

November • December 2019



Share your Experience, Strength and Hope
on a Step or Tradition - A Great Way to do Service.
Service is Important to Abstinence and Recovery.



www.connecticutoa.org

Monthly, 3rd Monday • 7-8:30 PM
CT. INTERGROUP • NEW ADDRESS
St. John's Episcopal Church
679 Farmington Ave, W. H.

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

QUICK STEPS 12 Steps/5 Wks.
Sharon K. 860 770-1557
skupiec@hotmail.com

HOPE AND HAPPINESS IN THE HOLIDAYS

OA Workshop
November 3

3:30 pm - 5:30 pm

Southwick Congregational
Church, 10/202 & Depot St.
Southwick, Mass

ABSTINENCE THROUGH THE HOLIDAYS WORKSHOP

November 14

5:00 pm - 6:00 pm

Faith United Church,
52 Sumner Ave
Springfield, MA

IDEA DAY

November 17, 2-5

International Day of
Experiencing Abstinence
St. John's Episcopal Church
679 Farmington Ave.
West Hartford



CHECK SOME PODCASTS

avision4you.info,
tabs for recorded meetings,
click & play

PRODUCTION:

Judi G., Janet N., Kathryn M., Nancy T.

SUBMIT TO:

artistjudi@sbcglobal.net

860.840.2475 For Information

KEEPING CONNECTED

GETTING BACK ON TRACK...One Day at a Time

While I've been in the rooms for 27 years (almost half my life!), I've only been cleanly abstinent since July 2019. I had been abstinent for many years, but slowly, over time, my food and program got sloppier and sloppier. It says in the Big Book if I fail to enlarge my spiritual life, I am headed for trouble. Of course, relapse was inevitable. I'm so grateful that during all those years, I still kept attending meetings - I knew from my very first meeting on July 4, 1992 that OA was the solution for me. Someone asked me recently what turned things around for me. As I reflected on my recent experience, I could see very old patterns starting to take hold - starting to isolate myself and eating... very scary territory. The fear of that dark, lonely place was part of it. The other part was seeing the light in people who were working their programs - especially some of the speakers at the Back to Basics workshops I attended this year. Slowly, my willingness started to return... I starting working with a sponsor, completed the Slipping and Sliding reading and writing tool, and attended an OA retreat in June where I heard "be grateful for any little smidgen of willingness I have." I started getting to more face-to-face meetings, getting on telephone meetings usually 4 days a week, got a Big Book sponsor and worked the steps like my hair (what little I have) was on fire. Each day I've prayed to set aside what I think I know about my recovery and to do what is suggested by my sponsors. The gratitude I have in my heart today for this program and this fellowship is indescribable.

Just "KEEP COMING BACK" no matter what... the miracle can happen!

Yvette L., New Britain, CT

ABSTINENCE:

The action of refraining from compulsive eating and compulsive food behaviors while working towards or maintaining a healthy body weight.

RECOVERY:

Removal of the need to engage in compulsive eating behaviors. Spiritual, Emotional and Physical recovery is achieved through working and living the OA Twelve Steps.

*The opinions expressed here are the writers' and do not necessarily represent OA as a whole.
We reserve the right to edit all submissions.*

ROZANNE S., OA'S FOUNDER, EXPLAINS HOW THE CONCEPT OF ABSTINENCE EMERGED "1962-ABSTINENCE ENTERS OA"

Eager for information about our early years, members frequently ask me: "How did the idea of abstinence come into OA? Was it always the way it is today? How did it start?" Looking back, the years from 1960- 1962 were exciting for us. We were so impulsive, so eager to see our tiny Fellowship grow and establish a firm foundation. By 1962 we were united about the wording of our Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. In other areas, however, we all had different ideas on how to achieve our common goals. Consider food intake, for example. Before 1960 most of us had grown up counting calories. We had been taught that as long as we kept within our calorie count, we could eat all the barely caloric foods we wanted between meals. Our problem was that while many of us had lost weight, even more were nibbling their way back to obesity. Others were sticking with their diets but crunching all day on the low-cal foods. Many just stayed fat, insisting they were only eating allowable foods between meals. Something crucial was missing. What was it? The Twelve Steps worked for our Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) friends; what were we doing wrong? During those years I was going to AA meetings every week. Although I'm not an alcoholic, my understanding of the Steps and Traditions was so limited I believed I could learn more by attending AA. In early 1962, one powerful AA meeting changed my way of thinking about eating. All through that meeting the speakers emphasized abstinence from alcohol. During the two years I'd had contact with AA, I had never heard sobriety referred to in that manner. It was a revelation! Sitting in the back of that meeting, I thought to myself: That's what's wrong with all of us in OA. We're not abstaining from food at any time of the day. We have to close our mouths from the end of one meal to the beginning of the next. Sometime during the day, we must abstain from eating; otherwise we're feeding our compulsion. Excitedly I brought my new approach back to OA. Some thought it was a breakthrough; others scoffed. By spring of 1962 we counted nineteen OA groups, most of them in California. The OA office was in my little dining room, and I was the unofficial, unpaid national secretary. We had already had our first informal meeting of the Los Angeles area groups; now we agreed it was time to have a real conference of all OA groups. Therefore, in May 1962 I sent out an Overeaters Anonymous Bulletin (forerunner of today's *Lifeline* to all OA groups. It introduced secretaries and group starters to one another and mentioned the proposed Conference. Then on page three of that first Bulletin came the announcement that would both unify and upset us for decades: Out of our regular visits to AA meetings and talks with our friends in Alcoholics Anonymous, we here in the Los Angeles area have discovered a concept that has revolutionized our way of thinking about our compulsive overeating. That concept is abstinence. Abstinence means simply three moderate meals a day with absolutely nothing in between. It means also no meals while we're preparing a meal and no meals while we're cleaning up the kitchen afterward. In other words, total abstinence from compulsive eating! If for medical reasons our doctor has ordered more than three meals a day, then of course we would plan accordingly and know that anything outside that plan would be breaking abstinence. Of course, black coffee, tea, water, and noncaloric beverages of any kind are the exception to between-meal nibbling. Just as the alcoholic must totally abstain from alcohol to remain sober, so we have found we must totally abstain from compulsive eating to maintain our own kind of sobriety. We call those who have achieved this kind of sobriety abstainers.

There are no musts to any part of the OA program. . . indeed our Twelve-step program is only a suggested plan for recovery. Therefore, we aren't saying that abstinence is a must. We're only passing on to you what we have learned from our own experience . . . that with abstinence from compulsive eating we have at last found the true meaning of sobriety for the compulsive overeater." In 1962 this was a brand-new idea for us. Since the word abstain means to stay away from, it seemed clear that to be abstinent in OA meant to stay away from compulsive overeating. How to do this? Since we must eat, the most logical method would be to eat only at mealtimes:

That meant three moderate meals a day, more if health needs required them, and absolutely nothing in between. Unfortunately, over time abstinence took on a new meaning, a corruption of the original. Instead of implying "to stay away from," it came to suggest the eating plan itself. What's your abstinence? one member would ask another. What the person really meant was, What's your eating plan? With this confusion, it's no wonder the word abstinence has come to mean different things to different people. Will the time come when we all understand that the concept of abstinence is the same for everyone . . . to stay away from compulsive overeating? Can we recognize that it is the eating plan which may be different from one person to another, perhaps different for an individual at various times in his or her life? In 1962 my unexpected insight was difficult to grasp, even harder to put into practice. Today it is no easier, but we can meet the challenge. Together we can climb those Twelve Steps to recovery, abstaining from compulsive overeating **ONE DAY AT A TIME!**