

OA - "The Miracle of Program: Freedom from the Obsession, Relief from the Compulsion."

June 2003

I have been in OA for just over a year now. I began my journey in OA hoping to lose weight. I knew I ate too much and I knew how to diet, but I couldn't seem to stick with it. I went to my first meeting and heard someone say "just get to your next meal." Don't even worry about the entire day, one meal at a time. I went home and counted the hours and minutes down, fighting the food thoughts. I also bought every piece of OA literature available within my first month in the program. I'm an academic type and reading is something I enjoy and can do. Writing and telephone, that's another story.

Through the meetings, support of fellow OA-ers, and God I was able to follow a food plan day after day for months at a time. I went from eating sugar every meal to having it once a week within one month in the program. What freedom I felt from the compulsion to overeat.

I began teaching in the fall 15 pounds lighter and scared to death of the food table in the teacher's lounge. That table and kids bringing their birthday treats were two areas that plagued my eating for years. I vowed not to enter the lounge so I wouldn't even have to look at the food. Because I had followed a food plan and had good abstinence for the summer, turning down birthday treats and not eating from the teacher's lounge was simple, not easy but simple. I didn't eat that stuff anymore. Over the past year I have turned down over 100 birthday treats and stayed away from the lounge and faculty meeting food tables. Miraculously because of this program and the steps, I have a choice to NOT EAT what was offered to me at school.

I have not worked a perfect program this past year but I have made excellent progress. I know that God can and will remove my compulsion if I just seek him. That final part is the key for me. If I don't stop and pray to have my food thoughts removed, they don't go away. However, when I do stop and use a tool and/or pray, I find that I can stay away from sugar and one day I hopefully won't even have to have the food thoughts. I've had the freedom and relief from the ACT of compulsive eating, what I pray for now is the freedom and relief from the THOUGHTS of compulsive and obsession with food! It works when I work it and I am worth it!

January 3, 2003,

Yesterday, at the meeting, I heard many things that give me hope and strength to continue program. 1- That a binge is a blessing. It shows my human weakness,

my inability to control food, and reminds me that God is the only one who can help me. 2-that hungry feeling I get is my body working on the fat that I still have. Accept that feeling and let it happen. It is good for me!

I am willing to take some new steps as I welcome in 2003. I will make at least 4 phone calls each week, striving for at least once a day.

I will read, write, or make a phone call before I take a bite (any bite that is not part of my food plan or between meals).

I will email my sponsor at least every other day.

I will get a home sponsor even if it is just someone to be a food plan sponsor.

I will turn my pain and control over to God, he is the one with all power, and he alone can take it away!

January 4, 2003,

Yesterday was a good day. The sweets called to me, but I did not surrender. I even wanted a drink of Amaretto last evening but my daughter had a tough time getting to bed, so I never got to the store. God has his ways of taking control if I simply surrender and take things as they come. God has the power to control my addiction, to lead me and to guide me. I just need to pay attention. I ate abstinently yesterday and did not eat anything in between meals. Not even a cracker. It felt great to follow my food plan.

I even had a more "healthy" breakfast and lunch because I craved it! I will probably end up changing my food plan a bit to bring in more protein and vegetables and less breads and pastas. My body is changing and that is what it is craving now. Things I used to want to eat do not excite me anymore. Unfortunately, sweets are still calling. But it has been almost a week since my last taste of sugar. I feel that God is in control and I am surrendering.

January 8, 2003,

I have felt good the last few days. I am flustered a bit because I can't find my 12 step book. I might have left it at mom's, in Florida. Oh well, I guess I'll just buy a new one.

I forgot my lunch yesterday at school and went to a local restaurant and ordered a BLT and cup of soup. It was a healthy and very filling meal. I was happy I

didn't over eat or get something heavy. As with every day, I need to continually surrender my eating desires over to God so that he can take them away. No problem is too small for God. That is an amazing thing to say and believe, but it is true.

January 10, 2003,

I met with another OA member to begin step 5 last night. It was truly revealing. I enjoyed talking about my defects with another OA person. She was kind, thoughtful, and helped me see what connections there are between certain behaviors. We only covered Pride last night, so we will meet every week and try to cover more. It is so nice to reveal some of the shameful things I have done in my life. I am positive this step will help me to become a better person. I like the fact that this program is more than about the food. I didn't even realize that I ate because of other things.

It's amazing to see it all uncover. I still have food desires but some days they are less than others. Yesterday was an excellent day. I saw a few people at the meeting last night I haven't seen in a few months and they all noticed that I have had some physical recovery. It was nice, but it wasn't as nice as seeing them come back into fellowship. I care about this family in OA. It is a caring and unconditional place where everyone bares their soul and no one is judged. What a wonderful place to find in this world!

January 17, 2003

I have had a glorious, abstinent week (almost done). I feel that I am turning my will over to God and that he in turn has removed many of the cravings I have. Last night, at a meeting, I had a tiny moment when I believed that maybe someday. I would not eat sugar(ever). Right now, sugar is a part of my food plan once a week. Occasionally, this gets me into trouble, but so far it has worked towards my recovery. However, I am open to the possibility that someday it may work against my recovery and then, I will need to give it up, one day at a time. I hear such strength and hope in the speaker meeting. I identify with so much. I know I will always need meetings to keep me honest. Sometimes I hear a speaker say something that I didn't realize I identified with and voila! I have a new revelation.

I worked with Camille last night and started through fear on my inventory. She gives me such insights into my feelings and reactions. The 5th step is truly an awakening. Thanks to OA for such a wonderful program to learn to live my life in a much better way!

January 20, 2003

Today was my day to have my once a week "treat." I shared some of it with my daughter and then, after it was 1/2-2/3 gone, I decided I'd had enough. It was very sweet and I didn't feel I needed any more. So, I scooped it out of its neat container and threw it in the trash. I feel good that I was able to sense when to stop, when was enough, and that it was very rich. I made a phone call today and yesterday to another OA member. It is good for my program and recovery to do so. I am so blessed with my life and how I am feeling towards everything.

January 23, 2003

Things have gone okay this week. I have made 3 phone calls this week and have committed 2 OA members to speaking at meetings in February. Yesterday, when I was about to yell at my students, I bowed my head and prayed, IT WORKED! I was able to finish class in a calm collected manner. I met a newcomer to OA yesterday. She really identified with a lot of what I shared. It was nice to have someone connect to me. I have been abstinent but I think some of my meal portions have been a bit larger than they should be. I need to eat more vegetables and fruits.

July 7, 2003

I'm feeling serenity this morning for the first time in a few days. I went to Platteville for the 4th. It is the one place that is such a danger zone as far as sugar. I've only had 1 trip to Platteville that lasted w/o sugar. Unfortunately, this was not one. I passed on the giant Hershey's bar for the first few hours...but my husband left a few small pieces open in the wrapper and I grabbed it w/o even thinking. I ate it...felt okay. Then nap time for Cassy and I was left alone in the house with a half eaten box of thin mints. I've been staring at this box, and its companion of coconut carmel delights, for months. I can't believe it's not gone yet...

Well, I decided I was going to binge and eat the rest of the box...1 whole side of cookies...about 18 according to the package. Plus...there were homebaked cookies in the freezer...I took out 1 chocolate chip cookie. I sat down and knew I was going against my food plan, abstinence, hp...you name it...but I wanted it too bad.

Here is what I wrote after I "binged":

I have just "binged" or I at least set out to. I knew I was going to do it...and I sat down with 1/2 a box of thin mints and a chocolate chip cookie. After eating 8 thin mints (there are 18 in 1/2 a box) I realized that they weren't that great...I could taste the gunk, fat, lard...whatever...and I felt physically sick. So...I stopped. I did eat the chocolate chip cookie...but I regret that too. I feel sick, and it wasn't as good as I thought. How ridiculous to break my abstinence for that...and how I feel...Yuk!

I had already thrown the box in the recycle bin, buried it, so I wrapped the package of the rest of the cookies up and threw them into the freezer (in the back). Then my compulsive mind started thinking...what if someone remembers they have them and goes to look for them...and they're gone...or someone discovers them in the freezer...I'll have to admit I ate them.....

So...I fished out the box and tried gluing the box back together...but I am impatient and couldn't wait for the glue to dry. So...I taped it with scotch tape. Got the rest of the cookies from the freezer and put them back in the box and back in the cupboard.

I wish my story could stop there...but it didn't. My binge for the night stopped...I ate a good healthy dinner and was abstinent through the rest of the night.even in the face of little Debbie Swiss rolls. (Sometimes I feel my husband's sweet tooth is going to be my downfall.)

The next morning...I ate 2 of the thin mints. They tasted good probably because I stopped there. Or so I thought I would... then later had another two... then decided I should freeze them (way in the back of the freezer) and tossed the box back in the recycle bin, buried it. (I wouldn't be there for lunch or dinner that day, so I wouldn't have to admit I ate them) Well, I'm sure you can guess the rest. I ended up eating three more about 45 minutes later and then finished off the package about another 30 minutes later.

I set out to binge, tried to stop, and ended up finishing the binge the next day. We came home and I unpacked. My husband and daughter were upstairs sleeping and I was heading out to mow the lawn. I uncovered the last package of little Debbie's in the food bag I was unpacking. I ate them. Once again they were good, but I felt the guilt, pain, shame, you name it. The rest of my day was sugar free and healthy eating.

Sunday was full of cravings but I read something in the Food for Thought book I have about feeding the craving will only make it stronger, and staying abstinent will make it grow weaker. I said that several times yesterday and this morning. I can feel the cravings starting to weaken, and my willingness to pick up the tools and stop and pray growing stronger.

Writing and sharing this is a big part of my recovery. I know this. It is hard, humiliating, but it is necessary. I know I can surrender this to you and not be judged.

Thank you for listening. Pray for me today...I need your strength.

July 8, 2003

Yesterday was just awesome. I concentrated on the good and had a wonderful abstinent day. I'm ready to focus on the good for another day, one day at a time, just for today. I need to keep focused on that. I was reading in the new Voices of Recovery book for July 8th it talks about "treats" versus "bondage" regarding sugar (at least that was my take). It was really good to read that. As I read my daily books I mark pages that I find particularly useful for a time when I want to take that first compulsive bite. Now, I just need to commit to picking up the books and reading those pages when I have those cravings.