

Anchorage Alaska Intergroup  
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# The Northern Light

## January/February 2014

**Note from Editor:** Thank you so much to those who submitted entries to me, I am looking for some idea to get out another newsletter ASAP and I would love to have a few more people's voices in these pages. Thank you again for your experience strength and hope through your words and actions.

### Announcements

The ABC's of Abstinence

Date: June 7<sup>th</sup>, 2014

Time: 5:30 PM to 8:30 PM (following a brown bag/potluck dinner @ 4:30-5:30)

For more information go to <http://oa-alaska.org> for flyer

### From the Members

#### Recovery during difficult times

As someone recently said, "If I have a problem (or difficult situation) and I eat over it, I now have two problems." Somehow, I find that abstinence is more automatic during really difficult times. There is a part of me that doesn't want to compound the problem by compulsively eating. In 1990, my mother in law was terminally ill and wanted to come home for her final days. I took off from my part time job, not knowing how long the process would be. In the small town where she lived, everybody brought all kinds of food, some of which was not my kind of food. I was able to eat reasonably. Because I was caring for her round the clock, I made sure that someone was there to watch her for an hour every afternoon, so I could go on a walk, taking my OA literature, writing and praying. I learned to ask for help, to actually LET people help. Acceptance of what is helped me a lot too.

It seems I can practice my recovery more easily in major crises. I understand that I have no control over war, famine, death, and pestilence. It's the everyday little occurrences that drive me to the food and over the edge. I guess that's because my disease tells me I should be able to handle it, should know all the answers to the questions, should have it all together like the rest of the world, etc.

Today, I make it a habit to turn absolutely EVERYTHING over to HP before I get out of bed - my binge foods and my abstinent foods, things that are my part to deal with and things that are not my part to deal with. The First Step is the only one I can take 100%. So I have found that turning over 100% of my life and my will is the only way for me to stay in recovery, no matter what happens in my life, big or small. I still have "memory lapses" during my day, but I can always turn over what's going on and be relieved of my compulsion.

I don't understand how my HP works. Things that look so terrible and awful are often the "packaging" for some of the greatest gifts I have received. So I am learning to look for the gift and not to look at the "packaging". Gratitude helps me so much to get through a difficult situation - even gratitude for the difficulty. Because that is what is bringing about my spiritual growth and keeping me dependent on my HP.

Alaska Anonymous

### **Eating Won't Solve It or Make It Better**

As the Big Book states whenever I am disturbed, I am the one at fault. In the past, whenever I was disturbed food seemed to solve my problems. I could eat and then experience oblivion. I could get that ease and comfort that I sought. Of course, food never fixed anything. In fact, it always made living life worse. Not only was I left with the same problem(s) as before, but I also had the guilt and shame from eating

compulsively. In addition, by avoiding life, because I ate, I failed to grow-up. I became emotionally immature. I refused to accept responsibilities, instead I leaned too heavily on others and situations. As a result, eventually my “protectors” slowly pulled away from me. This, in turn, contributed to my isolation. And I did not have, on my own, a way out of this life.

However, this knowledge, this self-knowledge, was not enough for me to stop eating compulsively. The ideas, concepts, and actions had to be casted aside and a new set put into place. OA has shown me that now is the time for me to grow up and take responsibility for my choices. However, the only way I can do this is by staying abstinent. They told me that nothing would be solved by eating. They told me that if I was a compulsive overeater that there can be lurking notion that I can eat like others. They told me that I must be willing to do anything, to go to any lengths to stay abstinent and have a spiritual experience. I had to trust the process, the 12 Steps. It was by the practice of the 12 Steps that I would experience a spiritual awakening. As a result, I would lose my desire to overeat.

While abstinent I have walked though many situations, with my Higher Power’s strength and direction. A tire blew out in the middle of nowhere and I had to walk to a place to get my tire repaired. I have lost a job. Started a business and then sold it and moved to Alaska, where I didn’t know anyone, but I knew there would be OA. People have personally attacked me. I have lost loves. My job has changed a few times, and I even came close to losing my job. Heck, today my windshield cracked. All these things and more are simply a part of life. And these situations are not worth eating over. Nor is worth eating over the “good” (when life goes “my way”) situations. I have a nice car, house, job, and friends and family. These situations couldn’t be improved by eating.

According to the Big Book, as long as I am spiritually fit, I can do almost anything. It is so true. If I place more importance on abstinence

practicing these spiritual principles, allowing God to work through me, knowing of myself I am nothing without God, then I can match calamity with serenity. Today, life has taken a new meaning. Instead of thinking only of myself and how life affects me, I am thinking of others. Today, I face life as it is, not as I wish it to be. Today, life is neither good nor bad, because either I get my way or not. It is, and it has always been, my reaction to life that makes it good or bad. And for today, life is good.

Alaska Anonymous

### **What does working Step 3 mean to you?**

"Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him." Every 12 Stepper is faced with this decision, sooner or later. How is this accomplished? What does it look like? As I looked at this Step again, I found myself "thinking" down some well-worn paths until I put pen to paper and took the action of writing. I forget sometimes that "Figure it out" isn't one of our slogans! As I write, the answers that HP want to send me will spill out on the page. I don't seem to be able to reach these ideas by pondering and brooding questions in my head.

I always said that my religious experience never taught me how to surrender like the 12 Steps talk about - that I didn't learn any practical methods until I came into program. But as I wrote, I discovered something that had until then remained hidden: I didn't WANT to know! I never asked for help or clarification on turning one's life over. I said the words, but even then, decades ago, my self-will stepped in and said, "You said the words. That's enough."

Now I am striving for recovery and all that my HP has to offer me, and I am faced with this question again - "have I turned over EVERYTHING?" Well, I rationalize, I HAVE turned over some things - I turned over my seriously alcoholic binge foods - isn't that enough? I surrendered much of my time for service and sponsoring - isn't that enough? I surrendered certain restaurants and behaviors - isn't that enough?? Why do I have to do more? Why can't this be enough?!?!

The answer isn't that I need to *do more*, but that I need to let my loving HP in to **every** nook and cranny, every aspect of my life, because my disease hides. It is for my protection, for my sanity, and for my life itself that I need to be thorough here. It is not a punishment or sentence. It is offering God the opportunity to heal all the areas in my life. It is to give me the true freedom from food obsession and self obsession that I suffer from otherwise.

"But wait! Wait!" my scared inner self says. "We can't do this! We WILL FAIL! It will be awful. We don't like it. Why even try? It's just impossible! **It is impossible.**" And then HP steps into my writing again, and begins the list of all the impossible things that He has made possible for me:

- stop snacking between meals
- driving past fast food restaurants
- giving up those beloved, cherished binge foods
- living without soda
- giving up sugarfree gum, mints, candy
- abstinent holidays
- abstinent birthdays
- exercising regularly
- beloved salty snacks
- forgiving people who wronged me
- forgiving myself
- learning to trust again
- liking 100% whole wheat
- weighing and measuring my food
- making food plans
- stop buying junk because it was on sale
- packing a lunch
- being abstinent with my family
- going to the movies without eating
- abstinent potlucks
- leaving free food alone!

I had to admit, God was doing the impossible for me, over and over and over. I don't know how to surrender my whole life - it is impossible. That's ok. I just need to give it to the care of the One who has been doing the impossible for me all along - God. And please note that word: care. It is turning over our lives to the Care of God, not the Control of God. Thank you, OA and HP!

Anonymous in Alaska