

## Grateful Newcomer

I am a grateful newcomer to the OA program. It has been three months since I surrendered to my compulsive overeating, and I would like to share my experiences on the road to my recovery.

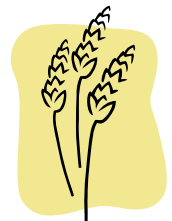
How do you know when you have hit your bottom? For me, it was many things hitting me at once: depression, isolation, the number on the scale mocking me, looking at myself in a vacation photograph and denial. My compulsive eating was getting worse and I knew I needed help. I could no longer do it by myself (even though I thought I tried everything); even with all the gimmicks out there, I was still powerless. History has proven repeatedly what I have been doing was not working.



My husband is a member of a twelve-step program. I saw how he was progressing and liked what I saw. I attended a couple of his meetings to understand and support him in his recovery. Hanging on the door at the meeting I went to, was a list of questions about compulsive eating from OA. I was amazed of how many questions related to my eating habits. I was fortunate that there were members of OA at this meeting that I was able to talk with. I was invited to an OA meeting to see if this program was attractive to me. Of course being the compulsive person I am, I had to over think every aspect of why I did not need to attend. I am so glad I went. I was welcomed with open arms and came to realize I was not the only one with a compulsive overeating problem. I was hooked. Eager to get on the road to recovery I purchased a couple of books and step guides.



I started reading and found something I have been looking for, for years, hope, strength and experience. The first thing that clicked for me was that recovery meant taking care of my physical, emotional and spiritual needs, that I needed desperately. That is what has been missing, the combination of all three. I was always taking care of the physical, but never looked at the emotional part of why I was eating like this or asked my Higher Power for help. I have been able to abstain from compulsive eating by my willingness to do whatever it takes, the support of my sponsor, using the tools of recovery, the OA fellowship and my Higher Power.



I have learned a lot about myself in three months by working the steps. I can now appreciate when the fellowship says, "keep coming back, it works if you work it." It truly does work "one day at a time."

With an open mind, heart and dependence upon my Higher Power enables me to stay focused on just today.

- Loretta T.

### “No Longer Ashamed”

I first heard of Overeaters Anonymous in a Dear Abby newspaper column. Many years ago she answered a question with OA information and suggested the person who wrote to her about an obvious eating problem check it out. I could so relate to the advice seeker’s pain, shame and desperation about the hidden (or so I thought) problem I had with my unnatural desire for food. I cut out the article and placed it on my refrigerator. It stayed there for three years.

Finally in my mid-twenties with three small children under five years old and an alcoholic husband (I did not recognize that fact at the time), my marriage was cracking-up, I hated my body and my life; I decided I would try the OA organization Dear Abby had written about. After all, I had tried weight watchers, TOPPS, hypnosis, diet pills, fad diets, fasting, Atkins, you name it. Why not give this OA thing a try? ... (Continued on Page 2)

# SIGNS

Every day we are bombarded with street signs and billboards. Sometimes there are so many, I wonder how we can keep our eyes on the road! But signs definitely have their purpose. For me, they are simple reminders that I am one of many out on the road, and that I need structure and guidance to get through the crowded streets of life.



How does my OA program teach me to read the "signs" in certain situations? Well, here are some examples of how everyday signs could help me navigate this crazy world, and my crazy attitude!

- When I am eating out with non-program people, and I think, "They don't know about my food plan, so I can get away with something..." **DANGER.**
- When I'm in a heated discussion with someone and I want to "win", but I know that getting my way will only prolong the argument and bad feelings.... **YEILD.**
- When my disease is running rampant and I am in my head, thinking about nothing but myself... **STOP. LOOK. LISTEN.** (To a Higher Power, that is).
- When I start to think, "Maybe there's another solution out there that could help me with my problems with food..." **ONE WAY.**
- When I pass a food establishment that can only cause me trouble... **DO NOT ENTER.**

A few weeks ago I was leaving the church where an OA meeting is held. On the church billboard was the following message:

**Live simply.  
Speak kindly.  
Love generously.  
Leave the rest to God.**

Reading that message made me smile, and has given me a warm feeling in my heart ever since.

Take a moment to read the signs in your world today. They may just be telling you something!

*-Kelly C.*

## “No Longer Ashamed”

(Continued from Page 1)

I had lived under a blanket of shame. Shame about eating behaviors I knew were abnormal. Shame that I was a phony with my polite normal eating in front of others only to gorge myself when alone and uninhibited. I ate whatever and how ever much I could get my hands on and there was never enough. When I went on a binge it would only end when I could eat no more because I was so full and sick that the thought of putting one more thing in my body was impossible. Then I would sit on the couch and be half comatose or go to bed and pass out.

That is exactly where my disease wanted me. This addiction wants my life. It was ceaseless in its pursuit to be the dominant governor in my thinking. Like a cancer left untreated my compulsion to overeat grew with each period of uncontrolled eating. Followed of course by the mother-load of guilt and shame every overeater is all too familiar with, as the cycle begins again: I will never do that again...I am going to stop this once and for all...that was the last time...tomorrow will be the beginning...etc, etc. Thanks to this program and my Higher Power I no longer am ashamed of myself. With the help of my friends in the program I have been courageous in my attempts at achieving abstinence and grateful for my current state of abstinence. Today I am free of the compulsion to overeat...I have the gift of abstinence and the wisdom to use the tools to keep it in place. The Serenity Prayer has been a constant source of strength. I was ashamed to be a member of OA for the first few years I attended. My attitude has changed through working the steps and surrendering to my HP's will for my life. I am now very humbly grateful and proud to be a recovering member of OA. OA has transformed my life to a rich a wholesome adventure. I cherish your anonymity and mine. I tell many people I am a member of OA. I do trust that you never will. I am no longer ashamed of who I am or what I need to do to stay happy, joyous and free.

*- Veronica G.*

**Can't make a meeting? Don't forget about  
online and telephone OA meetings!**

**A list can be found on the OA website:**

**[http://www.oa.org/online\\_meetings.html](http://www.oa.org/online_meetings.html)**

# How to get a Sponsor

Besides staying abstinent and working the steps, getting a sponsor is the third most important thing in the program. A sponsor is someone who shares with you their experience, strength and hope, and helps you as you do your steps. Although some have worked the steps and stayed abstinent without one, it is almost impossible to do without a sponsor. So finding a sponsor is very important.

One of the reasons people suggest you go to at least six different meetings before making your decision on staying in the program is because you will meet a lot of different people in the program. Hopefully, you will run into someone who could be your sponsor. Being a man, I had to go to a lot of meetings to find a sponsor (I wanted another man and it is recommended you do stay with the same sex). I found it interesting when I visited other meetings, and meeting new people was fun.

It is important to get a sponsor as soon as you can. If you're afraid of forming an immediate close relationship with someone, ask someone to be a temporary sponsor. For a sponsor or temporary sponsor you can ask anyone who has more experience in the program than you. If you ask someone to be your sponsor and they say they cannot, then ask them to be a temporary sponsor. When asked to be a temporary sponsor, most people in the program will not turn you down. They all remember what it is like to be new, too.

You should look for someone in the program that has something you want to be your sponsor. Something you want could be a long period of abstinence, a aura of peace and serenity, or just common interests and a feeling you click with the person. You do not have to find that perfect person because you can switch sponsors at any time for any reason. I have found that sometimes you ask a person that you think will not get along with it ends up you get surprised. Like they say, don't judge a book by its cover. Also, asking someone to be a temporary sponsor is a great way to find out if it will work out between you.

When you get a sponsor, some just ask "What should I do next?" However, if you want to set some ground rules and are not too assertive, you may suggest that other people go over the, "A Guide to the Twelve Steps for You and Your Sponsor" when they find a sponsor, and you think that would be a great thing to do. Most sponsors will accept that or suggest to do that themselves.

Finding a sponsor was scary for most of us, but people abstinent in the program have managed to find one and it has lead to better things. You will probably find the same thing. Even if you get a bad sponsor it can still work out. I have had a sponsor who yelled at me and told me I was going to die. I did not die and I got rid of that sponsor. We are still good friends. Him being my sponsor then was just not in my Higher Power's plan right then. It did not harm me or my program, I am still doing well and staying abstinent and so will you. So do not be afraid, get a sponsor.

- Mike B.

**Q:** *My home group is in desperate need of sponsors. Not one of us feels ready to sponsor, even those of us who have been members for two or three years. Is there anything we can do to prepare ourselves to sponsor others and to encourage those with OA experience to share it?*

**A:** It is important to realize that there is in no one, perfect way to sponsor. A sponsor is simply one OA member working with another to better understand and live the Twelve-Step program. There are as many different methods of sponsoring as there are OA members. The key to being a sponsor is to share one's experience, strength and hope as it relates to OA's Twelve-Step program.

If there are individuals in your group who have maintained any length of abstinence and are working the Twelve Steps, they have something to share. There is no graduation date when members magically become ready to sponsor. As we learn in OA, all progress is worth sharing.

Additionally, you'll find much helpful information in two OA pamphlets, *A Guide to the Twelve Steps for You and Your Sponsor* and *The Tools of Recovery*.

August 1991, from the *WSO Notebook*,  
January/February 1991

- Reprinted from *OA Ask-It-Basket* at [oa.org](http://oa.org)

## Step of the Month:

### Step 10:

Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong, promptly admitted it.

## Tradition of the Month:

### Tradition 10:

Overeaters Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the OA name ought never be drawn into public controversy.



“We who began working the Steps in order to recover from compulsive eating now find that through them we have embarked on a lifelong journey of spiritual growth. From the isolation of food obsession we have emerged into a new world. Walking hand in hand with our friends and our Higher Power, we are now exploring this world, using the great spiritual principles embodied in the Twelve Steps as the map to guide our way. We gratefully follow in the footsteps of many others who have walked this way before us, and we're gratified to be making footprints of our own for others to follow.

“Those of us who live this program don't simply carry the message; we are the message. Each day that we live well, we are well, and we embody the joy of recovery which attracts others who want what we've found in OA. We're always happy to share our secret: the Twelve Steps of Overeaters Anonymous, which empower each of us to live well and be well, one day at a time.”

- *The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous, p. 106*



## 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: [newsletter@oa-brandywine.org](mailto:newsletter@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.

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This is the speaker list that is currently being maintained by 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 the newsletter editor at [newsletter@oa-brandywine.org](mailto:newsletter@oa-brandywine.org).