



Freedom from the Fear in Overeaters Anonymous

From the onslaught of news to the empty shelves at the grocery store, I am reminded these days that I am not in control. With that reminder comes The Fear. I have been dipping in and out of fear a lot lately. It is a familiar feeling that used to paralyze me. But today is different. I'm no longer consumed by the fear. These days are different because of OA. In OA, I can experience freedom from the worry and anxiety.

When I was in my disease, I was imprisoned by the fear. Imprisoned because I wouldn't let myself feel it. Sit with it. Instead, I kept stuffing it down with the food. I was terrified of the fear. I thought it would swallow me up or kill me or keep going on and on and never end. So I stuffed it down, trying to get rid of it. But that never worked.

In OA, I learned Steps and tools to deal with the fear so I am no longer a slave to it or to any of my

feelings. I can sit with them. Deal with them. Let them go.

Now when I'm in the fear, I am free, to get my quiet time, plug in and ask God to take away my anxiety. Turn it over to Him to handle. I can ask for his protection and to show me how He would have me be in this moment.

Now when I'm in the fear, I am free to reach out and call a fellow OA'er. I can express my angst, but also my gratitude for the ability to reach out to another. My anxiety is eased as I remember that I am not alone, and when I reach out, someone is there.

Now when I'm in the fear, I am free to call into a meeting and hear others' experience, strength, and hope, to connect, instead of staying in my worry and isolation.

Now when I'm in the fear, I am free to do a 10th Step, to get at what's underneath the anxiety. Am I not trusting God to take care of me? Am I afraid of losing something or someone I think I can't live without? What's my part in the fear? Often, it is my selfishness or self-absorption. Yet once I uncover that, then share it, I can reach out to another, get my mind off myself and my fear. Reaching out and doing service is a sure-fire way to get rid of my dread or worry.

I am so grateful for these tools, these Steps, and this program. What a miracle that I'm not stuffing down my feelings with food. What a miracle that in OA I finally have freedom from the fear.

~Anonymous



**OVEREATERS
ANONYMOUS®**
MILWAUKEE AREA INTERGROUP
Serving Eastern Wisconsin

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Serving Eastern Wisconsin

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Board of Directors

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MAI News Available Via Email

Want to receive free, monthly MAI news via email? Send an email to emailblast@oamilwaukee.org with "subscribe" in Subject to receive our "News You Can Use." Include your first name, last initial, and home meeting.

Your email address will never be distributed nor seen by other people receiving the mailings.

MAI Monthly Meetings

Third Monday of every month, 6:30-8:00 p.m.
Martin Luther Lutheran Church
9235 W. Bluemound Road, Milwaukee, WI 53226
Each member group can have two voting representatives. All OA members are welcome.

OA World Service oa.org

Free OA podcasts featuring OA speakers: oa.org/podcasts/. A podcast is a radio-type show you can download from the Internet to your computer.

A link also is available at this site to get World Service Office (WSO) information.

Spanish OA Website Espanol.@oa.org

French OA Website Francais.@oa.org

Region 5 region5oa.org

Serving Midwest US and Canada

Cocoon Submissions

We want your stories of recovery, poems and pictures, that share your experience, strength, and hope!

| Issue | Deadline | Topic |
|-------------|----------|---|
| 3rd Quarter | June 13 | What We Were Like; What We Are Like Now |

Send to cocooneditor@oamilwaukee.org or OAMAI, Attn: Cocoon Editor, PO Box 270054, Milwaukee, WI 53227.

Editor: Louise V.

Editorial Policy

Out of the Cocoon is the *quarterly* newsletter of the Milwaukee Area Intergroup of Overeaters Anonymous, Inc. We welcome OA-related contributions from members. Material cannot be returned, nor can payment be made. All submissions must be signed; names will be withheld upon request. The editor reserves the right to make editorial changes and to refuse any article not meeting the editorial policy or that breaks any traditions. Articles may not appear in the quarter of submission. Other OA groups may reprint articles without permission as long as credit is given. The opinions expressed herein are those of the writers, and not of the Intergroup or OA as a whole.

Seeking a Sponsor?

The MAI Twelfth-Step-Within Committee maintains a list of available sponsors and temporary sponsors so newcomers and those still suffering can get direction and support. If you need help finding a sponsor, email 12th-stepwithin@oamilwaukee.org or call 414-259-0640 and leave a message. Provide your contact information, type of sponsor you're seeking (i.e. food, step, temporary, etc.), and any other specific needs.

Available to Sponsor?

Please add your name and phone number to the list so you can help another member. Indicate type of sponsor you are willing to be (see above for ideas) and time of day you are available.

Endless Freedoms in Overeaters Anonymous

In my disease, I was a prisoner to the compulsive eating, the isolation, the insanity. Since joining OA, I've experienced endless freedoms. I have freedom...

- from compulsive eating
- from negative thinking
- from feeling different
- from feeling disconnected
- from feeling hopeless
- from the need to be right
- from the need to be first
- from the need to look good
- from self-absorption
- from resentment
- from worry
- from people-pleasing
- from fear of getting to know myself
- from perfectionism in myself, in others
- from fault finding
- from what others think of me
- to let go my expectations of others
- to stop fighting anyone or anything
- to let unhealthy relationships go
- from trying to control myself
- from trying to control others
- from thinking I'm unlovable
- from thinking I'm not enough
- to let go of my past
- from thinking I can do this on my own
- from trying to be someone I'm not
- to be physically healthy
- to be emotionally healthy
- to respond versus react
- to begin living - take life as it comes
- to choose acceptance
- to choose peace
- to try new relationships, new possibilities
- to enjoy people instead of food
- to choose gratitude
- to be hopeful
- to choose an HP/God of my own understanding
- to believe God loves me
- to believe in a positive future
- to trust others
- to trust myself
- to learn who I am as my authentic self
- to strive for humility
- to make mistakes
- to say "I don't know"
- to feel all my emotions
- to take action
- to choose honesty
- to choose willingness
- to choose love

~Anonymous



Third Quarter 2020 Theme

The theme for the third quarter 2020 *Cocoon* is "What We Were Like Before; What We Are Like Now." Send in your stories reflecting what you used to be like before OA and what you are like now. How has your life has changed for the better now that you've found OA?

Deadline: Saturday, June 13, 2020.

Gratitude for My Crystal Clear Character Defects

Here I am, half laying, half sitting on my couch, bundled in blankets. A classic case of the flu is kicking my butt - fever, sore throat, cough, headache, chills, etc. I could tell it was coming on for the past few days and yesterday it was in full swing. But, as sick as I was, I decided to wash clothes. I wanted the virus out of all the clothes, blankets, and pillows.

The washer and dryer are communal to the four tenants in my building so once I had ownership I did not want to let it go until I was done. I washed about 7 loads; two flights up and two flights down. Every time I walked down the stairs (slowly and gingerly so as not to fall) and up again, I told myself how good I was to be doing this when I felt so crappy. I wanted someone to call me so I could have them hear how raspy my voice was and to “wow” them with my “hard work” while sick. I wanted the sympathy. I wanted the, “Oh you poor thing.” I wanted the accolades for all I was doing. I was sitting in the character defect of martyrdom.

The good thing about this realization is that I DID realize it! It was crystal clear. DAMN! So what next?

I remember one of the questions in the OA workbooks, “What does the character defect do TO me, and what does the character defect do FOR me. What I found it does TO me is keeps me in my head. It keeps me isolated. The thought that I am “better” than others for all I was doing, distances me from my fellows.

What it does FOR me is it allows me to wallow in self-pity. This is a familiar place for me; a cozy blanket. I feel very comfortable in this place. It allows me to escape life.

Next steps? I told myself how lucky I was to only have the flu; people are dying from diseases every day. Some people have chronic illnesses, knowing they will never feel better. That helped for a while.

I realized I could have prayed to have the character defect removed. Why didn't I? Was I just too comfortable in this safe, warm haven?

AA's Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions gives a very gentle response to this dilemma. “Looking again at those defects we are still unwilling to give up, we ought to erase the hard and fast lines that we have drawn. Perhaps we will be obliged in some cases to still say, “This I cannot give up yet...,” but we should not say to ourselves, “This I will never give up!”

So as I half lay and half sit on the couch in my bundle of blankets I am grateful that I was abstinent so I could realize the defect, and grateful that I am not saying, “I will never give this up,” I am saying, “I cannot give this up yet.”

~Mary P.



I Thought I Was Free...But Now in OA, I AM Free

I wasn't free...

When I tried to control my family and friends

I wasn't free

When I played the victim to get attention and sympathy

I wasn't free

When I turned down the social invites to have an evening alone with my binge foods

I wasn't free

When I bought variations of my alcoholic foods, thinking I was still abstinent

I wasn't free

When I frequently interrupted others because my point was more "important"

I wasn't free

When I agreed with my boss to avoid conflict

But in OA, I AM FREE...

When I start the day on my knees, asking HP to be of service today

I am free

When I let go of the need to be right or win that argument with my spouse

I am free

When I offer my opinion at work even though it might differ with my co-worker's

I am free

When I answer the phone call from a fellow OA'er instead of letting it go to voice mail

I am free

When I text an OA member to see how their day is going

I am free

When I do my quiet time first thing in the morning instead of jumping on my phone

I am free

When I maintain my abstinence, ignoring my thought that I can have just one bite

I am free

When I pause and ask HP for guidance when I am irritated with my parent

I am free

When I listen to my girlfriend and **not** try to solve her problem

I am free

When I'm honest with my food sponsor about a slip, versus not telling, because I'm worried what she will think of me

I am free

When I do a good deed without anyone finding out

I am free

When I surrender everything to God, "to live a life beyond my wildest dreams."

~Anonymous



Eating What I Want Isn't Freedom

Eating what I want when I want
Is not freedom

Being good or bad depending on
a number
Is not freedom

Tasting something and needing more
and more
Is not freedom

Following a plan of eating
This is freedom

Talking out a blowup
This is freedom

A hello and a hug at a meeting
This is freedom

~Lynn H.

Just One Bite and I'll Be Free

Just one bite and I'll be free...

from the pain

the fear

the loneliness

the emptiness

the anger

the heartache

Just one bite and I'll be free...

from the sanity

the connection

the protection

the willingness

the honesty

The Love

~Anonymous

