



# NOVATION!

NOVA Outreach Intergroup  
June 2003

## Celebrating Recovery

I just celebrated 2 years of abstinence in recovery. It was so hard for me to acknowledge my accomplishment, but my sponsor suggested that I pray for the willingness to celebrate. My Higher Power eventually did for me what I couldn't do for myself & my celebration was indeed a joyous occasion.

But when I think about why I didn't want to celebrate, I learned some things about myself. All my life, my disease has been telling me that I wasn't good enough, that I wasn't thin enough, that I wasn't cute enough. So it made sense to me that now it was telling me I wasn't ABSTINENT enough, that I wasn't working my program well enough. But when my sponsor asked me if I was practicing the principles to the best of my ability, I had to answer yes.

What I'm beginning to see is that abstinence is a gift I give to myself and to people in the fellowship. It says that I do my days with a more ease than before. It means I am gentle with myself and the people around me because if I'm criticizing and judging myself, you best believe I'm criticizing and judging you too!

It is a miracle that I haven't had

to purchase larger clothes in 2 years. It is a miracle that I keep coming back. It is a miracle that I don't have to do this life alone. It is a miracle that I walk the oh-so-scary walks I walk without the food that I thought was giving me courage. I'm learning what true courage is all about. I'm learning that it comes from within.

My sponsor says that she hopes I'll be my own cheerleader one day. She says that she doesn't believe it when people say you have to love yourself before you love someone else. It's okay for people to love me and celebrate my life even when I can't.

The God in me is reaching for the God in others. And sometimes the God in me is reaching for me. It isn't easy showing up for my own life when all I've ever known is how to base my worth on the opinions of others. My sponsor says that her hope for me is that in times of difficulty, I am more able to hear my own voice, to see my own light. I'm abstinent today by the grace of God and with the help of the fellowship. May we all find greater ease as we walk away from the food, staying away from the food one day at a time. We are worth it.

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**Step Six** "Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character."

My experience with the sixth step is it is much easier to accept if I am naming the defects of character

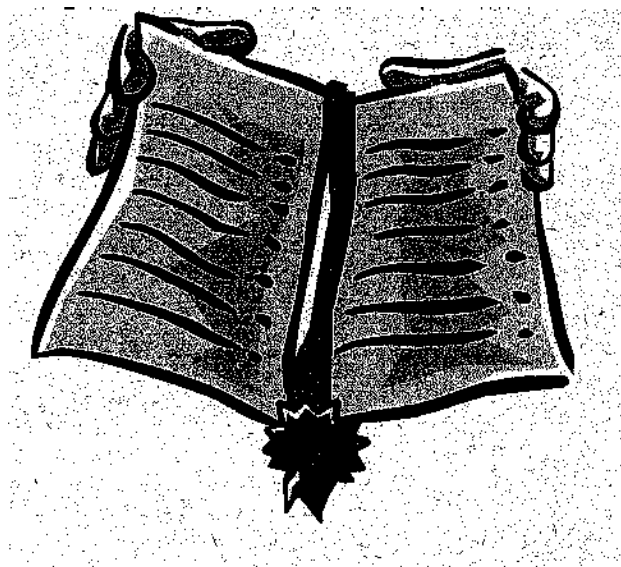
myself. It is easy for me to get up in a meeting and say that I have a problem with "perfectionism" or "procrastination." And having said that, my ego is comfortable with the diagnosis, and I can go on with my life. This reminds me of when I was doing employment counseling. When employers asked applicants if they had any faults, we told people to list a fault that would pay off for the employer. My favorite was, "I just don't know when to stop working. If I have one fault it is being a workaholic." Anyway, I can take the sixth step pretty well as long as I am listing the defects, and I am defining the terms instead of my Higher Power.

HOWEVER, there are times when I have to let go of something that I REALLY wanted to keep. Now that is another kettle of fish. Like maybe my procrastination is made up of a guilty conscience and maybe whatever I am procrastinating about was not meant to be done at all. Maybe my perfectionism is not me wanting to get something perfect, but me trying my best to avoid something uncomfortable.

In addition, some of my worst defects may be those parts of my personality that I am most proud of: My ambition, my self-righteous anger, for instance. The AA 12 and 12 has this quote: "What we must recognize now is that we exult in some of our defects. We really love them. Who, for example, doesn't like to feel just a little superior to the next fellow, or even quite a lot

superior?" (p. 66) What I am slowly beginning to realize is that it isn't just the defects I enjoy a little too much that I have to be willing to lose, but those parts of my personality which may never have occurred to me to be faults.

I usually operate with this list of things I am supposed to do. The list is always too long and I moan and complain about all of my commitments and responsibilities. And then my sponsor says something wise--maybe, she says, the list itself is a defect. Maybe it is ego-defined and not defined by my Higher Power.



Maybe my ego is telling me how much the world is wanting me to do these things when in reality God has an entirely different plan. And if that were true, if it were possible for me to realize that my plans, pride and activities are not the same as what God might wish for me to accomplish; well, then step 6 is being willing to let my ego driven plans fade away and to practice being willing and open to what God has in mind for me today.

Being willing to have God remove our defects is a scary thing when you get down to it, because mostly my defects is how I define myself. And step 6 is being willing to let those definitions go.

--Anonymous

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### **Speaking of Tradition Six**

"An O.A. group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the O.A. name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property and prestige divert us from our primary purpose."

Once I started Overeaters Anonymous I was overcome with the welcome and the answers I found in the rooms. For the first time in years and years I began to feel I could be guided toward a solution. I wanted everyone to know the good news, and I tried to drag friends to meetings. Why had this stayed such a secret, I wondered. Surely the world needed to know more about it. My ego wanted to be the STAR and to show others by my wonderful example.

It took me awhile to discover the importance of an anonymous spiritual program. But that should not be surprising, considering my own primary purpose was simply to lose weight. It had not dawned on me yet that my whole life was going to change. I intended to lose 65 pounds, then I was out of there.

As I grew in my recovery, I began to see the traditions in a new light. I

realized that not only must the group be careful to not lend out their name; but I, also, could become easily "diverted." And what is more, any time I was dealing with problems of "money, property and prestige" I was on shaky ground.

At the end of this tradition, the OA 12 and 12 mentions the slogan, "Keep it Simple." This works both in the rooms and in my own life. When I begin to get tangled up with prestige or ego, that is when I run the risk of returning to the food. The longer I am abstinent, the more important I feel my abstinence is, and the more carefully I work to keep it strong. I try not to get into long discussions of whether or not OA "works". If you are not in program, I will simply say "it works for me." And I try to remove myself from those situations where my ego wants to convert everyone in the room. It is not good for Overeaters Anonymous and when I get diverted, it is not good for my program.

-- Anonymous

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**More Sixth Step Sharing "When men and women pour so much [food] into themselves ...defying their instinct for self-preservation, they seem bent upon self-destruction... and work against their own deepest instinct." AA 12 and 12, Step 6, p. 64.**

I believe that our own deepest instinct is a yearning towards God. As a food addict, I did anything I could to avoid that yearning, that emptiness that

yawned inside me. Most of my obsessions and compulsions fall into the category of self-absorption and are ego driven. If you interrupt me to point this out, I will barely hear you, so bound am I to complete the action. My mind will dismiss what you are saying. "Yes, but...." I will say, and go on running downhill straight, towards my own self destruction.

In the midst of this ego chattering, it is very hard to be still and listen to the voice of God. I have much too much to do, much too much to accomplish. When my desires "drive me blindly" like this, it is easy to name my faults. I name very easy ones, "oh, yes," I will say, "I am too busy." "Oh yes, I procrastinate." But there is a still small voice that says, "you put yourself before God." In my busy-ness, I do put myself before God. I move pell-mell into self-destruction. I think sometimes when I stop that constant movement, the sadness of the world begins to catch up with me, and the depth of a God commitment haunts me. So I rush on to a new project, like the alcoholic that is bent on destruction. I keep running to avoid the call of God, which is too scary to imagine without food or constant activity.

--Anonymous

6:45 to 7:45 am at FAIRFAX CIRCLE BAPTIST CHURCH, 3110 Chichester Lane, Fairfax 22031. On Route 50 (Arlington Boulevard), one block west of Cedar Lane. For more Info call Jim/Amy at 703-204-0181.

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Support NOVA IG We meet the third Saturday of each month at 10. am at Immanuel Methodist in Annandale, Heritage Drive; near Route 236 & the Beltway. All are welcome.

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**NEW MEETING: TUES & THURS  
FAIRFAX SUNRISE**