

November 2015 Writing Exercise – TOOLS

Please share your experience, strength and hope – how do you use the 9 tools in your daily life? Which tool do you use the most? Which tool do you struggle with the most (and why)?

I attend 2 OA meetings a week & special workshops, committee meetings as I can. Read OA/Big Book mornings, noon and before bed. Pray throughout the day. Walk/yoga almost every day (action plan). Report to my sponsor daily my food. Write to/email/text meet with OA members several times daily/weekly and take phone calls. Lots of service at group, intergroup level. I struggle the most with phone calls and anonymity...why? I've never been good on the phone and anonymity still confuses me at times. I write daily from the OA meditation workbooks and I write articles for Lifeline, region and local newsletters. I follow a food plan daily with direction from God and my dietitian.

Writing & literature go together like hand & foot – one goes with the other. Answering the endless questions keeps me abstinent and out of trouble. My phone is my lifeline. I have over 75 contacts and then there's my "Hot 8". My "Hot 8" are people I respect and admire in program. They are a text away when I'm in trouble. Anonymity feels like a freebie – a given I don't need to worry about. My action plan is me doing my program, taking action every day. I am a sponsor and I call a sponsor every day. Thank God!! My food plan is my weakest link. I roughly follow the diabetic food plan with 3-0-1 and nothing in between. Each meal has a carb less than 20g, fruits, vegetable and protein. It is very flexible but makes my sponsor crazy because I don't weigh & measure. Meetings are my happy place – my 'whew' I made it another day, week, month...my rebuild, restock, reload place. I attend 3 meetings a week mostly and look forward to each one.

I use all nine tools. One of them that I use daily is "Plan of Action". After I write my 10th Step, making food plan, pray, then I write down my plan of action. I think about the day ahead, what I need to do, what I think I need to do, and send it to my sponsor. She graciously reads it and makes comments to me. I am an over-planner and usually want to do so much more than is possible in one day. This keeps my "busyness" intact and under God's control. So grateful for this tool!

I don't use any of the tools a lot. My recovery sometimes is like a stack of plates that could fall at any moment if I moved them. If I stay still, it is fine. I am a bad writer, a below average sponsor and I don't make outreach calls. I go to 2 or 3 meetings per week and all of my literature is underlined cover to cover, but I wouldn't say I understood all of it. Did I mention I am a bad writer?

I open the day with literature – I look forward to what each of the 5 meditation books I use has to say to me each day. Before breakfast I read then pray and meditate. Instead of the

November 2015 Writing Exercise – TOOLS

telephone I frequently use email – I email meditations with commentary to 4 others at least once a week – 3 of whom are in OA. I have a food plan as I am diabetic and I weight, measure and journal what I eat. Only under great stress do I write – however when I do it provides great relief. I think the step I forget to do is the 10th step at the close of day. I use literature the most. I do an action plan every night, to cover what I will do the next day. I attend 2 meetings a week and am secretary/treasurer for one of them. I attend Intergroup as a rep (service). Finally, I have one sponsee.

I struggle with using the tools, just because I am stubborn and think I know better. I think that it is easiest for me to use the phone when I am struggling or succeeding. My worst is writing because I don't want to see it in black and white.

How do I use the tools? I use the tools gratefully. I need to call my sponsor – that happens at a specific time Monday – Friday. I sponsor. That means texts and emails. I sometimes text several times to encourage a struggling sponsee. I read literature every morning. Literature helps me remember I am a compulsive overeater. As I write, I remember how helpful it is to write my food down when I am out of my routine. I can think I haven't eaten right after eating a meal. Anonymity is huge. Having been in program a long time I need to remember I am just another compulsive overeater. I also need to remember to focus on myself and not what or who someone is or does. Each person has the freedom to be themselves. Thank you for allowing me that same freedom.

I always have a food plan. I sponsor several people. I connect with my sponsors at least 4-5 times a week. I am currently working the steps with a sponsor in another program. I pray and meditate daily. I go to several meetings a week. I use the phone the most – it helps “talk me down” – get honest and connect. I guess I have an action plan – I sort of know what I going to do each day. My most difficult tool is writing – yet it's the most honest. I give service by leading meetings, sharing, and have been both a regional & WSO rep. I try to encourage people to be enthusiastic about the work we are doing.

I address steps 1-3 daily in my morning quiet time and as I make contact with my sponsor regarding food and action plans for the day. I am powerless, but my HP takes care of these issues for me if I let Him. Steps 4-9 are steps I work on occasion depending upon how my life is working, the state of my serenity and spiritual life. Steps 10-12 are worked on a daily basis by writing in my journal and addressing any issues or emotions needing step work. Praying and meditation are a big part of this process and Step 12 is addressed in some form every day to make sure my recovery stays by giving it away.

Writing – I used to write more. I don't know why I stopped. I had books & books I'd fill each year. I think I stopped because I spend more time in prayer than I used to. I don't need to fill a

November 2015 Writing Exercise – TOOLS

book any longer. I just fill my God box. Sponsorship – I use my sponsor now more than I used to. My sponsor is my link to sanity when insanity is pulling at me. The same goes for the telephone. I use the telephone now more than ever. I love texting prayers to sponsees/sponsors. I love having the fellowship in my hip pocket wherever I go. My food plan/plan of eating is probably the most important tool. I would have nothing/I have nothing without my food plan. Without abstinence I do not pray, I do not reach out to others. No one wants to interact with me and my insanity either!

I use all the tools. Writing was the last I began to use and probably is still the last. I use email first thing in the morning. My morning routine includes reading OA literature and sometimes answering the questions that go with Voices or For Today. I talk with my sponsor and sponsees most days.

Well, everyday I follow my food plan. Call my sponsor, I do writing on step work and a daily gratitude list. The gratitude list is texted to 10 different program members. I attend at least 3 OA meetings a week and chair usually one. My action plan is more weekly, what meetings to attend, day for menu planning & shopping. I do prep lunch and snack for work the night before. Also reach out by phone and or texting to members not receiving my gratitude list.

I use writing in my daily inventory and also throughout the day and in my step work in the OA workbook. It is a lifesaver. I go to 2 OA meetings a week. I have begun making phone calls each day, when I admitted my powerlessness over the isolation I was feeling. It gives my life meaning to connect with fellow compulsive overeaters. That is the hardest tool for me to use. And when I don't make phone calls, my spirituality suffers. All the other tools I can use but for me I have to use all of them to be doing my HP's will. I read literature, do service, I have a sponsor and am identifying myself as a sponsor.

The first tool was meetings – that's where I first received the hope that there was a solution for me. Then abstinence was what I received after I got a sponsor on my first day. Then the telephone was necessary for me to contact my sponsor daily. Although the telephone is one of the most difficult. Prayer is my most often used along with the steps – these I use most often. Plan of eating – daily.

A food plan defines my day, gives it structure. Not only am I freed from indecision, but it gives me peace of mind. I plan my actions around the steps it takes to stay faithful to the plan. How much time will it take to prepare my meals? Which activities need to be scheduled differently so that I may have my meals at regular times? Do I need to shop for groceries to ensure I have what I need? So it is the stepping-off point for my action plan.

Phone calls is the tool I use the most. I start every day with calls from sponsees. Each person's needs are individual but it is a great way to start a day in recovery. Meetings are a critical part

November 2015 Writing Exercise – TOOLS

of my recovery. I need time to be face to face with other people who share my compulsion. I gather strength and hope from their message. I struggle most with writing. I converse with God all day in my head but I am reluctant to take up pen and paper and practice the art of 2-way prayer. That is one area where I have a great need for willingness and following through.

Literature – I read every day from the literature and from certain prayers. It helps me keep focused on program. I have Big Book studies for most of my meeting which really help me keep things in perspective. Prayer/meditation – do every morning. If I don't take time to connect with God (my HP) I feel it. It's like when you are sick and stay in your PJs all day, etc. By the end of the day you feel all gross. It the same. I need this and I don't know how I used to do without it. Meetings – connecting with others helps me not to feel alone in life and in this disease. The fellowship gives me new knowledge as well as insight. (Sorry I didn't get time to finish but if the above could be useful, please use it.)

I struggle most with using the tool of telephone. I have it that I don't have the time. The tool of writing works best for me. I use it when I am in angst about anything that is making me irritable and/or discontent. It often brings me to information about myself and why this issue is causing me these feelings. This is very important as it is these feelings that cause me to want to eat & retreat from my fellows in OA and the rest of the world. Meetings are my most favorite as I so learn and am impacted by the sharing of others. Meetings also bring me into realizing why OA works for me and others. I hear my higher power speak clearly through others. Literature gets me into touch with the relevance and power of the sharing of others. Food plan gives clarity and accountability to my program of recovery. Plan of action again gives my program a clear road.

Three meetings a week/a fourth to pass info or cover a missed meeting. Phone list – OA in my cell phone. Intergroup rep & IG treasurer. Lifelines for meetings – distribute. Inventory of literature (to put mass order together). "Who you see here, what you hear here, when you leave here, let it stay here."