

NOVATION!



Gratitude Event Celebrates Recovery

NOVA Outreach Intergroup October 2002

Welcome, readers!

I take over the editorship of NOVATION with trepidation because Dick did such a great job. But it was a good chance to do service and reflect on recovery, so I decided to give it a try. It was pointed out to me that this was a good opportunity to practice letting go and letting God. This newsletter focuses on gratitude because of the recent Gratitude event, but, to begin with, each newsletter will focus on the Step/Tradition of the month. You can also write about general recovery issues such as abstinence and serenity.

I may cut submissions to run as many items as possible, so please limit the length of your articles. You can also submit "Program Zingers," pithy sayings incorporating 12-Step wisdom. If your item doesn't appear at once, I may be holding it for a latter issue. Please send me material via e-mail at kristinkristk@aol.com or to:

Kristin K.

Address on hard copy only

Available at meetings

Thanks in advance for your help. And please--keep 'em coming!

Several dozen compulsive overeaters gathered at the Falls Church on 5 October to celebrate everything recovery has given us. After speakers talked about how OA has changed their lives; several OA stalwarts presented a very funny skit about eating out before Program--"Can you make that the supersize trough of onion rings?"--and eating out since recovery. At least one prospective new member, attracted by the crowd, stopped by to get literature and information about the program

At tables outside the auditorium attendees wrote a gratitude list. Things mentioned included:

Abstinence today (appeared repeatedly!)

Physical, emotional, and spiritual recovery

Joy

Courage

Resourcefulness, creativity, health

The God of my understanding, the guidance of my Higher Power

A new way of life

Tools to handle life

Learning to live positively, learning how to take risks

Being here, having the Program--and all of you

My Wednesday writing meeting

Life

My job

Doing well, one day at a time.

For my home, house, dogs, friends, family, closeness

Love, a loving partner/husband

Beautiful grandchildren

Being restored to sanity

Improving self esteem

Having enough
Blue skies, my walk
My funny little pets ☺
Being restored to sanity
Feeling more serene
Safety in dangerous times
For OA and HOW--and the many loving
12-Step people in my life
Being surrounded by friends--making
new friends
OA friendships
Having a life

Several people offered special appreciations. One wrote: "I have gone from a 275-pound couch potato to a 160-pound dancing machine!" Another wrote: "I am thankful that I am no longer bingeing and that I have a group of people I can interact with, that I can go places and mix with people. It's not about the food anymore; it's about the people..."

Perhaps the most moving submission was from a member who penned simply: "I have a life. You people saved my life."

Many thanks to Barbara J. for organizing the evening and to the others--too numerous to mention--who helped!

Thanksgiving for Blessings

I would like to share some of the blessings brought to me by my Higher Power, together with my fellow members and sponsors. And to think that all I had to do was admit my powerlessness, show up, and open my heart to the unconditional love to be found in our fellowship.

I recently reached a major milestone in my life with my acceptance into a graduate school. This path was difficult, requiring much soul-searching, courage and perseverance. I

could not have done it without recovery, and I couldn't have found recovery without you.

My home life was a battleground. My father, a deeply frightened and controlling man, was afflicted with this illness. I believe I inherited the disease from him, and like my father, I tried to escape my childhood hurts by overeating. As my bingeing increased, the addiction, entered as a refuge, became a cage that shut me away from God.

After repeated, ineffective prayers for the lifting of my food addiction, God began to seem irrelevant. I was a classic addict: I wanted the world to change around me. I wanted a Higher Power to serve me rather than serving a Higher Power.

Over the years, my father sought recovery again and again in this very fellowship, but has never yet seemed to reach abstinence. This fact kept me away from these rooms for a long time. In my twenties, I was trapped in my addiction and compulsively trying to save an unhappy relationship. Then a true miracle occurred: While accompanying my significant other during a temporary job in Australia, desperate for friends and a community, I finally tried attending meetings of Overeaters Anonymous. I struggled through months of hunger pangs and the terror of confronting emotions without the armor of food. The fellowship gave me tools to rid myself of the emotional chains that led me to eat.

Over the years, through I've experienced many ups and downs, struggles and relapses, many other

miracles have occurred. I now have sustained conscious contact with God. Though I have breaks and sometimes lack willingness, I do service in the fellowship-me, a person who struggles daily against selfishness!

I have affirmed my purpose in life, which changed me forever: my purpose is to discern and do God's will. This was to be the business of my life, and the vehicle of my joy.

I've begun to see my Higher Power nurturing, a constant Presence that would surround and fill me every minute if only I would let it happen.

I have written several fourth-step inventories, reflecting on persons or groups I have hurt or resented in my life, and what character traits caused that harm. I've written of my parents, my boyfriend, my siblings. In finding the courage to share this with God, with myself, and with my sponsor, much of the shame that drove me to eat was washed away. I have reckoned up my accounts, and they are only so big. I see that just as I have the power to hurt people, I have the power to love them.

After prayerful consideration with my sponsors, I have made amends, in ways carefully designed not to inflict further harm, to those in my inventories. In the cases of people still in my life I make "living amends," working each day toward loving relationships. My siblings and I are experiencing new healing.

Thank you, fellow OAers all over the world. Thank you for your prayers, your attendance at meetings, your laughter, your shoulders to cry on and

ears to listen, for keeping Intergroups going and selling literature and sponsoring one another. Each time we do any of these things, we're feeding the "river of love" to be found in these rooms. I couldn't have done this without you.

--Anonymous, by e-mail.

Reflections on Gratitude in the Morning

I have often heard the term "grateful recovering compulsive overeater." In fact I'd have to be recovering if I were grateful. That's just the way gratitude works. If I didn't have this shameful condition then I never would have dropped to the bottom of despair where I anticipated falling through into the peace of death. What kind of God would lead me to such a place? A God who helped me discover that the lower the bottom the higher I can reach. Peace is not beyond despair-it is in hope. It is in my willingness to follow the steps-it is in my awareness of God.

I am grateful today because if I didn't have the condition-I wouldn't have the solution. I love the solution and embrace it, for it includes the peace I have acquired-the knowledge and understanding of myself that comes with self-respect I never had.

The people I have met and come to know at meetings have become my friends. They are the best kind of friends. Their love for me despite my defects is my most valued treasure. If they can love me knowing who I really am then I can learn to love myself and abolish forever the self-hate acquired over years of feeling worthless-one day at a time.

I am grateful for the people I've met along the way of this daily journey. Some I haven't seen for a while, some have died from this disease and some have moved on and up. All have been mirrors of myself at various stages and have been valuable teachers when I didn't want to learn. I will always remember them even when my short-term memory fails because they are a permanent part of my story, my healing and my life.

--MaryAnn F, from the NE Florida IG newsletter via Internet.

Program Zingers

Surrender means letting **God** drive.

The effects of a meeting last about as long as those of a good bath.

One is too many and 1000 isn't enough.

A grateful compulsive overeater is an abstinent compulsive overeater.



Helpful Phone Numbers

NOVA IG BOARD

Chair	Karen S.	7/536-5269
1 st VC	Toby G.	7/528-9563
2 nd VC		
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- Betsy F. 7/998-7276
- Debbie F. 7/799-3282
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2/269-4204 (w)
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- Cecile 7/658-0873
- Gail 7/793-4926
- Gladys 7/968-8476
- Ginny 7/998-1463
- Lynn B. 7/222-3279

Have You Ever Noticed?

Reading from the AA Big Book this week, I was struck once again how closely our disease parallels alcoholism. Consider the following paragraph--which I have adapted from "More About Alcoholism," Third Edition:

Here are some of the methods we have tried [to stop overeating]: Eating protein only, limiting the number of meals, never eating alone, never eating in the morning, eating only at home, never having food in the house, never bingeing during business hours, eating only at parties, switching from meat to vegetarian meals, eating only natural foods, agreeing to resign if ever "strung out" on the job, taking a trip, not taking a trip, swearing off forever (with and without a solemn oath), taking more physical exercise, reading inspirational books, going to

health farms and sanitariums, accepting voluntary commitment to asylums--we could increase the list ad infinitum."

And to think I sometimes find the Twelve Steps too much work!

Support Your Intergroup

NOVA IG meets the third Saturday of each month at 10 am in the basement of Immanuel United Methodist Church in Annandale. The church is located about one-half mile of Route 236 inside the Beltway. Find out more by showing up and serving on a committee or becoming an IG rep for your group. Service is its own reward!

Support OA 60/30/10

After meeting group expenses, it is suggested that a prudent reserve be set aside and the remainder sent 60% to your local IG, 30% to WSO, and 10% to Region VII.

Handy URLs for OA Computer Nerds

NOVA IG website www.oanova.org

DC/MD website www.aa-dcmetro.org

OA/WSO website www.aa.org

FILL THIS SPACE WITH YOUR EXPERIENCE, STRENGTH, & HOPE!