

HEARTLINE



Greater Rockford Intergroup Newsletter April - June 2003

EDITORS NOTES:

As part of my service, I desire to get a regular newsletter going again. My goal is to get this out on a quarterly basis. I envision this newsletter highlighting several aspects in each issue. I would like to incorporate a personal story about recovery to keep that as the central point. I also see this as an avenue for meetings to highlight events. Also this can be an avenue for GRI (Greater Rockford Intergroup) to get information out. As I have worked on this newsletter, I realize this is a large undertaking, and I need additional help. If you are interested please let me know. This newsletter we have an announcement concerning the next Rockford workshop. Lori has written about her story in recovery. I also included an article from OA handbook on how do group problems get solved.

Rick, Editor in Chief

GRI

Nancy C., Chair

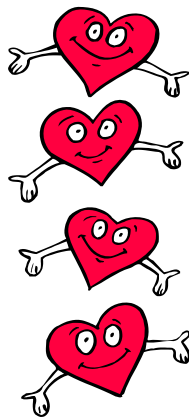
Rick, Vice Chair

Betty Ann, Secretary

Scott, Treasurer, Region V Rep

Joanie, Literature Representative

Cindy B., Mail Representative



God grant us the serenity to
accept the things we can not change
the courage to change the things we can
and the wisdom to know the difference

GROUP CONSCIOUS MEETINGS

With three Rockford groups having had a group conscious this past fall, I want to look at what OA literature has to say about having a group conscious. This article was taken from the OA Handbook for Members, Groups and Intergroups pg 21-22.

•19. How Do Group Problems Get Solved?

•Sometimes a group problem becomes a group blessing as time passes because of the wisdom gained in dealing with the problem. Group problems are usually a sign the group is meeting the challenges of life. They are often evidence of a healthy diversity of opinion among the members. They give us an opportunity to learn how to “practice these principles in all our affairs.”

•Four principles seem to lead away from trouble and toward growth: (1) unity within the group; (2) harmony among the members of the group, other OA groups and the rest of the community; (3) a hearing for all points of view; and (4) understanding that speakers’ talks and pitches are not open to comment or debate. In other words, wholehearted practice of the Twelve traditions.

GROUP CONSCIOUS CONTINUED:

•By “group problems” is meant such common OA questions as: What about special medical problems? What should the group do about “slippers”? About pill takers? About drinking? How can we increase attendance at our meeting? How can we get more volunteers to help with group chores? How can we raise money for more literature? How can we get out from under the rule of old-timers who insist they know what’s best for the group? Why can’t we get more long-timers to share their experience and help solve group problems? Should we celebrate individuals’ OA birthdays, or does this foster an “ego trip”? What can be done about vulgar language and profanity at meetings? Should we accept free meeting space offered by a church? Why can’t we retain newcomers in our group? Should we donate a *Lifeline* subscription to the local library or buy a new coffee pot for the group? Is loyalty to a home group a good thing or not? What can be done about an anonymity-breaker? A promoter of other forms of therapy? Those who insist on pushing their personal religion at meetings? “Thirteenth-

•Stepping”?

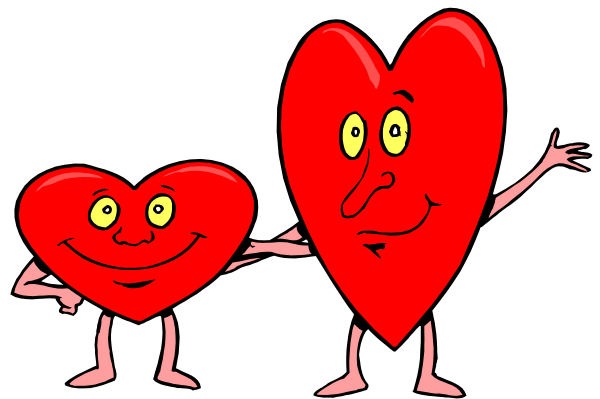
• You will not find the answers here. No one can set down the law for OA, but most groups have faced and solved problems like these and more by applying the Twelve Traditions through the group conscience.

• Often group problems are simply misunderstandings easily threshed out in open discussion. Or they may involve members’ trying to change other members’ behavior or opinions. Perhaps two people mean different things by the same words. Or members may agree on a goal but simply have different opinions on how to attain it.

•Sometimes group (or even Intergroup) problems concern honest disagreement between two sincere, well meaning sets of members. They may be of equally good hearts and intentions, but they feel differently as to which crowd performs certain OA services better, or which methods to use, or which approach to abstinence and sponsoring works best. In most cases, OA’s Traditions and past experiences have guided the way to harmony in such matters, and the result can be even better service than either had dreamed possible.

• No problem has to lead to serious trouble for any group, since OA experience shows that food will, honesty, selflessness and a spirit of love and service will prevail if we make an honest effort to place principles before personalities (Tradition Twelve). A sense of humor, patience, courtesy, willingness to sit still and listen, a sense of fairness, and trust in a Higher Power have been found far more useful than legalistic arguments or personal accusations.

• Along with using the Twelve Traditions, groups have found they can apply some of the ideas from AA found in Bill W.’s “Twelve Concepts for World Service” and *The AA Service Manual*.



THE END OF THE RAINBOW

My name is Lori and I am a compulsive overeater.

I am the youngest of three in a middle class family in a high-class community on the East coast. My older sister is pretty, smart funny, and thin, my older brother, just a boy, who had no time for a little sister, Mom came from an emotionless family, Dad was a functional alcoholic. I was a wallflower, didn't want to rock the boat get into trouble, make anybody mad. I could not get approval from Dad, he loved me the best he knew how (I know that now), mom was there for me, but I didn't know how to accept what she gave to me. I spent my teenage years with low self-esteem, running on sugar and my own will. I didn't get into too much trouble for fear of the wrath of my Dad. I sank deeper and deeper into despair and into my own seclusion with food. I married the first man I dated for any length of time.

As an adult I found myself in a relationship with a man who loved me two wonderful kids, a great house in the country and I was completely miserable. I hated myself, how I looked, how I ate, I hid my true self whoever that was. I would try dieting only to fail. I would eat as I was making dinner for my husband and kids, sit with them, eat, then as I was clearing the table eat what was left on their plates. I would have the "if only's" If only I didn't have to cook for him, If only I didn't have to have treats in the house for the kids, If only I could lose the weight I know I could keep it off..... Well the marriage ended and some of the "if only's" came true and I kept eating compulsively.



I did, at that time, find the Twelve Step Program through some counseling and it was a lifesaver. I sat in counseling for months and the counselor would ask me "How do you feel about that Lori?" And I sat there blankly because I was so filled with food I couldn't feel a thing. At least in groups of people I could say "Yeah, I feel just like that!!" I was so numb I had to have someone else verbalize what I was feeling for years. It got even better when I found OA and you all talked about what I had been doing with food for 2/3 of my life. The vicious cycle of eating and hating myself for it, so eating so more, the compulsive thoughts of food 24 hours a day. Fearing new experiences, my overeating eating being found out, being exposed for the sad person I really was. The awful daily experience with the weight scale being my determining factor if I were to have a good day or bad, the fat clothes and the skinny clothes. The insanity.

I like to say I "dabbled" in OA for the first six months. I knew I had a problem with food but sugar wasn't a problem. I would include sugar in my 3 meals a day. No problem.... Until my complete lunch was sugar items and a non-OA friend called me on it. !!!!@@!!!!!!...Caught....!!!@!!!!!! "Well that's okay I still can do it my self" three months of misery later I was in a OA group, willing to do what it took, going to any lengths. I was lucky I got abstinent quickly but the first three months abstinence was totally out of fear. Fear that I would abuse my body again. I then had to hang on to what you told me to do, work the steps, go to meetings and stay abstinent. I am glad to say today many 24 hours later I am abstinent, a better mom, friend, employee, happily married, a graduate of nursing school, and going to meetings at least once a week. This program is my lifesaver and is what I think about when I get up in the morning and when I go to bed at night. I like my self today; I no longer am compulsive around food. Thank my higher power, Thank you OA.