

We are in a 5 minute meditation. Stay tuned...

April 1

No one can make you feel inferior without your consent.

Eleanor Roosevelt

I could hardly believe my ears when I heard the OA saying, “What people think of me is none of my business.” When your confidence is down around your ankles, thanks to your helplessness over food and fat, self-worth tends to go up and down with the tides of other people’s opinion.

With freedom from compulsive overeating and the return of my self-respect, I understood what the saying meant. Today, I value the good opinion of my fellow humans but, good or bad, what others think cannot diminish the good feelings I have about myself.

For today: The OA program gives me the self-confidence all creative people have. How impoverished the world would be if its original thinkers—its artists, writers, scientists and philosophers—took adverse criticism as a sign of their inferiority and turned to some other line of work!

Optional Question: When I am still what does my loving Higher Power reveal to me about my value?

We are in a 5 minute meditation. Stay tuned...

April 2

The greatest happiness you can have is knowing that you do not necessarily require happiness.

William Saroyan

Dissatisfaction was one of the hallmarks of my compulsive illness. Few things measured up to my expectations, so I found a way to make it up to myself. I used food to give me the illusion of happiness.

What freedom there is in giving up that chase!—to go somewhere, do something without demanding that I be happy. Paradoxically, it is when I go my way with an open mind, free of expectations, that I most often find my heart singing.

For today: What do I need, if not happiness? I need the willingness to take what comes, to get out of my own way, to let go the idea that I should feel good all the time.

Optional Question: In what areas of my life am I chasing "happiness"? What happens when I stop the chase?

We are in a 5 minute meditation. Stay tuned...

April 3

Want is a growing giant whom the coat of have was never large enough to cover.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

My “wants” outran my “haves” in all things, though what I wanted most as a compulsive overeater was to be able to eat what I want when I want it. This illness is a symptom of *want*. What else did I want? More attention? More things? Yes—and more, always more. Whatever I wanted, I thought I should have simply on the strength of wanting it. But the truth is I seldom needed the things I wanted.

I am learning that what my life needs is the elimination of clutter and excess, which take up time and space and energy. If I think I need something, I ask myself, “What will it add to my life?”

For today: The true source of serenity, of good feelings, is not getting what I want, but wanting what I’ve got.

Optional Question: What clutter and excess can I eliminate in my life so I will have more time, space and energy?

We are in a 5 minute meditation. Stay tuned...

April 4

To know and yet think we do not know is the highest attainment. Not to know and yet think we do know is a disease.

Lao-tzu

In the days before I came to Overeaters Anonymous, when I was responsible for running the world, it was unthinkable to admit I didn't have answers for everything. The three least used words in my vocabulary were "I don't know."

What a relief to leave the job of directing the universe to God. With my disease of food addiction arrested one day at a time, I have the courage and humility to say, "I don't know."

For today: May I have the wisdom to remain teachable.

Optional Question: Where in my life am I ready to say "I do not know" and listen for God's answers?

We are in a 5 minute meditation. Stay tuned...

April 5

...the more total our surrender, the more fully realized our freedom from food obsession.

Overeaters Anonymous

Surrender. Now, there's a word that stops people cold. Everybody knows that losers surrender; winners keep on fighting. That idea kept me battling my problem of food and fat until it brought me to my knees—and to OA's door. Step one was easy when I finally understood that fighting the problem of compulsive overeating would never in this life relieve me of it.

Proof followed swiftly in the form of abstinence and weight loss with unprecedented peace of mind. In short, sanity. In surrendering I gained what years of struggle could not bring me.

For today: There isn't a single problem in my life, including food obsession, that would not be resolved in direct proportion to my ability to stop fighting it, turn it over to God and know that a solution will come.

Optional Question: What problems can I stop fighting today, turning them over to God instead?

We are in a 5 minute meditation. Stay tuned...

April 6

Our entire life, with our fine moral code and our precious freedom, consists ultimately in accepting ourselves as we are.

Jean Anouilh

What is self-acceptance? Does it mean accepting my good qualities and rejecting others? No. Self-acceptance means taking myself just as I am and liking all of me, with no conditions. I may not like being fat, but that has nothing to do with liking the person that is me. I am not my fat. Nor am I my shyness, or my physical awkwardness, or my straight hair. There is far more to me than any of these characteristics. Even if I were to list every one of my known attributes, it would still not reveal all there is to know about me.

For today: It is not a sign of pride, but humility to know that I am unique and beautiful.

Optional Question: Where am I still unable or unwilling to accept myself as I am?

We are in a 5 minute meditation. Stay tuned...

April 7

A cloak is not made for a single shower of rain.

Italian proverb

OA is as warm and safe as a cloak. I am glad for its protection, and I need it as much now as I did in the beginning, although perhaps not in the same way. When I first found OA, people shared gut feelings and then told me, “Let us love you until you can love yourself.” And I grew; I came to care for myself and to like the person I am.

Have I let complacency creep into my thinking? When I don't feel like going to a meeting, do I tell myself that they don't need me; they'll do fine without me? At such times, I remember what it is like to be a compulsive overeater with no idea that the recovery I have today is possible. Will I be there when such a person needs to see a miracle like the ones that walked and talked at my first meeting?

For today: How can I best help another compulsive overeater? By going to the meeting, whether I feel like it or not.

Optional Question: How can I carry the OA message today?

We are in a 5 minute meditation. Stay tuned...

April 8

To win without risk is to triumph without glory.

Pierre Corneille

Never risking is never growing beyond fear or ridding myself of it. To explore a cave, confront a friend, dial a number, ask for a raise, change jobs or just say No—all of these can be acts of heroism, leaps into freedom. To do what others expect, so they'll love me, is to play it safe. To throw imagination into the ring is an act of courage.

It is not easy to risk failure in plain view of those who wait smugly on the sidelines. To be thought foolish or insane could well start an avalanche of negative self-judgments. But as I grow, I become more willing to venture out of my safe cocoon.

For today: I have the strength to walk through my fears, to take a chance on a new way of life.

Optional Question: What fears can I walk through?

What risk can I take to become the person I would like to be?

We are in a 5 minute meditation. Stay tuned...

April 9

Always shun whatever may make you angry.

Publilius Syrus

What is it that makes me angry? Life is what it is; there are causes and effects, many of which I am not aware. Do I rage against the tide and the moon? No. I accept them as they are, knowing I cannot change them.

But neither can I change people. So why rage at them—and at situations that are beyond my control? There is a better choice. I can consider the circumstances a natural part of life that can be dealt with calmly and rationally; and I can then express my feelings in accordance with that view.

For today: To the extent that I can accept my own and others' shortcomings, I can be free of anger.

Optional Question: Which people, places and things still cause me anger? What do I need to accept to be free of anger?

We are in a 5 minute meditation. Stay tuned...

April 10

Time ripens all things.

No man's born wise.

Miguel de Cervantes

Patience does not come easily to the obsessive/compulsive person. I have a tendency to want results *now*; never mind the need to acquire experience.

Today I follow a path that enriches my life with experience—a path that leads me through feelings that once were too painful to contemplate, and delivers me right side up, trudging forward on my own two feet. As I progress, I have a sharpened awareness of the suffering of others, and I can offer help that is based on honest experience.

When I feel impatient and want to hurry on with growth, to have defects removed before their time, I know that I have more to learn. Everything is in God's time.

For today: My Higher Power offers me a way to live free of the obsession with food. I am willing to do today's footwork and wait for the results.

Optional Question: When feelings of impatience strike, how do I engage God to help me cope?

We are in a 5 minute meditation. Stay tuned...

April 11

*And this is the noble truth of the arising of sorrow.
It arises from craving...*

*And this is the noble truth of the stopping of
sorrow. It is the complete stopping of that craving
... being emancipated from it.*

The Pali Canon

“The complete stopping of that craving ...” How aptly that describes recovery in the twelve-step program.

Recovery is not resisting the craving; it is being *free* of it. The process may be a long or relatively short one, but until I experience that emancipation I must act on faith. I willingly and gratefully follow the suggestions of those whose craving has been arrested and who live in the grace of recovery.

For today: My disease—the craving for excess food—has beaten me. But it is no match for the combined forces of my Higher Power, the OA Fellowship and my desire to stop.

Optional Question: What recovery suggestions will I practice today to achieve the freedom of having my cravings arrested?

We are in a 5 minute meditation. Stay tuned...

April 12

*Blind and naked ignorance Delivers brawling
judgement, unashamed on all things all day long.*

Alfred Lord Tennyson

So you have a problem? You're tired? Have a headache? Need more money? I had the answers. Go to sleep. Take an aspirin. Work harder. Sweet solutions you could not have figured out. There is little sensitivity to others in self-centeredness. Today I talk less and listen more, and even allow silence in the air. When someone asks a question now I can say, "I do not know." With those words comes the relief of realizing that answers are not a measure of my worth. That is self-worth where it counts the most.

For today: I listen to another's problems with sensitivity, but I share only my experience, remembering that what is good for me is not always good for someone else.

Optional Question: What opportunities might I take today to listen with sensitivity, sharing only my experience, strength and hope?

We are in a 5 minute meditation. Stay tuned...

April 13

We are all dangerous, til our fears grow thoughtful.

John Ciardi

I can hold onto fear that serves the purpose of keeping compulsion alive, or I can turn my life—one moment at a time—over to my Higher Power. Does that thought provoke a tremor of anxiety? Fear keeps me locked into self-will. My fears may not make the headlines or be a threat to others, but compulsive overeating is a killing disease—slow, patient, agonizing. Yes, I want more to be revealed to me, so I may uncover the nameless terrors and put them in the healing light of my Higher Power.

The fears that clamp my being into compulsion fall by the wayside as I open my heart to God.

For today: I can find instructions for dealing with my fears in the twelve steps. For details, I refer to the AA and OA literature.

Optional Question: What OA literature will I use today to help me walk through my fears?

We are in a 5 minute meditation. Stay tuned...

April 14

*There is no ache more
Deadly than the striving to be oneself.*

Yevgeniy Vinokurov

I want to be myself, but what is myself? It is being my own person, not the person for another, all the time smiling, joining in, going along and not wanting to at all. That is not being my own person.

Some days I do not know much about myself, but I am aware of my efforts to find out, to grow. I know that growth has the power of a blade of grass pushing through a crack in cement. I also know that growth comes on its own terms and in its own time. I will be patient. There is nothing else to do.

For today: To be myself is to say what I mean, make decisions without fear, and give up pleasing people just to gain approval.

Optional Question: When or with whom do I find it hard to be myself, be decisive, or say what I mean? Why am I having these difficulties in giving up people-pleasing?

We are in a 5 minute meditation. Stay tuned...

April 15

*“Hope” is the thing with feathers—That perches in
the soul—And sings the tune without the words
—And never stops—at all—*

Emily Dickinson

A “hopeless compulsive overeater” is the way I described myself when I came to OA. I was sure nothing could save me. Today I know that no one is without hope. Indeed, the best hope is in the very admission of hopelessness. There may seem little chance of realizing my hopes but, far from killing them, that dim prospect gives them new life.

I once thought that if I hoped for something I had to pursue it frantically. That’s not the OA way. Going on about my business, doing one small necessary chore at a time, and letting my Higher Power take care of the rest—that’s the **OA** way.

For today: I admit I can do very little about my fears, my concerns and my hopes. But I can—and do—turn them over to God.

Optional Question: What fears, concerns, and hopes will I turn over to God today?

We are in a 5 minute meditation. Stay tuned...

April 16

Nothing in all the world is more dangerous than sincere ignorance and conscientious stupidity.

Martin Luther King

I sometimes meet people, even in OA, who in their eagerness to help, offer suggestions that are not right for me. But I no longer need to act on questionable advice merely to avoid offending someone. I am not in this program to play the old game of people-pleasing. I know, above all else, that my recovery comes before anything and anyone; that this is a right and necessary concern.

I listen graciously to all who offer help, but I follow the simple instructions of the twelve-step program and I keep my eyes and ears open for a sponsor whose primary concern will be to help me find what works for me.

For today: Do the strengths of those OAs who have what I want correspond with my needs?

Optional Question: When I seek assistance, do I choose carefully whom I will ask for help, or do I consult so many people that I am more confused than when I started?

We are in a 5 minute meditation. Stay tuned...

April 17

They do not love who do not show their love.

William Shakespeare

Do I hug fellow OAs and say I love them, but have no time for them between meetings? It is easy to say the words—and mean them—but words are not enough. Love is shown in action: by caring, doing, remembering, listening. Love is being strong enough to put one's own problems aside to be of use to another. Love cannot flourish in the presence of obsession; there is no room. Romantic songs notwithstanding, it takes emotional maturity to be capable of showing consistent, enduring love.

For today: As I practice the principles of this program, my capacity for love expands.

Optional Question: What actions will I take today to show my love for others?

We are in a 5 minute meditation. Stay tuned...

April 18

Never can true courage dwell with them Who playing tricks with conscience, dare not look at their own vices.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

A twisting of fact, a wrong committed by word or deed soon erode the spirit. I may rationalize, “That’s the way life is; everybody does it.” But it is *my* wrongdoing, and therefore my peace of mind that is at stake, not “everybody’s.”

Is it an unrealistic expectation to try to square things with my conscience? No. The twelve-step program promises to heal those who are ailing spiritually. Because I want that healing, I follow the simple instructions and work as diligently as I can at practicing “these principles in all my affairs.”

For today: I choose to speak and act in accordance with the twelve-step program to the best of my ability.

Optional Question: Where have I acted badly or dishonestly, causing me to lose my peace of mind?

We are in a 5 minute meditation. Stay tuned...

April 19

Pride is the mask of one's own faults.

Hebrew proverb

Pride was my protection; it kept me from seeing myself as I was. But my refusal to look at my defects also kept me from accepting myself.

Does pride still stand in the way of my recovery? Is there a righteousness in me that says, "Do it my way"? Today, I do not take credit for my abstinence. I do not criticize friends, colleagues, family members and fellow OAs for doing things differently from the way I do them. Today I see self-righteousness as a form of phony respectability—a wall behind which glaring defects can hide.

For today: How grateful I am that OA gives me the understanding and support I need to uncover my faults.

Optional Question: How does pride stand in the way of my recovery today?

We are in a 5 minute meditation. Stay tuned...

April 20

*Not in the clamor of the crowded street
Not in the shouts and plaudits of the throng,
But in ourselves, are triumph and defeat.*

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

There is no greater triumph than feeling good about myself—not because of acquisitions or recognition, but because I have come to like myself, to accept and feel at peace with myself.

It is for this reason that many members of OA say they are grateful to be compulsive overeaters. They have passed from the defeat of incurable illness to an inner tranquility that is entirely independent of any outside condition.

Beside such a triumph, all the achievements and possessions of a lifetime pale to insignificance.

For today: I have at least one hour of free time in which to take one more step toward recovery.

Optional Question: Which parts of myself do I struggle to accept and what can I do about it?

We are in a 5 minute meditation. Stay tuned...

April 21

Man cannot live without self-control.

Isaac Bashevis Singer

As one who had lost control of my eating, I marveled at the self-control of others.

Today, abstinent by the grace of God, I gratefully join in the laughter when someone in the group defines a normal eater as “a person who can eat just one cookie.”

I no longer need to learn the “secret” of such self-control. It is more than enough to know that, one day at a time, I can continue to surrender my lack of control to God and receive in return the freedom to enjoy all the good things of life, in moderation.

For today: I readily admit I have no self-control when it comes to eating. God can and does, however, do for me what I cannot do for myself.

Optional Question: While in my disease, how did I demonstrate that I had no self-control when it came to eating?

We are in a 5 minute meditation. Stay tuned...

April 22

Every situation—nay, every moment—is of infinite worth; for it is the representative of a whole eternity.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

NOW never counted for much in my life of compulsive overeating. I rejected the idea that the present moment represented eternity, or that the way I lived—anesthetizing myself with food—would never change unless I understood that NOW was all I had or ever would have.

The twelve-step program of recovery is the most now-oriented set of ideas I have ever encountered. What I did yesterday—how good or how bad I was, how successful or unsuccessful, how fat or how thin—has no reality today except in my mind. Following the directions of the steps, I clear my mind of the debris of the past, leaving myself free to give all my attention, energy and love to the present moment—which represents eternity.

For today: The “time of my life” is NOW.

Optional Question: What can I do today to clear my mind of the past and fantasies of the future so I may have the time of my life right now?

We are in a 5 minute meditation. Stay tuned...

April 23

*Grief drives men into habits of serious reflection,
sharpens the understanding and softens the heart.*

John Adams

If I allow it to pass through my life without trying to change it or escape from it, grief will leave me a more finished person. The problem is non-acceptance. My compulsive overeating mind says, “No! No! I can’t bear it. Change it! Fix it! Make it better.” Round I go, giving myself no peace until, finally, I stand still and let myself feel the pain.

Accepting whatever comes—the sorrow as well as the joy—without letting it divert me from doing God’s will as I understand it, is what this program is all about. It is recovery.

For today: I can learn much that is of value from grief by not running away into the food.

Optional Question: What have I learned of value by not running from grief into the food?

We are in a 5 minute meditation. Stay tuned...

April 24

Solitude is bearable only with God.

Andre Gide

I can keep busy, work hard to keep solitude at bay. There comes a time, however, when I am alone with myself. When I feel the presence of my Higher Power, I let my thoughts wander into shadowy crevices, unafraid, and I learn much that I did not know before. I experience truths such as, “Fear has been a fact of my life.” Felt as a fact, it no longer seeps into every facet of my existence, and I am no longer its victim. Without solitude, I would not have seen that truth. Without the company of my Higher Power, I could not venture into solitude, a place devoid of distraction, where I am face to face with myself.

For today: In conscious contact with God, I easily face what I cannot bear to look at otherwise.

Optional Question: What struggle can I bring into quiet, conscious contact with God today?

We are in a 5 minute meditation. Stay tuned...

April 25

We honor ourselves and our friends when we can tell them how we feel.

Theodore Isaac Rubin

Expressing my feelings, especially the negative ones, does not come easily. I want people to like me. I prefer to please rather than anger or upset a friend. There are some things, however, that are not worth the price I have to pay for them.

Like all progress, willingness is all it takes to learn how to deal with emotions such as anger in a way that harms neither me nor others. By consciously *feeling* my anger, rather than acting as if it isn't there, I am actually expressing it, even if only to myself. From this beginning, I can go on to learn how to express my true feelings to others.

For today: Being honest and open with friends and family is a sign of growth.

Optional Question: What are some examples of expressing my true feelings. and what are the results of doing so?

We are in a 5 minute meditation. Stay tuned...

April 26

Doubt is part of all religion. All the religious thinkers were doubters.

Isaac Bashevis Singer

Sometimes I have trouble believing what is in front of my eyes, let alone what I can't see. Though I no longer doubt my Higher Power, I have periods when I feel its remoteness. Through the pain and fear of these episodes, my faith in the reality of God in my life has grown stronger. However bleak the "dry spell" I am passing through, I know that I have not been abandoned. The grace that saved me before is still there and will be revealed in God's time, not as a result of anything I do or fail to do.

For today: As always, I remain abstinent, accepting things as they are and reaffirming that I have placed my life in God's hands.

Optional Question: What happens when I find the strength to be still and accept where I am today?

We are in a 5 minute meditation. Stay tuned...

April 27

The foundations which we would dig about and find are within us, like the Kingdom of Heaven, rather than without.

Samuel Butler

My resources are within. If I stand still, and don't panic, they will come to me. Terror may strike and I can live with it, going on about what I am doing. I do not have to act on every thought; feelings need not paralyze me. Each time I do what I have to do, I become stronger. When I face indecision, I ask God for an intuitive thought, a direction.

It is inspiring to realize that, apart from nature, all that is good and beautiful in this world has come from human inventions and discoveries.

What solutions are within me?

For today: To find my own strengths, I put aside the rigid ideas and prejudices that limit my thinking.

Optional Question: When I face indecision, what process do I follow with the help of my Higher Power that allows me to seek solutions from within?

We are in a 5 minute meditation. Stay tuned...

April 28

The first test of a truly great man is his humility.

John Ruskin

Great people do not brag about their successes and possessions, call presidents by their first names or make it known that they live in the best part of town. On the contrary, they often drive small cars, make just enough money to live on and prefer listening to talking. Great individuals are in a state of complete freedom from themselves; their character defects do not control them. They seem to live entirely in the now, giving full attention and energy to the present moment.

For today: Humility is trying to do God's will as I see it, to the best of my ability, at all times, in all places.

Optional Question: How is my pursuit of humility reflected in my actions?

We are in a 5 minute meditation. Stay tuned...

April 29

And do not say, regarding anything, “I am going to do that tomorrow,” but only, “if God will”.

The Koran

It is not easy to put down that insistent self-will. Am I not the captain of my soul, the master of my fate? Yes, certainly; that is one view of it. I “captained” myself right into an obsession with food that wrecked most of my hopes and plans.

Having surrendered that obsession to God, I became free to live as I had hoped and dreamed. That is what “God’s will, not mine” means to me. God’s will frees me from my self-destructive willfulness; it takes nothing good away from me.

For today: I gladly seek God’s will for me, in place of that blind self-will which can so easily lead me to the brink of disaster.

Optional Question: Where can I let go, open my eyes, and gracefully allow God's will to be done?

We are in a 5 minute meditation. Stay tuned...

April 30

Either the human being must suffer and struggle as the price of a more searching vision, or his gaze must be shallow and without intellectual revelation.

Thomas de Quincey

From the pain of compulsive overeating came abstinence; from turmoil, serenity. When I am hurting, I need to hear the words, “This too shall pass.” I remember other struggles and the rewards that came out of them. As Bill W. writes, “Our better understanding is often rooted in the pains of our former follies. . . . In God’s economy, nothing is wasted.”

Pain persists until I give up trying to do things my way. I am grateful for the suffering and struggling that brought me to this understanding. “Let go and let God” is an idea I could never have accepted had I not paid the price exacted by my illness.

For today: I am thankful that the pain of compulsive overeating gave me the vision not to try to change the world or other people or situations or even myself, but to do the footwork and leave change up to my Higher Power.

Optional Question: What price did I pay for my illness?
Why am I now thankful for that pain?