

## Message from the Chair



Welcome to our newly revised Stepping Stone! When the intergroup chose to cease regular publication of our printed newsletter this past spring, the idea was that our website would be our method of providing news and information to our membership. However, some felt that providing a printable newsletter would be of benefit. So, this past month, our webmaster, Chelsea, offered to expand her service commitment to include the development of a monthly page that could be printed for our membership – both those who simply want a hard-copy of information available to them, and perhaps more importantly – for groups to provide to members without computer access. We live in such a technology-driven society that sometimes those of us who work on our laptops, tablets and smartphones forget that some of us do not have access to (or choose not to use) electronic devices. I hope that this will serve the SJIG fellowship and that you enjoy the Stepping Stone. Have a healthy, abstinent Thanksgiving! – *Karen B, Chair SJIG*

## BRIDGES



**Do you remember when the toll over the Tacony-Palmyra Bridge was 25 cents? Well! I remember crossing one day and the Collector told me that the car in front of me paid my toll. For quite a way, I was smiling in my car. I couldn't wait to do the same for a stranger when I again used that bridge.**

I need to remind myself that our OA Program is a bridge from compulsive overeating to sanity. I can choose to show up at meetings to get through more days of abstinence or also spend some minutes after a meeting to listen and chat with another OA, who is struggling. I can sign the "We Care" book or also take a name and phone # out to give an ear to someone on the same road of life I am on.

Bridge tolls and life's problems can get increased. We are blessed with staying abstinent and working the 12 Steps. These can be our EZ PASS to travel our life journeys in a safer way. —*Joan G. - Mount Laurel*

## ABSTINENT THROUGH THE HOLIDAYS:



With the holidays approaching, I'm always reminded of those days when I was actively in my disease and trying to get through the holidays without eating any of those holiday foods. As a food addict and anorexic, I'd obsessively watch others eat, wondering how they could eat all that and not be fat? I never realized that there are people out there who didn't think about food, weight and exercise all day long. I never understood how people could eat ONE sweet and walk away. I never understood why I couldn't until God brought me into the rooms of OA.

As a food addict, it doesn't matter for me if I'm starving myself or eating everything on the table....once I begin doing either, I can't stop. The scary thing is that my disease has gone from eating compulsively in my teens and then flipping to the other side and starving myself in my 20's. The holidays used to be a time of angst and fear for me. I'd worry about the food that would be present, wondering how I'd be able to attend the function and avoid eating anything. I missed out of many enjoyable gatherings because I was too afraid to be near food. I'd isolate, starve and think that I was ok because I wasn't eating that stuff. I'd think that I was ok because I was no longer the fat college girl. I'd think that I was ok because I weighed a certain number. I was never ok until I came to OA and began working the steps and surrendering to God, my Higher Power.

Today, I'm excited about the holidays. I love my weighed and measured abstinent food. I bring it with me to holiday parties when I know that I can't get what I need. If I can get what I need, I still bring my scale. My scale is my "eyes" for me since mine are severely broken. I've been abstinent for a while now and with each passing Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Years Eve, I say "wow, that was a great holiday season." It is great because I have OA in my corner. I have you on my side and I have God's hand in mine.

Here's to a happy, healthy and abstinent Thanksgiving. There is so much to be grateful for....and for me, Thanksgiving is not about the food at all. It's about being with my family and being PRESENT for them. It's about sharing what we're grateful for and being reminded of how good life truly is. Here's to an abstinent and Happy Thanksgiving to us all.

—*LKW*



Step 12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these Steps, we tried to carry this message to compulsive overeaters and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

## Twelfth Step Prayer

Dear God,  
My spiritual awakening continues to unfold. The help I have received I shall pass on and give to others, both in and out of the Fellowship. For this opportunity I am grateful. I pray most humbly to continue walking day by day on the road of spiritual progress. I pray for the inner strength and wisdom to practice the principles of this way of life in all I do and say. I need You, my friends, and the Program every hour of every day. This is a better way to live.



## “Transformation of A Caterpillar”

We have been told that the symbol of Overeaters Anonymous is a “Butterfly”.

It’s a wonderful goal to feel free, look beautiful and be naturally floating and flying in life.

What most of us need to be reminded of is not just that we come in these rooms feeling ugly, slimy, and crawly like caterpillars. We also need to be reminded that caterpillars grow only so much and then must shed its old skin to continue the transformation.

OA 12 Steps and OA 9 Tools have helped me shed so much of my uncomfortable layers of fears and other character defects.

The stages of growth keep coming. Since I love the growth developing in OA all these years, I hold onto the symbol of the “Butterfly”.

My Higher Power holds me during caterpillar days of problems, pain and sadness. Then trying to follow His Will, I allow Him to puff me up to flutter about and get abstinently through my day. – **Anonymous**



Yesterday is history.  
Tomorrow is a mystery.  
**Today is a gift.**  
That is why it is called  
**the present.**

—Anonymous

## Writing is a tool I use daily.

I write a reflection on what I read in the day’s *Voices of Recovery* reading. I do Step work. After the writing that is most useful is the stuff that pours out of my pen when I have a food thought.

I’ve learned that it is impossible for me to hold a pen/pencil, even a crayon, and eat at the same time. The hand not holding the writing tool can’t do something different, so long as I hold the pen, I can’t act out with food. As long as I’m holding it, I might as well use it.

I list the “stuff” that’s bugging me. Sometimes it’s a few words – once in a while, it’s been a few notebooks. (Not all at one sitting.) Eventually, I run out of the stuff.

When I read it over, I get clarity and I see the direction my HP wants me to take – sometimes that just means asking for help as I don’t see a clear path.

At least with the writing, the stuff is out of my head and on paper and I am free of food issues.

**Anonymous – Monday, Marlton SJIG**



## THE TOOL OF WRITING...

Topic: ENTIRE ABSTINENCE

What does entire abstinence mean to you?

### **How It Works for You – SHARE IT!**

*Write on how you define entire abstinence in your program of recovery. Share your experience, strength, and hope so that someone who perhaps isn’t clear on ENTIRE ABSTINENCE might be helped by your experience.*

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(use form to submit stories, upload files, etc.)

# PROMISES IN QUESTION FORM

I remember years ago being told “*The Steps are in order for a reason*”. Until I admit I am powerless (Step 1), how can I consider believing in a Higher Power (Step 2)? And, until I come to believe in Higher Power (Step 2), why would I turn my life and will over to a Higher Power (Step 3)? In meetings, we often read “*the Promises*” (BB pg 83); but, these are the 9<sup>th</sup> Step Promises. There are many Promises throughout the Big Book.

I recently heard, *If you want to know what Step you are on, put the Promises of each Step in question form.* If you answer yes—you’ve completed that Step. If you can’t answer yes—that is the Step you need to work on.

Below are some of *The Promises*:

## Steps One and Two:

- Is it clear to me that I am a compulsive overeater and cannot manage my own life?
- Is it clear that no human power can relieve my compulsive overeating?

## After Step Three:

- Was an effect, even a very great one, felt at once?

## After Step Four:

- Have I begun to comprehend the futility and fatality of my resentments?
- Have I swallowed and digested some big chunks of truth about myself?

## After Step Five:

- Can I look the world in the eye?
- Can I be alone at perfect peace and ease?
- Have I begun to feel the nearness of my Creator?

## Before half-way through Step Nine (the Promises):

- Do I not regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it?
- Do I comprehend the word serenity and do I know peace?
- Have I suddenly realized that God is doing for me what I could not do for myself?

## After Step Nine:

- Have I ceased fighting anything or any one—even food?
- Has sanity returned?
- Do I feel as though I had been placed in a position of neutrality, safe and protected?

## After Step Ten:

- Have I begun to sense the flow of His Spirit into me?
- Have I to some extent become God conscious?

## After Step Eleven:

- Am I surprised how the right answers have come when I have tried to relax, take it easy, and wait for God’s inspiration, intuitive thought, or decision.
- Has what used to be the hunch or the occasional inspiration gradually become a working part of the mind?

## After Step Twelve

- Has life taken on a new meaning?
- Can I do all sorts of things compulsive eaters are not supposed to do?
- Have I found release from care, boredom and worry?
- Does life mean something at last?

**Kim G., Mount Holly, NJ**

## Drawing on The Tools....



## THANKSGIVING DAY

*“The celebrations of this day will be over at midnight, and tomorrow I will wake up glad to be alive and abstinent.” — For Today, p. 151*

A holiday, a birthday, a wedding; these events roll around and allow me to reach for the tools the program has lovingly handed me. I start my day asking the God of my understanding for help. I’ve learned to pick up the phone, and kind words receive me on the other end. They gently remind me of the pain I thought would grip me forever and of the most important thing I will do today: keep my abstinence. Gratefulness envelops me, I say a quiet thank-you, and go through my day. When I lay my head down, gratitude lulls me to sleep.





# SJIG OA Announcements

Visit SJIG Events page for more details: <http://oa-southjersey.org/events/>

- 11/7-9 /2014:** Region 7 Convention; Gettysburg, PA
- 11/15/2014:** I.D.E.A. Day 2014 -- Hope Church – 10am-12noon
- 11/27/2014:** Gratitude Meeting – THANKSGIVING DAY -- JFK Cherry Hill, 9am-10am
- 12/06/2014:** Next Intergroup Meeting – Saturday – 10am-12noon

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### *The Stepping Stone* Contributions & Ideas

Please submit your contributions and ideas for content by the 20th of every month to:

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