



NOVATION!

NOVA Outreach Intergroup April 2004

EDITOR'S NOTE

This issue is sponsored by the Monday Night Hundred Pounders' Meeting at Church of the Good Shepherd on Hunter Mill Road in Oakton, which responded to my plea for articles. If you've never been there, it's a great meeting to check out--lots of honesty and recovery.

June will be sponsored by the Arlington Sunrise Meeting, but that still leaves May open. Would your group like to sponsor the May issue? Or would you like to share some experience, strength, and hope with other NOVA OA's by signing on as editor? Yours truly will probably need to take a break shortly to get married J. You can contact me at k2lovesrabbits@earthlink.net. Thanks!

--K2



MEMBERS REFLECT ON STEP FOUR

April is the month for celebrating the Fourth of the Twelve Steps of Overeaters Anonymous (OA). The Fourth Step is "Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves."

Certain words always jump out of this Step for me, the first being "fearless". As someone who was raised in a home of compulsive overeating, alcoholism, mental illness, and other abuse, I was unable to conceive of being "fearless". However, I finally learned that the Steps fall in the order they do for a very good reason. Each Step builds on the one(s) that came before it. It was only by becoming

truly powerless over food in Step One; coming to believe that a Power greater than myself could restore me to sanity in Step Two; and making the decision to turn my will and life over to the care of that Higher Power in Step Three; that I could begin to believe it possible that an inventory of myself could be "fearless" in Step Four.

The second word that jumps out for me is the m "moral inventory". On first blush, it sounds as if it is going to be really ugly and all about my guiltiness, blameworthiness, and entrenched status as a victim of life. However, upon reflection and standing strongly with the first three Steps behind me, I can see that guilt, blame, and victim perspective are not moral. So "moral inventory" must mean something else. Perhaps it is another way of describing an inventory of truth.

The truth is that in all the situations of my life up until now, I have done the best I could with skills that were very faulty indeed. The truth is that I operate in the present with skills learned as survival techniques when I was a child. The truth is that today I do not have to stay in a place where I am victimized by food, other people or economic insecurity. Today I have other choices. Today, my "moral inventory" includes fearlessly reviewing choices I made in the past and asking my Higher Power for clear alternative choices to make today. For me the "moral inventory" includes a way to choose my Higher Power over the "power" of the disease of overeating.

--Louisa J



As a child, I started throwing up food when I had terrible fear and lots of rejection from my parents who were getting a divorce and neither one of them wanted me. I had been eating all my life because they were never home. The babysitters would feed me junk-food to quiet me. I had learned to associate food with love and affection. My father

would come in to my bedroom and tell me stories and rub my legs that always ached from what they called "growth pains". Later, I found that he was not beyond rubbing my breasts which, of course, made me feel anxious and violated. As long as I ate sugar food and white flour, I was high enough to cope with all the sense of loneliness and vulnerability. When I first came into OA and stopped eating sugar and white flour, I had become so addicted that when I no longer had my "drug foods," I developed panic attacks. My doctor helped by prescribing anti-depression medication that helped relieve the compulsion to throw up. However, it is OA meetings at least 3 times a week that have given me the courage to stay abstinent. At the meetings, I met people whom I can speak with who have a similar problem so we can support each other. The steps teach us honesty which is the most important part of my program. I am so grateful for the 12 Steps. I use the Steps in another fellowship also, which is helping me not to blame myself. Because of OA, I have learned that it is necessary to love myself.

--Nan



I have finally learned my lesson not to be afraid of Step 4 because it won't bite. I thought I was the only ONE of the thousands of OA members who put off step 4. I mean, "Duh", the OA 12 and 12 talks about not procrastinating on this step, just to do it. This is hard for me to admit--it has taken me one whole entire year to really work step 4, from start to finish. My sponsor gave me a jump start on the toughest part of the step, because I asked for her help. All I have to do is relax and reach out. In this case, I reached out to my sponsor to guide me through such a difficult part of my program.

--Elise C



KEEPING IT FRESH

I've lost track of the number of times I've heard, read, or said that "It's much harder to get abstinent than it is to stay abstinent" or "Nothing tastes as good as abstinence feels." After so many years in program, it is easy for me to become complacent and for repeated slogans to lose their meaning for me. As a survivor of multiple relapses, I know all too well just how true these statements are but still need to keep things fresh if I am to sustain my abstinence and my commitment to all three facets of my recovery; physical, emotional, and spiritual. The critical part of this triangle of course being spirituality.

So just how can I keep things fresh and retain that same energy level I had as a newcomer when I was walking on air? For me the answer was a combination of things, including listening to spiritual music for inspiration and as a source of new slogans I can use when others may feel temporarily "stale." Of course, nothing keeps things fresh like working with newcomers or those battling to return from relapse. It is imperative that I share my story, the good and the bad, with those who share my disease. For me this is a truly spiritual exercise and the greatest message I can share with them comes from a song I heard through my HP gave me the willingness to keep coming back. Anyone who has ever suffered from relapse or simply feels like a failure because they can't control their weight, remember...."There's no such thing as a failure who keeps trying." Keep coming back and to find new ways to keep it fresh for yourself and those to whom you reach out.

--Bret S.



ANNOUNCING REGION SEVEN'S "CALL FIVE TO KEEP 'EM ALIVE" CAMPAIGN

MAY 5-10

Are there some people you haven't seen around the rooms in a while? Take this chance to pick up the phone to see how they're doing and let them know OA CARES. Sponsored by Region Seven and NOVA Intergroup.



COMING IN JUNE!

THE TOOLS RETREAT

- ☞ Saturday, June 19, 2004
- ☞ 1:00 - 4:00 p.m.
- ☞ Hope Lutheran Church in the Fellowship Hall
- ☞ 4604 Ravensworth Road
- ☞ Annandale, VA
- ☞ Directions: From the Capital Beltway (I-495), take Braddock Road East. Turn left at the first light, Ravensworth Road. The church is on the left about a mile down Ravensworth. The meeting is in the Fellowship Hall.
- ☞ Sponsored by NOVA Intergroup and the Arlington Sunrise Meetings
- ☞ Suggested Donation: \$3
- ☞ Contact: Kitty at kjvitko@yahoo.com, (703)892-1413 or Joan at hower@erols.com.



SUPPORT NOVA IG

We meet the third Saturday of each month at 10 am at Hope Lutheran Church, 4604 Ravensworth Rd, Annandale. This is the place to get new Whens, NOVATION, and the latest flyers for retreats. Come see what you have been missing.



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