



## It's September...Back to School! Or, "All I Really Need to Know I Learned in OA"



There's just something about the month of September that brings me back to my school days. The cool evenings, the crisp leaves starting to fall, the first time I pull out a sweater from the closet... it all brings me back to the years spent in the classroom.

OA has made me a "student" again. Every day I learn something new! I feel so fortunate to be a part of this program and to be able to learn from others who have "been there, done that."

Remembering "Back to School" makes me think... how much do I really focus on learning today? Do I remain teachable? Here are some rules that I learned back in my early school days, and how they relate to my recovery today:

### "Hit the books."

I have a nightstand full of literature. How often do I read them? When is the last time I read something other than the "usual" Big Book and OA 12 & 12? There are so many wonderful books (Just for Today, Voices of Recovery, Lifeline Sampler, Overeaters Anonymous brown book....) that I often forget about. Some of mine have sparkling clean covers and unfolded pages which indicate that I am not getting enough good use out of them!

### "Take notes."

How often am I writing? Am I using this tool to sort out my feelings and allow clarity to come through on paper? Have I thought about making a contribution to Lifeline or the Recovery newsletter (like this one!)?

### "Don't skip class."

Am I getting to enough meetings? Have I made excuses as to why I am too busy to make more meetings?

### "Raise your hand."

In meetings, do I only share when I have it "all together"? Do I try to sound like I am an OA expert who has all of the answers? Or do I share my challenges honestly, so others know they are not alone in the struggle? On the other hand, do I only whine and complain about things that happened to me this week, without relating it to my recovery?

### "Do your homework."

Am I working the steps with a sponsor? Am I making calls to others who can help me? More importantly, am I making calls to others who need my help? Am I living the principles of the program in every aspect of my life, not just when I open the door to a meeting?

### "Don't cheat."

Did I really measure that portion at dinner, or did I say it was "close enough"? Do I make exceptions for "special occasions"? I remember my teachers used to say, "When you cheat, you're only cheating yourself." This is so true with my abstinence today.

OA has taught me more valuable lessons than I ever imagined possible. I look forward to being a "student" of OA, one day at a time, for many years to come!

K.C.

## Happy, Joyous, and FREE!

You may have noticed in the upper-right hand corner of this newsletter, there is no longer a "\$.25 Donation." Brandywine Intergroup will now be absorbing the cost of printing the Recovery Newsletter so that everyone can enjoy it. Please take it and distribute it freely! There is a catch, though. Now, instead of a financial contribution, we ask that you **please contribute your articles, poetry or any other writings!** We need your writings to continue this wonderful source of recovery!

Next month's topic will be **Halloween** – What causes you fear? What masks do we wear? Did you think that OA was scary at first?

So, put away your quarter, and pick up your pen! We can't wait to hear from you!

## DO YOU JUST BELONG?

Are you an active member,  
The kind that would be missed?  
Or are you just contented  
That your name is on the list?

So you attend the meetings  
And mingle with the flock?  
Or do you meet in private  
And criticize and knock?

Do you take an active part  
To help the work along?  
Or are you satisfied to be  
The kind that just belongs?

Do you work on committees,  
To this there is no trick;  
Or leave the work to just a few,  
And talk about the clique?

Please come to the meetings often,  
And help with hand and heart.  
Don't be just a member  
But take an active part.

Think this over, members,  
You know what's right from wrong.  
Are you an active member,  
Or do you just belong?

---Anonymous

## Tradition of the Month:

### **Tradition 9:**

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

## Step of the Month:

### **Step 9:**

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

## *What I have learned in OA*

There are so many things I have learned in the OA recovery program. Starting in my early days of recovery I heard "No one ever died of starvation between dinner and breakfast". How many times have I had to remind myself of that one! I remember thinking how funny and true that statement is. Early in recovery it was also suggested to me when I was tired I should go to bed. This suggestion has been an abstinence saver for me. When I get tired my decision-making abilities become fuzzy.

I remember asking my sponsor "Am I supposed to enjoy my food?" Her answer was "Yes". My sponsor taught me to enjoy my food. I have my most serene meals when I sit at the dining room table in my "abstinence chair". I do not have the television on or I am not reading a book or my mail. I have a napkin in my lap and I am using utensils to eat my food. I know for me when I eat, even abstinent food, that if I am using my hands I have to be careful about my behavior around food.

I have learned that in order to keep the gift that I have been given in OA I need to give it away. This is what service means to me. Service has played an important part in my recovery. I was taught early in recovery to do service. If all I do is go to a meeting and not contribute, I will not get that much in return. I have a home group where I am active in a service position. I need to share honestly in meetings in order to get well.

I learned a while ago that even though I am in recovery I cannot do everything I want to do! Even though my choices are healthy ones, I just don't have time to do everything I want to do.

Another lesson learned for me is that when I have boundaries and practice discipline my life is so much easier. I never thought that boundaries and discipline would feel good and make me a happier person, but they do.

Pain and fear are big motivators for me. When I am struggling with something it usually comes down to either and issue with pain or fear. However, not all pain and fear is bad. I have a healthy fear of sugar. If I eat it I will be unable to stop and the fear of that happening is what helps to keep me on my food plan.

I have also learned that anything that I have ever let go of had claw marks all over it! When I am having trouble letting go of anything I remember the words of one of my favorite songs by the group Great Big Sea:

*"Let it go, let it go, it is smaller than you know  
it's no bigger than a pebble lying on a gravel road  
let it go, let it go, got to leave it all behind you  
give the sun the chance to find you, let it go"*

**- Anonymous**

# Dear OA Friends,

I'd like to share something personal with you.

My dad died this year.

Although he was an active alcoholic when I was growing up, the last half of his life he was a sober, happy man. Our relationship bloomed. We sang together, rang bells together, laughed and cried together. It was special.

The last two years were tough. He had cancer but never complained. I took him to his doctors, to choir rehearsals and to family gatherings.

Last Thanksgiving he had a stroke. During the next two months, I tried to visit him daily.

The night before Daddy died, my husband, my son and I paid him a rather brief visit. We told him we loved him. I stroked him and kissed him. He did his best to tell me he loved me and gave us the thumbs up sign. The next morning, he died.

The reason I'm telling you all this has to do with the tool of writing.

Ever since my dad died, I've had recurrent feelings of guilt and remorse. I shared with my sponsor that I've felt a heaviness in my heart, a lump in my throat of sadness and regret that my last visit to my dad was so short. The shame and remorse followed me everywhere. My sponsor and I decided it might be a good idea to write a letter to my dad.

So, in my journal I wrote him a loving letter. I told him how bad I felt about that last short visit. I said that if I were to have that last night over again, I'd like to just sit with him and hold his hand. I could sit and sit as long as we'd like. (Somehow I found writing this vision comforting). In my letter I thanked Daddy for the gift of himself and for all the great lessons he taught me.

After I finished writing, I felt a calm feeling of peace.

I've heard it said in the rooms, "Writing is the poor man's psychiatrist."

The process is a mystery to me.

When I write, another part of me speaks. I like to think it's my good spirit helping me find the truth.

Thank you for letting me share.

A.

... And as we join hands, we find LOVE and UNDERSTANDING  
Beyond our wildest dreams!

## Recovery Submissions

We are looking for original articles, poems and writings to help share our experience, strength, hope and continuing recovery from compulsive overeating. *Recovery* is published on a monthly basis, and we need your input! Please send your contributions to:

Recovery Editor  
P.O. Box 605  
Bryn Mawr, PA 19010  
Or email: [info@oa-brandywine.org](mailto:info@oa-brandywine.org)

We look forward to hearing from you!

## Editorial Policy

The opinions expressed in *Recovery* reflect those of the writers and not the Brandywine Intergroup or OA as a whole. We reserve the right to edit for space and grammar, and it is understood that all copy may be reprinted by other OA groups without permission.

## Some random thoughts on the 9th step:

- ❖ *If we struggle with a step, it usually means we need to give the previous step some attention. A few people have had trouble with their 9th step because they haven't gone through the process of forgiveness called for in Step 8.*
- ❖ *There are 12 steps and 12 corresponding principles. The principle which corresponds with the 9th step is the principle of love.*
- ❖ *The promises in the "Big Book" of AA come after the 9th step.*

*"If we are painstaking about this phase of our development, we will be amazed before we are halfway through. We are going to know a new freedom and a new happiness..." (Alcoholics Anonymous)*

A.

# ANNOUNCEMENTS

## Meeting Changes/Updates

The **Sunday evening Men's meeting** in Bala Cynwyd has closed.

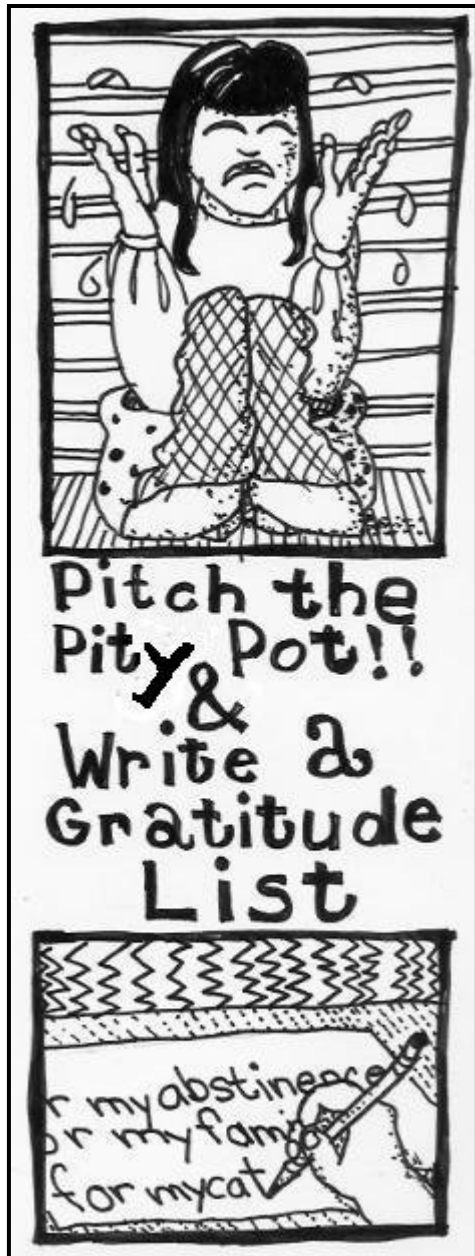
The **Monday 7:30 pm Plymouth Meeting meeting** has moved. The Renaissance Nutrition Center is now located at 2500 DeKalb Pike, Suite 200, in East Norriton. Please contact Phoebe at 610-287-5514 for more information.

## Special Events

- ❖ On Saturday, September 17, there will be a **Sponsorship Workshop** at Trinity Memorial Lutheran Church, Allentown, PA. The address is 545 W. Emmaus Avenue. At this workshop, you will:
  - Learn how others sponsor
  - Share how you sponsor
  - Find a sponsor
  - Ask questions
  - Have fun!

For more information, call Heather at 610-295-0213, or Pamela at 610-776-0690.

- ❖ Don't miss the **2005 OA Region 7 Convention!** This popular retreat will be held November 4-6 at the Dunes Manor Hotel in Ocean City, MD. For more information, visit the OA Region 7 website at [www.oaregion7.org](http://www.oaregion7.org)



## Brandywine Intergroup Speakers List

Susan 484/744-2770	John M 610/352-9287
Diane T. 610/494-6968	Marilyn 610/525-3397
Ethy 267/257-1173	Gil 610/864-8080
Laura 610/771-0142	Bruce 610/645-0790
Marilyn K. 610/356-2762	Lee H. 215/473-2232
Margie 610/642-3411	Kelly C. 610/240-0753
Jake 610/687-4201	Judy 610/586 -8855
Bob 610/753 -9231	Mike B. 610/970 -0570
Bobbi 215/753 -9231	Cathe 610/352-9919
Mary L. 610/604-0440	Sherry 610/361-1390

This is the new speakers list that is currently being developed for Brandywine Intergroup. The goal is to have a list of people willing to perform this vital service (if available) to call on if the need for speakers arises. This can be useful to assist new or smaller meetings, marathons or retreats. Anyone who is willing to have their name added to the list please contact John M. at 610/352-9287 or email [mccreaif@aol.com](mailto:mccreaif@aol.com).