

# THE 43RD ANNUAL OA BIRTHDAY PARTY

## *Adventures in Abstinence Workshop: Mapping Out Your Abstinence and Food Plan*

### "The ABC's"

**A == ABSTINENCE:** Abstinence is life & death: It is black and white.

Webster's Dictionary defines **abstinence** as: n. an abstaining from some or all food, liquor, etc.

In May of 1995 at the OA World Service Business Conference abstinence was elevated to "Our Primary Purpose" (along with carrying this message of recovery to those who still suffer). In a letter addressed to Meeting Secretaries June 9, 1995 a delegate from the SFVIG stated "Abstinence is for the compulsive overeater what sobriety is for the alcoholic. Abstinence is the goal of the program, not a tool." She quoted the OA preamble which states that the primary purpose of Overeaters Anonymous is "...to abstain from compulsive overeating..."

Alcoholics Anonymous presents cakes to members for 365 days of continuous (perfect) sobriety. Overeater's Anonymous presents candles for 365 days of continuous (perfect) abstinence, Abstinence is to be maintained perfectly like sobriety. It is life and death, black and white. It should only be changed, amended, or modified after serious and lengthy discussion with your sponsor.

We are compulsive overeaters: we will always be compulsive overeaters. The disease centers in our minds, not our bodies. It will be with us for a very long, long time!

Select an abstinence that works for **you!** An abstinence that **you** can sustain throughout your life with all life's challenges until the day you die. Make it livable, attainable and sustainable. i.e., something you are able to commit to now.

You will have 10 minutes to complete this section. You will not be asked to share it with anyone during this workshop. (However, we strongly suggest that you discuss it with your sponsor and write your ABC list in pencil inside the back cover of your Big Book.)

My abstinence began on (date): \_\_\_\_\_

My abstinence is: \_\_\_\_\_

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## **B == THE FOOD PLAN:** A plan of eating is a powerful tool that will aid you in attaining your goal of sustaining abstinence for life. The food plan is ever changing.

Quoted from the letter addressed to Meeting Secretaries June 9, 1995... "A plan of eating is a tool. It is an aid in achieving our goal. Ultimately, in OA we determine our own plan of eating."

Plan of eating: (It is the first of the eight tools.) "Overeaters Anonymous does not endorse any specific plan of eating. Some members **refrain** from certain foods, some eat all foods more **moderately**. Only **you**, with proper **guidance**, can honestly appraise your own eating habits."

Webster's Dictionary defines **refrain** as: to hold back, keep oneself from doing something. Webster's Dictionary defines **moderately** as. 1 . within reasonable limits; avoiding extremes 2. mild; calm 3. of medium quality, amount, etc.; to make or become moderate. Avoidance of extremes.

Slips happen in the food plan; never in abstinence. Our food plan is imperfect

Select a food plan that works for **you!** List foods and behaviors that keep you *fat, anorexic, or bulimic*. These are "better limit them" foods! Foods to be aware of! Be awake in the presence of these foods & behaviors! Choose a food plan that allows you to eat in moderation. Choose a behavior plan that allows you to participate in life without setting off your disease.

You will have 10 minutes to complete this section. (However, we strongly suggest that you discuss it with your sponsor and write your ABC list in pencil inside the back cover of your Big Book.)

My food plan is: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## **C == COMPULSIVE FOODS:** Foods that make me... crazy! "Fix me! Fill me!"

This is just an honest appraisal of your trigger foods. Foods that lead you to "pitiful and incomprehensible demoralization." Quoted from page 30 of the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous: "All of us felt at times that we were regaining control, but such intervals - usually brief - were inevitably followed by still less control, which led in time to pitiful and incomprehensible demoralization. We are convinced to a man that alcoholics of our type are in the grip of a progressive illness. Over any considerable period we get worse, never better."

Identify and list all the foods that you are not willing to give up or modify yet. Foods or behaviors that make you crazy and trigger your disease of compulsive overeating.

You will have 10 minutes to complete this section. Remember to discuss with your sponsor and write in B. B.

My compulsive foods are: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

As you grow and change in abstinence, work the 12 steps, and the 8 tools of recovery, you will find that a change will begin to take place with your relationship to your "C" list foods. These "C" list foods will move from your "C" list to your "A" or "B" list. When this growth begins discuss with your sponsor whether it is appropriate to make these food changes part of your abstinence or food plan. You will begin to live in the 9th & 10th Step promises... You will recoil from food "as from a hot fame."

.....*Remember* ..... This is a spiritual program.....

A spiritual program of what??.....**Action!!!!**

## **A few of our favorite sayings!!!**

There is a bottom below the bottom you know!

Take one step towards God, he'll take 10 steps towards you.

Life's a gift or a chance to grow!! (There is no honeymoon!!)

God feeds the birds but he doesn't throw the seeds into their nest!!

Growth doesn't cause pain; it's the resistance to it!!

Fight for your right to be uncomfortable! Pain is the admission price to a new life! (Step7)

Take the action and the willingness comes!

Action is the key to willingness! Pick up the key of willingness! (Step 3)

The miracle comes after you take the action! !

Doubt is a signal that something is wrong spiritually.

Your today is the tomorrow you were thinking about yesterday.

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## *The 10th Step Promises*

Pages 84 - 85 of the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous

And we have ceased fighting anything or anyone-- even food. For by this time sanity will have returned. We will seldom be interested in food. If tempted, we recoil from it as from a hot flame. We react sanely and normally, and we will find that this has happened automatically. We will see that our new attitude toward food has been given us without any thought or effort on our part. It just comes! That is the miracle of it. We are not fighting it, neither are we avoiding temptation. We feel as though we had been placed in a position of neutrality--safe and protected. We have not even sworn off. Instead, the problem has been removed. It does not exist for us. We are neither cocky nor are we afraid. That is our experience. That is how we react so long as we keep in fit spiritual condition.

It is easy to let up on the spiritual program of action and rest on our laurels. We are headed for trouble if we do for food is a subtle foe. We are not cured of compulsive overeating. What we really have is a daily reprieve contingent on the maintenance of our spiritual condition. Every day is a day when we must carry the vision of God's will into all of our activities. "How can I best serve Thee--Thy will (not mine) be done." These are thoughts which must go with us constantly. We can exercise our will power along this line all we wish. It is the proper use of the will.