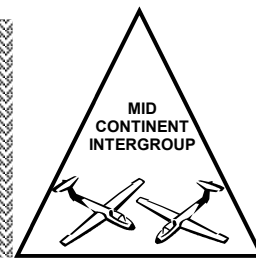


THE PILOT

MID-CONTINENT INTERGROUP
7701 E KELLOGG DR STE 635
WICHITA, KANSAS 67207



April-May 2011

“The Three Doors”

St. Louis Newsletter—March 2010

Before I came to OA, I was a prisoner, a prisoner of my own mind and body. Food was my captor and constant companion, when I wasn't eating it, I was thinking about it. It was my substance of choice for self medication against feeling emotion. The real insanity was that I had been doing it for so long and with such conviction that I allowed myself to believe that I was living my life to the best of my ability. This way of living became my “lot” in life, and I was fully compliant, as I had convinced myself I didn't deserve any better.

Years ago a story was shared with me. I never realized what a personal and profound effect this story would play in my life until I reached “rock bottom.” As the story goes, there was a kingdom long ago that had a very ruthless king. In the kingdom was a prison, and imprisoned in it, a man who had been there most of his life. Word spread the ruthless king had died and soon his son, said to be far more ruthless than his father, would take the throne. Fear and apprehension filled the hearts and minds of the townspeople but none more so than that of the prisoner, for he was aware the newly crowned king would soon be paying him a visit. Not knowing just when the king would arrive, the prisoner waited anxiously in his prison cell, gripped with fear. As expected, the new king did indeed arrive in all his grandeur. The king commanded the prisoner's cell be opened, that he may enter in. At this point the king looked sharply at the prisoner and began to speak saying, “I am your newly crowned king;” to which the prisoner reacted submissively getting onto his knees, bowing his head. “Look up at me when I speak to you!” the king yelled.

The prisoner quickly complied looking up to the king with fearful, tearfilled eyes. The king began, “I am here to offer you a choice: you may choose one of three doors. Behind door number one is life in prison; behind door number two is certain death; behind door number three, it is unknown what will happen to you. Which door is it that you choose?”

The prisoner's mind was racing, immersed with fear. Trying to think, the prisoner quickly contemplated the fate that lay behind each door: door number one: life in prison; I have lived my entire life a prisoner, and I have survived. I have clothes on my back and rations to live on. Door number two: certain death, even though I am imprisoned, I am allowed to live. I am such a sinner; I am afraid to die! Door number three: unknown, unknown! This could mean a fate far worse than death! This ruthless king could have me tortured mercilessly, starve me, and then have me killed, along with my family! I can't bear to think what will come of me! No! No! He shuttered.

Abruptly the king bellowed, “Which door is it you will choose?”

“Door number one! I choose door number one; I wish to remain alive!” The prisoner cried out in anguish.

“Then so it shall be, door number one, life in prison!” As the king turned to leave, he paused benevolently, looking back at the prisoner and said, “Since you are safe in your decision, and your life will be spared, would you like to know what it was that awaited you behind door number three?”

With tearful relief the prisoner shook his head, “yes,” in reply.

“Behind the third door, my son, awaited freedom. Your freedom! Rather than daring to believe freedom could ever be possible, you sold yourself short and allowed fear to rule your mind.”

Sadly, the prisoner in our story would never know what it is to be free. In the end, it was his own tremendous fear of the unknown and complacency that ultimately imprisoned him. He came to believe life was merely about existing. Living a life rich in experience was beyond his ability to reason. He had lived in darkness for so long he did not know to look for the light.

I relate very much to the prisoner in this story. I, too, have been victim of my own complacency, fears, and self-will. In choosing to avoid the inevitable pain of dealing with the events and emotions of my life, in my secrecy and denial, they became my prison. I, too, just as the prisoner, had convinced myself there was nothing better waiting out there for me. (cont'd on page 2)

(cont'd from page 1)

Ingesting food became my comfort as well as my bludgeon at a very tender age. When I was happy, I ate. When I was sad, I ate. When I was hurt, I ate. When I felt victimized, I ate. When I was anxious, I ate. If it is said that a person shows their emotions passionately, they are “wearing their heart on their sleeve.” In my efforts to bury my emotions with food, one could say the end result for me was that I ended up wearing my emotions on my waistline, hips, and thighs!

I thought if I buried my emotions in enough food, I wouldn't be able to feel them; if I couldn't feel them, I wouldn't have to acknowledge their pain. Nonetheless, I wasn't really hiding anything from anyone, least of all myself. I was painfully aware of my self-cruelty. Even though I could hide my feelings masterfully from those around me, I realize now I was not nearly as practiced in the art of self-deception as my pride would have me believe. Not only would I not deal with my emotions, over the years I convinced myself I'd be better off if I just never allowed myself to encounter emotional circumstances. I quit watching certain types of television for fear of coming across an emotionally charged program; I refused to read books that were fiction because I did not want to be transported to a realm where dreams, for some people, really did come true. Any activity that could tap into my emotions was painstakingly avoided. When I didn't outwardly reject intimacy, I made sure I had adequately “medicated” myself with enough food, and later alcohol, that I wouldn't have to feel anything.

As I earnestly turned a blind eye to my own physical, emotional, and spiritual needs, I did the complete opposite for the loved ones in my life. Over the years, I've worked tirelessly to spare my loved ones any form of unpleasantness, even if it meant being anyone and everyone's daughter, sister, wife, parent, neighbor, friend, caretaker, therapist, cook, maid, nurse, gardener, secretary, chauffer, room mom, and laundress. You name it - I would do it. I duped myself into believing that if I could just be the be-all-end-all for everyone and everything in my life, and do it with complete perfection, no one would ever suspect the wretchedness that lived inside of me.

In my desire to save the world, I was killing myself. It wasn't until the physical side effects of my malady became undeniable, that I knew I could no longer exist. I would perish from this world a wounded, angry, bitter, and resentful worn out husk if I did not change my ways.

On Monday, January 5, 2009, at 3:00 a.m., with my teeth clenched and heart pounding out of my chest, yet again, waking in physical pain and mental anguish, drenched in sweat, I knew this charade needed to end. Suddenly, for the first time, the tide had turned. No longer was I more afraid of seeking help than I was fearful of living one more day in the quiet chaos of my life. On this darkest of nights, I would find my brightest day. I wrestled to the family computer, booted up, and began seeking information of how I could enlist myself in Overeaters Anonymous. By the grace of my Higher Power, I found the OA website, and not only that, there was to be a meeting later that very evening at 7:00 p.m. Later that morning I phoned the OA contact person and was captivated by the beautiful love of a stranger that instantly brought comfort and enveloped me. A feeling of hope, grace and peace filled my heart. I knew that very moment, by the grace of my Higher Power, I had finally found the key that would open the “third door” of my life.

After experiencing the love and camaraderie of my first OA meeting, I was hooked. I immersed myself in OA literature and philosophies, quickly seeing the results of all they promise take hold in my life. I lost forty pounds in my first four months of OA. Never had it been so simple. Not easy but simple. Not only did I allow myself to feel true hunger for the first time since I cannot remember, but, slowly, I've begun allowing myself to begin feeling, contemplating, understanding, and releasing my emotions. There have been moments along the way that have been absolutely gut wrenching. With the grace of my Higher Power, I have grown in appreciation that those moments are necessary and vital to my recovery. I've even termed the tears I now cry as my “OA tears,” for I know even though they can at times be painful, they are no longer my captors. No longer do I have to bury them in food. They, too, will pass and as they do, they carry with them new, enriching, healthy knowledge of a better way to live and freedom beyond my wildest dreams! I thank my Higher Power and also all of you for allowing me to share with you my OA freedom!

~Lisa W, St. Peters

Lifeline, May 2010—"Recovery Insurance"

When exploring my OA region's Web site, I found a link to a document called the Recovery Insurance Policy (www.oa.org/pdfs/recoveryinspolicy2.pdf). It is an agreement between two or more OA members to take specific actions if one of the parties shows signs of compulsive eating.

What a wonderful, loving, concrete way to put into action the communal "we" partnership of our program! It reinforces the idea we are not meant to do this alone: "the amazing secret to the success of this program is just that: weakness. It is weakness, not strength, that binds us to each other and to a Higher Power and somehow gives us the ability to do what we cannot do alone" (Our Invitation To You, p. 2)

The Recovery Insurance Policy reminds me of a personal relapseprevention plan my sponsor had me write several years ago when I was struggling with relapse. Over the last several weeks, that plan has worked! Surprise, surprise, the plan involves the tools and Steps! The more I work the tools and Steps, the more recovery and abstinence I gain and the more joy, honesty, clarity, love and compassion I give myself, my Higher Power and the beings with whom I share this earth.

When strong cravings hit, here are some strategies in my personal relapseprevention plan:

- I commit to waiting five minutes. In those five minutes, I say the first three Steps and pray for the willingness to hear Higher Power's alternatives to hurting myself.

- I commit to calling my sponsor. If I can't get him or her, I leave a message, being honest about the cravings and aware of why they've surfaced (maybe I had a fight with my mom). Then I make another call.

- I pick up a tool like literature and keep it in places I can't avoid it: my purse, car, powder room and kitchen. My sponsor had me post

signs in my house with program slogans or "God loves you; you don't need to eat" on them. Most guests understand.

- I visit the OA Web site (www.oa.org) and listen to a podcast if it's too late to call anyone.

- I remember I'm not alone. I let someone else in program be my Higher Power "with flesh" in person, on the phone, on paper or on the Web.

- I remember what I feel when I wake up after a binge: shame, self-anger, regret, sorrow, distance from God, irritability and self-pity. Then I remember how I feel when I am constructive in enduring hard feelings: ready to be of service to others, humble yet prideful, close to God, clearheaded, loved, confident, and trusting of the program and my fellows.

- I do service, even when I feel least like doing it (when self-pity and anger make me feel like the world "owes me"). Even the smallest kind of service works, including: writing a paragraph for an OA newsletter; leaving a message for someone; tuning in or showing up to a phone, face-to-face or online meeting; or sending a card or email to a non-OA friend.

- I pray for those with whom I am angry, even if I have to "act as if."

- I keep a list of nonaddictive, fun, comforting or challenging treats: listening to music, cuddling with my pet, watching funny or uplifting films, reading books, swimming, walking, buying flowers, drinking tea, chewing sugarless gum, visiting educational or entertaining Web sites, drumming, making a gratitude list, doing gentle stretching exercises, talking with a friend, and taking a hot bath or shower.

These strategies help fulfill the needs I'm trying to satisfy with food, without hurting myself. Humor and community are powerful weapons in my arsenal against my disease, especially if I can share with someone!

~Andrea M



Courage to Change (Al-Anon Daily Reader)—Mar 16

Isn't it exasperating to go to the grocery store for an item, only to find the shelf empty? Fortunately, grocers can correct that situation by taking inventory to learn which shelves need replenishment.

The same is true for me. A Fourth Step inventory illuminates my own empty spaces, my shortcomings. This doesn't have to be a painful or scary experience. I don't have to pass judgment on an empty shelf, but unless I take the time to become aware of it, I won't do anything to fill it, and the problem will continue. By taking inventory, my empty spots can be filled with the help of the remaining Steps. I experience the healing power of these Steps whenever the formerly hurtful circumstances recur while the pain that I once felt does not.

Today's Reminder

When I can't find a solution to a problem, when I have nagging doubts, fears, or frustrations, when I feel lost or confused, a searching and fearless moral inventory of myself can make a tremendous difference. Whenever I work the Steps, I tell my Higher Power that I am willing to heal, to find a solution, to feel better. The energy that would have been dumped into worry, tears, and obsession can be turned into positive action.

"We all wish good things to happen to us, but we cannot just pray and then sit down and expect miracles to happen. We must back up our prayers with action."

Freedom from Despair



Omaha Newsletter—July 2008: “Who Am I Really?”

As a teenager, my father took me to the Orpheum Theatre to see a touring production of “A Chorus Line.” Even at that young age, when there was so much of my diseased brain that had yet to reveal itself, I remember being struck by one song in which a dancer stared into the mirror and mournfully questioned: “Who am I anyway? Am I my resume? That is a picture of a person I don’t know . . .” Those words stuck with me and became true of my own life in evolving ways as I got older.

Despite living a life based on selfcenteredness and self-seeking, I had no true sense of self - one of the great ironies of addiction. Depending on whom I was with at the time I created different personas, different tastes and interests, even different fabrications of my personal history to attempt to feel a part of the group. Surprise, surprise, it never worked! When my higher power finally landed me – fat, miserable, and insane –in an OA meeting, I had no personality, no sparkle, no light in my spirit. And I wondered why all of my relationships were falling apart!

As I began working the steps and was relieved of the desire to sedate myself with compulsive eating, I found myself looking into the mirror and wondering: Who am I, anyway? What is my taste in clothes, now that I know I deserve to wear things I like, not just “what fits”? What music do I like, now that I don’t have to just agree with the group? What interests might I develop in all the free time left when the bingeing stopped?

My OA journey has taken me many beautiful places, even in the “low” times. But one of the greatest gifts of all is knowing that I EXIST today for more than a slow, painful death from disease. This program has given me a personality,

has opened the door for me to discover talents and gifts I didn’t know I had, has blessed me with authentic relationships I never dreamed possible for me. Today I know me, and you know me! And from that miracle I have arrived at the sane and happy usefulness promised in the Big Book. I belong at last. Thank you OA for introducing me to me!

- Anonymous

Lifeline, May 2010—"ABCs to Saying NO"

Things to do before you take that first compulsive bite:

- A Make an Amend; Ask for help; Accept a person, place or thing;
- B Buy yourself flowers;
- C Call someone; Clean something; Change the things you can;
- D Dust something; Dead-head the plants; make a trip to the Dump;
- E Email someone in program; Exercise, no matter how small the activity;
- F File paperwork or your nails; Floss your teeth; schedule a Facial;
- G Go to a meeting; make a Gratitude list;
- H Make contact with your Higher Power; schedule a Haircut;
- I Look for Inspiration around you;
- J Remember you are on a Journey;
- K Get down on your Knees;
- L Light a candle; Listen to a favorite CD; fold Laundry;
- M Make a bed; Mow the lawn; Meditate;
- N Take a Nap; call a Newcomer;
- O Do something for Others;
- P Prune bushes; Pray; make a Powerless list;
- Q Be Quiet and listen for guidance;
- R Rake leaves; Read OA literature; Reach out to another person;
- S Call your Sponsor; take a Shower; do some Service;
- T Turn it over; use the Telephone; focus on Today;
- U Use the tools of recovery; buy some new Underwear;
- V Vacuum a room or the car; take your daily Vitamin;
- W Water plants; Weed out old clothes; Write; take a Walk.
- X Anything eXtra you need to do?
- Y Do some Yard work;
- Z Get some Zzzzzz. Has the compulsion been lifted?

I am grateful in New Hampshire.

~Nancy S., Windham, New Hampshire USA

Normal is not always natural.

~Alan Cohen

Ask Anna Nimity

Dear Anna,

I am having trouble understanding the idea of a Higher Power. I don't know if I believe in God or not. Can you help me?

Higher Powerless

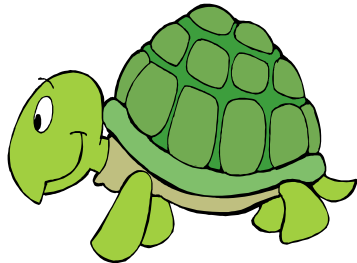
Dear Higher Powerless,

You do not have to believe in God to recover in OA. You need only believe in something greater than yourself. This could be the love of the OA group, the life-force of nature, or even a fairy godmother, if that is a meaningful representation to you. Consider the things you would like to receive from a Higher Power—love, understanding, comfort, encouragement, and so on—and see if you can imagine an entity that offers those. Also, your Higher Power can change as you progress in recovery. Ask other members how they experience their Higher Power—there is a wealth of wisdom in your local group!

Yours in humble service,
Anna

MYRTLE THE
TURTLE:

It's not just a
program, it's an
adventure!



May Big Book Reading List

- 1. 72-80 17. 289
2. 80-88 18. 437
3. 246 19. 219
4. 193 20. 476
5. 301 21. 246
6. 535 22. 553
7. 359-364 23. 232-239
8. 364-368 24. 239-245
9. 544 25. XI-XXIV
10. 208 26. 512
11. Gratitude List 27. 382
12. 171 28. 458
13. 407 29. 398
14. 328 30. 531
15. 122-129 31. 338
16. 129-136

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Next Intergroup Meeting, May 10, 2010
Intergroup Office, 7701 E Kellogg Dr Ste 635

All are welcome!

www.oawichita.org

Mid-Continent Intergroup
Combined Treasurer's Report Feb-Mar 2011

Checking:

Table with financial data: Beginning Balance (Nov) \$ 551.94, Donations (\$1206.14) including Book Study, Monday 7:30PM, Monday 10AM, Monday 5:30PM, Wed BB, Friday Noon, Sat AM, Sat PM, Salina, Hutchinson, Independence, Expenses (-\$805.07) including Phone, Rent, Publicity Expenses, Newspaper Ad, Nonprofit fee, Sharathon room rental.

Publicity Budget = \$300; 106.27 remng

Net (Donations minus Expenses) \$ 401.07

Ending Balance (Dec) \$ 953.01

MID-CONTINENT INTERGROUP OFFICERS

(Terms are 2 years in duration, and are limited to 2 consecutive terms per position)

- CHAIRPERSON: Deb S. 316-734-6790 (1st term, '09)
VICE CHAIR: Laura L. 316-684-5904 (1st term, '10)
SECRETARY: Mary M. 316-619-8140 (1st term, '08)
TREASURER: Gay 316-260-5945 (1st term, '09)
LITERATURE: Barb H. 316-733-2136 (2nd term, '09)
PILOT EDITOR: Kirsten W. 316-214-9144 (1st term, '09)
PARLIAM.: Mary G. 316-652-8689 (1st term, '10)

All officers are willing to lend an ear for your concerns, comments and questions! Please thank them for their generous