

November • December 2017

OVEREATERS ANONYMOUS® *Connecticut Intergroup*

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WHAT'S HAPPENING?

Friday, November 3

• 9:30am •

SPEAKER MEETING

St. Mark's Episcopal Church
15 Pearl Street, Mystic

Thursday, November 9

• 5:00pm – 6:15pm •

ABSTINENCE THROUGH THE HOLIDAYS WORKSHOP

Faith United Church
52 Sumner Ave., Springfield, MA

Saturday, November 18

• 9am- 12 noon •

SPONSORSHIP: KEEPING US ABSTINENT WORKSHOP

St. David's Church,
Gales Ferry

Friday November 24

• 6pm – 7:30pm •

GRATITUDE GATHERING
Southwick Congregational Church
10/202 & Depot St., Southwick, MA

Saturday, December 9

• 1 - 4:30pm •

12th STEP WITHIN WORKSHOP
First Baptist Church
Southington • 7th Tradition.

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KEEPING CONNECTED

IN PROGRAM, IMPERFECTLY

I've been in Program, imperfectly, for 4 1/2 years. In the last 9 months, I've considered leaving twice. I started to wonder why. I came to realize that it's because I hadn't been practicing the program perfectly. No consistent perfect abstinence; I wasn't doing the steps perfectly; I wasn't using the tools to what I thought should be the best of my ability. I wasn't enough. I know the concept of progress not perfection, but I didn't believe it pertained to me.

Then, I heard something in a phone meeting the other night that put my perception of perfection into perspective. The speaker had been in Program since the '70's. She said that during that time she had been abstinent and relapsed. Through weight loss and weight gain. Life's tragedies and joys. And through it all, she practiced her program imperfectly, with one exception: she never gave up on Program. She stayed - perfectly.

From the speaker to God, to my ears: the right message at the right time! ~Anonymous, Vernon, CT

KEEPING IT IN THE MOMENT

I've been in O.A. since 2011, but have had a hard time being abstinent. Recently, however, I have been abstinent after a few serious relapses.

I have a good sponsor and she told me to take things one moment, one meal and/or one snack at a time, if need be, and not count the days. Before this last relapse, I was focusing on trying to get my 1 month medallion.

Naturally, I am tracking my number of days by my journal entries, but "keeping it in the moment" really helps. Also, I know that it's my Higher Power that is giving me the ability to stay abstinent.

I am truly grateful to the Program of O.A. and my loving sponsor. I feel more focused, alert and present when I'm abstinent, and it gives me the ability to revolve my life around more healthy things, such as truly taking care of myself and doing service in the Program.

~Anonymous, Vernon, CT

**FOR TODAY - Pray to God, but continue
to row to shore. - Russian Proverb**

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

HOLIDAY ABSTINENCE

✱ Focus on the true meaning of the holiday or event rather than the food orgy that sometimes accompanies it.

✱ Don't set yourself up to feel bad because of unrealistic expectations of what the holiday will bring. Sometimes we're with family, sometimes with friends, sometimes we are alone. Face the reality of the situation beforehand. For example, if a family occasion almost always turns unpleasant, plan not to be part of the unpleasantness. If you're going to be alone, face that you may face sadness. Plan to deal with it, without excess food.

✱ Build up your recovery bank account before and during the holidays by attending lots of meetings, working extra hard on your 12 Steps and using all the tools, especially service. Keep in constant contact with your sponsor. The disease doesn't take holidays. Nor should our recovery.

✱ Keep your OA phone numbers with you at all times. Use them.

✱ Know the limits of your recovery. When in doubt, avoid persons, places and things that have in the past triggered overeating. The party is not worth it. Choose not to attend if you feel it may be a major problem. Remember that abstinence, one day at a time, has to be the highest priority in your life. Without it, all other things suffer.

✱ From the perspective of food, treat the holiday like any other day. Our disease never takes a holiday.

7. Plan something special for yourself when other people are eating sugary desserts that you choose not to include in your food plan. Special teas, hot water and lemon, fruit, anything that's a little special for you.

✱ Whether a holiday gathering or ordinary party, choose to focus on the people rather than the food. Pick out people and engage them in "real" conversation. If they don't want to play, go to the next one. People like to talk about themselves. Ask them about themselves, their life, their work - and really listen.

✱ Try to really connect with people at the holiday table. Make food a secondary thing.

✱ At Halloween there is no law that says you have to give out candy. We're not doing these kids a favor by giving them junk food. Give nutritious things or money. Do not give out things you would not consume yourself. Then there's no problem with leftovers.

✱ Set an extra place beside you (in your mind or for real) at the table for your Higher Power.

✱ Remember step two. It says that with the help of a Higher Power we can be restored to sane eating behavior. Call on your Higher Power. HP can keep you sane, one day at a time, one meal at a time.

✱ During the holidays get out of yourself by giving service, any service, whether it's to Program, to needy individuals, or to the community. Do something that may be a little hard for you, but that you know you will feel good about later. Give yourself something to respect yourself for.

✱ Plan! Plan! Plan! Be proactive toward the holidays and the meals. Don't just lay back and hope for the best. Rehearse in your mind over and over exactly what you will do, particularly what, where and when you will eat. Pray just before sitting down to the meal.

✱ Just before sitting down to eat, or just before being served, go to a private room somewhere in the house or restaurant, call your sponsor, and commit what you are about to eat, as well as what you will choose not to eat. It makes no difference whether you get your sponsor or an answering machine. It's your commitment.

✱ If you're visiting others for a holiday dinner, it's up to you to know what is being served and whether it is something that you choose to eat. Call the host. Plan accordingly. People understand others' food limitations. Even people without our disease have foods they don't eat for one reason or another. Volunteer to bring something that's good for you. The host thinks you're gracious and you're taking care of yourself!

✱ Remember that you are responsible for what you eat. It's easy when sitting with family to slip into old childish roles where you feel you must eat whatever you're given. It's not true. We are adults and responsible for our own choices. It's up to us to take care of ourselves. It's up to us to set whatever parameters or boundaries we need to set with our families.

✱ Gratitude, gratitude, gratitude. There is nothing as good for staying abstinent—particularly during the Thanksgiving season—than focusing on the many things we have, rather than what we don't have. Do gratitude lists frequently.

✱ How about writing a little card/note to each person who will be at the Thanksgiving dinner table telling them why you're grateful to know them? Leave it at their dinner place. The focus will quickly get to the real meaning of Thanksgiving rather than on the food.

✱ For many of us the most dangerous period for our abstinence is after we have successfully gone through a difficult occasion. The insanity of our disease subconsciously or consciously tells us to reward ourselves with food because we did so well yesterday. Or, we suffer some kind of letdown about the occasion. It didn't meet our expectations. Some of us feel an emptiness after holidays that in the past we have tried to fill with food. For these reasons, plan to go to meetings the next day after the holiday.

✱ A holiday is not a crisis. Holidays come every year. They are simply calendar times set aside to honor certain things. We deal with the holidays just like we deal with the rest of the days in the year. You can do it. Relax and work your program the way you know how.

OA WORKSHOP
October 29, 1997,
Port Chester, NY
Summary of
Member Suggestions

❄ ❄ ❄ **12 TIPS FOR ABSTINENT HOLIDAYS** ❄ ❄ ❄

Is this time of year the “Bermuda triangle” of recovery?

*The theory is that Halloween-Thanksgiving-Christmas or Chanukah
can be rough sailing for recovery – you might come out abstinent, but not everyone does.*

*But everyone CAN emerge from the holidays with their recovery intact,
by living one day at a time and working the tools and steps of our program.*

Here are Twelve Tips that have helped me and many others survive and thrive in this
time of year that seems to have more focus on food than other months:

1. Line up extra OA activities (meetings, phone calls, service, intergroup).
2. Entertain OA friends, especially newcomers, at home or at a coffee shop.
3. Keep your OA telephone list with you at all times.
4. Find out about holiday meetings or celebrations in local groups.
5. Skip any parties/eating occasions you're nervous about.
6. If there's one you can't skip, take an OA friend – or keep literature and a gratitude list handy – or text someone before and after the event.
7. Don't think you have to stay late. (Plan an “important date” in advance.)
8. Go to special places that are meaningful to you... church, a park, the shore.
And don't forget about extra meetings!
9. Don't sit around worrying or brooding; catch up on reading, OA tools,
museums, walks, letters.
10. Don't project about holiday temptations; remember “One day at a time.”
11. Even if you cannot give material gifts, you can share the gift of your recovery and
enjoy the beauty of the holidays.
12. Carry the message. Give joy away, and it will be yours to keep.

(Gratefully borrowed from a 12-step friend and adapted for OA.)



ABSTINENCE DEFINED

Abstinence in Overeaters Anonymous is the action of refraining from compulsive overeating and compulsive food behaviors while working towards or maintaining a healthy body weight. Spiritual, emotional and physical recovery is the result of living the Overeaters Anonymous Twelve-Step program.

REMEMBER:

- EASY DOES IT
- ONE DAY AT A TIME
- JUST FOR TODAY
- KEEP IT SIMPLE



MENTIONING FOOD IN MEETINGS

"In our belief, any scheme of combating alcoholism which proposes to shield the sick man from temptation is doomed to failure. If the alcoholic tries to shield himself, he may succeed for a time, but usually winds up with a bigger explosion than ever. We have tried these methods. These attempts to do the impossible have always failed." - BB, 4th Ed., Working With Others, pg.101

Mentioning food in meeting: I believe not mentioning foods in meetings enables denial. It's a disservice to the people still struggling with getting honest about specific foods that cause them trouble. Mentioning specific foods makes it much harder for these folks to not see the truth. It helps them get honest when they hear other people who have the same problem with these foods. Seeing the truth puts us a step closer to taking the actions suggested by the Program.

Background: The idea behind this ban is that mentioning of a specific food may trigger the obsession in some people. However, since the 2000 World Service Business Conference concluded in essence that food and food plans are not an outside issue in OA and decided to bring back food plans to OA through our Dignity of Choice pamphlet, a lot of meetings around the country have eliminated their meeting's rule on not mentioning food. It's seems a little incongruous not to be able to read an OA pamphlet (Dignity of Choice) in a meeting because it discusses food and food behaviors in detail.

OA meetings are free (if they want) to discuss food and food plans within the framework of Tradition 6 and copyright laws, i.e., no endorsement of

particular plans, and no copying of commercial plans for distribution in the meeting. Some meetings have revised their rule to say that members can mention a food, but should not 'dwell' on it. The idea is that there's quite a difference between saying I ate the whole cake or the whole container of ice cream, versus going into an extensive, almost erotic, description of the process. Speakers struggle to describe sweet things that come in packages, or celebrate round things, or crunchy things that come in bags. These disguised descriptions cause more turbulence in some brains than simply saying cookies, cake, ice cream, or chips. Nevertheless, this is an issue subject to group conscience.

Business Motions: The meeting business motion I have used many times is the following: I move we replace the sentence saying we don't mention food in this meeting to: It's okay to mention specific foods in this meeting but we ask that you not dwell on them. It has passed every time.

~Don C., Bloomfield

