

This Newsletter is hosted by:  
Thursday Noon SLO Group  
Great Job Everybody!!

## A New Year — A New YOU??

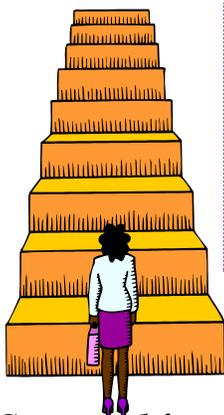
“Year’s end is neither an end nor a beginning, but going on with all the wisdom that experience can install in us.” Hal Borland  
(from “For Today” — Jan 1)

“Whether it is the beginning of a new year or a new month, week or day, it’s tempting to make resolutions, to swear off, to promise to reform. Before OA, I did not know that these pledges were misguided attempts to be in control, to try yet again to make a normal eater out of myself. Do I want abstinence with peace of mind? Have I been able to achieve it on my own? I can admit my powerlessness now or I can wait for another calendar “beginning.” But the best time to give up my will, my ideas, my defects is any time I am ready to grow.” FOR TODAY: “Instead of resolutions, promises and vows, I mark this day as I do all others: by surrendering my will and my life to God. *I give up trying to handle my food and my weight.*”

**UPCOMING WORKSHOP!!!**  
**Sunday February 3, 2019 1:00—4:00 PM**  
**Rancho del Arroyo Clubhouse**  
**2700 Cienaga St., Oceano 93445**

**Speakers share their experiences of hitting bottom, discovering new found power and developing trust by taking action in Steps 1-3**

**Come early to donate lightly used clothing. Participate in our free clothing-swap boutique from 11-1. BYO Lunch.**



*Start taking and keep working the Steps to make 2019 your Best Year Ever!*

Newsletter Host Schedule (I think this is accurate — there were a few changes)		
Jan — SLO Thur Noon	June — MB Tue 7:00 PM	Nov — Oceano Thur 10:30 AM
Feb — MB Sat 1PM	July — AG Mon 10:30 AM	Dec — Santa Maria Sat 9:30 AM
Mar — No host	Aug — Lompoc Wed 5:30 PM	
Apr — SLO Fri 10 AM	Sept — No host	<b>Please send your submittals by the 28th of the month PRIOR to your host month!!</b>
May — AG Wed 6:15 PM	Oct — SLO Tue Noon	

**Thanks one and all for your wonderful contributions to the Newsletter. Remember: If it isn't signed, it's from our Good Friend Anonymous! Get ready to send your stories, thoughts, musings when your home group's month rolls around!**

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# Happiest of all Years EVER — 2019



*“The ending of one year and the beginning of another gives us an opportunity to ‘review and renew.’ May I set my goals for the New Year not as the year-long mark, but at one day at a time. My traditional New Year’s resolutions have been so grandly stated and so soon broken. Let me not weaken my resolve by stretching it to cover ‘forever’-or even one long year. May I reapply it firmly each new day. May I learn not to stamp my past mistakes with the indelible word, ‘forever.’ Instead, may each single day in each New Year be refreshed by my new found hope.” - A Day at a Time, January 1*

Every New Year’s Day, I sit and review the past year. So for 2018, I ponder and answer the following questions: What I did well? Who is better off knowing me? Where was I of service? Where did I grow spiritually? Did I make improvements in personal relationships? Did I learn new lessons or have any insights? Ending my year-end review with: what were my happiest days this year (list at least 3- being specific about what happened that day) & listing what brought me joy and what I am truly grateful for?

Then, I look to the New Year (2019): Does this New Year find me better—a more evolved person? I write down where I would like to improve the manageability/quality of my life by doing specific actions in the following areas: Spiritual, Emotional, Physical (symptoms, environment, body), Social Relationships (becoming more connected to others), Financial, Professional/Business, Play/Fun/Pleasure, and Intellectual/Education. What personal characteristics/patterns I want or need to work on in 2019? Finally, how will I increase my knowledge of and my connection to my Higher Power in the coming year?

I write this all out and then turn it over by putting it in my God Box. Some years, I have pulled it out to review; other years, I have just “Let It Go” surrendering to the process of recovery and trying to live the principles of the program in all my affairs. Remembering, it is “progress not perfection” that I need to strive for--paying special attention to the days that I am especially vulnerable due to being too angry, lonely, hungry, tired, frustrated, and/or sad. Those days, I have to work my program harder and not dwell on mistakes but make amends where needed and *start anew*. Each day or even at any moment, I can start anew — that is the hope and assurance this program gives me.

I have been doing this “Year-End Review” New Year’s ritual for about 35 years, ever since my mother developed this handout for her recovery friends and sponsees. I have summarized it, to share what I have found valuable that aids in my recovery.

*“Instead of resolutions, promises, vows, I mark this day as I do all others: by surrendering, my will and my life to God.” - For Today, January 1.*

Lastly, my only true annual resolution is:

Resolve: *To be gentle, loving and nurturing to myself (and to others) in 2019.*

Nicole L.



Trying to explain the difference with OA-- ie "We are not a diet and calories club" or the core of 12 step work is achieving a "spiritual awakening" through daily contact with a Higher Power that "restores us and keeps us abstinent," is a lifelong "spiritual Path" available to anyone of any faith. We are all inclusive.

I strive for these program goals because I need them for my serenity. Others are often surprised, as I was habitually cynical. I find speaking to another person is just a way to remind myself. I am surprised at how far I've come in understanding the difference and contrast from all the many other weight loss approaches I have tried in my life. I have no trouble seeing OA as my lifelong spiritual path, or that "God is working through others".

To me it is clear that our founder, Bill W. and "friends on the Path" did have "revelations". I'm so happy these teachings now work for and through millions as well. The Program affirms for me that "God" wants us to be "Happy, joyous and free." We are not abandoned, as "prophets" can appear at any meeting of a 12 step group anywhere in the world.

Attaining "A fit spiritual condition" was not something I thought about in practical terms before Program, but through the 12 Steps I've gained appreciation of what it means to be on a spiritual path that enhances my own well-being as well as that of others around me. This makes me so glad too.



### Self- Acceptance and the 12 Steps

In Voices of Recovery p. 308 it states, "There is a tremendous paradox between powerlessness and responsibility.....The phrase is "powerless over food" not "powerless over footwork." **The footwork includes working the 12 Steps.** P. 15 in Voices of Recovery gives an apt description of Steps 5 -7 as they relate to self-acceptance. **"In my Fourth and Fifth Steps I realized what character traits and behaviors had outlived their usefulness in my life. I saw that my old ways of reaching out to the world kept me from reaching my full potential. In Step Six I became willing to let go of whatever stood in the way of my being present to life. I am powerless over fixing myself but I am not helpless. I can pray for the willingness to surrender and allow the natural progression of change to unfold in God's time. I can even enjoy myself in the process. OA has given me back my power. Today I choose to practice unconditional self-acceptance while I relish the mystery of change."**



Part of this change for me has included a growing recognition of my futile efforts to control my life by fixing, trying, comparing, expecting, and judging . Instead I am trying to become willing to listen and learn from the experiences that life and my Higher Power are giving me. I am also trying to be open to each moment – not trying to overly prolong what feels good in my life and rejecting and pushing away whatever is difficult. Life is ideally a flow which I block when I try to take over and control my experiences. When I release control, I become open to the spaciousness, light, and joy in my life.

## Using a Plan of Eating as a Barometer

A plan of eating is one of the tools that OA gives me to work my program for abstinence. For me, this gives me a reference point for learning abstinence. As stated in For Today on p. 12,

**“My food addiction was acquired so I could survive and cope in earlier, painful circumstances. Thus began two myths: First that pain was to be avoided at all costs, and second, that eating would relieve the pain free of charge. Those myths were useful then, but they are insanity now. As I become willing to accept the truth that is revealed in OA, the myths I clung to so desperately lose credibility. I no longer need to be anesthetized; I can stand still and feel my feelings. I don’t think something is wrong if I am not happy every minute.”**

Because my uncomfortable feelings are often hidden by my use of food, my compliance with my plan of eating becomes a useful barometer for indicating when an emotional or physical issue is arising. My non-compliance in the form of overeating or binging bring me teachable moments for approaching those, often hidden, feelings with compassion and curiosity. When a binge occurs there are three phases of it that I can learn from.

First, when the binge is over, I can learn just how high the price is for my body because of the unwelcome physical sensations that I am left with and can learn to meet the resulting emotions of fear, despair, and self-judgment with compassion. I must remember that food is how I took care of myself when I was disconnected from myself and unable to cope.

A second teachable moment is when I find myself in the middle of actually binging. I can try to be aware of what I am running away from while realizing that food will not give me the cessation of feeling that I desperately want. Writing the actual feelings down as they occur can be a very helpful way to learn more about the feelings. Also asking the open-ended question, “What is asking to be seen” or “What am I resisting?” is useful.

The third and most important teachable moment is at the beginning when I feel the need for excess food. Most of the time this happens when my body tightens in reaction to some thought, physical sensation, or social interaction that is causing a beginning unwelcome feeling. At that time I can say “no” to the food but that “no” will be disregarded if I am responding against a behavior without first meeting the feeling with attention and compassion. Without giving attention my “no” will just be an attempt to control or deny what is happening. Accompanied with compassion for the feeling, my “no” becomes about making kind and skillful choices instead of the dominating of an undesired behavior. Besides saying “no” I can also negotiate, or offer options that are more desirable. I can ask the open-ended question “What do I truly need?”

Asking for help is the most basic aspect of working the OA program. In addition to a plan of eating, OA also offers the tools of sponsorship, telephone, writing, literature, action plan and meetings to assist with learning and maintaining abstinence. Most importantly, OA gives me a working relationship with my Higher Power through the 12 Steps. That relationship is most powerfully accessed for me by the use of open-ended questions. I am not trying to answer them – the answers don’t come



from my overactive mind. The intent of these questions is to help me listen to the deep knowing and inner wisdom within me that is working to help me through the opening of a question. The questions that I most need to ask are “What is asking to be seen?”, “How can I give this space to be?”, “How can I bring compassion to this?”, “What am I resisting?”, and “What is it that I truly need?” In this way my compulsive food addiction gives me a powerful way to find my way home to myself and achieve abstinence.

