, take from me my obsession with food and grant me freedom. The price is steep (self-will) but freedom gave me back the person I was meant to be.

Are you still under the illusion that you can control your food?

How long have you waged the war on addiction?

Are you battle-weary?

How much longer will you continue into battle?

Are you ready to admit defeat and accept that surrender is needed?

Do you want freedom from the obsession with food?

Love in recovery,

A Topic Setter for Journey to Recovery



### **SPOTLIGHT ON OA NEWCOMERS**

(Click Title To Join)

### **TOPIC ~ INTO ACTION**

Welcome to the The Recovery Group's (TRG)  
Newcomers Program.

I'm your topic leader today. I am also a compulsive eater. I introduce myself like that instead of saying I am a compulsive overeater because I have, at times, been an overeater and an undereater. I am compulsive about food. In 1987, I hit my bottom. I had made a decision to not diet or be concerned about weight anymore and I was going to eat whatever I wanted to eat. This worked for a little while and then I became obsessed about dieting again. I woke up in the morning, and my first thought was what I was going to eat or not going to eat that day. Sometimes I had decided the night before to be on a diet and that usually lasted until noon. I bought bags of sugary things, telling myself it

skills, instead of surviving skills.

- I'm learning that I can't control how others perceive me, so I must be true to myself. My external visage will reflect my internal one anyway, so there is where I need to work.
- I've learned that I only need to concern myself with this day, and this day only. Sometimes I only need to get through the next hour, and that is okay too. Even if I have to white knuckle my way through it, I know at the other end, it does get better.
- I do not need to wake up each day dreading the rest of my life. I do not have to depend on chaos in my life to know that I'm alive either.
- I've learned what it means to let go. I've learned that I can't control events, people or situations no matter how hard I try. So I've learned to let go, not in defeat, but in survival.
- I'm also not color blind anymore. When I see a red light, I know it doesn't mean charge ahead, it means stop a while, take a closer look at the situation or person, and listen to my gut feeling about it.
- Living life needn't be viewed as a problem. However, I have to be present to live it, even with its ups and downs. When I'm in the food, I'm not present. I'm somewhere else.
- In my life there have been plenty of volunteers offering to live my life for me. They had a million suggestions and advice that they believed I needed. Though I was up to my hip boots in the shit of other people's good intentions, I never thought of putting down the shovel and just walking away from it.
- Finally, I've learned to stop going to a dry well expecting that this time it might be different; I might find the sustenance I need there. This is part of what I call "putting on my big girl panties" and growing up. Life is always going to have its lumps, everyone experiences them. I refuse to live in self pity any longer. Living in self pity is best described by Maya Angelou -

*"Self-pity in its early stages is as snug as a feather mattress. Only when it hardens does it become uncomfortable."*

Recovery from any addiction is a long road paved with the triumphs of those who have passed before us. I have to keep my eyes faced forward, not side to side or backward. The distractions there can suck me back into a life I no longer want. Addiction is a formidable foe because it fights dirty. It starts as an offer of friendship and escape, and then ever so gradually turns killer. It's an ambush killer thereafter. It waits patiently for its victim to let their guard down. It grows stronger when loss, anger, sadness, or worry becomes present in one's life. It tempts with an irresistible Siren's call and the promise of a quick fix for all the pain and pressures of life. Life isn't easy, but it shouldn't be feared. Using is not a cure for life, or a way to get through it. The solution is simple, but it isn't easy. Those who are addicted will be in for the fight of their lives to rid them of it, but the rewards are so very worth it.

.. A Member and Trusted Servant of TRG

was cheaper to buy them in bulk, and that I could make them last a long while, but they were gone in a day or two. I ate sugar until I felt sick, went to bed until I felt better, then got up and ate more sugar.

Eventually, I found myself at an OA meeting. My HP spoke to me (in my mind) during the meeting and when I left, I had my plan of eating in place. I would stop eating my binge foods and not eat between meals. Actually, I thought you had to stop eating compulsively to be in OA, so that's what I did.

My plan of eating remains the same. I have not been perfect with it for these over-twenty years. But I can tell you that the way the program and the Twelve Steps of OA have changed my life has not gone away.

My first thought in the morning now is about my day. What do I need to do? I don't really think about food until time for lunch because I always eat the same thing for breakfast. And now my last thought at night is no longer remorse over what I have done, but is instead gratefulness to my Higher Power.

I have learned to share the things that are eating me with other recovering people--online and face to face. I am so grateful for OA and for TRG.

Here's what I would like to say about the basics of the OANewcomer Program of TRG.

We at TRG have found that when people join Overeaters Anonymous (OA) or TRG for the first time, they want and need a lot of information quickly. This series is meant to give you an overview and answer questions.

In the next few weeks, you will meet many of the trusted servants of TRG. They will give you an overview of the OA Program (the 12 Steps and Traditions) which tells you how to stop eating compulsively. You'll learn how to get a sponsor, how to attend online meetings, protocol for sharing on different loops and help you navigate TRG. You'll learn about the eight tools of OA, about OA and AA Literature, how to choose a food plan and many other things.

The groups on TRG where you share are called loops. Most of the loops of TRG are on Listserv by LSoft. But others are on Yahoo. Even in the newcomer's program, this loop (OANewcomers) is on LSoft and the more casual loop (NewcomersToRecovery) is on Yahoo. There will be help available for using both types of loops.

TRG Online meetings are registered with OA. OA does not recognize any lists or loops, so TRG loops are not OA. But they are filled with people working the OA program and using them to communicate with others who are doing the same.

On to the first assignment. For most of the topics, you will be given something to read and questions to answer. If you are getting too much mail, it is not so important that you read the other answers. It IS important for you to read the leader's share and answer the questions yourself.

In my face to face meeting we read something called "Our Invitation to You." Please read it, then answer the following questions, by replying to this email (to the loop: I will read them there and don't need a copy in my mailbox).



## LOOP SPOTLIGHTS

This month we are spotlighting those special loops whose coordinators or trusted servants present sharing topics to their members. The topics usually begin with a quotation followed by the esh of the topic leader and always end with at least one question ~ sometimes more. All members of the loop are invited to share their experience, strength and hope back in response to the question.

### SPOTLIGHT ON OAONLINE

(Click Title To Join)

### T OPIC ~ INTO ACTION

*There is action and more action.*

*AABB, Into Action, page 88*

I've heard many times 'It's not "into thinking," "into analyzing" or "into feelings" ... it is Into Action!' Today I celebrate when I take action. About two years ago I spilled water on my laptop. I knew that I was responsible and accepted the situation fairly easily. Fortunately I had insurance coverage to have the computer fixed yet I did nothing. I did not call to have the laptop repaired because I was afraid I would be asked how the damage occurred and that I would then have to pay for the repair myself. This situation reminds me of an expression I've heard lately: *Don 't believe everything you think.*

**When I finally was ready to take action and face my fear (many months later) I was not asked how the damage occurred; there was no cost to me AND the repairman came to my house. I learned a valuable lesson: my fear (based on a faulty, erroneous belief) blocked me from my good (having the use of my laptop for several months).**

**To day I am aware that my life is a series of actions, even if the action is simply being still. Every morning the first thing I do (other than go to the bathroom) is sit still for Prayer & Meditation. Taking this time to connect with God each morning gives me the presence of mind to take the next right action over and over again throughout the day. Without taking action, I cheat myself out of a full, rich vibrant life!**

**Are you taking action today?**

**What is one area that would benefit from you taking action?  
How have the 12 Steps affected your attitude regarding taking action?**

**A blessed, abstinent, sane and serene day to all.**

**Joyfully abstinent, recovered & emotionally sober by the grace of God,**

**An OAOnline Member & Topic Setter**

<http://www.therecoverygroup.org/invitation.html>

If you are a compulsive eater, does it mean there is something wrong with you?

Do you believe compulsive eating is a disease?

Are you guaranteed recovery? What are the terms of the guarantee?

What food plan does OA use?

How does the last paragraph make you feel?



### TRG SERVICE

For a list of service opportunities, please contact

[TRGDirectorofAdms@yahoo.com](mailto:TRGDirectorofAdms@yahoo.com) or  
[MtgAdm@TheRecoveryGroup.org](mailto:MtgAdm@TheRecoveryGroup.org)



OA NEWCOMER'S BEGINS TODAY

[CLICK TO JOIN](#)

## SPOTLIGHT ON DIABETES

(Click Title To Join)

### TOPIC ~ BIG DOG

Good Morning Everyone,

I belong to another support forum and the leader was talking about how he overheard someone say another about a third party, "If you can't play with Big Dog then don't get off the porch." The saying stayed in his mind for three days, then he heard a song sang by the duo Van Zant. The song is called "Takin' Up Space".

*"If you're gonna go--go all the way  
If you're gonna stay stand your ground  
If you can't run with the big dogs  
Big dog, let me walk you out  
If ya can't lead, let me by you  
If ya won't follow get out the way  
You're takin up space."*

And finally,

Life's too short to live in caution  
But life's too long not to live at all.

Our leader used this in his lesson asking if we were going to take the risk to play with Big Dog or would we lay on our death bed and say, "Woe is me, I let me little fears run my life and make my choices." He wondered if we would really lose that weight this time or will we climb up on the porch and hide from the dogs????

This lesson really got my attention because shortly after I read it we went out for dinner. A man came in with a t-shirt that had written on the back, "If you can't play with Big Dogs, then don't get off the porch."

So, I sat down and answered his question: I AM THE BIG DOG!!!!

He wrote back that I was exactly right, that I am the Big Dog. Then he asked, "Now, who do you want to play with?"

I told him the story about Big Dog:

*Are you a Big Dog or are you staying on the porch afraid to risk going all out -- doing WHATEVER it takes -- for your abstinence?*

Right on,

DIABETES LOOP TOPIC SETTER, Big Dog

*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*

" In the deepest part of a compulsive eater's soul  
is the realization that recovery begins when we find one another."

# SERENDIPITY