

Region 9

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Abstinence and Recovery

I am so grateful that I have my abstinence - physically, emotionally, and spiritually. But I can't say it's always like that with me. I have kept my physical recovery since I started with the OA program. I've always written my food down, and turned it over to my H.P. and sponsor. I realize that Abstinence is the most important thing in my life, without exception. I'm willing to ask for help, ask questions, and admit I am powerless over food. I surrendered to this fact.

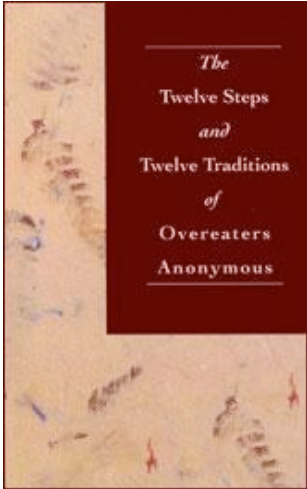
When I'm in recovery, emotionally and spiritually, I am doing step 3 to the maximum. But the times when I'm finding it a bit difficult, I still continue with the 12 Steps, the 9 Tools, the 12 Traditions, and the 12 Concepts of OA Service. I still reach out, and I get help. This is the beauty of OA - Our unity. Knowing that we need to give it away in order to keep it. And the hope that our program gives us.

Everyday I learn more about myself. I'm more self aware. I'm more willing to change - for the better. If I was still picking up the food, I wouldn't notice the things I notice. If I was still in the food, I wouldn't have received so many miracles. Abstinence and Recovery is the best place to be. Thank you Overeaters Anonymous!

Susan,
Region 9 Chair



Steps, Traditions and Concepts for June-July



Step 6 - Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.

Step 7 - Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.

Tradition 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.

Tradition 7 - Every OA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.

Concept six- The World Service Business Conference has entrusted the Board of Trustees with the primary responsibility for the administration of Overeaters Anonymous.

Concept seven - The Board of Trustees has legal rights and responsibilities accorded to them by OA Bylaws, Subpart A; the rights and responsibilities of the World Service Business Conference are accorded to it by Tradition and by OA Bylaws, Subpart B.

Abstinence and Recovery

My name is Ester and I'm a compulsive overeater.

Earlier this month I celebrated my fifth birthday at OA. Five years of recovery, although not of 100% abstinence. There was the 'honeymoon' of the first two years (as I know many of us call it), and then the 'coming back to reality' - the difficulties, the changes, the ups and downs. But through all that, the path has always been clear to me - stay in course, OA is the only solution.

OA has taught me so much! I have a food plan that I have been following quite rigorously since day one, I'm learning to view myself in a different light, to accept myself and others, and to learn from my mistakes. I'm even learning to be present in the moment - neither in the past, nor looking into the future - and that's a great gift. It is a lot of work, indeed. But throughout it all, it has always been clear to me that OA is the only answer. Even when it was hard to work the steps, when my inner self resisted, when



sticking to my plan of eating was difficult - all along I never stopped going to meetings, have always had a sponsor, and have always tried to give service to those who give back to us so generously.

I am a true believer in the three pillars of the program - physical, emotional and spiritual. However, the physical aspect has always been a very important aspect in my life. I realize that doing the work emotionally and spiritually will ultimately have an effect on my physical appearance; yet, abstaining from harmful food remains my main objective.

My Higher Power does a great deal for me, but I have to do things for myself too, at least that's my strong belief. So I try to stick to my food plan no matter what (and admit to having relapses), but always try to get back on track as soon as I can. With the help of my sponsor, the meetings, the program, I can remain on course even if the sailing is not always smooth.

Abstinence is an essential part of my recovery, a very central component. Without abstaining from allergic foods and from binge, emotional eating, my recovery would not be possible.

I thank OA, my sponsor, the community and my Higher Power for having shown me the way.

Ester, Israel

Here is a reading on Abstinence. Can you guess which OA piece of literature it comes from (book or pamphlet)? You can find the answer on the last page of this newsletter.



There are people who come to our meeting every week and complain that they can't get abstinent. But when we offer the solution of the Twelve Steps, they pooh-pooh the idea. They think that holding hands, talking on the phone, and going to meetings should be enough.

It's not enough. I would not have over five years of abstinence today if I hadn't been willing to work the Steps, make commitments, and have a sponsor. My Fourth and Fifth Steps were tedious and time-consuming, and they made me cry. My Ninth Step cost me money, not to mention the humiliation of the social amends. My life was precarious for about a year and a half as I assimilated new behaviors and stifled old ones. And you know what I got for all this discomfort? A comfortable abstinence.

I want to keep this comfortable abstinence, so I'm always providing service to my meeting and sponsoring as many babies as want to work the Steps. I am afraid that if I refused to be of service to this program, I wouldn't need abstinence anymore; I'd have plenty of extra time to fill with binges.

I've lived through plenty in the past five years. I moved, changed jobs, got married, lost two babies, gave birth to a wonderful baby girl, and battled some serious health problems. This is life. I'm a

compulsive eater, no different from the other compulsive eaters who come to our meeting and complain and hold hands and talk on the phone and binge. I wish they would listen, work the Steps, provide service, and sponsor. I'm quite sure this program would work for them, just as it works for me and for so many others who have found the willingness.

Abstinence and Recovery

I spent my first three years in OA thinking that by diligently going to meetings, doing service, working with a sponsor and going through the 12 Steps, I would be able to stick to my food plan at the time which was three moderate meals a day and two snacks in between.

Without a doubt my life improved dramatically in these 3 years, but I couldn't stay abstinent for longer than a few weeks or months at a time. When I returned to my old ways with food the mental torture was worse than ever and I was worried that I was a hopeless case that would never find freedom.

After a particularly uncomfortable binge, while on holidays, I felt utterly at a loss as to what to do next. I met a lady at a meeting and she gave me some good advice... PRAY. A few days later I came across a group of OA members who seemed very 'sober'.

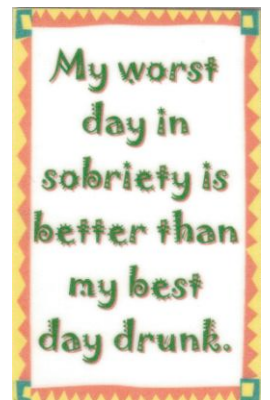
Several of them hadn't eaten off their food plan in over 20 years.

This was definitely something I wanted so I asked one of the members what they were doing.

This lady had an understanding of abstinence that I hadn't come across before. She didn't believe in trigger foods but rather believed that any food was a trigger if it wasn't on her food plan. Furthermore, her food plan didn't allow for any grey areas as it was all weighed and measured.

She also believed that a compulsive overeater is absolutely powerless over the first bite and that no amount of will power is sufficient to prevent picking up the first bite, therefore SURRENDER to the fact that she was completely powerless over food was essential.

Her food plan seemed dramatic and I didn't think I would be able to do what she had done to find abstinence. God, however, had different plans as something happened to me that day 5 ½ years ago and I haven't had to take a bite off my weighed and measured food plan since.



anything I could have imagined.

This new found freedom from food allowed me to see clearly that I had little freedom from fear and resentment.

I was at odds with almost everyone I came into contact with. I learned that the solution to this lay in the 12 steps, which promised, amongst other things, 'happiness' and 'freedom'.

By surrendering to God's will not mine the steps are slowly taking me to a place where I can give more and more without expecting anything in return. This new focus and way to live has given me a life better than

Fawn, Cork, Ireland

The group's treasurer



Getting elected as a treasurer is real vote of confidence from your group, making you the person in charge of the financial aspects of running a meeting.

We have to always keep in mind that even though the basis of our program is spiritual in nature, it requires solid financial support in order to keep the message going - check out tradition 7 if you need a reminder...

In most groups, the treasurer is responsible for -

1. passing the basket to collect 7th tradition contributions
2. taking care of rent payments
3. transferring money to the literature person (to keep a current literature stoke)
4. covering the costs of the coffee table
5. paying visiting speakers their traveling expenses
6. keeping track and reporting the group about its financial status

We all have to keep in mind that keeping track of the money we collect is not the sole responsibility of the treasurer - it is each and everyone's responsibility. Be involved in order to keep your group healthy. Making sure the reserve is reasonable and passing on the rest to your Intergroup, checking that the donations are reported correctly (it happened in the past the meeting closed and all the money collected "got lost" and in other cases money disappeared from the basket).



Keep in mind that rotation of service is always important and having two members giving service as treasurers is always better than just one. This insures that the financial safety of your group will be maintained.

And a final note - region 9 as a whole is not self supporting yet - keep that in mind next time you put your donation in the basket.

7th tradition skits from WSO - [available online](#)

"Think what a difference it would make if every member put in at least one more dollar a meeting. All of OA's activities -supporting members, translating literature into different languages, public awareness, and reaching the professional - could happen sooner and better, if more money from contributions was available..."

Encourage your group members to give generously - it all stays in the family!

Abstinence & Recovery



The Twelve Steps has helped me to become a more loving, caring and gentle person to myself. This is a very clear sign of recovery to me. When I first came in, I was punishing myself for everything I did, or did not do. I was abstinent, and worked my steps very hard, day after day, but I was afraid to call my sponsor because she seemed so tough to me. I dropped out after five months and didn't think I could ever achieve five months of abstinence again. Two weeks ago I celebrated 5

years of abstinence. Thank you Higher Power.

My abstinence is the most important thing in my life today, without that I wouldn't be able to be anything for my family, others, or myself. What I experience when I take contact to my Higher Power, is freedom. Freedom from the obsession, freedom from the craving. I have learned the hard way how it is to live as a compulsive overeater in the disease.

I pray and meditate twice a day, go to meetings whenever I can; like this morning where I was at a meeting in my homegroup, and everybody shared experience, strength and hope, and I got lifted by the spirit and love of that meeting. I reach out to other OA's in different ways; like call them, do service as Secretary, both in Region 9 and Denmark, I participate in social gatherings with other OA members, I do my step work on a daily basis, I'm sponsoring people, I commit to an action plan for my day every day... I thank OA, Higher Power, and my sponsor for where I am today. It wouldn't have been possible to do without you. You make me grateful for every new day I'm here.

Love in Service,

Mette

Region 9 Secretary

Reminders

1. August 6, 2013 - Proposed Bylaw Amendments to Bylaws Committee
2. August 15, 2013 - Region 9 September Newsletter Deadline (articles to Newsletter Coordinator)
3. August 29 to September 1, 2013 - OA Convention 2013, Cleveland Ohio ([registration information](#))
4. September 1 to 8, 2013 - Region 9 Week
5. November 6 to 9, 2013 - Region 9 Assembly & Convention, Israel ([registration information](#))

Abstinence and recovery



At this moment - today - I am blessed with the certainty that I belong in OA. I have been blessed with this certainty from the very first meeting. I also received abstinence from day one and the obsession with sweet, fat-and salty snacks, that used to make up many of my meals and in-between snacks, has been removed - however sometimes it is a bumpy ride. Since I joined the fellowship I have lost 70 pounds. My abstinence has changed over the course of time as my disease finds cracks and holes (new interesting food, that I did not consider a problem) and tries to creep back into my life. With the help of the steps, my sponsor and all the incredible people in OA I can deal with this on a daily basis.

All this is a tremendous relief; however, I am well aware, that recovery goes beyond that. I cannot be in recovery without abstinence but abstinence does not mean recovery in itself. Compulsive eating is a spiritual sickness and my supreme task is to develop my relationship with my higher power in order to strengthen my spiritual life.

At a meeting today I heard "ok' is the chief enemy of 'splendid'" (I hope my translation works). This reminded me to take an honest look at my spiritual recovery. Do I sometimes slack and let the disease have its way and think to myself "I'm doing okay" and "it is not as bad as it was before I joined OA" - yes I do. I have a God shaped hole in my soul that I still sometimes try to fill out with food, tv, shopping etc. When I stop and turn to my higher power, in prayer, meditation and/or writing, I always get what I need in that situation. Also, I try and listen when my higher power speaks through other people. The other day I was grocery shopping and found an interesting food item. I debated with myself whether it was considered crisps - which are a trigger food for me - or not. I went ahead to buy it - put it on the counter and waited my turn. Suddenly a lady in front of me says in a very loud voice "is this your bag of crisps?" I got my answer. For that and this program I am deeply thankful.

Marlene, Denmark





Are you familiar with the "Welcome Back" and "Members in Relapse" pamphlets?

Twelve Step Within items - reminding those who left the rooms that we still care. Either send by mail or give in person to those you know who left the rooms, to encourage them to come back.

Not just for their personal recovery - but for your own.

We do better together

Abstinence & Recovery

Since I came into the OA rooms 27 months back, my abstinence has been evolving with me. At the beginning it has been 3 moderate meals a day with nothing in between and no sugar, then a pure diet that I was following with obsession to the absolute dot, but with some time my soul started rebelling to it and I realized I could not do anymore of this imposed diet and thus decided to change my plan of eating before relapsing. First I thought that after those months full of rigidity I deserved (sometimes the disease tries to cajole me...) a "more free" plan of eating, but soon I understood that as a compulsive overeater I can't afford to underestimate my powerful, baffling and cunning disease and so I started again with a precise plan of eating that I sent every day to my sponsor.

With the days passing by few items have become compulsive and I had to eliminate them. For some it has been easier while for others I took more time but I did take them all out... till the next one! I also discovered other items that were not good for my body and I decided to quit them or to reduce drastically their intake.

Along this path of discovery, one day at a time, I realized that my abstinence, that is a gift of my HP, gave me the clarity I needed for my recovery. The more I'm abstinent, the more I'm able to respect my plan of eating and my body. The more I'm abstinent, the more I have the space and the energy to work the program, to discover and accept my character defects and to trust my HP and let go of the control. The more I'm abstinent, the more I learn to work with others, to trust them and to share with them also what I still fear...

Every day I keep asking my HP to grant me the courage to do the next right thing, to act as per His will and to keep considering my abstinence as the most vital part of my life. Too many times in the past I chose to follow my god-food just to find myself one more time back in my anger, fear, self-pity, victim role and pessimism, all this had always taken me to a point of stillness. A meditation I recently read says more or less... instead of swearing to darkness you can switch on the light... as the one that comes from a small candle, the candle we light at every meeting to remind us that we have a solution, that at the end of the tunnel there is always light, that today I can choose to be abstinent, to work the program and to be in recovery by doing His will.

Recovery has taught me that I don't need to be perfect, far from it; the most important thing is that I do the best I can just for today. I also learnt that during hard times I can choose to give service and to use the program's tools instead of leaving my HP's hand and go towards the well-known god-food and the disease, with all that it carries with it.

One day at a time today I have the choice to light up symbolically a candle, because each time I do it I choose not to give power to my fears but to trust the program, my HP and to keep walking along the recovery path, with commitment and in abstinence, to see realized the promises of the program in my life. It works if I work it!



Sara, Italy

Astinenza e Recupero

Da quando sono entrata in OA 27 mesi or sono, la mia astinenza è cambiata insieme a me. All'inizio erano tre pasti moderati al giorno senza nulla in mezzo e senza zuccheri, in seguito una mera dieta che seguivo con ossessione al grammo, ma poi la mia anima ribelle si è risvegliata e ho visto che non riuscivo più a seguire l'ennesima dieta impostami dall'esterno e così ho deciso di cambiare piano alimentare prima di ricadere. Prima mi sono detta che dopo tutta quella rigidità mi meritavo (a volte la malattia usa anche la lusinga...) un regime alimentare " più libero" ma dopo qualche tempo ho realizzato che come mangiatrice

compulsiva non mi posso permettere di sottovalutare la mia furba, potente e sconcertante malattia e quindi ho ricominciato a seguire un piano alimentare preciso e programmato che mandavo ogni giorno al mio sponsor.

Con il tempo alcuni alimenti sono diventati compulsivi e quindi li ho dovuti eliminare, per alcuni è stato più semplice, per altri ci ho messo più tempo, ma alla fine li ho eliminati tutti... fino alla prossima scoperta! Ho anche scoperto altri alimenti che facevano male al mio corpo e quindi li ho eliminati o ne ho ridotto di molto l'assunzione.

In questo cammino di scoperta, un giorno alla volta, ho capito che la mia astinenza, che è un dono del mio PS, mi ha portato la chiarezza di cui ho bisogno per il mio recupero. Più sono astinente e più sono in grado di rispettare il piano alimentare e il mio corpo. Più sono astinente e più ho lo spazio e l'energia necessari per lavorare sul programma, per scoprire e imparare ad accettare i miei difetti di carattere, ad affidarmi al mio PS e a lasciare andare il controllo. Più sono astinente e più imparo a lavorare con gli altri, a fidarmi di loro, ad affrontare e a condividere anche quello che mi fa paura...

Ogni giorno chiedo al mio PS il coraggio di fare la prossima cosa giusta, di agire secondo la sua volontà e di continuare a considerare l'astinenza come la parte più importante della mia vita. Troppe volte in passato ho scelto di seguire il dio-cibo per poi ritrovarmi ancora una volta, nella rabbia, nella paura, nell'auto-commiserazione, nel vittimismo e nel pessimismo più totale che mi hanno sempre e solo portato all'immobilità. Una meditazione che ho riletto recentemente dice più o meno... invece di maledire l'oscurità puoi accendere la luce... come quella di una piccola candela, la candela che a ogni riunione accendiamo per ricordarci che una soluzione esiste, che alla fine del tunnel c'è sempre la luce, che oggi posso scegliere di essere astinente, di seguire il programma e di imparare a recuperare seguendo la Sua volontà.

Il recupero mi ha insegnato che non devo essere perfetta, sono lontano dall'esserlo, ma questo non è importante fino a quando faccio del mio meglio per oggi. Ho anche imparato che nei momenti bui posso scegliere di fare servizio e di utilizzare gli strumenti del programma invece di lasciare la mano del mio PS e andare verso il conosciuto dio-cibo e la malattia con tutto quello che porta con sé. Un giorno alla volta oggi ho la scelta di accendere simbolicamente una candela, perché ogni volta che lo faccio scelgo di non farmi bloccare dalle mie paure ma di fidarmi del programma, del mio PS e di continuare sulla strada del recupero, in affidamento e in astinenza, per vedere realizzarsi nella mia vita le promesse del programma. Funziona se io lo faccio funzionare!

Sara, Italy



**2013 ASSEMBLY 6-8TH & CONVENTION 8-9TH OF
NOVEMBER IN ISRAEL**

Register TODAY

What's New on the Region 9 Website?

(Useable links - press CTRL key and click)

[R9 Chairs Report of WSBC 2013](#)

[Region 9 General Assistance Fund](#)

[Workshops at Italian Conference April 2013](#)

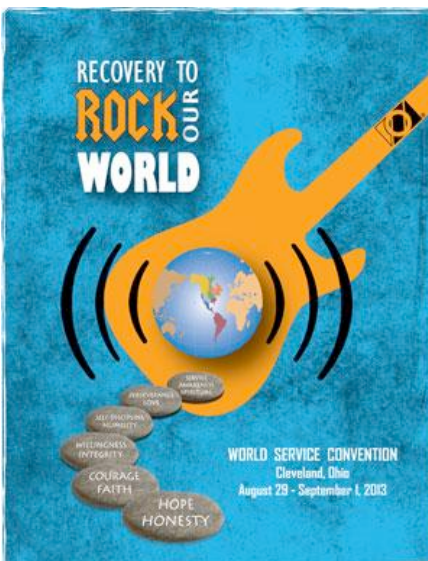
[Translate OA PI Video To Your Own Language](#)

[R9 Newsletter - July 2013](#)



Tips

- Abstinence is the most important thing in my life without exception
- Do service - write an article for Lifeline or the Region 9 Newsletter (or both)
- Abstinent Sponsors are important to our Fellowship



Please join us for the World Service Convention 2013 in Cleveland, Ohio USA from August 29 - September 1, 2013.

Volunteer positions are still available!

Contact the World Service Office at conventioninfo@oa.org

Interested in the latest Convention news?

Sign up for the Convention mailing list at conventioninfo@oa.org

Have you heard that the World Service Convention will offer a Virtual Services Lounge and meetings? Keep an eye out for the Convention schedule for details.

Keep in mind that pre-registration closes on August 6. After August 6, all registrations will be processed onsite at the higher rate.

Want more information?

<http://www.oa.org/world-service-events/world-service-convention/>

Public Information activity report

I would like to share with you an important PI project which was recently carried out by the service body I am a representative of (Intergroup North Italy)

Last January our group conscience decided to donate some copies of OA Brown Book to 45 libraries in the main cities comprised within the geographical boundaries of our Intergroup. Specifically, the books were distributed as follows:

- ✓ 25 books were given to Milan,
- ✓ 6 books were given to Lecco
- ✓ 5 books were given to Saronno
- ✓ 3 books were given to Bergamo
- ✓ 6 books were given to Genua.

Our goal was to provide the public libraries of each city involved with this important piece of OA literature and make sure the books would be correctly indexed in the libraries' catalogues.

The books were bought using the PI funds of the Italian National Service Body.

Each copy was accompanied by a letter of presentation in which the main principle of our program and the history our association in Italy were briefly described. All contact details of OA Italy were clearly reported as well.



With regard to Milan, where my home meeting is, the group conscience of the five OA groups present in the territory, decided to donate a copy of OA Brown Book to all the twenty five public libraries in the city. In order to avoid postal problems or delivery difficulties of the packages, it was decided to consign the literature in person. An OA member contacted the central office of Milan public libraries and arrange a meeting with the person in charge of the books distribution service.

On the fixed date, June 24th, four OA members went to the office premises and handed over the twenty-five BB directly to her. They were received with a warm and friendly welcome and had the chance to thoroughly talk about the OA program. They were assured the books would be distributed to all city libraries and correctly entered into the libraries' catalogue.

For the OA members involved it was a great chance to carry the OA message of love, strength and hope outside the meeting rooms!!! This mission made them live the miracle of coming out of isolation and feel part of a big family.

We all trust this footwork will help us reach out to the still suffering compulsive overeaters of our city. We are grateful to our HP for giving us the inspiration to plan this event and the tools to put our ideas into effect. We turn over the results of our action to His will.

We finally hope our experience may serve to inspire and develop similar projects in other countries as well!

Love in Service,

Sabrina

Compulsive overeater, Italy

From our Trustee's Desk

Abstinence is the most important thing in my life, with no exception. Abstinence is very different from all the diets I used to do for many years before I came to OA. Abstinence is refraining from eating certain foods that are not good for me, foods that make me crave for more of these kinds of foods, or that make me eat compulsively in general.

Abstinence for me is a way of living. It is not something temporary, till I lose some weight. It is the way I behave every day, on a daily basis, just one day at a time.

By being abstinent I have lost weight, I feel better, I like myself, I feel like buying new clothes, dressing nicely, doing my hair, polishing my nails, looking good and feeling pretty.

The change in appearance is not enough. It is good, it is important, but it is not Recovery. Recovery is growing within. Recovery means changing. I learned that the OA program is like a stool with three legs - one physical, one emotional and one spiritual. As the stool needs those three legs in order to be stable, so do I. In order to be in recovery I have to take care of my abstinence (the physical side of the program), as well as of the emotional and spiritual sides of my disease by working the twelve steps and using the tools of the OA program.

By working the steps I learned a lot about myself and acquired tools to improve myself and my life. In time, I learned to implement the principles of the twelve steps in all the affairs of my life. I learned to be **honest** with myself and with others. I have **hope** that my life will get better and better. I have **faith**.

I trust my Higher Power not only with my food but with everything else in my life. I have more **courage** and **integrity** to speak up my mind or shut up when I need to. I am still **willing** to learn more and more about my life and about my character defects. I practice **humility** by seeing myself equal to others; not above anyone else but also not inferior to anybody. I am learning to ask for help, which means that I am able to admit my weakness. I try to be more **disciplined** and not leave everything to chance. I practice **love** whenever possible. I believe that loving brings back love for me and that by loving myself I can truly love others.

I've been working the program for almost 19 years; this is **perseverance** and I try to practice this principle in other areas of my life. In the past I was so busy with my life that I had no time to stop and to look around. In the program, I learned not only to stop but to seize the moment, to thank my Higher Power for being there and to be able to experience the **spiritual awareness**. This special connection with a power greater than myself enables me to let go of my ego and control, which limited my life before.

Last but not least, **service** became a very big part of my life. Service in OA helped my recovery in many ways. It connected me to the meetings and to the fellowship, it taught me a lot, gave me opportunities to travel to new places, to meet new people and to know new cultures. It improved my self-esteem and taught me that to be a trusted servant is much better than to be in control.

I am so grateful for the OA program, for finding a way to live in peace with my food; to deal with my fears, worries and all other problems in my life without the compulsive overeating and with serenity, joy and happiness.

Love in service,

Esti

Ask-It-Basket

(Questions come from OA region 9 members... answers come from OA world service Trustees. Q's & A's have been shortened for our newsletter - anyone wishing the full question & response, please email to Region 9 Chair.)

Q. I am a member of OA recovering from anorexia and compulsive overeating for four years now. I spent two years of my recovery in Ireland, and two years in London. I have recently moved back to Ireland and am based in Co. Clare. I am 24 years old.

I have enjoyed many service positions in OA but am keen to get involved in PI- specifically by doing some public speaking in Secondary Schools/Universities.

I have noticed that the only organizations in Ireland specializing in recovery from eating disorders are based in Dublin and overall there is a real lack of informative services in my locality for young sufferers today. I would like to change that.

I am not sure how this works, what procedures are in place for such PI talks so I thought I would email you to ask your advice? Where do I go from here??

A. PI is very important as our primary purpose is to spread the message of OA to those who still suffer. Every member can spread the message by sharing his or her experience and of course while keeping the anonymity.

If you would like to do PI in the level of the meeting of IG or other SB it is recommended to check the guidelines which you can find in OA website www.oa.org go to documents and there you can find guidelines to PI and to Professional outreach.

In Region 9 we also have a Committee who deals with PI and you can ask them for help. It is possible to go to schools to share your experience and to tell them about OA but you have to follow the guidelines and to be careful about keeping your anonymity and not give promises.

Q. "WHILE OA MAY BE PUBLICISED WE DO NOT BREAK OUR INDIVIDUAL ANONYMITY AT THE LEVEL OF PRESS RADIO, FILM, TV ETC AND ALL PUBLIC MEDIA OF COMMUNICATION" was passed. I asked for clarification of what this meant and she could not explain but suggested that I contact you. Does "DOES ALL PUBLIC MEDIA OF COMMUNICATION" include Facebook and Twitter?

A. The final version of the proposal that was adopted didn't include the term "social media". However, there was considerable debate on the issue. It is my belief that those words were struck from the proposal not because social media isn't included in "public media of communication", but because it is - therefore, Tradition 11's requirement that we remain anonymous at the level of press, radio, films, television and public media of communication would include social media such as Facebook, Twitter, Linked In, etc. Furthermore, WSBC 2011 adopted a policy statement on public media:

Statement on Public Media

While Overeaters Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues, including social media, the delegates of the 2011 World Service Business Conference recommend against any OA member, group or service body

endorsing (sponsoring, creating, funding or using) for OA purposes any public media of communication where the personal anonymity of OA members cannot be maintained.

The entire purpose of social media goes against the principle of anonymity as we understand it. It is meant to bring people together through shared contacts or interests. I have received many friend requests over the years because people found me through mutual friends - despite the fact that I have made my information available only to MY friends. In some cases people have "met" me through people I haven't even met - perhaps a public figure that I admire and with whom I am "friends". Furthermore, when random bits of information appear about me, I have no way to control what pops up for others to see - it could be a favorite television show, or it could be Overeaters Anonymous. For that reason, I no longer "like" pages that refer to OA - nor do I state that I am a member of OA, even though I love this program and want to let others know that we have found a solution to compulsive eating. I may personally tell friends or complete strangers that I am a member of OA, but I may not do it via public media - and there are few things more public than the Internet and social media sites.

The reading on Abstinence comes from: A New Beginning book (Stories of Recovery from Relapse)...The Price of Abstinence (Anonymous)...pg. 46 - 47

Public Information postcards - a way to carry the message.

Contact PI committee for more information

