

Hello my fellow OA friends!

As we didn't get any articles on the suggested topic "*I put my hand in yours and together we can do what we could never do alone...*". I thought I would share some of my own personal experience on the subject of sponsorship within my editorial.

When I came into Programme I still had so much self-will and arrogance in me that I resisted asking anybody for help for a very long time. I certainly wouldn't ever recommend that anybody 'rows their own boat' in such a way.

Similarly, up until fairly recently I adopted the self-same attitude as regards a Plan of Eating. Somewhere along the line I must have totally missed the following sentence in the OA pamphlet by the same name: "*We plan once a day, write it down, commit it to our Higher Power and a sponsor, and then don't think about food until it is time to eat.*" (A Plan of Eating, p.7, 2001)

The *Dignity of Choice* pamphlet also suggests seeking the support of a sponsor in choosing a plan of eating which it describes as "*a tool that moves us toward achieving and maintaining a healthy body weight*" (p.2, 2004). No wonder it's never been my favourite piece of OA literature! It also goes on to state that "*Some of us choose to weigh and measure to free ourselves from having to struggle with daily decisions about how much food to eat.*" (p.7)

These practices appeared totally abhorrent to me for a very long time; however, I'm delighted to say that since the Ilkley retreat earlier this year, I have been doing just what the OA literature suggests at long last. And surprise, surprise - after having plateaued for quite some time at a weight that was nevertheless "*beyond my wildest dreams*" compared to when I first came to OA, but still by no means 'healthy', I now no longer feel a pang of guilt when the Statement on Abstinence is read out at meetings, safe in the knowledge that - just for today - I am indeed working towards a healthy body weight. As they say, "*Don't leave before the miracle happens!*" and "*you are no longer alone*" - or at least only if you choose to be!

Love in Fellowship

Lucy, SBS Editor
Newcastle-upon-Tyne

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We need YOU to submit your shares, stories, letters, artwork, illustrations and poetry.

Share with fellow OAers around Great Britain.

Do some fun service and keep our Fellowship thriving.

Email all submissions to
stepbystep@oagb.org.uk

OR, write to
**SBS c/o OAGB, 483 Green Lanes
London N13 4BS**

Submissions deadline for the Winter 2013 edition of SBS is Friday, 25th October 2013. Topics:

Step Two

Tradition Eleven

Tool of Recovery: Writing

Topic: "No longer is there a sense of hopelessness..."

or any topic/Step/Tradition/Tool of your choice; review a favourite piece of OA-approved literature; or share your experience of an OA Event/Retreat/Workshop

Submissions sent to Step By Step are assumed to be intended for publication and may be subject to editing. All submissions become the property of OAGB for publication and copyright purposes. Submission does not guarantee publication. We do not publish stories that contain outside issues or that do not demonstrate recovery through the OA Programme. Please note your contribution may be held and published in a future edition of Step By Step.

Step By Step presents experiences and opinions of OA members. Opinions expressed herein are not to be attributed to Overeaters Anonymous as a whole, nor does publication of any article imply endorsement, either by Overeaters Anonymous or SBS.

Please note that in line with the policy 'Guidelines for OA Newsletters' (see <http://www.oa.org/pdfs/newsletterguidelines.pdf>) any OA service body is welcome to reprint full articles featured in Step By Step without permission as long as credit is given to SBS. Authors of articles published in this and any future editions of SBS need to therefore be aware of the fact that their articles may be reproduced in other OA publications.

For more information on the Steps and Traditions, visit www.oagb.org.uk

Step One

"We admitted we were powerless over food – that our lives had become unmanageable."

For many years I have struggled with various diets, fads, calorie-counting programmes and so on to try and lose my weight. I was even put on a waiting list to have a gastric band fitted. My family used to joke that I owned every diet book and plan possible!

But this past year a friend introduced me to OA and it has completely changed my life. The first group I attended was so welcoming and friendly. I felt I was in a safe place and was totally comfortable with myself and able to share the realities of my food obsession. I was not going to be judged for what I spoke about. And for the first time in 23 years, the admittance of saying, "I am Ruth and I am a compulsive overeater", began to tear down some of the barriers and excuses I had hidden behind for so long. I am totally powerless over food - it controlled me 24/7. The initial buzz kept me on the Programme for a while, but I still wasn't grasping the abstinence part completely. I also struggled with the 'God concept' due to some issues from my past, growing up within a strict Christian home and school environment.

But after attending an OA convention, I was able to grasp the true meaning of abstinence, as meant for me. I was also able to connect with a Higher Power of MY understanding.

I am no longer alone, fighting my battle of compulsive overeating and purging. I have found a way that works with OA. I have some new, amazing and supportive friends; a wonderful and encouraging sponsor; a new way of thinking and eating. Life is good.

One step at a time.

Ruth

"...admitted we were powerless over food..."

Through the years of (perfectly imperfect) abstinence and recovery I had, Step One had always been the very foundation of my recovery. I am powerless over my desire to stuff my face with (usually sugary) food until I pass out and sleep. I had years of it. And then I got pregnant. Looking back, the de-prioritisation of abstinence and recovery started way before then - I'd moved slowly towards the edge of the OA bed, I suppose. Abstinence had stopped being my number one priority. That wonderful 'All I need to do today to have been a success is to not eat compulsively' approach had gone. I started to eat compulsively again.

It started off as self-soothing – the physical symptoms of the pregnancy, the tiredness. I couldn't cope without it. I wish I had stepped up my recovery instead, found a way to work it that would have worked for me. When the baby was born, my perfectionism kicked in. My insistence on doing everything perfectly, on being the perfect mum, on putting the baby first instead of my abstinence, meant I continued to use food to self-soothe during the sleepless nights/to prop up my attempts to be perfect.

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I ended up in an awful relapse, characterised by extreme self-hatred: I was literally self-harming with the food. As soon as I picked up sugar again, I might as well have been on crack. My husband had never seen me in full-blown relapse, totally in my addiction. I told him lies. I couldn't cope with the baby. In relapse, and not reliant on my HP and the Fellowship, I couldn't cope at all. My attempts to get abstinent failed because, I believe, my physical allergy had been triggered once I picked up the sugar. I'd lost the plot. I was powerless.

I went back into treatment. Not for long, but it was what I needed to get off the sugar. To be reminded that I'm an addict. That I need to be around addicts. That I can stop pretending to be normal and using food to prop up the deception. Abstinence is my priority again. I remind myself today that all is well as long as I don't pick up. I am desperate for my HP in my life. I wish it hadn't taken a relapse (and a subsequent – very expensive – stay in rehab) but I don't know how this surrender, this Step One, would have happened to me otherwise. I pray I never need to be reminded like that again.

Julia, Woking

Tradition Ten

"Overeaters Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the OA name ought never be drawn into public controversy."

OK, this is obvious: OA doesn't recommend this diet or that exercise regime, or sponsor this sport or that church, or publicise this meditation tradition or the works of that spiritual guru. There is always going to be a compulsive eater who hates one of these, but who would make a good stab at following our Twelve Step Programme of recovery if they weren't put off by the association.

OA and its members are, though, inseparable from the society that hosts them. We all need that society: with no social order there would be none of the stability we require to hire rooms, keep our money safely, have literature printed and publicise our existence through 'the media'. Above all, we would not be able to trust anyone or anything.

As individuals, OA members might be, or become through their recovery, active members of society whose very actions express opinions on the issues of the world at large. I might become a church leader, you may be elected as a local councillor, she may be promoted to manage a major company, he to become a TV star. We are all still welcome as rank-and-file OA members: at our home meeting, intergroup or wherever our Twelfth Step service takes us. We might share, in the confidentiality of the meeting, the ups and downs of our external roles and the challenges and boosts to our recovery that these offer. OA members listen non-judgementally and assimilate our experience, strength and hope in recovery, not our views or politics.

Notwithstanding the word "never" in Tradition Ten, though, the OA group is never totally neutral in the society in which it is embedded. At the least it has a relationship with the body from which it hires its meeting room. Keeping this relationship 'uncontroversial' is also Step Ten work, even if it is no more than paying the rent on time, leaving the room tidy and not making too much noise.

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"There is no right or wrong – just consequences"

In a rare case, an OA group could be really controversial just by observing Tradition Three (*"The only requirement for OA membership is a desire to stop eating compulsively."*). Are we prepared for these challenges? Have we policies, and people familiar with them, for (for instance) an accident during a meeting that leads to a lawsuit; a convicted sex offender asking - via a probation officer - to attend our group meetings (with the probation officer); allegations of sexual abuse being made by or against members; unaccompanied children turning up at our meetings; or fraud by one of our trusted servants? Sexual abuse and fraud are crimes, so not reporting them to 'avoid public controversy' would be associating OA with crime.

Ouch! Tradition Ten is vital to OA's message of recovery, but it turns out not to be as easy as I thought! Churches and charities are wrestling with the same issues, though, and Tradition Ten doesn't preclude our learning from their experiences and making use of their footwork.

Sheila, South East England

PS The National Service Board has recently considered a policy for youth in OA - see the April 2013 Board News at http://www.oagb.org.uk/?page_id=94

A Board Member replies:

Sheila raises some interesting points. The issue about public liability insurance (in case of an accident during an OA meeting) has been brought up many times, especially in recent years. Each group needs to ensure that they have this. Many venues will already have this in place, with the cost included as part of the room hire fee. Increasingly nowadays many do not, and they ask the group to obtain their own. The alternative is to move to another venue that automatically includes it. I understand that some Intergroups (IGs) have enquired about obtaining a blanket policy for all their groups.

The matter of young people in OA is also pertinent and frequently asked of OAGB NSB. We investigated and agreed a suggested policy earlier this year (see the above link to Board News).

OAGB NSB is not British OA's governing body, simply another service body that serves the British Fellowship. Obviously we have no governing powers, and can only make suggestions for groups and IGs based on our own experience. We have a policies and procedures manual which outlines each officer's responsibilities. Our accounts are audited annually. Many IGs also have similar policies and it would seem prudent that all service bodies, at whatever level, have these in place.

Personally I am hopeful that if members have a good understanding of the Traditions, common sense and an abstinent, well sponsor to discuss any concerns with, this will go a long way to keeping OA away from public controversy.

If any OA member or service body would like to discuss this matter further, please feel free to contact me - chair@oagb.org.uk.

Sue J, Chair of OAGB's NSB

Tool of Recovery: Plan of Eating

What is a tool? A tool is something to help me do something. For example, a screwdriver may help me loosen or tighten a screw. We pick up a tool when we find it helps us achieve something we want to do. My reading glasses are an essential tool for me; a walking stick is a very good tool but I do not (yet) need a walking stick.

All the nine OA Tools are laid before us as things that we may find useful to aid some aspects of our recovery. They are not rules; they are tools to use if/when we find them useful. I have found that at different stages of my recovery the usefulness of Tools can vary: at one stage, meetings and the phone were most useful; at another, service. Over my years on the recovery road, writing has grown into an ever more important Tool.

But throughout all my years in Programme, one Tool has always been very important to me. That Tool is a Plan of Eating. One of the first things I had to learn about a Plan of Eating is that it is a tool, not a magic cure for my compulsive eating. The purpose of this Tool is to help me achieve and maintain abstinence. So I use this Tool if and in whichever ways it helps my abstinence, just as I would pick up a screwdriver to tighten a screw. The details of this Tool have developed over my recovery journey.

One very important thing to note about this Tool – it is a Plan of Eating, NOT just a food plan.

What is the difference between a Plan of Eating and a food plan?

A food plan

Though for me, and I believe for most of us, a Plan of Eating has always included some sort of food plan, a food plan is just a part of the Tool. We use it if it helps us achieve and maintain abstinence and we do not use it if doesn't help. A food plan may just be a list of the foods - and often the amounts - we agree with ourselves we will eat at each meal, and/or it may include three categories of foods:

1. Foods we agree we will not eat - *red foods*
2. Foods we may eat occasionally - *amber foods*
3. Foods we may eat with more freedom - *green foods*

We may find a food plan by trial and error and re-trial; by reading the pamphlets *A Plan of Eating* and *Dignity of Choice*; and by talking to sponsors and others in OA. Many of us also seek professional help.

A Plan of Eating

A Plan of Eating encompasses much more than the specific foods we agree to eat that day. It may include times at which we will eat; places where we will eat; that we will not eat standing up; we will not read while we eat; we will not eat while we prepare food; we will not lick a spoon as we put food out. Many report their food plan to their sponsor daily. Some include prayer before starting to eat, or starting to prepare food. There are many, many different behaviours.

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"If you don't want to have to turn it over, don't pick it up"

But in each case, the exact details of the practices that we include in our Plan of Eating will be those things that help us maintain abstinence. That is our individual Plan of Eating that is the Tool that works best for us. The details of my Plan of Eating have developed over my years in OA. I have always found it helpful to talk to my sponsor about my plan, but not every day. What I do find important is to mention my Plan of Eating in my inventory. Our sponsors, sponsees and OA friends may all have found a slightly different Tool that works well for them. We each have to find the Plan of Eating Tool that best helps us maintain abstinence, whatever others may do. A bit like using the right-sized walking stick to fit my height and length of arm.

My Plan of Eating is part of my spiritual journey

If just making a Plan of Eating would enable me to be abstinent, I would not need OA. My difficulty is that I have the mental disease of compulsive eating: that is, the disease is in my thinking. It is in the blank spot in my mind that precedes a first compulsive bite. It is in the total but brief loss of any memory of the devastation of a binge. It is in the total lack of any resistance to that first compulsive bite.

There is that very important passage in the Big Book starting at the bottom of page 84, *'And we have ceased fighting...'* (*Alcoholics Anonymous, Fourth Edition, 2001*). Here, after an inspiring description of freedom from our terrible disease, we are shown two very important limits on that freedom. First, I am reminded it is only a daily reprieve. All I am offered is a reprieve for that day. I cannot assume anything like, "Now I have got it," or "I will never eat compulsively again." I am also reminded that that reprieve is dependent upon keeping in fit spiritual condition.

Now, that keeping in fit spiritual condition demands constant work of the Programme. For me, this is constant work practising the Steps. Through all my years in OA, it is an ongoing journey. What seems to matter is not that I reach some impossible perfection but that I am constantly doing my best, falling back, picking myself up and trying again. This attempt seems enough for freedom. At the end of *Our Invitation to You* which we read in most meetings, there is that passage beginning, *'It is weakness, not strength...'* (*Overeaters Anonymous, Second Edition, 2001, p.5*) and that is my experience.

My Plan of Eating is also a spiritual exercise. If I want to keep a muscle in good condition, I have to exercise it. Likewise, if I want to be in fit spiritual condition, I need spiritual exercises. Sticking to a Plan of Eating and very specifically to a food plan gives me daily practice in dropping self-will. There is a very telling sentence in the pamphlet *Dignity of Choice* on page four near the bottom of the section *Reviewing Our Eating Patterns*: *'When we think of this process not as deprivation but as a positive act and an ongoing spiritual discipline, we begin to find freedom.'*

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Also, I have found it important to write about my Plan of Eating in my daily inventory: not just a note to say I stuck to it (or failed), but to write deeply about my thinking and acceptance or otherwise of the plan, and how that plays out in my strict following of the Steps.

And overall, gratitude for freedom from compulsive eating. Every time I honestly thank whatever I conceive that Higher Power might be, I am admitting my own powerlessness and my acceptance of Steps Two and Three. I am accepting with humility the great gift I have been given.

Kathleen

Just Practise

For years I kept it secret
I would bury hidden fear
Never open up my heart and mind
Even to people I hold dear

Afraid of what people think
Too scared of rejection
I kept quiet, didn't ask for help
To myself I gave protection

But thoughts and feelings simmer
Confusion makes me weak
A crisscross of emotions
Too painful, easier not to speak

But now I'm told to open up
Talk to us, just reach out
Contact those who understand
But years of being private makes me doubt

"Just practise," I was told
It's not so scary then
Send a text or make a call
They understand, the OA ladies and men

So I practise, try to open up
Something I've never done
A fear built up over many years
Takes a while to overcome.

Debra

The Willingness Prayer

I would like to share a prayer that was given to me by my Higher Power when I was going through a really tough time in many areas of my life: in OA, in working through deep-rooted emotions in another fellowship, and in my life in general. I was overwhelmed by that negative voice which told me that I couldn't do it, couldn't keep on going day after day. But Higher Power just kept telling me that I didn't have to know how to do 'it', didn't have to be able to do 'it'. All I ever have to be is willing to do 'it', and the knowledge, strength and support will be given to me.

Time and again I have put my faith in this concept, and time and again I have been amazed at how easily things can come to me when I have faith and put myself in the hands of my Higher Power. But often I forget, and think I have to know all the answers, have to do it all myself. So Higher Power gave me this prayer to remind me that all I ever have to be is willing, and so I say it to myself every morning, with my other prayers.

The willingness prayer

Higher Power, please help me to be willing today.

I am willing to do whatever it takes to build my recovery.

I am willing to listen to your voice and hear your will for me.

I am willing to take whatever action you propose for me.

I am willing to be humble and give up control, to live my life on your terms, not mine.

I am willing to abstain from compulsive eating and compulsive food behaviours.

I am willing to have faith that your way is the right way.

I know I don't have to be able, I just have to be willing.

Please help me today to be willing.

Jo, Manchester

No Longer Alone

I searched for so long

Tried so hard to be strong

Looked for answers from within

In my quest to be thin

All I found was hurt and pain

And feelings that drove me insane

My emotions I numbed with food

Overate to control my mood

My dirty secret I could not tell

Not even to people I knew well

They would be ashamed of me

I was ashamed of myself, you see?

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For years I felt so alone
Others like me I'd never known
But now I know I belong
With friends together we can be strong

A special lady to sponsor me
God above to be my HP
As a team we can conquer
And at last, abstinence capture

Debra

Notes from OAGB Literature Service

OAGB Daily Journal. We are now selling the OAGB Daily Journal.

The Journal lays out promptings and questions for the morning and evening reviews, and the spaces to fill in our reviews for each day of the year – a very useful **Tenth Step Workbook**. It has a spiral binding so the pages lie open, making writing our reviews simple.

You can order the Journal from the Literature Shop on www.oagb.org.uk. Currently it is the last item listed on page five, but when the new website goes live, it will be easier to find.

The Journal is not on the current order form, but you can order it by post. Send your request to: OAGB Literature, 8 Lark Avenue, Kidsgrove, STOKE-ON-TRENT ST7 4YJ. Enclose cheque (payable to OAGB Literature) and your address. The Journal costs £8.00.

We have been asked about the status of the Journal, as it is neither Conference-approved nor Board-approved literature. It is OA literature: its official OA category is *Local Literature*, that is, OA literature developed by an OA Service Body specifically for its local area. It is within OA policies on literature to sell and use local literature in OA meetings.

Updated Tools of Recovery pamphlet. We are now selling the expanded and up-dated *Tools of Recovery* pamphlet. It does not contain changes to the OA policy, but it is an expanded and clearer text.

New edition of Abstinence. The new edition has been on sale for some time now, but there are still a few copies of the first edition available for the reduced price of £8.00. When ordering *Abstinence*, please make clear which edition you want, and pay accordingly: the new edition costs £12.00.

About OA and other important PI (public information) documents. We are in the process of printing *About OA*. This means that in the near future, there will be copies available that include OAGB contact information (not just WSO information), thus making it a much more useful PI document in this country.

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Other useful PI items we print, with all the contact information for OAGB included, are: *Fifteen Questions, Is Food a Problem for you?, Introducing OA to Health Care Professionals, Many Symptoms One Solution* and *OAGB New Prospect card*.

If there is any pamphlet you would find helpful for PI if only it had OAGB contact information, please let us know. We may not be able to print it, but at least if you want it for PI, we can put a label with OAGB information on it.

Some remarks about four of our literature items:

Anonymity. A little booklet with four articles by Rozanne on different aspects of anonymity. It costs £1.30 and is listed in the *Traditions & Service* section on the order form. The titles of the articles are:

The Promise of Privacy, The Initial Confusion, In the Public Media, Our Spiritual Foundation. These articles first appeared in *Lifeline* in the early 1980s, but still offer us important insights into Traditions Eleven and Twelve.

The next three items are all pamphlets. Here are stories that demonstrate the wide variety of manifestations of our disease. They show that the very serious underlying disease is common to us all. Under our superficial differences, this common disease and this common recovery through the Programme unite us. "...together we can do what we could never do alone."

These stories begin to give me insights, which I think make me more understanding of others and maybe enable me to be a more useful member of OA.

All of these pamphlets are listed in the *Programme & Recovery* section on the order form:

OA Members Come in All Sizes. This is a pamphlet with 33 pages, costing £1.60. After a brief introduction, there are stories from members, all compulsive eaters, but of many different sizes, facing their differences, coming to see their underlying unity and recovery together.

Black OA Members Share Their Experience, Strength and Hope. This is a pamphlet with 23 pages, costing £1.00. There is a brief introduction, then the stories of recovery. Here there is the same diversity of the way the disease manifests itself, but with the addition of some cultural differences, and some long-term effects of the ways in which generations of those with white skins have treated those with black skins. I am moved by the total lack of criticism in all the stories.

A Common Solution: Diversity and Recovery. This is a pamphlet with 32 pages, costing £1.30. After a brief introduction the stories are arranged in the following sections: *Programme Diversity, Cultural Diversity, Sexuality and Gender Diversity, Life Diversity.*

Kathleen, member of OAGB Literature Committee

Interview with Sue J, Chair of OAGB's National Service Board

What has been the highlight of your first year as Chair of OAGB's National Service Board?

The power of working together as part of a group – it's similar to how OA meetings work for me, but with a different but equally magical perspective. I have been amazed how much we can accomplish by being a team, how when one of us doesn't know what to do, someone else does, and how we fire ideas off each other and find solutions together.

What drew you to become Chair?

I never really mind what service I do in OA, so long as I do something. Being Chair this year was a matter of elimination really - as a Board we talk this through in the weeks leading up to the Assembly, then again on the Saturday night with the new Board members. Personally, being Chair felt rather daunting, as if I should know everything, which of course I don't. I was also a bit worried about what it might do to my ego! But I was an IG Chair many years ago, plus having attended WSBC three times I knew a fair bit about parliamentary procedure, how to chair a meeting, etc. So overall it seemed it was something I could do.

Would you like to go on to do service beyond NSB in future?

It's never really called to me so far. I know lots of ex-NSB members then do service at Region 9 afterwards but when I came off the Board in 2003 I didn't feel drawn to that. We will see what the HP has in store for me when the time comes.

What would you say to someone considering standing for the Board in future?

I'd say have a chat with a few Board members to find out more, talk to your sponsor, put it in your God box. For me, it's great work and I love it most of the time. But it does take time and commitment; it's not for everyone I know.

What are you most looking forward to at National Assembly in October?

As every year, meeting up with old OA friends, and working together in a room with other recovering members. The power of the group working together always moves me: it's where the HP is - that's how I see it.

What brought you to OA originally?

Desperation. I wasn't that bothered about being obese, I accepted that as a consequence of my disease. But I was sick of spending so much mental energy and time in what I know now was disease voice thinking. I think I literally was going mad. I was desperate for peace of mind around food and eating.

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"If you make yourself available, you'll get what you need when you need it"

What are you most passionate about in the Fellowship/your recovery?

That our Programme works. Abstinence and the Twelve Steps combined, like two horses working together pulling a cart. If one isn't working properly, the cart goes round in circles, but if both pull together as a team, the cart can go places! This is my own experience and that of many, many people that I know.

What other benefits have you found from any service you have given?

I have grown as a person in so many ways because of OA service. It's kept me in OA when my disease voice tells me it's ok to leave now. I have learned IT skills, how to stand in front of a room and talk to people, and how to be free of my body when doing this. I have learned that it's ok to disagree with someone, and how to behave when working as part of a group. This has aided my career and given me options I didn't know I had, e.g. I had a new part time career for 11 years - working as a member of various strategic groups - because my service in OA showed me that I could sit around a table and contribute meaningfully. I also have a network of OA friends and have connected with the wider Fellowship. The list is endless. Fundamentally though, doing service in OA has always been integral to my recovery. And without my recovery, everything else would be meaningless anyway.

Sue J

Abstinence Workshop – Actions and Lifeline Session, North West Intergroup

There was a 'main share' for approximately 10 minutes. Members present were split into three groups – each with an edition of Lifeline and the appropriate questions. The groups discussed and then fed their findings back to the main group.

After the feedback session and at the end, members sat for five minutes and considered:

- 'Where is my personal OA programme?'
- 'Do I need to prepare an Action Plan that addresses perhaps a 'sticking point' that I am at?'

and completed - as far as possible – their personal Abstinence Action Plan. Lifeline subscription forms, Lifeline writing guidelines and Lifeline tent cards were available to take away to the members' home groups.

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Group A - Lifeline dated February 2013

Article on 'How Hard is Program?' (p.2); article on Step Two (p.20). For discussion:

1. Do I still feel I 'have got this thing licked' and can do it on my own, either by my internal dialogue or my actions - intentional and unintentional?
2. Which Tools do you use when you feel your life has become 'insane' and explain why you like that Tool.
3. How does that Tool help you work the Steps?
4. What Tools do you use to work the Steps on a daily basis? And why?
5. For meditation and personal time - Where is my personal OA programme? Do I need to prepare an Action Plan that addresses perhaps a 'sticking point' that I am at?

Article on 'Dumping' (p.12); Article on Tradition Two (p.19). From the Discussion and Journaling on page 24:

6. Do you suspect your meeting might be a Dumping Ground? Try to give examples.
7. If you feel that it is a Dumping Ground - are you prepared to bring it up at next Group Conscience?
8. Does your group have a regular (e.g. monthly) group conscience?
9. Do you as an OA member stay and take an active part in that group conscience? If not - what is holding you back?
10. When was the last time your group reviewed the Strong Meetings Checklist? A suggestion might be that you review some (maybe half) of the questions in one meeting and the rest at another. Secretary to take down the responses and feed back to the group in the minutes and for the group to then address anything that comes up - in God's time the answers will come.

Group B - Lifeline dated October 2000

Article on 'Not Perfect but Willing' (pp.2 & 3); article on 'Why Don't We Do It?'; article on 'Here's a Clue' (p.12).

From the Discussion and Journaling Section on page 19 entitled 'Take Abstinence Actions today':

1. Make a list of five actions you can do now to encourage and support your abstinence.
2. Consider which comes first - abstinence or something else; then
3. Make a list of five things you might lose if you can't find and maintain abstinence.
4. Take home those lists and put them in a prominent place to remind you that NO GAMES WITH FOOD is your motto and WHY DON'T I DO IT? is no longer a question you ask yourself.

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Article on centre pages (14 & 15) on Abstinence Actions.

One person to read down the left hand column list of 'Abstinence is...'
Another person to read down the right-hand column list of 'Benefits of Abstinence...'

A third person to read down the middle section of 'Abstinence Actions...'
Compile a group response to these three lists.

5. For meditation and personal time - Where is my personal OA programme?
Do I need to prepare an Action Plan that addresses perhaps a 'sticking point' that I am at?

Group C – Lifeline dated December 2011

Article on 'Carrying the Message' (pp.14–15); article on 'Group Problems and Solutions (pp.5 & 6).

From the Discussion and Journaling on page 25:

1. Has your group explored Group Problems and Solutions?
2. If not - can you suggest to your group that they look at how the group functions, in particular regarding Twelfth Step Within efforts? Perhaps they can set some new goals and in three months' time, get the group to evaluate its progress.
3. Do you have any personal actions that you take to enhance Twelfth Step Within?
4. List those actions.

Article on 'Preventing Relapse' (p.12)

5. For meditation and personal time - Where is my personal OA programme?
Do I need to prepare an Action Plan that addresses perhaps a 'sticking point' that I am at?

For copies of material mentioned in this article please go to
www.oafallowfield.org.uk

North West Intergroup

Calendar of Events

Workshops, conventions and other OA happenings...

DATE	EVENT	VENUE	CONTACT
Fri 18 th to Sun 20 th Oct 2013	28 th Annual OA National Assembly and Convention	The Copthorne Hotel, Armada Way, Plymouth PL1 1AR Tel. 01752 224 161	dcignationalassemblyenquiries@gmail.com Hosted by Devon and Cornwall Intergroup
Fri 1 st to Sun 3 rd Nov 2013	Weekend workshop on "Following the Directions of the Twelve Steps"	Noddfa Retreat Centre, Penmaenmawr, North Wales, LL34 6YF Tel. 01492 623473 Email info@noddfa.org.uk	oaconwygroup@hotmail.com Sponsored by Conwy Group
Sat 2 nd Nov 2013 from 10.30-3.30	Workshop on "One day at a time"	Ballynafeigh Community Centre, 283 Ormeau Road, Belfast, BT7 3GG	Sponsored by Overeaters Anonymous N.I.
Wed 6 th to Sat 9 th Nov 2013	5 th Region 9 Assembly and Convention on "Abstinence Comes First"	Hotel Kibbutz Shefayim, Shefayim 6099, Israel Tel. +972-9-959 5595 Email: info@shefhotel.co.il	Adele at asseoadele@gmail.com or info@oa.org OA Israel, P.O. Box 7250, Ramat Gan 52172 Israel Sponsored by Region 9

Publicise your OA event for free!

Let SBS know if your group or other service body is organising a workshop or other OA event that you'd like advertised on this page. (Just send an email to stepbystep@oagb.org.uk with details of the date, event, venue and a contact number and/or email address, stating which registered OA group or other service body is sponsoring this event.)

Any comments, suggestions or ideas for future editions?

Want to advertise a new group?

Send SBS an email at:

[**stepbystep@oagb.org.uk**](mailto:stepbystep@oagb.org.uk)

(please don't simply reply to the OAGB emails)

*God, grant me the
serenity to accept the things
I cannot change,
courage to change the
things I can and wisdom
to know the difference.*