

THE SERENITY TIMES



A VIRTUAL NEWSLETTER

BROUGHT TO YOU BY WESTCHESTER UNITED INTERGROUP

FIRST QUARTER 2021

ABSTINENCE



ODE TO CORONA

Last year, what if I had told you that you would be one of 100 million people told to stay home in the US. Would you have believed me?

What if I told you that this period of pause was a blessing in disguise for us all and that this outbreak helped us break out of patterns that we no longer needed.

What if this were a time when:

We spent less time focused on our inbox and more time focused on our in-breath.

We had fewer financial dealings and became more in touch with our substantial feelings.

We learned to talk less and listen more.

We spent less time with an attitude and more time in gratitude.

We paid less attention to stocks and bonds and more attention to taking stock and deepening bonds.

We booked fewer appointments and read more books.

We consumed less and connected more.

We self medicated less and meditated more.

We spent more time moving our bodies and stilling our minds.

We paid for fewer services and became of more service.

We looked less to others for answers and found the answers within.

We got rid of all the stuff we didn't need and got closer to our unique purpose in our soul to feed.

What if I told you that a year from now you would have more abundance in your life in ways you could not even have imagined.

Would you have believed me?

Ida F.

OA ZOOM MEETINGS:

Access the virtual meeting schedule, via Google Doc or .pdf:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/18bXW0gCIEVsxVYO-WGe_ZqSTS0j0tx83I94zBV0wuY0/edit

Downloading Google Docs and Google Drive apps will allow you to access the most up-to-date version of the meeting schedule..



We have a dire need for a **Webmaster/Webmistress**. If you have skills with Wix, or are an eager learner, please contact

WuigChair@gmail.com.

Getting and staying abstinent is simply a new way of eating, a new way of thinking and dealing with life, and a new way of believing.

Anonymous



AMAZING ABSTINENCE = AMAZING GRACE!



I started coming to OA meetings just over two years ago after a critical bout of septic peritonitis, caused by a culmination of the dangerous dance with food. Fifty years of eating disorders ruled my life, and I was often suicidal from the mental torment of my food addiction. Except for the occasional honeymoon of quick fixes, like herbal formulas, diets, boyfriends, surgery, and illness, life was a chore.

I think God took me by the shoulders and said, "You haven't been listening. Wake up to the Grace I have to offer you."

"Simple but not easy," I courageously forge ahead with my OA program, with a kind and merciful God, towards further recovery and further and further away from the eagerly reaching talons of an evil disease that wants me dead.

Making program first in my life is the only way I became and am staying abstinent. The non-negotiable foundation of my day starts with a Step 10 inventory and then onto a bountiful Step 11, filled with prayer and meditation, a planned, healthy breakfast, exercise, and then worship at a local church.

My daily action plan also includes:

Preparing nutritionally packed lunches and dinners

Outline of the day's meetings, goals, and commitments

Sponsor/sponsee meetings

Step work, including rigorous 12th Step work within OA and in other areas

Avoiding people, places and things that cause me anxiety and threaten my abstinence

Self care that includes honoring the child within: picking clothes to wear that I enjoy, singing and dancing around my home, smiling at myself in the mirror. Warm, bubble baths, frolicking on a swing while looking up at the sky, and releasing a red balloon into the heavens are amongst my little girl's favorites!

Remembering that, "others burdens are not mine to carry," when I want to fix the problems of those I love.

Prayers that include gratitude, petitioning to God to transpose my defects of character into their opposites, so that each day I may become more of the person He wants me to be.

Diane T



**KEYNOTE SPEAKERS,
WORKSHOPS AND
INTERACTIVE SESSIONS**



**2021 OA
VIRTUAL
REGION
CONVENTION**

[There is a Solution]

Save the Date
February 20—21, 2021

TRANSLATED IN MANY LANGUAGES




For more information contact: convention@oavirtualregion.org

We Need
You

for Overeaters
Anonymous's

Young People's Retreat

The event, "Entire Psychic Change," is March 6, 2021, but we have to get this party started now. Please write to oaypretreat@gmail.com ASAP.

Seeking:

- Speakers
- Panelists
- Moderators
- Help with programming, registrations, the tech side, and more.

If you don't know how, we'll teach you and be grateful for your help!



THE DEFINITIONS OF "ABSTINENCE" AND "RECOVERY" IN OVEREATERS ANONYMOUS:

1. Abstinence: The act of refraining from compulsive eating and compulsive food behaviors while working towards or maintaining a healthy body weight.
2. Recovery: Removal of the need to engage in compulsive eating behaviors. Spiritual, emotional, and physical recovery is achieved through working and living the Overeaters Anonymous Twelve Step program.

WHAT HAVE YOU BEEN MOST GRATEFUL FOR IN 2020?



SEND YOUR SHARE TO DIANE T
AT THE SERENITY TIMES BY 2/15/21
[WUINEWSLETTER@GMAIL.COM](mailto:wuinewsletter@gmail.com)





IT WORKS IF I WORK IT

In April of 1998 I was sitting at my kitchen table sick and miserable. I had, once again, eaten a second breakfast. At that time, I was eating two breakfasts, two lunches, two dinners and multiple “little” snacks in between. I was reading a book entitled, *I'm Fat and Furi-ous*. In the book, Overeater's Anonymous was mentioned. It was a revelation for me. I always knew that I ate the way an alcoholic drank, but I never knew that there was a place I could go for help from the obsession.

God sent me a neighbor who was going to an OA meeting in New Rochelle. A woman came up to me after the meeting, handed me a piece of paper and said, “Here's a food plan. Call me at 7:00am tomorrow, and tell me what you are going to eat.” I looked at the paper and kept turning it over and over until she said, “What are you looking for?” I replied, “Anything I can eat.” There wasn't anything with sugar or flour on the plan, and there wasn't any starch. I couldn't believe that people lived without eating any of the foods I loved.

It took many more meetings, and many different, loving sponsors before I finally accepted that I needed to do what others told me to do. I was given hope at those meetings, but I needed more than just the fellowship; I needed to do the Step work to gain the willingness to give up the illusion that I could control the food. In the beginning, I needed to weigh and measure everything that went into my mouth. I needed to replace old, bad habits with new ones. I needed to identify compulsive behavior that needed to change. To change the bad habit of tasting while I prepared a meal (I could easily eat an entire meal as I was cooking), I needed to tie a scarf over my mouth! It was amazing how many times I lifted my fingers to my face, only to be stopped by that scarf. I needed to pour Lysol over food that was thrown into the garbage to break me of the habit of brushing it off and eating it. I learned that it's not “a shame” to throw out food that “was not mine.” I learned to eat by the clock. I had to turn over to my sponsor, not only what I was eating, but what time my meals would begin and end. If it was three o'clock (not my committed time to eat), and I felt hungry, I needed to, “Move a muscle and change a thought.” In other words, I needed to take a walk, meditate, drink a quart of water, call an OA friend, read some OA literature, or anything else that was not food-centered. As I progressed in my recovery I learned to call on my Higher Power: “God please help me, because I cannot do this by myself.” It works if I work it.

Andrea, SC





WHAT I'M DOING TO GET AND STAY ABSTINENT

LINDA G.

I am a 78 year old newcomer to the program, currently in my 45th day of abstinence. My first 30 days sponsor and my on-going sponsor have both been nothing less than magically transformative in my life. It is their wise counsel that I am sharing as to what I've been doing to get and stay abstinent.

1. Take the "Are you a compulsive eater?" questionnaire.
2. Read in BB AA 4th edition: The Doctor's Opinion p.xxv, Chapter 1: Bill's Story p.1, Chapter 4: We agnostics p.44, Chapter 5: How It Works p.58, Chapter 11: A Vision for You p.151, and Appendix II: Spiritual Experience p.567.
3. Write on my Higher Power: Pray, meditate, and listen to my Higher Power, regularly, and when I feel I want to control. What would you have me do? Where would you have me be? Begin where I am, do what I can, step out gracefully, and expect my Higher Power to help. Help me to see the truth and meet it as well as I can.
4. Make a table containing: situation, intention, what I did, and what the consequences were. Then for each situation, add evidence that my Higher Power is restoring me to sanity.
5. For the Serenity and Step 3 prayers: Write an explanation of each word. Memorize sentence by sentence; focus on where I'm forgetting a word and consider why.
6. Read in OA 12&12 - 2nd edition. Do a brief summary of each paragraph. Write a brief statement on what each paragraph means for me - a gut response,
7. Do exercises in OA 12&12 WB - 2nd edition: Step One, Step Two, Step Three, Step Four, Step Five (done together).
8. Reading in AA 12&12. Step7: One to Five. Text to my sponsor the words of the Step as I complete it.
9. List ten items every day for which I am grateful.
10. Find a food plan. Send each day's meal plan to my sponsor, with how the prior day went. List red - yellow - green foods. Review after a month to see if any additions/corrections are needed. Remember food plan is for the body/allergy and 12 Steps are for the mind and spirit/obsession.
11. Try not to let myself get too hungry, angry, lonely, or tired. Remember when I don't know how to deal with life on life's terms, the disease takes over.
12. Go to meetings every day for 90 days, then at least 3/week. After at least six different ones, try to find a home group. Start doing service in the meetings: time keeper, reading, etc. Get phone numbers from each meeting; try to call at least one within 24 hours.
13. Look for strategies for when I want to eat. Pray; wait 15 minutes, or take a shower.
14. Weigh myself once a week to start or once a month if I seem to be obsessed with it.
15. Look for my on-going sponsor.
16. Don't give up before the miracle happens. Go from being restless, irritable and discontent ("twitchy, itchy and witchy") to happy, joyous and free!

LIFE IS FOR LIVING

When I returned to Program after a two-year relapse, during which I regained all of the 61 pounds I had lost in the first two years of my seven years in OA, I made certain that I had a sponsor before I left that first meeting. The first requirement was that she be at a normal body weight—attraction, not promotion...walking the walk. Equally important was that she have a sense of ease with herself. So, I asked God to lead me to the sponsor that He would want me to have.

The first woman I approached declined, lovingly telling me that I would “need far too much time” and she wouldn’t be able to give me that time (and I had sponsored her at one point—ouch!) Clearly God wanted me with someone else. The next woman I approached said “yes.”

Even though she had only been in Program a few years, compared to my seven “successful” years and my completion of eight Steps prior to my relapse...I followed HER directions and did whatever SHE asked me to do. SHE was abstinent at that point; I was not. Each day I wrote down my food, my gratitudes, and a summary of the daily reading in *For Today*. I committed what I was going to eat, and I ate what I had committed. I made my call to her every day at the time I was asked to call—our sacred time together.

I took a service commitment at two of the three meetings I went to each week. That way, I knew I had to attend to meet my commitment. If I couldn’t be there for some reason, I took responsibility and found someone to take my commitment for me—I didn’t just bail on the commitment.

Two months later at the Region Six Convention, I asked one of the Keynote Speakers to sponsor me through the Big Book Step Study process, and it changed my life. I had done the Steps before (1-12 in another fellowship, 1-8 in the HOW format, and 1-2 in OA’s Red Workbook), but I guess I was ready to see a different part of myself.

The honesty that I learned in Step 4...the ability to look at myself and accept responsibility for my actions, behaviors, and attitudes, changed my behavior around food. My abstinence is absolute: no sugar. This enables me to eat moderately, refraining from compulsive eating and compulsive food behaviors while working toward a healthy body weight. The more honest I get with myself, the less obsessed I am with food and with the scales (both for my body and my food!).

I have found that when I am focused on our primary purpose of being of maximum service to God and to those about me, food becomes something that fuels me, not something that I seek. I can be hungry and wait for a meal...it’s okay. It’s also okay to LOVE my food and enjoy it! Life is for living, not eating!

Mary T



FREEDOM ISN'T FREE

From *Overeaters Anonymous*, 3rd edition

Ultimately my disease took me close to 400 pounds (181kg), along with the health problems of obesity. After a couple of years in OA I was down nearly 200 pounds (91 kg) from my top weight.... My abstinence is three meals a day, nothing in between, no sugar or refined carbs. I weigh and measure when eating at home.

I found my way into OA because I didn't quite have the courage to kill myself. I was grossly obese, suicidal, and of course a bitter atheist. *Other than that, I was fine.* (p 115)

I trusted the process even though I didn't understand it. Eventually I did begin to understand. I had to change how I ate, how I thought, and how I believed. Physically, I had to learn the nature of my food addiction and a new way of eating that keeps it in check. Emotionally, I had to uncover the attitudes, beliefs, and values that are counterproductive to a good life. Spiritually, the Steps took me on a journey to get in touch with the spirit within, which some people call God.

Taking these actions eventually lifted the obsession, as promised in the Big Book. I trusted the process, and the journey took me to spiritual places I could not fathom when I started. Although I call my Higher Power God, part of that HP is still the collective power of the program: the Steps, Traditions, Tools, slogans, and people of the Fellowship. God will guide and give me strength, but he won't do for me what I need to do for myself. God is the well, but I have to bring the bucket of willingness and action.

Holding on to the miracle means staying in fit spiritual condition. It particularly means living in Steps Ten, Eleven, and Twelve. Step Ten is like weeding the garden. I might have done a good job the first time through the Steps, but weeds have a way of creeping back in among the flowers if I don't tend to them continually. The Eleventh Step in the morning is the daily renewal of my faith. If I don't renew my subscription every morning, it runs out sometime during the day. And Step Twelve is about passing it on. To stay clear and clean, a lake needs a flow in and a flow out. My flow-in is working my program. My flow-out is passing on the message to those who are still suffering and practicing these Principles in all my affairs.

Here's one final word on why I'm still here after thirty years—service. Irish statesman Edmund Burke said, "The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing." I translate that into: The only way for OA to fade away is for people whose lives it has saved to do nothing. (p 116-117)



GOING TO ANY LENGTHS

- I have been in OA for seventeen years. I have had periods of abstinence and periods of relapse. I have had different food plans which made me ask myself over the years, “What am I *abstaining from*?”
- I would change my definition of abstinence on a whim: no snacking, no binging, no desserts, no sugar, yada yada yada.
- I have pushed back on sponsors who I felt were too strict with me (What do you mean if I was up at midnight and *starving*, I shouldn’t have had that banana? Or, I should have called you??! Humph!) I knew how to eat and what I could and couldn’t do safely. I’m not like you, or her, or him.
- It took me a while to accept that I have to completely abstain from compulsive foods and compulsive food behaviors. As much as I desperately wanted to, I couldn’t manage it, handle it, or control it. It took until I desperately wanted to recover and to “go to any lengths” to accept that abstinence meant abstaining from anything and everything that could trigger, or perpetuate, or keep on a low simmer, my food compulsion.
- What works for me is to have a strict food plan, including meal times, weighing, and measuring. Of course, no “red light” foods, but everything else can be permissible- if I plan it and stick to my plan. If I say I’m going to have diet hot cocoa at 7pm, and I feel hungry at 4pm, and really want that cocoa, I don’t have it. I drink water and move on. I don’t grab a handful of “safe snacks” whenever I walk by the pantry. If I want crackers, I put them on my food plan with an allotted time and amount.
- I used to put on my food plan, “For snack I can have X,Y, or Z.” My current sponsor would say, “Don’t give yourself that flexibility, that choice. Plan it, pick one and a time, or, even all three, but be specific.” Doing that has helped ease the compulsion and helped me get to a place of neutrality with food.
- I initially thought those suggestions were ridiculous. But, I realized, whatever I did before wasn’t working long-term for me. It didn’t matter that I didn’t gain my weight back: it was soul crushing, obsessive, and diet -mentality, and I didn’t want to live like that.
- Today, I stay abstinent by committing my food each morning, including meal times and amounts. I don’t have to think about food the rest of the day. It’s like the bumpers in a bowling alley keeping me safe, clearheaded, and I able to deal with life without relying on food as a drug.

-Lisa

SEVENTH TRADITION CONTRIBUTIONS:

WE ARE FULLY SELF-SUPPORTING THROUGH OUR OWN CONTRIBUTIONS, DECLINING OUTSIDE DONATIONS.

60% WUIG, P.O. BOX 125, WHITE PLAINS, NY 10603. INFO@OAWESTCHESTER-NY.ORG (914) 633-2988

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THE SERENITY TIMES

NEEDS YOUR SERVICE! IT IS WRITTEN BY LOCAL MEMBERS FOR LOCAL MEMBERS. THE THEME FOR THE SECOND QUARTER OF 2021 IS ON MAINTENANCE: SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCES BY WORKING THE TOOL OF WRITING AND HELPING FELLOW OA'S. YOUR ANECDOTES, POEMS, FAVORITE QUOTES, AND LITERATURE ARE AMONGST SOME OF THE ITEMS YOU CAN SUBMIT. SHARE WHAT INSPIRES YOU TO:

WUIGNEWSLETTER@GMAIL.COM



WUIG TEXT MESSAGES:

IF YOU'D LIKE TO RECEIVE TEXT UPDATES ABOUT EVENTS, MEETING CLOSURES, ETC., TEXT @OAWUIG TO 81010. TO STOP RECEIVING WUIG TEXTS, REPLY @LEAVE TO THE NUMBER YOU ARE RECEIVING MESSAGES FROM.



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SPONSORSHIP: Need a sponsor? Are you an available sponsor? Please email Barb,

Sponsor Bank coordinator at servicewuig@gmail.com

RECOVERY BANK!! Newcomer Retention: we are looking for recovered fellows to do service in our new Recovery Bank by reaching out to interested newcomers. To give service, please text Cathy C. at (914) 552-7367. Please share this new service at your meetings and give new fellows Cathy's phone number.

MEETING REPS NEEDED FOR: Tuesday Pelham 4pm, Wednesday Katonah 7:30pm, Wednesday Dobbs Ferry 9:30am, Thursday White Plains 12:30pm, Saturday Yonkers 5:00p.m, Sunday Tarrytown 11:30am. Once you are elected at the designated meeting, contact Carol G. at wuigchair@gmail.com

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