



**HAPPINESS IS A BY-PRODUCT OF LOVE & SERVICE**

**Do I want to be happy? You bet. How can I do that?.....SERVICE**

What I've been taught by my OA friends is that by working the steps and incorporating their spiritual disciples into my life I am awakened to the power of love which gives me the inspiration and energy to work on carrying out God's will for me. Step 12 mandates carrying the message to other suffering compulsive eaters. How can I do that?.....SERVICE

The Board of Trustees of Overeaters Anonymous has developed a five year Strategic Plan. The areas of concern are Strong Meetings, Public/Professional Awareness, Committed Service Bodies, and Financial Health. One of the objectives is to educate the fellowship about the importance of SERVICE.

Staying ABSTINENT is the first and foremost way I can do service. Being in a normal sized body helps attract newcomers and reminds struggling members in a visual way that the OA program works. We offer physical, emotional and spiritual recovery as we consistently use the Tools and work the Steps.

**SPONSORSHIP** is a great way to give service. I learned a lot about how to sponsor from my sponsors. I pass along what they taught to me. OA has great literature about sponsoring. We have a "Sponsorship Kit" which includes *The Tools of Recovery*, *A Guide for Sponsors*, *Sponsoring Through the 12 Steps*, excerpts from *Lifeline* about Sponsorship, and a reprint of an article from *A Step Ahead* about working with others. (#210 \$2.25). The Big Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, has an entire chapter devoted to sponsorship called **"WORKING WITH OTHERS"**.

Making sure our local meetings are open and

available to all is a way of doing service any of us can do to assure we have OA there for all who want and need it. Carrying the key for a meeting, donating to the 7<sup>th</sup> tradition, ordering literature, setting up chairs, keeping the meeting information accurate on the oa.org and local websites, arranging for speakers, and chairing a meeting are examples of ways to insure that OA is always there.

Doing service to keep the service structure of OA alive and well is important. Attending Intergroup (IG), Region 8 or the WSBC, serving on committees, putting on workshops to carry the message are ways we can do service to insure good communication so the inverted pyramid service structure works.



Dr. Bob shared why he did service in his story. He said..... **"I do it for four reasons:**

**A sense of duty.**

**It is a pleasure.**

**Because in so doing I am paying my debt to the man who took time to pass it on to me.**

**Because every time I do it I take out a little more insurance for myself against a possible slip."** *Alcoholics Anonymous*, pages 180-181

**Are you doing what you can to carry the message? Your SERVICE makes a difference!**

**Doing service sure makes me a lot happier than eating a bag of wackados**

stephanie... ACTION is the magic word....d

Region 8 Chair

## ***We Are Supported.....***

**AS THE BUDGET IS BEING PREPARED FOR OUR NEW FISCAL YEAR AND THE COMMITTEES, BOARD, AND TRUSTEE HAVE MADE THEIR FINANCIAL REQUESTS IT BECOMES A CHALLENGE TO BALANCE NEEDS AND WANTS WITH WHAT IS POSSIBLE. BY DEFINITION A BUDGET IS A "STATEMENT OF PROBABLE REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE AND OF FINANCIAL PROPOSALS FOR THE ENSUING YEAR." IT IS EASIER TO HAVE PROBABLE EXPENDITURES THAN PROBABLE REVENUE. WHILE OUR EXPENDITURES ARE INCREASING OUR REVENUE HAS NOT INCREASED TO KEEP UP WITH OUR EXPENSES. THE BODY VOTED TO CONTINUE WITH THREE RECOVERY/ BUSINESS ASSEMBLIES A YEAR. THESE ARE BENEFICIAL FOR THE HOSTING INTERGROUP AND REGION 8 BUT ALSO ARE A LARGE PART OF THE BUDGET FOR REGION 8. THE TREASURER AND WAYS & MEANS COMMITTEE WILL SUBMIT A MOTION IN NOVEMBER TO THE ASSEMBLY TO REDUCE A PORTION OF**

**THE TRAVEL EXPENSES FOR THE COMMITTEE CHAIRS AND BOARD. THIS IS A MEASURED RESPONSE TO BALANCE THE REQUESTS OF THE COMMITTEES AND BOARD BUDGETS WITH EXPENSES.**

**THERE ARE ACTIONS WE CAN ALL TAKE TO HELP WITH THE REVENUE. OUR 7<sup>TH</sup> TRADITION REVENUE HAS, EVEN WITH THIS HARD ECONOMIC TIME, BASICALLY STAYED THE SAME. YET THERE IS A GREAT NEED TO INCREASE OUR REVENUE. HOW DO WE ACCOMPLISH THIS? HERE ARE A FEW QUESTIONS: DO WE DISCUSS WITH OUR GROUPS AND INTERGROUPS THE NEED FOR INCREASED DONATIONS FOR REGION 8 TO GET THE MESSAGE OUT? ARE ALL GROUPS SUPPORTING THEIR INTERGROUP? ARE ALL INTERGROUPS SUPPORTING WSO & REGION? IS AN INTERGROUP HOLDING A SUM OVER PRUDENT RESERVE THAT COULD BE SENT TO REGION 8 AS A ONE**



**TIME DONATION?**

**THE WAYS & MEANS COMMITTEE IS PROBABLY THE SMALLEST NUMERICALLY BUT THE WORK DONE IS FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR THE TREASURER AND FUND RAISING. DO WE SUPPORT THE FUNDRAISING OF WAYS & MEANS? DO WE LOOK FOR THE BOOTH AT ASSEMBLY AND SEE WHAT IS BEING OFFERED? DO WE HAVE SUGGESTIONS THAT HAVE WORKED AT GROUP OR INTERGROUP LEVEL THAT CAN BE PASSED ON?**

**A PRUDENT EXPENDITURE PROPOSAL AND AN AWARENESS OF THE NEED TO INCREASE REGION 8 REVENUE BY 7<sup>TH</sup> DONATIONS OR FUNDRAISING CAN WORK TO BALANCE FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY AND OUR PRIMARY PURPOSE, "TO CARRY THE MESSAGE TO THE COMPULSIVE OVEREATER WHO STILL SUFFERS".**

**RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED  
KAREN C.  
TREASURER REGION 8**

**TRADITION 3 WAS THE HOPE FOR MY RECOVERY! I BELONGED TO OTHER "GROUPS" IN THE PAST AND THERE WERE MANY REQUIREMENTS AND RESTRICTIONS FOR RECOVERY. IN OA I ONLY HAD ONE REQUIREMENT "A DESIRE TO STOP EATING COMPULSIVELY". I KNEW I HAD FOUND THE RIGHT PLACE. I FOUND OTHER MEMBERS TO BE JUST LIKE ME WHEN IT**

**CAME TO FOOD AND I LEARNED TO TRUST THEM. SOME BECAME FRIENDS, SPONSORS AND SPONSEES. TOGETHER WE WORK THE STEPS, KEEP THE TRADITIONS AND ARE LEARNING ABOUT THE CONCEPTS OF OA SERVICE. THERE IS A READING IN THE FOR TODAY BOOK (PARAPHRASED) THAT SAYS, WHEN THE STUDENT IS READY THE TEACHER AP-**

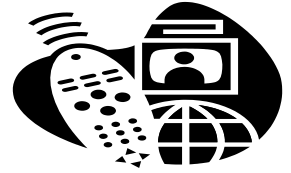


**PEARS. I HOPE TO ALWAYS REMAIN TEACHABLE. I KNOW I WILL NEVER GRADUATE, BUT HAVE FAITH THAT I CAN LIVE ONE DAY AT A TIME IN ABSTINENCE.**

**ANONYMOUS**



# Technology Corner



Now for all you Intergroup Chairs and Region Rep's in the fellowship we have the ability for six Reps or Visitors to attend the Region Conferences via the Internet.

We will be using a program called **OOVVOO** at this coming Assembly in March. Please contact **BURT** @ [showupoa@aol.com](mailto:showupoa@aol.com) or anyone on the publications committee for instructions on how to attend remotely. We will have step by step instructions and we will to help you learn to use the software . We need you whether in person or on-line to be with us to conduct the business of the region.

The Technology Web Site Committee is in the process of obtaining our first pieces of AV equipment for use at Regional Assemblies and other Region functions. We will soon be receiving 4 wireless Microphones and their associated stands and cables.

## **ELECTRONIC RESERVATIONS :**

It is now possible to have your event registration on line including event management, credit card payments, accounting , ticketing and making badges

It's easy we have now managed 6 different events within the region, contact the Tech Web committee for details attendance is improved by at least 35%

Email Committee chair



**Step 3** can not be taken until I have finished the steps that came before it. When I first came in Program and started working the steps, I wanted quick resolution of my overeating! I learned that by taking Steps 1 and 2, I became willing to do Step 3.

This process has made all the difference in my life. I no longer saw the Higher Power as the one who only took care of wars, famine and strife. He could take care of my obsession with food. All I had to do was trust Him. That was hard. I had trust issues. I still have some of those issues and He is helping me with them because I turn them over to Him daily, in prayer and take action and do my part to treat my issues.

Thanks for letting me share.

**SJ Fayetteville, NC**



## ***Medellin in November!***

Gerri Helms, Region 8 Trustee

Are you ready? There are so many extra considerations for this assembly and if we wait until after the July Assembly to start our preparation, it may not be enough time. One thing you may need to think about now, is your passport. If you have one, is it up to date? If not, you may wish to consider [ap-  
plying online!](#)

Some of the things you may have heard could be without merit, or perhaps you have questions. Please share them with us so that we can find the answers for you, to make this process as easy as possible for all our reps to attend the assembly and perhaps many more of you to take advantage of the convention, where Region Chairs from all over the world will be speakers!



One concern I've heard frequently is about safety. Although we heard some scary stories, [Chairman Stephanie D](#) and I attended the National Service Board of Colombia Business meetings in Bogota last year. None of our fears materialized. The flight was great, moving through customs easy, and we were treated like dignitaries by our hosts, who met at the airport, and transported to our housing. We spent a day touring Bogota, feeling very safe and having a good time. I wouldn't hesitate to return to Bogota and am looking forward to Medellín!

What questions might you have about the November assembly in South America, that we might answer for you? Please contact Stephanie or me, [your trustee](#).

## **CONCEPT TWO**

**The OA groups have delegated to the World Service Business Conference the active maintenance of our world services; thus, the World Service Business Conference is the voice, authority and effective conscience of OA as a whole.**

I am delighted to have an opportunity to write about Concept Two. I find it very appropriate for work I am doing in my recovery right now. The word voice, in this context is the expression of one's opinion, the opinion itself, the right to express opinion. I spent a lot of years of my life having no opinion about anything important. I knew my favorite color, will be a NY Giants fan for life and always knew what I wanted to eat, however I lacked an opinion about many critical matters related to myself. As I grew older, it became easy to have opinions about you and what you should do, however it took coming into recovery, surrendering my food and working the Steps for me to learn to focus on and take care of myself. Having opinions about me (my needs, wants, preferences, etc.) is part of this process.

The area that I have begun working on recently is expressing my opinions to others, giving myself a voice. I have the right and responsibility to share my voice. I was an active participant in my addiction and today I am an active participant in my recovery and life. People cannot read my mind; I need to take the risk and share my needs with others. It is also right for me to share my wants and preferences. I do this by using the slogan, "Mean what you say; say what you mean; don't say it mean." This gives me an opportunity to voice my opinion, and get my needs met, while respecting those around me. I still feel discomfort around this new behavior, yet the more I practice the easier it will become. My Higher Power has given me a unique set of opinions, and it is alright for me to share them in an appropriate way. I am grateful to add my voice to the Fellowship of Overeaters Anonymous

***.Joyfully Abstinent, recovered & emotionally whole by the Grace of God***

**Atiya** ❤️

## Trustee Talkin'

**Gerri Helms**

### Region 8 Trustee

Greetings friends in [SOAR 8](#)! Wow, so much has gone on in my first year as a trustee. There were many times where I've thought, "[What an order, I can't go through with it.](#)" I have a lot of new responsibilities and felt overwhelmed in the early days of my new service. But as time has progressed, I'm getting much better at my job and it doesn't seem quite so daunting as in the first six months.

There are many great things going on in our Region and OA as a whole. For me, the most exciting is the workshops I've been invited to do for intergroups in SOAR 8. My Trustee budget allows me to do several of them. My 'dance card' has become so full, that I'm needing to turn down invitations or move them further out in the year. The Region 8 Board can also do workshops for you. We have power point presentations for many topics, including (but not limited to):

- ⇒ Strong Meetings
- ⇒ Abstinence
- ⇒ Abstinence Action Plan
- ⇒ Traditions
- ⇒ Living the Traditions in your Every Day Life
- ⇒ Service & the Concepts of Service
- ⇒ Sponsoring

These workshops create desire for recovery and fellowship in the areas where we've presented. We can do any topic for your group, as long as it's on our [Strategic plan](#).

#### [World Service Business Conference](#)

is right around the corner! If you haven't sent in your registration yet, make sure you do it soon, and also book your hotel reservation, to be assured of a room. If



you need a roommate, contact [Stephanie Doran](#), our chair or [Sandy](#) at the WSO office. Has your intergroup read and voted on what items you would like to see the delegates address on your behalf? That information was just sent out in the [Second Mailing](#). The WSBC is a collective group conscience of OA – the delegates are YOUR voice. Make sure they are addressing items that you think are important to OA as a whole! Also, there are two General Service Trustee openings and the latest news is that two candidates are from Region 8! How great is that?

Have you read the most recent issue of the [Courier](#)? This is OA's newsletter to health care professionals! You can print it out in color or black and white, and give a copy to your doctor. Your PIPO Committee can do a mailing to all healthcare professionals in your area! Spread the word that OA works!

Ah, and how do we keep YOU abreast of what's going on in OA? Through [A Step Ahead!](#) You'll find lots of exciting information, such as OA unveiling our [new Spanish Website pages!](#) If your meeting has a designated downloader, consider printing out a few copies, in color, or black and white, for your members!

Of course, we are all excited about heading to Baton Rouge in a few weeks, for the Region Business Assembly and Recovery Convention. Have you registered yet? I [registered online](#) – it was easy and fast! If you would like to fly into New Orleans and ride with us to Baton Rouge, I am renting a car for that purpose. I am using the airline that doesn't charge for luggage, and the cost is much more reasonable for us. [Contact me](#) if you are interested.

Looking forward to seeing you soon in Louisiana or perhaps at an upcoming workshop. I'm currently scheduled to visit Charleston, SC in March, Jacksonville, FL in April, Albuquerque for WSBC in late April, Venezuela in May, New Orleans in June, Nashville for Region 8 in July, and Medellin, Colombia, SA in November for Region 8 again. What an exciting life! Remember, always put abstinence first and everything else seems to work itself out!

## Trustee Talkin '

**Gerrí Helms**

**Región 8 Trustee**

Saludos amigos en SOAR 8! Vaya, hasta el punto que ha sucedido en mi primer año como un administrador. Hubo muchas veces que he pensado, "¡Qué fin, no puedo pasar por ello." Tengo un montón de nuevas responsabilidades y se sintió abrumado en los primeros días de mi nuevo servicio. Pero con el tiempo ha avanzado, yo estoy mucho mejor en mi trabajo y no parece tan desalentador como en los primeros seis meses.

Hay muchas cosas buenas pasando en nuestra Región y OA como un todo. Para mí, el más emocionante es la de talleres que he sido invitado a hacer por los intergrupos en SOAR 8. Mi presupuesto administrador me permite hacer varios de ellos. "Carnet de baile" Mis ha llegado a ser tan completa, que estoy necesitando para rechazar invitaciones o moverlos más lejos en el año. La Región 8 Junta también puede hacer talleres para usted. Tenemos presentaciones en power point de muchos temas, incluyendo (pero no limitados a):

- >Reuniones Fuerte
- >Abstinencia
- >La abstinencia Plan de Acción
- >Tradiciones
- >Vivir las tradiciones en su vida diaria
- >Servicio y los conceptos de servicio
- >Patrocinio

Estos talleres de crear el deseo de recuperación y de becas en las áreas en las que hemos presentado. Podemos hacer cualquier tema para su grupo, mientras que en nuestro plan estratégico.

Conferencia de Servicio Mundial está a la vuelta de la esquina! Si no han enviado su inscripción, sin embargo, asegúrese de hacerlo pronto, y también su reservación de hotel, para estar seguro de una habitación. Si necesita un compañero de piso, contactar con Stephanie Doran, nuestra silla o de arena en la oficina de la OSM. Tiene su intergrupo leído y votado sobre qué artículos le gustaría ver la dirección de los delegados en su nombre? Esta información fue transmitida sólo en el segundo envío. El WSBC es una conciencia de grupo colectiva de AA - los delegados están SU voz.

Asegúrese de que se están abordando temas que

creo son importantes para OA como un todo! Además, hay dos de servicios generales aberturas Fiduciario y la última noticia es que dos candidatos son de la Región 8! ¡Qué grande es esto?

¿Has leído el último número de El Correo? Este es el boletín de OA a los profesionales de la salud! Usted puede imprimir en color o blanco y negro, y darle una copia a su médico. Su PIPO Comité puede hacer un mailing a todos los profesionales de la salud en su área! Corre la voz que OA funciona!



Ah, y ¿cómo te mantenemos al tanto de lo que está pasando en la OA? A través de Un Paso Adelante!

Encontrarás un montón de información interesante, como la OA el lanzamiento de nuestro nuevo sitio Web páginas en español! Si la reunión tiene un programa de descarga designado, considere la posibilidad de imprimir unas pocas copias, en color o blanco y negro, para sus miembros!

Por supuesto, todos estamos entusiasmados con la partida a Baton Rouge en un par de semanas, por la Asamblea Región de negocios y el Convenio de Recuperación. ¿Se ha registrado aún? Me registré en línea - que era fácil y rápido! Si a usted le gusta volar a Nueva Orleans y venir con nosotros a Baton Rouge, Voy a alquilar un coche para tal fin. Estoy utilizando la aerolínea que no cobra por el equipaje, y el costo es mucho más razonable para nosotros. Ponte en contacto conmigo si usted está interesado.

Mirando hacia adelante a verle pronto en Louisiana o quizás en un próximo taller. Actualmente estoy programado visitar Charleston, Carolina del Sur en marzo, Jacksonville, FL en abril, Albuquerque para WSBC a finales de abril, Venezuela mayo, Nueva Orleans, en junio, Nashville para la Región 8 de julio, y Medellín, Colombia, SA en noviembre para la Región 8 otra vez. Qué vida tan emocionante! Recuerde, siempre puso primero la abstinencia y todo lo demás parece que funcionara por si misma!

# Members Clips

( cut them out if you like)

OA HAS BROUGHT ME HOPE WHERE  
THERE WAS NO HOPE  
FRIENDSHIPS WHERE THERE WERE  
NO FRIENDSHIPS  
ABSTINENCE WHERE THERE WERE  
BINGES  
SERENITY WHERE THERE WAS  
CHAOS  
JOY WHERE THERE WAS DEPRESSION  
A PLACE TO SERVE WHERE THERE  
WAS APATHY  
A RINGING TELEPHONE WHERE  
THERE WAS SILENCE  
A JOURNAL FULL OF WRITING  
WHERE THERE WERE EMPTY PAGES  
MEETINGS TO ATTEND WHERE THERE  
WAS SITTING ALONE  
A DESIRE FOR ANONYMITY WHERE  
THERE WAS GOSSIP  
LITERATURE TO READ WHERE THERE  
WAS MINDLESS TV WATCHING  
A SPONSOR WHERE THERE WAS INDE-  
PENDENCE  
A PLAN OF ACTION FOR A BETTER  
LIFE

-DEBBIE H.



THE BUTTERFLY



AS THE BUTTERFLY AWAKENS  
IN HER COCOON  
SHE'S SURE NOT TO LEAVE IT  
TO SOON



AS HER BONDAGE RELEASES,  
SHE DOESN'T FALL TO PIECES  
HER SPIRIT RELEASES



SHE IS FREE FROM ALL HER  
CHAINS OF FEAR, ANGER, RE-  
SENTMENT AND MORE



SHE IS SECURE IN HER BEAUTY  
OF SPIRIT AND EMOTION  
SURE NO TO CAUSE ANY COM-  
MOTION



GOING THROUGH LIFE ON HER  
FLIGHT



BRINGING LOVE, UNDER-  
STANDING AND AFFECTION TO  
ALL THOSE IN SIGHT



Linda H



TSW Chair



# Don't Leave Before The Miracle Happens!

I was not one of those people who walked into their first OA meeting and willing to do whatever was necessary to recover from this **CUNNING, BAFFLING, AND FATAL DISEASE**. I was mired in fear, denial, and a heavy food fog. I could not imagine life without certain foods and eating behaviors, even though I was very overweight and in marriage counseling for issues directly or indirectly related to my compulsive overeating.

I would go to meetings, sit in the back, and never share. Some days, weeks, and months I did not attend any meetings. I asked someone to be my sponsor and never called the person. I did not buy any literature. I was gaining back my second 100+ pounds when I first walked into an OA meeting. I lost that 100+ pounds and gained another 100+ going in and out of OA

I was bound and determined to prove that I did not have to work this program the way that the OA and AA literature, speakers, and other members said that I needed to work it. Surely I, in my terminally unique personage, could find a way, my way, to lose weight and not have to give up all my favorite foods, eating behaviors, binge buddies, and restaurants. I just needed the perfect food plan, exercise regime, willpower, and the right time in my life to appear, and everything would just fall into place. None of this ever happened for me.

The one right thing that happened for me was that I kept coming back to OA. Maybe it was that first meeting with its

openness, warmth, and laughter that welcomed me as I nervously walked into the room. Maybe it was the people that honestly, willingly, and humorously shared their experience, strength, and hope.

Maybe it was the strong meetings that kept outside issues and controversies from diluting the message of recovery. Maybe it was that feeling that I had in my first meeting, that HP feeling that said "I am home; this is where I belong".

Whatever it was, I just kept coming back. I was in OA for 9 years before I began to put the food down and to work the 12 Steps. I had a lot of self-will and fear to let go of, and I was a slow learner. I needed to hear the same things a thousand times before I could understand and relate my life to the experience of others. I kept coming back, fat, thin, arrogant, demoralized, fearful, angry, food-fogged, hopeful and hopeless. It took as long as it took for me, but today, 21 years later, I am recovering, healthy, and happier than I have ever been before in my life. I have a purpose today, to be of service to my Higher Power. Oh yes, and to keep coming back to OA, one day at a time!

**I just needed the perfect food plan, exercise regime, willpower, and the right time in my life to appear, and everything would just fall into place.**

**Neill M.  
Raleigh, NC**

# Coming out of relapse with Honesty and Step One

I was in relapse. How did it happen why was I here again? What had brought me to this place I so desperately was trying to escape? Sitting with the spoon in my mouth, staring out the window, tears rolling down my face, I pondered these questions. I stood at the turning point.

Now was a moment of choice for me. First, I put down the spoon and went to another room. I asked God's protection and care with the kind of abandon that comes from desperation and pain. On the floor crying out to my higher power I got a footwork answer. "How honest are you?" I work hard to maintain a level of authenticity and honesty about where I am in my life especially with myself. I thought I was an honest person. What kind of answer was this?

As I have learned to do in this program if I don't have a solution, talk to someone else. So I talked to someone with experience. She asked me to write down all the things that happen before that first bite. She also told me that relapse happens before I hit the hard line with the food. I thought that's crazy, it just happens. I discovered upon reflection that if I am honest, relapse is a much longer process. Here is my list in no particular order:

- ⇒ I stop praying.
- ⇒ I cease to see beauty, feel gratitude, or recognize solutions.
- ⇒ I become pessimistic, critical, and angrily judgmental.
- ⇒ I begin to see the tools as dreary work I "should" find time for, like bad tasting medicine.
- ⇒ Justification, excuse making, and omission begin to filter into my conversation.
- ⇒ I stop making phone calls.
- ⇒ I stop accurately and consistently reporting to my sponsor.
- ⇒ I stop weighing and measuring my portions.
- ⇒ I skip meals to justify more food at another time of day.
- ⇒ Then comes the binge.



Any place on this list is a caution sign on the road for me. Each place is a turning point, at which, I can begin again. Why don't I obey them? Honestly, I *choose* to be dishonest. In those moments, I refuse to believe I am a compulsive over-eater, and that my life is unmanageable. I listen to my disease. A disease that wants me dead, instead of a power greater than myself that wants me to live free one day at a time. -L. L. Arkansas

# Keep Coming Back

“Hi, my name is Ellie and I’m a food addict.” That phrase is so much a part of me today. I have repeated it at my twice-a-week meetings for over six years. I know deep in my soul that I am a food addict and compulsive overeater. The God of my understanding has granted me abstinence several times for many months. I have also taken my will back and taken “that first compulsive bite.” Those devastating relapses are also part of my experience in OA.

There is one thing I am absolutely sure of and that is that I will always keep coming back! Recovery is my only option and my

only hope. I only fail in this program if I quit. I will not walk away from my OA life, my OA friends and my OA program. It is the only way for me.

Because of this hope and what I know is God’s plan for me, I was compelled to learn about the Twelfth Step Within program. Because I know of the despair, loneliness and self-hatred involved in relapse, I want to help those members in OA who have lost their abstinence. If they have at one time experienced the joy, peace and serenity of abstinence, I believe they want and can become abstinent again! I believe that if you do not leave the rooms of OA, you will have more recovery than relapse. I have experienced it and I

know you can, too! Because of my desperation, knowing that others cared and supported me, and with God’s help, I believed I could become “willing” again. If I truly believe, I can become.

Having a sponsor to guide us through the steps, becoming abstinent and using the tools, we can get well and achieve recovery. If you are struggling, please do not walk away from the OA way of life. We need each other to recover. We must all reach out a hand to the suffering compulsive overeater and let them know they are not forgotten.

**Keep coming back until the miracle happens!**

**ELLIE, TAMPA FL**

**11<sup>th</sup> Step:** *Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood him, praying only for His will for us and the power to carry that out.*

In response to an assignment about hope, I recently shared with my step group

that I hoped someday to have a much more conscious contact with my HP. Within the week, I was asked to write this article. Could it be an answer to my prayer? It *does* give me the opportunity to read, write, and think about the 11<sup>th</sup> step on a daily basis, in a way I would not otherwise do. This daily exposure *has* given me a new awareness of how this step can work in my everyday life...

I do pray at intervals throughout the day and during my morning meditation time, but I want to talk to God in a way that would feel more

natural, this is my definition of conscious contact. I think my ideal is to have a dialog with my HP. But if I’m talking and HP doesn’t respond I fear that he isn’t there, or isn’t listening or, worse, doesn’t care. I suppose that’s when I lack faith, because if I am a spiritual being having a human experience, it makes sense that HP would not communicate with me directly. So I can *“act as if”*; believing that I have been heard and my prayers will be answered in God’s time, and in God’s way. If that isn’t soon enough to deflect the natural consequences that I fear, then

faith also believes that I will be taken care of regardless. I guess I have come to expect a burning bush, a lightning strike, or at least a little voice saying, "Yes I heard you and yes the answer will come, be patient". That's also where faith comes in. Because, you see, my prayers *have* been answered before, especially once I've done the footwork and then turned it over and truly let it go, so I

[can](#) believe that this will continue to happen.

I see conscious contact as a belief that my HP is available to me at all times of the day or night and that I need only think the thoughts or speak the words aloud to request help. However, because sometimes the answer is "wait", I have had trouble having faith. I expect that when I ask, the answer will come immediately. Even if the answer is "wait", I want to hear it or see it or even feel it so I know I have been heard. Although I think faith is a belief that all prayers are heard.

Intuition is discussed in the Big Book as one of God's methods for speaking with me, a thought, or feeling will come....and in many cases I may just not recognize the answer, as in the case of this article. Once, I don't think I would have considered this an answer to my prayer. Today, however I can see this oppor-



tunity for service as a response from my HP to practice the behavior I've requested.

I have sought through meditation, as well, to improve that conscious contact. I have recently received training in a meditation technique that works well for me. Previously I would try to quiet my mind for periods of time, but I was usually not very successful, either falling asleep or being flooded with distracting thoughts. With training I have learned to successfully reach a meditative "mind-quieting" state almost every time, which amounts to twice each day, 20 minutes at a time; once soon after I wake up in the morning, and again a few hours after lunch, before my children get home from school.

Something I tried today, actually, in preparation for writing this article was to think a few moments about this project before I began to meditate; asking my HP to guide me in the writing, because I'd had a difficult time getting started. Then immediately after opening my eyes I began writing in my journal and I believe that this material I've written flowed from that inner guidance.

If the path that I'm on today feels right and is truly God's will, then how can I fail? HP will give me everything I need to succeed. If I perceive the outcome as a failure, it may mean only that I was not on the right path and that this lesson was given to me in order to change my direction. Perhaps life is like a maze and we receive help and guidance

when we are on our true path, and when we take a wrong turn, we feel pain steering us another way. If I continue to feel pain then perhaps I need to take note of when it hurts and stop behaving that way; try a different path, a new direction, a new approach. I remember once someone in a meeting said "pain is my greatest teacher". What a quick study I would be if I moved away from the pain *immediately*, instead of continuing to beat my head against a brick wall, expecting something else to change; the wall to move, or disappear perhaps, when of course, it is I who need changing. This is my insanity; doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results.

The second half of this step: praying only for God's will for us and the power to carry it out goes hand in hand with conscious contact. If I am willing to converse with my HP before I take a step, and ask him what he would have me do, as well as how he would have me accomplish his will, I can count on HP to give me the tools to succeed. My burden on this journey was meant to be light, so the supplies I need will be provided, [as I need them](#), one day at a time. I do not have to plan, control and schedule all things. The schedule and plan have been written, all I have to do is show up!

Patti S.  
Tampa FL  
IGOR Committee Chair  
Written in 2000 (recovered from an old floppy diskette!)

# **Newsletter Disclaimer:**

**Personal stories express experience of individual OA members and not of OA as a whole.**

## **Guidelines for Newsletter**

- 1. Only flyers promoting activities within Region 8 shall be considered for publication. There shall be no charge to include flyers for SOAR 8 Business Assembly and Convention. Flyers are subject to approval of SOAR 8 Vice Chairman.**
- 2. The newsletter is to be distributed to the SOAR 8 Board for review one (1) week prior to electronically distributing it to the membership.**
- 3. The newsletter is not to be a vehicle for the editor's personal opinion.**

## **Contents of the Newsletter**

**The primary purpose of the newsletter is to spread the message of Overeaters Anonymous to the compulsive overeater who still suffers, communicate with the region membership happenings within SOAR 8, and encourage the membership to participate in SOAR 8 events and committees. The intended audience is the general membership of Region 8. Within these purposes, the content of the newsletter may contain any of the following:**

- 1. Reports and articles from the SOAR 8 Board and Committees**
- 2. Calendar of events of Region 8 and WSO functions.**
- 3. Reprints from any OA-approved literature.**
- 4. Addresses and phone numbers of Region Officers and Committee Chairmen published only with the individual's permission.**
- 5. Articles, stories and other creative works that communicate the OA message of recovery.**