



PACE

The Mid-Hudson Intergroup Newsletter

Positive Action Changes Everything

Vol. XXVII, No. 3

August 2005

Message from the Chair

Hope everyone is having a great summer. We had a crowd at this month's Intergroup meeting. It was good to see the support and involvement.

Should exercise be an OA tool?

We discussed writing a proposal for the World Service Organization to discuss adding exercise as a tool. We would like feedback from all meetings. Please poll your members (yes or no) and send me the results via email or phone. We need more financial support.

Donations are not meeting expenses. Please make sure your group is donating something to Intergroup. If not, maybe take up a special collection specifically for IG. We pay for the meeting list, hotline and newsletter. Plus, we send a delegate to the World Service Business Conference.

We were wrong!

We voted to return to six mailings of PACE, etc to correspond with the IG meetings, minithons, etc. The other schedule wasn't working and resulting in more mailing.

Hope to see all of you at the mini retreat August 20th. I think it's going to be a great day.

Love in recovery, Mary Ellen



7th Tradition DONATIONS to MHIG * Thank you!!

Beacon Groups	\$20.00
Woodstock #39318	\$27.00
Blue Mountain #22578	\$30.00
Cornwall Groups	\$150.00
Intergroup Donation	\$11.00
Cornwall Groups	\$130.00
Cornwall Groups	\$50.00
Poughkeepsie Thursday HOW	\$50.00

UPCOMING MHIG EVENTS:

September 10 - Intergroup meeting at Family of New Paltz

August 20 * One day Mini Retreat at Sara Brae/New Windsor, NY, 8am - 6pm
Theme: How to Build a New Way of Living by Using the Tools

UPCOMING REGION 6 EVENTS

October 21 * 23 - OA Region 6 Convention, in Nashua, New Hampshire, at the Sheraton

Nashua

for more info., visit www.oanewhampshire.org or www.oaregion6.org

September 25 * Recovery Around the Globe, Albany, NY, at The Quality Inn Albany (Glenmont), NY

Registration: 9am.

9:30am-1pm, Qualifications, Panel Discussions and More

for more info., call our Region 6 Coordinator Toll Free ~ Mark (877)317-2111 or Email: markgse@adelphia.net

Accepting Responsibility for My Life

Hi, my name is Jeannie P. and I am a compulsive over-eater. I am also a single mom of two boys, ages 20 and 14. I have been on the weight gain/loss roller coaster since the age of 13! Well, I'm about to celebrate my 47th birthday and it's time for me to accept responsibility for my life.

Why did I eat? Was it because I had an unhappy childhood, a bad marriage, or because both my parents are Ukrainian (blame it on genetics ~ my ex-husband always said that Olympic Gold Medal Winning skater, Oksana Baiul, was the only slim Ukrainian woman he ever saw!)? Maybe it was because both of my kids have developmental delays, my younger son also has juvenile diabetes and it's been an uphill battle. It could be that the constant struggle of barely paying my rent and bills for the past three years has been eating me up. It could be that my ex-husband maxed out our credit cards and filed bankruptcy, forcing me to file with him? Then he foreclosed on our family home because he chose to stop making mortgage payments while he lived in it. While my kids and I lived in a 500 sq. ft., 3-story walk-up hellhole apartment above a laundromat on Main Street, he lived rent-free in a nice, 1200 sq. ft. town house in a respectable middle class neighborhood.

No, it's because the grass is green and the sky is blue...in other words, there will always be an excuse for me to use food as a crutch! Overeaters Anonymous has shown me that I can choose to handle stress in a more positive manner. I need to stop being a victim and accept responsibility for myself. Good, bad, or ugly, this is my life, and I refuse to allow food, my strict European parents, my abusive ex-husband, my whining, hyperactive kids, or the highs and lows of my son's juvenile diabetes control how I live it.

I was born a chubby baby, 9lbs. 4oz. to my parents, Ukrainian immigrants, who lived on the Lower East Side of Manhattan. When I was almost 2 years old we moved to Queens, NY. Through most of my childhood I was not fat, just a little "porky". By the age of 16, I had been "starving" for three years to stay at a "normal" weight. Often I would cry in bed at night because I was so tired of feeling hungry all the time. I wore a size 8/10 and weighed 118 lbs. At

certain points, my menstrual cycle was disrupted. I had scurvy! And I wasn't even skinny!

At age 20, I moved out of my parent's home. The only time my roommate or I had dinner was if a man took either of us out to dinner. We were always broke. I could wear a size 6/8. I did not own a scale, but I believe I was about 110 lbs. At age 24, I was up to 140 lbs. and I thought I was a fat blimp...if I'd only known...On February 4th, 1984, two months prior to my 25th birthday, I got married. I weighed 145 lbs. and wore a size 10. Little did I know what lay ahead for me. I became pregnant almost immediately. At my baby shower in October 1984, I weighed 196 lbs.! I had a very bad pregnancy and had an emergency C-section. My son was born a month early and weighed 8lbs. 12 oz. Six weeks after his birth I weighed 170 lbs. and wore a size 16. I thought I was disgusting. By Easter

1986, I weighed 160 lbs. and wore a size 14. I worked so hard to lose weight, but my husband said, "You're still fat!" Funny, other men seemed to find me attractive. I was still too naive to realize I had married a monster. At this point I had already gotten a black eye for no reason (other than he was drunk). I gained TONS of weight (went up to size 24). My youngest son was born in August 1990. I had to contend with a husband who was a cruel and abusive alcoholic and compulsive gambler. I joined a well-known weight loss program for the zillionth time and got down to 170lbs., and into size 14/16. He was still mean. At my niece's christening, I had lost 88.5lbs. from my all-time high weight, which I am too embarrassed to admit. I got a lot of attention at the party that day, because of my weight loss. Naturally, my husband had a nasty comment every time someone said something positive to me. My self-esteem was never allowed to bloom.

At age 4, my oldest son was diagnosed as having a developmental delay. He has been in special ed since then. My youngest son was 3 when he was diagnosed with a severe learning disability, and 7 when he was diagnosed with Juvenile Diabetes.

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There will always be an excuse for me to use food as a crutch!

Accepting Responsibility for My Life (continued)

In spite of all the tears and struggles, I cherished being their Mommy! In August 1993, I made my younger son a Birthday cake and cooked a lovely meal for relatives who came to celebrate with us. My husband was verbally abusive to me throughout the day. At one point I went into the kitchen and sobbed. After everyone left, I binged. I went into a downward spiral and regained every pound I'd lost, plus some extra. I went up to 200lbs. or more. If you looked at my thighs you

I can only attribute all the changes and joy in my life to the program.

could see that I was still in denial about my marriage.

I reached my all-time highest weight in October 1996. I am too embarrassed to say much I weighed, but I wore a size 24. I mocked myself on Halloween. I made my own costume and took the kids trick-or-treating dressed as

the Ronco-Matic- Housewife-From-Hell! My marriage was a living hell from all the abuse and my husband's drinking and gambling. No wonder I ate! Christmas 1996 and New Years 1997 were pure hell. My husband's drinking and violent behavior escalated. On the night of 01/03/97, I called the police to have him removed. It was the best thing I ever did for myself and for my kids. I never let him come back!

I could not afford to make the mortgage payments, so we had to leave our home and move into a tiny apartment. From January through May 1997, I was so broke that I lost 70lbs.! I had a make over and a new look. I was down to size 14/16. I finally had a happy new chapter in my life! I met the most wonderful man who was sweet, kind, loving, and supportive. He was the man that I hoped would one day be my husband. For Christmas 1997, my sweet boyfriend gave me the most beautiful flowers, along with other lovely gifts. But, I began to gain weight. The stress of dealing with my soon to be

ex-husband, the financial stress of the bankruptcy, foreclosure, etc., and the emotional stress of being the single mom of two special needs kids began to take its toll. I knew that I must take care of myself for the sake of my children, as well as for my own health and mental well-being. I had a second chance for a normal happy life and I didn't want to lose it. The boyfriend and I drifted apart. I blamed it on my weight gain. He got married a few years later and I was proven wrong because his new wife was a full-figured woman. Could it be that the relationship ended because of my playing the victim all those years, whining, complaining, examining everyone else's flaws, pointing the finger, etc.? Did I ever stop to look at my own behavior? NO! Not until I came into the rooms and began to recover. When I let go, and let God, wonderful things began to happen! I have been in Overeaters Anonymous for almost three years and it has been a way for me to get things off my chest, express myself, and find my sense of humor. It's very therapeutic. At first, I talked about weight and dieting, but my shares gradually evolved into something different. In the rooms I heard anecdotal stories, spiritual beliefs, social issues, bon mots, and pearls of wisdom. I can guarantee you laughter along with tears, passion and pet peeves, the full gamut of emotions are all here. This has been my journey of self-discovery, anger, love, and laughs. By a twist of fate, I am now living in my old house. I learned to drive and I have a reliable vehicle. I've made some good friends. I went back to college to take some psychology classes. I joined a women's club. I even take a belly dancing class! My younger son's diabetes is stable. I met a wonderful, intelligent man last year and I can honestly say that our relationship is NOT the unhealthy, co-dependent one I had with my ex-husband, nor am I the needy victim whining on my ex-boyfriend. I can only attribute all the changes and joy in my life to the program. Thank you OA for giving me my life back!

~ Jeannie P., Beacon

I put my hand in yours and together we can do what we could never do alone! No longer is there a sense of hopelessness, no longer must we each depend upon our own unsteady willpower. We are all together now, reaching out our hands for power and strength greater than ours, and as we join hands, we find love and understanding beyond our wildest dreams.

*~Reprinted from - I put my hand in yours by Rozanne S. *1968 Overeaters Anonymous, Inc.*

Letter From The Editor

This issue begins my work on PACE. It is my hope to deliver wonderful, inspirational issues in the future. As you can see, I've made changes in the appearance of our newsletter. However, without your input it will be just a pretty face with little substance and no personality. Only YOU can make this publication come alive.

The OA Preamble states: "Our primary purpose is to abstain from compulsive overeating and to carry this message of recovery to those who still suffer." You can do this by sharing the story of your recovery here.

I have several ideas for future newsletters:

- A Step and Tradition study. PACE will be published bimonthly. Each issue would cover the Steps and Traditions of those two months. The next issue comes out in October and would cover Steps 10 & 11, and Traditions 10 & 11. Would anyone like to volunteer to write on one of those? The deadline for submission for the October newsletter is September 15.
- Member submitted articles on the tools. Was there a tool that came to your rescue when you needed it the most? Write about why you love or hate specific tools. Does your sponsor require you to use specific tools?
- A Big Book quote that speaks to me is...? Why?
- OA has an official sanctioned definition of abstinence: "Abstinence is the action of refraining from compulsive eating." However, there is no official definition of compulsive eating. What is your personal definition of eating compulsively?

I welcome any and all of your input. What topics would you like to see in future issues of PACE?
Anne O., Editor

If you would be interested in receiving PACE by email, please email:
PACEeditor@midhudsonoa.org
Write "PACE subscription" in the subject line

HIGHER POWER ACTING THROUGH THE TOOLS OF OA

About three months ago, I hit bottom after bingeing almost non-stop for five months. I was in so much pain that I just wanted to die. While sitting in my recliner one day, surrounded by food, I just said, "I give up. I am a compulsive overeater and nothing is going to change that. I might as well just eat myself to death." I wasn't praying. Food was my Higher Power at that point. Though I didn't recognize it until recently, that was my moment of surrender.

I was going to meetings for one reason only. I was treasurer for a group. Another member was making most of the bank deposits, but I had to attend one meeting each month to pay the rent. I was often asked, "How are you?" at that monthly meeting. I always answered, "I'm fine", though it was painfully obvious that I was lying.

Shortly after my unconscious surrender, my telephone rang. I hadn't been answering the phone for some time: I was isolating and I didn't want to talk to anyone. But I answered that call. It was a friend from program and when she asked me how I was doing, the whole ugly truth came pouring out. She listened and when I stopped talking she told me she was going to a meeting the next day. I refused her invitation to that meeting. Undaunted, she offered to take me to a meeting a few days later. I didn't want to, but I agreed to go to that meeting. The meeting was the first of many we attended together. At first, going to the meetings meant that there were a few less hours of bingeing. That changed as time went on.

I had no sponsor at that point. I had asked someone, but as soon as she said that I had to throw my binge foods away, I was gone. It's only now that I remember her saying that she would sponsor me even if I didn't throw out the food. I have a sponsor now, and like everything else in my recent recovery, it happened because I surrendered. We were talking after a meeting and she asked me to call her later. I did, and I called her the next day, and the next...

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HIGHER POWER ACTING THROUGH THE TOOLS OF OA)
(CONTINUED)

I've been abstinent now for more than 60 days. In hindsight, I can clearly see Higher Power at work through the tools of OA and through people in the Fellowship. What tools? Service, the telephone, meetings, and sponsorship, initially. I've added writing, literature, and a plan of eating. Anonymity was the one tool I used even through the worst of my relapse. How was Higher Power involved? My friend made

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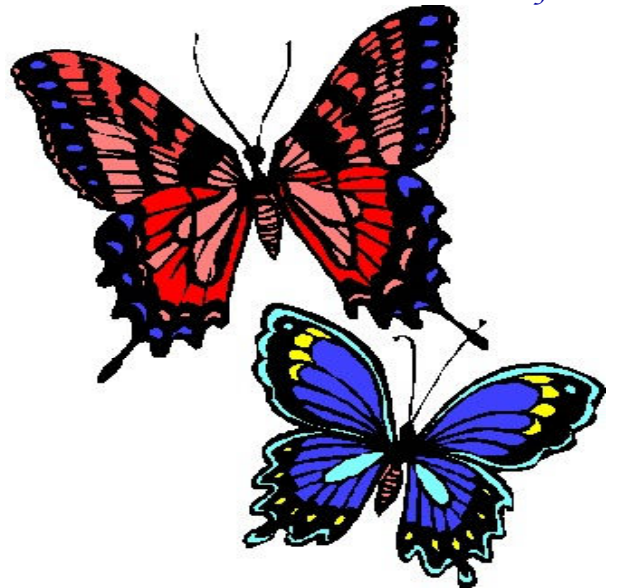
3 phone calls a day because her sponsor required it. I hadn't been answering the phone for months. Why did I choose that call to answer? And, why after months of answering, "I'm fine", did I pour my heart out to her? I didn't want to go to the meetings, but I surrendered and went. I was led to a sponsor who offered exactly what I needed. I truly view my recovery as a miracle. I went from being totally out of control with food and with everything else in my life to almost effortless abstinence. I certainly did not do this on my own.

~ Anne O., Highland Mills



*The Responsibility Pledge
Always extend the hand and
heart of OA to all who share my
compulsion: for this I am
responsible.*

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Step and Tradition of the Months

Step 8

Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.

Tradition 8

Overeaters Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers.

Step 9

Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.

Tradition 9

OA, as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.

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