

Looking Up

December 2010

Two County
Inter-Group Newsletter

The Promise

When I first walked into the rooms of OA I was "home." When I selected my home group I was "part of." When I asked for my sponsor's help I was "in community." All of these initial events happen in a whirlwind of emotion and sometimes confusion but they felt right – for me the reality is that they are right.

It quickly becomes apparent that the OA journey will require a "Stepped Pathway." That if I truly want to find the peace and wholeness that is missing in my compulsive life I will need to "take certain steps." The question that filled my darkest place – my hidden mind and heart – was "what is in it for me?"

Not being one who can lightly call my inner voice diseased, I initially saw the flaw in the program process. They are asking me to follow a pathway without any assurances. They were asking me to go on their word alone that in the end I will be happy. Who do they think they are!?

My sponsor of course just chuckled and told me to continue reading. Frustrated I turned the page of the AA Big Book to page 83 and (with a good deal of grumbling) continued to read. There the essence of the miracle shouted out to my soul. There the promises held out before me the truth that had been found by those who had gone before me. This is a program of guarantees if we choose to work the Steps.

For me today, I always carry a PROMISE in my heart and measure my day by its meaning to me. Today it is "We are going to know a new freedom and a new happiness." This particular promise calls out to some of the deeper pains I have felt in my disease. Just a few short months ago life had little value and I felt trapped in a lackluster existence. There on page 83-84 the gifts of the program are laid out and we have the right to seek the fullness of these promises. In fact we should all select at least one of these and watch for it each and every day of our abstinence.

My sponsor gave me one caveat: "We have the right to demand a miracle from God – just don't tell Him what and don't ask Him when."

Here is another from Page 100 – "When we look back, we realize that the things which came to us when we put ourselves in God's hands were better than anything we could have planned." Now tell me that Step 3 is too scary....

What I get is a new life filled with miracles that "...are fulfilled among us—sometimes quickly, sometimes slowly. They will always materialize if we work for them."

Anonymous

A Note of Concern... The Past & Future Tense of Recover

I awoke this morning and the miracle happened!

Having willingly followed the 12 hallowed steps for life I came to a point where I was "RECOVERED." What a wonderful moment in my history. I guess this means I am "LIVED." Now I can proclaim that I am "FULFILLED"!

Wait – I am "lived"? Does this mean that is all there is? Is this the end of life? And why did I get it when others struggle so?

I know that it is semantics and that even my interpretation of the language is probably still not kosher, but bear with me for just a moment. There is method to my madness. This wonderful anonymous program asks so little of us but what it does ask is for a good reason.

Our personal proclamations may be the only words another sufferer hears and our only purpose should be to invite others to find what our Higher Power has so graciously provided us.

**"OA believes that compulsive eating is a threefold disease:
physical, emotional, and spiritual, which, like alcoholism and
drug abuse, can be arrested, but not cured."**

– Introduction OA to Health Professionals

I have had fleeting moments in my recovery where everything seems to be fully aligned and I thank God for them, but I am on a road to recovery, not recovered. Besides, it is not me but my Higher Power who is working the miracle, I am just along for the ride and the ride will last until I shuck this mortal coil.

Our disease being life-long requires a sense of care for those mentioned in the 12th Step. We must understand that our message can confuse and concern others. We need to think not so much about ourselves and our recovery but focus our proclamations on the group and program. Statements of "being recovered" can lead others to either feel they are "constitutionally incapable" or worse "hanging around idiots who think theirs doesn't stink."

The "Road of Happy Destiny" in the Big Book is the road of recovery in the present and I hope to join you there each day of this wonderful journey called OA.

Anonymous

Building Spiritual Muscle

"Anonymous" is an integral part of our name and a major reason why I've kept coming back since 1989. Anonymity is the foundation of my recovery. It creates boundaries, which in turn make me feel safe. No crosstalk, feedback or advice-giving allows me to share freely, knowing my emotions, feelings and decisions will not be judged. I sign the "We Care" book, trusting that it is used only for OA business. We have no last names or job titles to create real or imagined hierarchies. At any OA meeting, I'm just another bozo on the bus.

Anonymity extends to who my sponsor is and how many sponsors I have. It's none of my business who attended a meeting I missed. When someone asks if I saw "so-and-so" at Saturday's meeting, I say, "There were about a dozen people at that meeting." If asked again, I simply repeat my answer.

At one of my home meetings, we read and share weekly about the eight tools of recovery. I've heard about anonymity every Friday for 19 years. I'm still hearing—or reading—something new in it. That tool is so rich.

Do I like every member, agree with every share, endorse every food plan, or support every Intergroup policy? No. Does it matter? I think not. We all have a right to be in these rooms, and it behooves me to remember that the tool of anonymity places principles before personalities. When the person I like least is the only other person at a meeting, I'm mighty grateful she's there.

Are business meetings always smooth? Not necessarily. Still, I am responsible for speaking up at my home meetings. I speak up about a Tradition violation, an outside enterprise, or a meeting deviation such as cross talk. I can vote "no" on a format change, even when a friend votes "yes." Once the motion has been put to a vote, my job is to let go of the outcome, I need this meeting more than I need to be right.

Tradition Twelve gives me freedom to grow. My Fourth-Step Inventory is locked in a former sponsor's heart. What I say in a meeting or what I tell my sponsor on the phone stays there. Trusting this, I will explore more, reveal more and learn more about myself. Tradition Twelve builds my spiritual muscle.

Patricia D.

Reprinted from Lifeline, December 2008

11th Step The Whisper of Love

I sat in my easy chair. You know the place where the Grand Poopa – the Lord and Master of the World – His Nibs reigns supreme sits... And I was alone.

My daughter came into the room, climbed into my lap with her Strawberry Shortcake doll, scrunched down into a comfortable position, and began to talk with her doll. I know that this moment will be a part of my joyful memory for all of my life. It is a part of the meaning of my life and it is good. I was never alone.

My sponsor told me prayer was talking with my Higher Power and meditation was listening. I believe with all my heart that my Higher Power uses all my senses to get His message of love into my heart and my soul. There is nowhere that I can turn and not find my Higher Power ready, willing and able to be part of the love I feel, and I think (now this is truly personal opinion) that He loves to use wonderfully diverse messengers to carry the essence of His love for me.

Years come and go, old shortcomings and defects slowly die away, but one thing has remained. I can always talk to my Higher Power and I can always listen. When I do, all the moments and all the understandings line up within my mind, heart and soul to show me the truth. He has given me this life to freely choose the path and to share in His work so that I may be happy.

She was watching her father as he tended to the daily chores and she was on the couch where I sat. Her Dora doll in hand she found a comfortable place in my lap and continued to watch the world around her.

While I still hold on to my "Grand Poopadom" (trust me - sponsors have tried mightily to break me of this one) I am twice blessed and can see the unbroken line of His deep and abiding love for me through my life.

If you truly want to chase a magical elixir try to break down the various components of prayer and meditation. If you want to feel love – just do it. It is not wrong or right – it is love and it has more ways to touch you than the stars in the sky or the grains of sand on the beach.

I am blessed and my God continually shares His love with me in the most wonderful ways if only I will quiet my world and listen. My granddaughter giggled as her daddy dropped the toy he was picking up and she jumped out of my lap. I truly love the God that created this joy for me to share.

Anonymous

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LOOKING UP is a monthly publication of the OA Tri-County Intergroup. The opinions expressed here are those of the author and not of the OA Tri-County Intergroup or OA as a whole. Editor reserves the right to edit material submitted.

Monthly Treasurer's Report and Intergroup Meeting Minutes are available at www.aa-tricounty.org

Seventh Tradition Donations

OA's Seventh Tradition tells us that we are fully self-supporting through our own contributions. After paying group expenses (rent, literature, supplies) and maintaining a prudent reserve (determined by group conscience), OA suggests that groups distribute the remaining funds as follows:

60% : Tri-County Intergroup

Billie Stamp
1513 Tyler
Arlington, TX 76012

30% : OA World Service Office

P.O. Box 44020
Rio Rancho, NM
87174-4020

10% : Region III

Region III OA
Barbara Vervenne, Treasurer
PO Box 29903
Austin, TX 78755

Give as if Your Life Depends On It.

OA Responsibility Pledge: Always to extend the hand and heart of OA to all who share my compulsion; for this, I am responsible.

Seasonal Fear

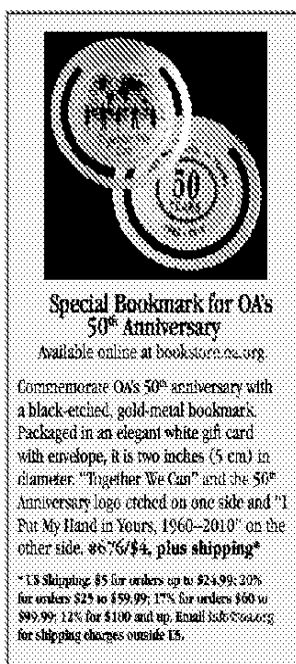
Losing our abstinence during this season of celebration and food preparation is a strong fear that many of us in OA experience. Abstinence becomes the topic of many meetings, and this enabled me to share my fear with others and learn that I was NOT alone, and gave me the opportunity to learn the ways to use the TOOLS of the program through listening attentively to others' sharing. Remembering daily that I have a 3 part disease – physical, emotional and spiritual, which has to be kept in check and balanced to achieve progress, for if I am out of balance then my disease had leverage to rear its ugly head.

The first year of my new lease on life with OA I worked the 12 steps honestly, vigorously and kept in very close contact with my Sponsor, gradually achieving The Promises – what a blessing! I committed myself to working program and service work the first 10 years of my journey in OA. My abstinence has stayed with me since 1983 and even though this is 2010, I know without a doubt that my disease is just sitting patiently waiting for the opportunity to get a strong foothold again.

Season's Blessings to all!

Lucy

"I put my hand in yours and together we can do what we could never do alone."



Special Bookmark for OA's 50th Anniversary

Available online at bookstore.aa.org

Commemorate OA's 50th anniversary with a black-etched, gold-metal bookmark. Packaged in an elegant white gift card with envelope, it is two inches (5 cm) in diameter. "Together We Can" and the 50th Anniversary logo etched on one side and "I Put My Hand in Yours, 1960-2010" on the other side. \$6.96/\$4.95, plus shipping*

*US Shipping: \$5 for orders up to \$24.99; 20% for orders \$25 to \$59.99; 17% for orders \$60 to \$99.99; 12% for \$100 and up. Retail Job #062029 for shipping charges outside US.

**Voting for 2011 Tri-County
Intergroup Board Officers will
be held at the December
Intergroup meeting, 10:30 a.m.,
Sat., Dec. 4th, 2010.**

Please send newsletter submissions to
bethelhow@gmail.com

Thoughts for the day, journal entries, step writing, Lifeline articles, etc. If you would like to receive this newsletter via email, please send an email with the subject line "Subscribe" to bethelhow@gmail.com

Check the January newsletter for an updated Treasurer's Report

RECOVERY CONNECTIONS

Tri-County Intergroup <http://www.aa-tricounty.org>

OA Region 3 <http://www.oaregion3.org/>

Dallas Metroplex Intergroup <http://www.oadallas.org/>

Telephone Meetings List http://www.aa.org/pdf/phone_mtgs.pdf

Online Meetings List <http://www.aa.org/pdf/OnlineMeetingsList.pdf>

iTunes Podcast http://www.aa.org/get_podcast.htm

Use iTunes to search for OA Podcasts, OA readings, long-timers share experience, classic OA speakers, special speaker events and more.

Los Angeles Area Intergroup Virtual Speaker's Bureau

<http://www.oalaig.org/html/speakers.php>

Audio recordings related to 12 Step Fellowships <http://www.gstl.org/>

AA Big Book online <http://www.aa.org/bigbookonline/>

Bethel UMC Group Recipe Book

To order, email bethelhow@gmail.com

Electronic version: free; spiral bound with plastic covers, conveniently mailed to you: \$10
In your email, please specify double-sided or single-sided copying. Double-sided gives you a light-weight book, while single-sided provides ample space for notes.

