

January • February 2018



SPONSOR AN ISSUE!
GIVE SERVICE WITH A SMILE!!!

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

Monday, January 1, 2018,
5:15pm- 6:15pm

WILL BE HELD AS USUAL

South Congregational Church
1066 Southeast Street, Amherst, MA
Wheelchair Access

Saturday, January 6, 2018,
10AM - 11:15AM

**A Personal Story of Recovery
and Abstinence
Speaker Meeting**

St. Luke's Church
Clark Lane off Route 12,
Gales Ferry, CT.

Saturday, January 13, 2018
(Snow Date 1/20/18)
8:30 to 3 pm

2018 MARATHON

Living the Steps:
Beyond our Wildest Dreams
St. David's Episcopal Church
699 Springfield Street
Feeding Hills, MA 01030

Wednesdays,
Jan. 17 & 24, Feb. 7 & 14
4 sessions - 6 PM to 8 PM.

Quick Step the 12 Steps Workshop

St. Paul Lutheran Church,
Old Saybrook, CT.

Preregistration required.

Contact Eileen
secispeakerseeker@gmail.com.

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KEEPING CONNECTED

LAUGHTER FOR SERENITY

The author of the Serenity Prayer, Reinhold Niebuhr, wrote that "humor is a prelude to faith and laughter is the beginning of prayer". I really love to laugh; it clears my head of anxiety and all sorts of negative thoughts. Recently, my daughter and I were on a mission. Tension was in the air and emotions were high. We were getting in the car to leave, and I had parked too close to the curb for my front bumper, which was really low, so when I backed up, the bumper came clean off. My daughter jumped out of the car, picked up some bolts and the bumper, loaded it into the car, and we called AAA. I started to laugh! She laughed as well. What a scene! I will never forget my daughter hauling the bumper into the car. I don't know why it struck me funny, but laughing helped me relax and not be afraid. Before I started OA, I don't think it would have been funny at all. The whole thing reminds me of the reading in For Today where a speaker said that we can tell compulsives from non-compulsives because when the car won't start in the morning, normies call a mechanic, compulsives call suicide prevention. Before, I would have thought losing my bumper was the end of the world, or at least the end of my checking account. It was not, I was fortunate, and made sure to

thank God that no one was hurt and damage was not as expensive as it could have been.

Laughter is God given, and a real blessing. It helps many situations that I think could end up badly. My husband knows this, too. He always says "It could be worse!" Or at times his point of view is so serene, it makes me laugh when my anxiety is high or I am dwelling on something negative, completely reminding me to let go and let God.

I also remember a friend in program who told us, laughing, that she used to go to meetings with sweets in her pocket, so she could sneak some in when she felt no one was looking! She continued to say that nothing is worth eating over, and that our goal was to be happy, joyous, and free of compulsive eating.

Laughter breaks the ice of our tension, and helps us relax and hear the truth of situations. Then, with renewed calm, we can continue on in a good, orderly direction, thanks to our higher power. With prayer and meditation we can realize the gift of our blessings.

~Sherry, Hartford

INSPIRATION

Higher Power,

what can I do today to love my self
and enjoy my life today?

-Lifeline

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



FIVE PRACTICES FOR VITAL MEETINGS

Several years ago, I had the pleasure of hearing the then-chairperson of the OA Board of Trustees talk about how to strengthen meetings. She mentioned five simple (but not necessarily easy!) concepts that would help all of our meetings individually and, no doubt, OA as a whole:

RADICAL HOSPITALITY:

Newcomers want to be at the meeting. They are there because they are ready for the solution, so the solution must be at the meeting! We need to:

- “love them and stay with them!”
- designate a newcomer greeter to come early and stay late.
- Identify someone to call them after the meeting (and another person to e-mail a note or card if we get e-mail addresses on our We Care list).
- offer to pick them up and take them to the next meeting...

Lastly, she emphasized making our meetings “a school for abstinence”.

PASSIONATE PROGRAM:

Meetings should provide an atmosphere where people who are passionate can share that passion and reach out to people’s hearts!

- Do we have regular speakers meetings? We can invite people in from other meetings, have someone call in and speak by phone or get podcasts of people who’ve qualified.
- Keep meetings focused on the solution, not the problem!
- Encourage members to mention their length of abstinence and their weight history. (This is about sharing HOPE!)
- Support and encourage the use of Lifeline.

Her last point on this topic was to remind us all to display eagerness and a passion for recovery when telling our story!

FIVE PRACTICES FOR VITAL MEETINGS (continued)



INTENTIONAL PROGRAM PROGRESS:

While it may seem obvious, she reminded us that we all need to work on the program of recovery outside of meetings. She urged us to “work the steps, abide by the traditions and use the tools”. “What step are you currently working on?” is a question we should always be able to answer!

RISK TAKING SERVICE:

Her actual statement was that we need to “have a zest for risk taking service!” She defined service as “offering oneself in the deliberate effort to improve the experience of others,” and stressed the need to push ourselves beyond our personal comfort zone. She reminded us that the Seventh Tradition states we are self-supporting, and that service is a crucial part of that. And she offered another question that everyone should be able to answer: “What service are you doing?”

EXTRAVAGANT GENEROSITY:

OA needs our financial support; are our seventh tradition donations commensurate with the value we receive from our OA recovery? She encouraged us to think about how we can give our financial support to OA, and reminded us that could include memorial gifts from OA members as well as “birthday” gifts in gratitude for our own or another members OA anniversary.

Obviously, I was inspired enough to take copious notes, and am grateful to have the opportunity to share her inspiring thoughts and words with you. And I’ll close with one last quote from her speech: “God can’t be everywhere, so He sent you – to the meeting!”

~Kimberly C., Bloomfield

STAYING ON THE OA HORSE



**VOLUNTEERS
ALWAYS
NEEDED**

God grant me the serenity
to accept the things
I cannot change,
courage to change
the things I can,
and wisdom to know
the difference.



When I first came into OA nearly 9 years ago, I had truly reached the point of desperation. I remember it was the Tuesday after Easter. My holiday overeating was then extended to 2 additional days of uncontrolled eating and binging on leftovers. I was about 40 pounds overweight at the time, close to my “peak” weight, but it wasn’t the excess weight that really brought me to OA, it was the realization that the manner in which I was stuffing myself with food, the binging, the stomach aches, was a real problem. I finally started to feel like I was insane to behave and eat that way. I felt hopeless. I was willing to try anything. Today I am grateful for that feeling of helplessness, because it’s what brought me to the program.

I looked up OA online, made a call and found myself in a phone conversation with an OA member. I told her that I thought the way I was eating might be such that I needed OA, but I didn’t know much about it. She invited me to share more about my history with food. I shared about my binges and periods of uncontrolled eating. I shared that I often ate well beyond the point of being full but couldn’t stop. She suggested that I attend a meeting to learn more about OA.

The next day, I attended my very first OA meeting. I didn’t go in with any specific expectations. I remember there weren’t just overweight people in the room. There were people of all shapes and sizes, and people of all ages, but everyone shared problems with food. I cried my eyes out at that meetings when I shared. I talked about the ups and downs of weight loss, the terrible binges, the feeling of being out of control with my food. I looked into the eyes of the other people at the meeting, and I could see that they truly understood the pain that I felt.

When I think of my journey since that first day, it sort of reminds me of the stockmarket. There have been peaks and valleys, positive swings followed by dips, but over time there has been a steady progression upward, as each day is one more day of recovery, of healing and of heightened self-discovery and self-awareness.

I’m definitely in a much better place now than I was before OA. I realize now that the food is a way to numb uncomfortable feelings. OA, through the steps and the tools, provides a great framework for true recovery. Unlike commercial “weight loss programs, which focus only on the food, this is the only program I know that attacks the compulsive overeating at its roots.

There are a number of people, sponsors or otherwise, who have guided me and served as my “teachers” throughout this journey. And I learned that there is a way out of the madness, by working on myself, by cultivating positive relationships with other members, by getting a sponsor, and of course, by turning it over to my higher power. I continue to heal and become a stronger and more capable person through this program. I am maintaining a healthy body weight and while my abstinence from compulsive eating is by no means perfect, I don’t feel insane around food anymore. If I have a set-back or a bad day, I have learned it’s not the end of the world. I dust myself off, I try to figure out why it happened, I ask for help, I talk about it. I have learned to forgive myself and have compassion for myself, and to get myself right back on the OA Horse.

There are so many benefits that I see to being an OA member, too many to list, but I will share what keeps me coming back:

- (1) A supportive, loving and understanding community of people who understand my feelings and my problems with food .
 - (2) The tools and the steps - a framework for true recovery
 - (3) The ability to share and be heard - whether it’s my progress, my struggles, or just my feelings that day.
 - (4) The opportunity to learn from those who have recovered and are now living healthier, more fulfilling lives, and
 - (5) The chance to share what I’ve learned to help others recover.
- These are the reasons I keep coming back.

~Anonymous