

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

August 1

Outside show is a poor substitute for inner worth.

Aesop

Appearance is not everything, but it does tell the world how I feel about myself. As my days of abstinence increase, my appearance improves.

Before OA, physical attractiveness presented problems I didn't want to deal with. As I practice the steps of the program, these problems diminish. I gain spiritual fitness, mental health and physical wellbeing. Giving one hundred percent of myself to the tasks before me each day, and applying the principles of the program in all my affairs drives out both the obsession with food and the preoccupation with my looks. I lose weight without making it my primary goal.

For today: OA promises me threefold recovery as a result of working the program to the best of my ability. This is the only way I know to attain both outer attractiveness and inner worth.

Question: Which aspects of the program can I invest in more deeply to enhance my recovery?

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August 2

The barb in the arrow of childhood suffering is this: its intense loneliness, its intense ignorance.

Olive Schreiner

One of the paradoxes of life is that, though most of us suffered varying degrees of childhood pain, few know how to spare their own children. We are presented with conflicting opinions about child care. What was thought right a few years ago is no longer in vogue today.

In the Twenties, an undoubtedly well-intentioned behavioral psychologist advocated disciplining babies by not picking them up when they cry. Fortunately, an overwhelming number of mothers never heard of this expert or his theories. In the next two decades researchers revealed what mothers have always known: a baby cries out of vital physical and emotional needs, which are not subject to discipline. To deliberately refuse to respond to a baby's needs is to instill a feeling of rejection that may color all subsequent experiences.

The heart of a mother is absolutely reliable: it tells her to show love by being loving.

For today: The best discipline is love.

Question: How do I show love and kindness to myself and to my fellow OA members?

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

August 3

Your cravings as a human animal do not become a prayer just because it is God whom you must ask to attend to them.

Dag Hammarskjold

What do I pray for? The relief of pain? The satisfaction of my desires, the fulfillment of my every wish? It makes little difference what I pray for because God is in charge; I don't sway God. God gives me what I need, not what I want, answering prayers in surprising ways, giving me solutions to problems I was hardly aware of, removing obsessions and excesses I didn't want to believe I had. God has replaced resentment with serenity, confusion with direction. I never knew what to pray for before, but in taking the first three steps, I sought—and received—a way to live free of the obsession with food.

For today: As I grow accustomed to prayer, it becomes a part of my life. I pray as I am moved to pray, sure that God's love embraces me every time.

Question: What special prayer can I recite or create today?

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

August 4

*Something there is that doesn't love a wall
That wants it down.*

Robert Frost

I try in all ways to be good, kind, helpful—to give people the benefit of my wisdom and advice. This is a wall? It is. True giving of myself requires not advice or helpfulness, but allowing others to be, without trying to change their opinions or protect them from making mistakes. Telling another what to do erects a wall between us. Walls keep us apart. When I am tempted to give advice, I need to practice the discipline of listening, instead. That is real closeness, without barriers.

For today: I freely give to others what this program has given me, remembering that the only authority here is God as each of us understands God.

Question: Which of my relationships would benefit if I listened more and spoke less.

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

August 5

I myself believe that the evidence for God lies primarily in inner personal experiences.

William James

The stories of many OA members disclose that the existence of God became real to them only when they experienced surrender and spiritual awakening in this program. A number of these individuals had always believed in God, and some were active members of religious denominations before coming to OA.

One does not need prior belief, however, to have a spiritual experience. In the OA literature and at meetings, we find atheists and agnostics who describe their surrender of the problem and acceptance of a spiritual solution in the same terms.

Spiritual experience is open to all. If it does not come immediately, be willing to wait in the knowledge that it will come as a result of working the steps.

For today: I believe that this is a program of spiritual recovery and that all I have been able to do thus far is evidence of God as I understand God working in my life.

Question: In what ways can I improve what I am currently doing to enhance my spiritual growth?

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

August 6

When the student is ready, the teacher appears.

Author unknown

Overeaters Anonymous appeared in my life when I was ready for it. I was not spiritually teachable until my illness forced me to look in that direction. It was all that was left; no human power could relieve my compulsion.

I am not entirely free of the pride and arrogance that shut out growth. The process of recovery seems to involve alternately giving up my will and taking it back. This creates periodic setbacks, but each time it happens I learn something.

For today: I have three ways of checking on my teachability: Am I open to suggestion? Do I avoid judging without investigation? Do I seek to know—and do—God's will?

Question: Where would I benefit from being more open, judging less, and asking God for help?

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

August 7

If you will please people, you must please them in their own way; and as you cannot make them what they should be, you must take them as they are.

Lord Chesterfield

I learned early on that pleasing people can make life pleasant. Today I realize that people-pleasing as a way of life is carrying a good and natural impulse too far.

What freedom to know I am not all-powerful— that I cannot make people play the roles I create for them, no matter how excellent the casting. OA teaches me to take people as they are. There will always be some whose company I do not enjoy, but there are many others whose delight in simple things gives me joy. It is good to be around those people.

For today: There is no finer way to treat people than to accept them as they are.

Question: What can I do today to resist my people-pleasing tendencies and accept people as they are?

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

August 8

They that reverence too much old times, are but a scorn to the new.

Francis Bacon

Do I look back in longing and think what fun it was to eat what I wanted when I wanted it? Do I feel my life today is one of deprivation? Dear God, remind me of what life was like before I came to Overeaters Anonymous—the obsession, the demoralization, the treadmill, the despair and sickness. I am as powerless over food now as I was the day I walked in. Compulsive overeating and hope are not compatible.

My new life of abstinence, peace of mind and physical wellbeing was made possible by a willingness to trust in a Power greater than myself. All I have to do is keep on letting that Power do for me what I cannot do for myself. That is more precious to me than any remembered “high old time” with food.

For today: On my knees, I pray to be “as a child”—to go back now to steps one, two and three. There is nothing out there in the wilderness of compulsive overeating that I want.

Question: How have Steps One, Two, and Three strengthened my ability to choose recovery?

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

August 9

What a day may bring, a day may take away.

Thomas Fuller

“Hang onto the good feelings,” I tell myself. Sadly, the effort to control dissipates the very state of being I want to retain. The clarity, the joy of living does not come about on demand. Good feelings come as a result of getting out of myself and “going with the flow.” As I live the OA program, I root out gloom-producing defects and discover a new capacity for pleasure.

For today: This is a day to be aware of my Higher Power’s gifts; to live with whatever comes my way.

Question: In what ways can I reduce "gloom-producing effects" so I can be more aware of God's gifts?

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

August 10

A permanent state of transition is man's most noble condition.

Juan Ramón Jiménez

Change is not compatible with stubborn pride. Growth does not happen in a climate of arrogance and know-it-all superiority. The changes that are taking place in those who practice this program involve the total personality—thoughts, emotions, the way I see myself and other people. These transitions require a willingness to let go old ideas, to place my faith in a Power greater than myself. When I gave up my will, the gift of abstinence became mine and my compulsion to overeat was arrested. My other defects are being removed as I become willing to give up my right to decide and control my life.

For today: To change, I must understand that giving up is not giving in, nor is it failing. It is no longer needing to be right.

Question: What changes are happening in my life as a result of surrendering my will to a power greater than myself?

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

August 11

True wisdom consists in not departing from nature and in molding our conduct according to her laws and model.

Seneca

There is a rhythm to life: growth comes from a winter of rest, spring rains, a summer of wildflowers and fireflies. If everything in nature follows God's plan, why do I think I have a better one for myself? To live according to natural laws, I need abstinence and freedom from obsession—needs that are filled, not when I'm in charge of running my life, but when I turn my will over to God in the matter of food.

True wisdom, then, is to seek and follow God's will for me in every aspect of my life—a path laid out in steps 2,3,6,7 and 11 of the program of recovery. Making progress along that path to the best of my ability is surely living as close to nature's intention as possible.

For today: I open myself to God's will by putting out of my mind something I want but don't need and can't get.

Question: Where am I out of rhythm with life? What do I want but do not need and cannot get?

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

August 12

*A theorist without practice is a tree without fruit;
and a devotee without learning is a house without
an entrance.*

Sa'di

If I talk a spiritual program and practice that program to the best of my ability, people ask me to share my experience. They want what I have because what I have is obvious even to the newcomer. If, on the other hand, I make suggestions I do not follow, my words are hollow sounds without conviction.

It is a waste to pretend to be something I am not, because I am missing out on the rewards of this program. To start walking the way I talk, I need only the willingness to ask for help.

For today: It has been said that no one is too “dumb” to work the twelve-step program, but there are some who are too smart. I pray to God to keep me from being too smart.

Question: When my words contradict my actions, what do I need to do to bring about change?

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

August 13

To spare oneself from grief at all cost can be achieved only at the price of a total detachment, which excludes the ability to experience happiness.

Erich Fromm

Am I still using food to avoid my feelings? Does the term, “fat serenity,” describe where I am today? If it does, I accept it without judgment. In time, perhaps I will tire of that bland feeling-no-pain state of escape that robs me of my humanity. Perhaps I will have the courage to acknowledge pain, to feel the feelings without reaching for an escape, and to have faith that my Higher Power is directing my life, not I.

I accept unconditionally wherever I am today, acknowledging the truth without reservation or recrimination.

For today: The OA program, the people and God are all there for me, loving me fat or thin, abstinent or compulsively overeating. Can I do any less for myself?

Question: What have I lost by avoiding my feelings because I might unleash an old hurt?

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

August 14

Envy is one form of a vice, partly moral, partly intellectual, which consists in seeing things never in themselves, but only in their relations.

Bertrand Russell

Looking at another's program and achievements is another way I have of putting myself down. "Why can't you do better? What's the matter with you? I wish I were ..." The OA program is not a competitive sport, nor is my Higher Power a referee. With envy as a defect, I do not have to look far to find that I am making unreasonable demands on myself.

I know that what relieves me of the compulsion to overeat can also relieve me of other defects. I need only to practice the steps—all of them—and turn my life over to my Higher Power on a daily basis. I don't need to be perfect at any of this; I just need to be myself.

For today: To free myself of envy, I can start by looking to see how it is hurting me.

Question: What thoughts and behaviors caused by envy are holding me back from self-acceptance and love?

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

August 15

Few people can fail to generate a self-healing process when they become genuinely involved in healing others.

Theodore Isaac Rubin

The Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous describes one of the great early discoveries of that Fellowship. In looking for a key, a common pattern among those alcoholics who recovered, it was found that the one action taken by all of them was helping another alcoholic. In each instance, the newly sober AAs, some just released from the hospital, went out and tried to help an alcoholic who was still suffering.

For today: OA doesn't hand out degrees that qualify one to help another compulsive overeater. I have all the inner resources I need to do it now.

Question: Who can I talk with today to learn more about giving of myself and being open to receive?

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

August 16

*One can know nothing of [anything] that is worthy
to give unless one also knows how to take.*

Havelock Ellis

It's terrible to receive; I don't know what to do, what to say. Whether it's a compliment or a gift, I stammer and stutter in embarrassment, muttering ridiculous but time-honored denials such as, "This old rag? ... I bought it at the Goodwill." Only later do I realize that in my attempt to appear modest, I have insulted the person who gave me a simple compliment.

I like the suggestion of a member who practices tough love: "Say 'thank you' and then shut up."

I treasure simple directions I can understand, and the loving OAs who pass them along.

For today: I am willing to practice saying "Thank you" until it comes naturally.

Question: To become more accepting of recognition and compliments, what do I need to change?

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

August 17

*Diseases desperate grown
By desperate appliances are relieved
Or not at all.*

William Shakespeare

It has been said that newcomers must spend as much time and energy getting and staying abstinent as they did in compulsive overeating. “Half measures availed us nothing.”

My mind tries to tell me I am not *that sick*. I am most certainly not insane, and I do manage my own life. My only problem is I want to eat most of the time. If I could just find a really good diet and lose weight, I’d be OK.

Yet, somewhere in this rationalizing is a gut feeling that I need to be here, that there is a way out, that this program will work for me.

For today: I want what I see in OA. I pray for the willingness to follow each step of the program and to believe that the food and the weight will be taken care of in the process.

Question: Where am I still defending my right to do and say things that I know are hurting me?

August 18

To take what there is, and use it, without waiting forever in vain for the preconceived—to dig deep into the actual and get something out of that—this doubtless is the right way to live.

Henry James

Life offers me treasures beyond imagining, here and now. They are there for me to take and use with the God-given talents and skills and energy I possess today.

My enthusiasm is the digging tool. I dig into the actual for the sheer love of digging; therefore, the fact that there may be something better tomorrow is irrelevant. I will be here, digging into life and getting something out of it today. Nothing can beat that.

For today: The right way to live is to live as fully as I can *today*, to take what possibilities there are and make of them what I can.

Question: What am I willing to do in order to live life to its fullest today?

August 19

*The remedy of all blunders, the cure of blindness,
the cure of crime, is love.*

Ralph Waldo Emerson

All growth, all healing depends on love. Love is what God is all about. A loving God—as I understand God—does not preach or dictate or threaten. God is my backer, supportive of me, no matter what I do. God does not make deals: “Do this and I’ll do that.” God does not bully or punish or say, “I told you so.” God listens and accepts me as I am, loves me as I am. God doesn’t give advice. God knows that learning comes only from experience—experience I am not led to until I am ready.

For today: God’s perfect love is mine any time I am willing to receive it. I let go the God of my childhood and believe, with all my heart, in this God that brought me here and gave me new life.

Question: How do I feel the unconditional love and support from my Higher Power?

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

August 20

*There is a courtesy of the heart. It is akin to love.
Out of it arises the purest courtesy in the outward
behavior.*

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Courtesy of the heart may seem detached; it does not interfere with another's decisions or give advice or need approval. It neither plays games nor passes judgment; it does not accept guilt or make others feel guilty with "Why didn't you do it this way? What made you do that?" Courtesy of the heart does not distinguish between president and bus-boy, can never feel snobbish or superior, and is able to learn from everything and everyone.

Courtesy of the heart welcomes new ideas and people, feels joy instead of fear, sees with fresh eyes and appreciates rather than criticizes what it sees.

For today: May I be one of those so blessed as to be able to show "courtesy of the heart" to all.

Question: In what ways do I demonstrate "courtesy of the heart" to others and myself?

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

August 21

Every man takes the limits of his own field of vision for the limits of the world.

Arthur Schopenhauer

When I was overeating, did I ever imagine that life could be any different than it was? No; there was no way out, I was sure of it. Sometimes, in a dilemma, I still tend to think there's no way out. I accept that feeling, but today I know it is only that—a feeling, not a fact. My experience tells me there is a solution and it will come in time, as I become willing to let go and let a Power outside myself take charge. Giving up control means growing up: my experience broadens, my pleasures expand, my usefulness to others increases and my horizon—like God's world—is limitless.

For today: I turn over to God the concerns of the moment, knowing that the answers will come and, with them, a new awareness and greater depth of understanding.

Question: What actions can I take today to enhance my ability to hear God's voice?

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

August 22

Life can only be understood backwards; but it must be lived forwards.

Soren Kierkegaard

The twelve steps are simple, direct and always to the point. I begin by facing the condition I find myself in when I arrive. I make the necessary surrender and then go backwards in time to uncover the events that shaped attitudes and beliefs which drove me to abuse food.

I describe my own errors and misdeeds, accept them and admit them to another person and to God. In sequence, I ask God to remove my faults and seek to redress my wrongs, asking forgiveness of those I have harmed.

Now I go forward, commencing an ongoing, daily review of my actions and maintaining my spiritual recovery through prayer and meditation and working with others.

For today: I look at my past in order to understand myself and in order to let the past go.

Question: In looking at my past, what do I see of value that will help move my recovery forward?

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

August 23

Let us live while we live.

Philip Doddridge

Now that I am free of compulsive overeating and have a way to live, I am eager to look at other things in my life that impede my spirit. I want to be free of all my excess baggage—fixed ideas and ways of responding that make it hard to like myself. I want to live with zest and enthusiasm, to be confident enough to step out of myself, to put my life in the sunlight of the spirit and *live*.

For today: Having saved my life, let me live it.

Question: What is stopping me from living with confidence and enthusiasm today?

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

August 24

Nothing is unthinkable, nothing impossible to the balanced person, provided it arises out of the needs of life and is dedicated to life's further developments.

Lewis Mumford

Today, I open my mind to everything that could be—possibilities that are far from the idle wishing of the old days, but rather a loosening of restrictions, a broadening of the imagination. I leave my life up to my Higher Power, remove my hindering ways and let my spirit soar. I seek to be more honest, more aware, to have closer relationships, a better ability to carry the message, more time to serve.

I have received, and now pass on to others, what was once impossible: the hope of spiritual awakening, of recovery from compulsive overeating.

For today: I keep an open mind to having an open mind; the possibilities are endless.

Question: What can I do today to be more open to life's possibilities?

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

August 25

In his prayers he says, "Thy will be done"; but means his own, at least acts so.

William Penn

What is God's will for me? Certainly not selfishly looking out for myself at the expense of others. God's will is surely to have me be at peace with myself. It is acceptance of all things, not condemning or passing judgment. God's will is practicing the OA principles in all my affairs.

If I fail at something that is important to me, it is hard to maintain my self-esteem. But God, unlike myself and the society in which I live, does not measure me according to worldly values.

For today: To better do God's will, I pray to let go standards of perfection and see myself in God's light.

Question: What do I need to let go of today so I can better know and do God's will?

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

August 26

The dogs bark but the caravan moves on.

Arabic proverb

Complaints: I have a lot of them—the ice is too cold, the sun too hot, the rocks too sharp. There is not much I can do about any of it, so why complain? Chronic complaining is a useless practice that destroys self-acceptance and self-reliance. Complaining about things I dislike in my life increases my dissatisfaction. Instead of buttonholing all who will listen, I can ask myself, “Is there anything I can do to help myself with this?”

Yes, there is: I can practice the twelve-step program, as written. Complaining about my faults or the lacks in my life is folly; it is time wasted that might be better put to use in self-caring and acceptance.

For today: There is no need to complain about personal characteristics or other aspects of my life I do not like. Instead of complaining, I can do two things: pick up the steps where I left off, and pray for the removal of this defect.

Question: What underlies my most common complaints?
What kind of help do I need to ask God for?

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

August 27

Every man has a right to be valued by his best moment.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

Do I value myself and others for our best qualities and actions—for those times when we are blessed with grace, when we rise to heights of courage and selflessness far beyond our expectations? Or does one bad mistake cancel out those moments? Our character assets have been with us always, though all too often obscured by the fears and insecurities of living with obsession.

Freedom from compulsive overeating allows me to be the person I want to be more of the time. The longer I live in this way, the more numerous my “best moments” become.

For today: I remind myself of my many good qualities and best moments—and those of my family, friends and colleagues.

Question: What are ten good qualities that I possess?

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

August 28

The only means of strengthening one's intellect is to make up one's mind about nothing— to let the mind be a thoroughfare for all thoughts.

John Keats

To let go the fixed ideas and prejudices that occupy my mind is to eliminate the safety of absolutes. By making room for the unknown, I invite change. I do not know the direction toward which growth will take me, nor do I know what will be revealed to me. I may say, "I want to work this program so I can have such and such." But working the program means putting control of my life in God's keeping, not mine. Recovery means being open to what life brings, not insisting on having things my way. Working this program is being aware, letting my thoughts ramble and allowing feelings to come out of hiding.

For today: What an adventure this OA program is! I go forth with an open mind, eager to learn what God will reveal to me.

Question: What negative attitudes and prejudices can I turn over to my Higher Power today?

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

August 29

The emotions may be endless. The more we express them, the more we may have to express.

E. M. Forster

The value of expressing my emotions is in what I learn from listening to myself. One thought leads to another and, if I'm being especially open, I may find myself blurting out answers I didn't know I had.

When I talk about my feelings to my sponsor or to my group, they give me the gift of attentive listening. I return the gift when they express their feelings. In OA, we help by listening and sharing our experience, not giving advice.

For today: With all the resources OA provides, I do not have to hold back my feelings. I can express myself as freely as the situation warrants, to my sponsor and to my group.

Question: What emotions do I hold back from sharing with my sponsor? What am I afraid of?

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

August 30

*People wish to learn to swim and at the same time
to keep one foot on the ground.*

Marcel Proust

Only by being willing to give up the safety of the old can I find out what the new has for me. Uncertainty, confusion and fear of leaving the safety of my old ways behind me are natural, but the need to save my life pushes me on. I move beyond my fears and prejudices and learn that I don't have to act on them; that, one day at a time, I can face whatever must be faced.

I may think nostalgically of my old hiding place from time to time, but the truth is, nothing that could possibly happen today can make me go back.

For today: The direction God gives me is forward; I am not afraid to take it.

Question: How do uncertainty, confusion, and fear keep me from moving forward on my journey?

August 31

Man is as full of potentiality as he is of impotence.

George Santayana

Hope and hopelessness are part of my disease. Hope tells me there is a better way; hopelessness says, “What’s the use?” I recognize hopelessness for what it is: my mind protecting me from disappointment. Hopelessness served at one time, but I don’t need that device today. I have a Higher Power that gives me everything I need. I am willing to continue to cast out old ideas, to keep turning my life over to the care and protection of God. Therein lies hope.

For today: My potential is in direct proportion to my willingness to let go the shackles of self-will, to get out of my own way. On one end of the scale, I accomplish wonders; on the other, I am powerless.

Question: Where are self-will and hopelessness blocking me from achieving my full potential?