

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

July 1

When a proud man hears another praised, he thinks himself injured.

English proverb

Abstinence is like pulling up a window shade: it gives me a view of my real problems. I see a willful child, wanting to be first, to be best, to be noticed and praised. When I hear a good word for someone else, I have not outgrown the cry, “What about me?” I feel so unloved I need it all.

Let me take steps now to face my defect of pride and use it as an incentive to grow. Then I can be free of competitiveness and share in the joy of someone else’s virtues and strengths.

For today: I do not compare myself with anyone but, rather, appreciate each of us for what we are. That is the true harmony of the world.

Optional Question: How has my pride kept me from sharing in the joys and virtues of others?

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

July 2

Cursed be the social lies that warp us from the living truth.

Alfred Lord Tennyson

“Come now, one bite can’t hurt you.” It can if you’re a compulsive overeater.

If I believe the well-meaning people who understand nothing of my affliction, I may be a lonely audience of one to the outcome. If I can learn so many things through practice, I can learn to say No. Until then, I may have to give up old friends, old places, old activities. It is called *going to any lengths*.

For today: I am always aware of who I am and what my limitations are. I can turn down food and drink that may be dangerous for me as easily as I can get out of the way of a speeding car.

Optional Question: To what lengths am I willing to go in order to learn how and when to say "no"?

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

July 3

*... I will not be afraid to enjoy what is beautiful,
and to believe that as I give to the world, so the
world will give to me.*

Just for Today

How is it possible to be afraid to enjoy what is beautiful?
There is surely no threat in beauty.

It was a fear of living, actually, that made me hide in food.
To be afraid to live is to be afraid of everything—good as
well as bad, beautiful as well as ugly.

In giving to the world, it is I who must make the first
move, I who must run to meet life with a smile that says, “I’m
happy to be here.” To like oneself, to enjoy life and to have
enthusiasm for its precious gifts is to give to the world.

For today: Freedom from food obsession restores to me my
God-given right to enjoy the beauty of this world and not to
be afraid to show it.

Optional Question: How have I begun to enjoy this
beautiful world and where am I still holding back?

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

July 4

*Freedom has a thousand charms to show that
slaves howe'er contented never know.*

William Cowper

Freedom from compulsive overeating, and all that goes with it, feels better than any food tastes; this I know. But am I still locked into some patterns that keep my life from being as good as it might be? Am I a slave to others' approval? To perfection? To the scale?

I want to be aware of my shortcomings, but I also know that being too critical and expecting too much of myself can be discouraging. "Easy does it" is a better approach to the personal inventory suggested in steps four and ten than taking myself too seriously.

For today: I am satisfied with the progress I have made so far; it is giving me freedom from obsession and a new joy in living.

Optional Question: How do I apply the slogan "Easy does it" to my progress without falling back into food obsession?

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

July 5

If an ass goes traveling, he'll not come home a horse.

Thomas Fuller

Going somewhere else has great appeal for many who are addicted to too much of a good thing. This is known as a “geographic cure,” although those who use this term are well aware that a “geographic” cures nothing; it is just another escape. Escapes simply compound addiction. If I want abstinence, peace of mind and physical wellbeing, what I need is to stay put, go to as many OA meetings as I can and ask for help.

For today: God grant me the wisdom to understand my longings and the willingness to act in my own best interest.

Optional Question: What actions will I take today to sustain abstinence, peace of mind, and physical well-being?

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

July 6

If you are reluctant to ask the way, you will be lost.

Malay proverb

If I knew what to do to arrest my illness, I wouldn't be here. Recovery requires a change of ways, a willingness to go to any length. I need to ask directions: How do I stay abstinent? How do I avoid becoming obsessed with diet and weight loss? I have to ask questions, even when I think I know the answers—or, perhaps, *especially* when I think I know the answers.

Step by step, I will find my way, asking for help, using telephone numbers, getting a sponsor, listening and sharing at meetings.

I will do what is necessary to be restored to sanity.

For today: May I continue to discard more of the pride and arrogance I put aside when I came to OA and asked for help.

Optional Question: Where have I stopped asking for help because I feel I already know the answers?

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

July 7

If all pulled in one direction, the world would keel over.

Yiddish proverb

It is rightly said that our common bond in Overeaters Anonymous is greater than our individual differences. Aside from the experience we share as compulsive overeaters, however, we are as diverse as any group of people anywhere. In offering help to someone who asks for it, I must keep individual differences in mind. We are not carbon copies of one another. What may benefit one person could be entirely inappropriate for another. Each of us must be free to find our own way, both in the adoption of an eating plan and in working the program.

For today: Am I helping those I sponsor find what works best for them?

Optional Question: How do I take into account our individual differences as I try to help other OA members find what works for them?

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

July 8

By the husk you may guess at the nut.

Thomas Fuller

How do I shape up under scrutiny? Is my appraisal of myself an honest one, or do I fall back on variations of the theme, “Thin is not well,” or “Appearances aren’t everything”? Do I use the old excuses of glands and metabolism for my continued overweight? Those rationalizations and the mental gymnastics they involve may be keeping me fat.

If I remain obese, what indication does a newcomer have that the program works? I need to face the truth, starting with my definition of abstinence. I may also need to replace sponsors who, out of misguided kindness, are helping me keep up the myth of spiritual recovery while I stay fat.

For today: I believe in the OA principle that each person is the sole judge of his or her ideal weight, but honesty is honesty and is not subject to interpretation. How honest am I?

Optional Question: How honest am I in judging my own physical recovery?

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

July 9

Much of your pain is self-chosen. It is the bitter potion by which the physician within you heals your sick self.

Kahlil Gibran

If it were not for the pain, I wouldn't be here. Only when the pain of compulsive overeating became worse than the pain it was intended to kill did I become willing to abandon the pretense of controlling my life.

Getting in touch with my pain is a new experience. Until the day it brought me to my knees, food was my first line of defense against any and all pain, even that caused by the food itself.

In OA, I have come to understand that I must let myself feel the pain before I can recover.

For today: I no longer choose to avoid my growing pains. My Higher Power, my program, my meetings, my friends—all stand with me as I face, head-on, whatever must be faced.

Optional Question: Which sources of emotional pain would I benefit from examining further?

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

July 10

To different minds, the same world is hell, and a heaven.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

My mind, as a recovering member of Overeaters Anonymous, is as different from my mind as a practicing compulsive overeater as night from day. Abstinent and self-accepting, I see more beauty than ugliness, more to admire than condemn. But, whether I am depressed or joyful, at peace or in turmoil, I know it is not the goodness or badness of the world, but my mind that tints the lenses through which I see.

As I grow in this program, my mind and my vision change. Problems of a week, a month or a year ago are resolved. In time, I will be free of much that bothers me today.

For today: I am letting go my urge to change people and situations to fit my expectations. It is not the world that needs changing; it is I.

Optional Question: How are my expectations still holding me back from accepting people and events as they really are?

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

July 11

The most exhausting thing in life is being insincere.

Anne Morrow Lindberg

A young woman who had binged and vomited for thirteen years before finding OA considers herself well qualified to speak on people-pleasing. Here's what she told her group:

"I seemed to think I had to go through life with a smile pasted on my face. I was sweet and accommodating and polite. A good egg. Of course, none of it was sincere. How could it be when, inside, I was angry and resentful and afraid? My false front was so exhausting I had to make it up to myself somehow, and the one sure way to do that was to eat.

"The same exhaustion overtakes me today whenever I try so hard to make a good impression that I am not being myself. But it's all right to make mistakes. I am not perfect. I'm making progress and I'm very grateful for the chance to do it."

For today: Doing or saying something I don't mean costs me more in the long run than I'm willing to pay. I am as honest as I can be without either being rude or fawning over anyone.

Optional Question: Where am I being less than sincere or trying too hard to prove something to others?

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

July 12

It is not often that any man can have so much knowledge of another, as is necessary to make instruction useful.

Samuel Johnson

What is simple for another may be difficult for me. What is fearful for that person may not be so for me.

What is in each person's head is a sum total of experience from our very beginnings. I can share experience, strength and hope, but I cannot "teach" a newcomer the path of long abstinence. To get from here to there takes time. It is experience—the *process* of recovering—more than the result that contributes to sensitivity, understanding and wisdom.

Advice to another can be an insult. Listening can be a godsend. For each compulsive overeater, working through is the path to joyous freedom.

For today: The highest service I can give my fellow OAs—and they to me—is to share experience. There are no instructors in this program.

Optional Question: In what areas of recovery am I still prone to giving advice rather than supporting my fellow OA members in finding their own way?

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

July 13

Do not set your eyes on things far off.

Pythian Odes

Unhappy people do not live in the present. They have their eyes on some distant future when everything will be wonderful. Compulsive overeaters will no longer be fat—something will have magically “fixed” them, and they will live the lives they always dreamed of having.

The tragedy of projection, of course, is that it is all illusion; that beautiful future becomes the contemptible present.

I am not buying that illusion today. The only way I can assure myself of the best possible future is to live as well as I can today.

For today: I refuse to sacrifice today for a tomorrow that never comes. I have everything I need to live today.

Optional Question: Which tools of recovery can I use to help me live joyfully in this day?

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

July 14

You gain strength, courage and confidence by every experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face. You are able to say to yourself “I lived through this horror. I can take the next thing that comes along.”... You must do the thing you think you cannot do.

Eleanor Roosevelt

The inability to face my fears was one of the primary contributing factors of my illness. If I did not look fear in the face, I would not know what it was made of, and if I did not know my fears, I would not feel them. Compulsive overeating did an admirable job of helping me bury my fears alive.

The OA program excels in helping us deal with our fears. One small step at a time, we discover what terrifies us, pass through it and go on with our recovery. Enlisting the help of a sponsor—and using the other tools—is an effective way to begin facing fear.

For today: The help I need to deal with fear is available in the twelve-step program, the OA members and the tools. Am I using that help?

Optional Question: Where have I made strides in moving beyond my comfort zone, and where is fear still holding me back from taking risks and learning as I go forward?

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

July 15

The truth shall make you free.

The Bible: John

Do I call an addiction, “a little problem with ...”—a minor inconvenience on a par with measles? Addiction can kill me. Perhaps fast, perhaps slowly, but either way the trip is hell. I can hang onto old ideas: “This time I’ll do it,” “It’ll be different,” “I’ll stop for good.” Old ideas shun words like *fat, drunk, obese, compulsive overeater, alcoholic, addict* in favor of gentler, easier words. Words do not change a meaning. I can call the sun and the moon by other words, but they are still what they are. An addiction is a fact, like my height and coloring. In recognizing that truth, I am able to admit I am powerless over food, give up my will—and become free.

For today: It is not a disgrace or a weakness to admit my powerlessness over food. That is an idea that has nothing to do with the truth.

Optional Question: What addictive thoughts and actions do I still feel I have the power to control?

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

July 16

He will never have true friends who is afraid of making enemies.

William Hazlitt

People-pleasing has a twin called resentment. Excessive compromise—always smiling and saying Yes when I want to say No—is bound to take a heavy toll in terms of self-esteem and, consequently, in my relationships. Fear of going off the deep end, of blowing up, keeps me from letting people know how I really feel.

As a result of working the steps of this program, I am developing the emotional balance I need to express disagreement without hostility. Progress in this area is slow. It begins with feeling good about myself.

For today: I seek my own approval first, then the approval of others.

Optional Question: What am I doing to develop the emotional balance necessary to let go of people-pleasing and build up my self-esteem?

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

July 17

Nature never deceives us, it is we who deceive ourselves.

Jean Jacques Rousseau

Nature did not make me a compulsive overeater. My hunger pangs are like everybody else's: they tell me when I must take nourishment to sustain my life. When I began eating to satisfy emotional hunger, this simple mechanism went out of kilter and it stayed that way until I became abstinent in Overeaters Anonymous. The irony of compulsive overeating is that it eliminates hunger and intensifies craving.

Today, I live as nature intended me to live: I eat the food I need, with all the pleasure, enjoyment and freedom God wants me to have.

For today: Normal eaters may occasionally indulge in eating to satisfy needs other than hunger, but I am abstaining from such uses of food.

Optional Question: How has the OA program helped me identify the ways I abused food in trying to satisfy my emotional hunger?

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

July 18

Between two stools one sits on the ground.

French proverb

No, I don't always know which course to take, where to go, what to do. But OA says, in effect, "Don't 'sweat it'. Ask your Higher Power for an answer and then relax. Inspiration will come, sometimes directly, sometimes indirectly." I once thought I had to have answers for everything. And they had to be quick, sure, positive, right. Today I do not know. I gave up having to know when OA showed me a better way to live.

For today: Indecision cannot panic me. Whether I have to act quickly or have some time to think, the answer will come freely, from God, if I ask for it.

Optional Question: What anxiety-provoking situations can I accept more easily if I ask God to provide me with an inspired or intuitive thought?

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

July 19

One doesn't discover new lands without consenting to lose sight of the shore for a very long time.

Andre Gide

OA is a new way of life. Nothing in this program has much relationship to anything I have known before. There are steps to take and meetings to attend. Recovery means going to any lengths to stay abstinent. It means being willing to give up, for today, any or all of the comfortable and familiar old ways that may interfere with abstinence, including cooking, restaurants, friends, meals for my family, flag and country. I found it wasn't necessary to give up these things, but I had to be willing; willingness is the key. Without abstinence I have nothing except a killing, progressive disease.

For today: I am willing to put abstinence first. That means talking to anyone who is able to help me, asking questions even though they may make me appear foolish, making phone calls even though I may bother someone.

Optional Question: What am I willing to do to ensure that nothing will interfere with being abstinent today?

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

July 20

Nature is no spendthrift, but takes the shortest way to her ends.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

Growth is a phenomenon of nature. I cannot push it, shape it, make it happen. I can only do the footwork, endure the pain and know that the results are not up to me. There is struggle in the growth process; pride, ego and misused will stand in the way and must be overcome gradually, with understanding and compassion. Pain is always the teacher, but with each period of growth it becomes less acute. Growth is the opposite of control. Another term for it is learning to let go and let God. And that is a subject I can only expect to get better at, not master.

For today: Do I really need to be in control—which is wasted motion, really—or can I trust in my Higher Power? I will let today be a wonderful surprise.

Optional Question: What am I trying to control that I can turn over to my Higher Power?

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

July 21

Extreme remedies are very appropriate for extreme diseases.

Hippocrates

Go to meetings. Read the Big Book. Get a sponsor. Go to any lengths.

All that? When will I have time for my life?

Make time. Compulsive overeating is a killing disease.

But I'm not that bad.

No, not yet. But this illness is progressive; it gets worse, never better. Abstinence is a new life, not in theory but in practice. It means following suggestions, listening to someone who knows more than I do about living abstinently. It means reading: "Rarely have we seen a person fail who has thoroughly followed our path."

If I want abstinence, and a better life, I have come to the right place.

For today: I have taken the first step. God help me to stay on this new path toward physical, mental and spiritual recovery.

Optional Question: How will my action plan give me the best chance to achieve physical, mental, and spiritual recovery today?

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

July 22

Repetition is the only form of permanence that nature can achieve.

George Santayana

When I tire of the sameness of the program, I wonder why there isn't some more advanced way of doing it. Now that I'm abstinent, thin and sane, why do I have to keep going to the same meetings, hearing and saying the same things?

Different people have different answers to such questions. Some change meetings; others turn to more challenging forms of service. What I know is this: I have a cunning, baffling and powerful disease that can and does throw every trick in the book at me.

Yes, I need to be at meetings. Yes, I need to hear newcomers. And yes, I need to keep on working the program over and over again. I have read the Big Book and the Twelve and Twelve a hundred times, and each time the same words give me a different meaning, a new insight.

For today: Thank God I'm here; pray God to keep me here.

Optional Question: When was the last time I did something for the first time in OA?

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

July 23

If what I feel were equally distributed to the whole human family, there would not be one cheerful face on earth.

Abraham Lincoln

If Lincoln could achieve all that he did feeling such depression, can I not bear feeling down in the dumps occasionally without being driven to the insanity of compulsive overeating?

With the support of the OA program, it is possible to feel a full range of human emotions and remain abstinent. Feelings have no power. They cannot dictate my actions. At times I have stood still and hurt, and at other times I applied for relief by contacting an OA friend or going to a meeting. Both ways work.

For today: Feeling bad is part of being human. I don't try to escape it any more than I try to escape feeling good.

Optional Question: What are the feelings I still struggle with the most? What can I do about them?

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

July 24

The most beautiful experience we can have is the mysterious.

Albert Einstein

I will probably never understand exactly what happened to me when I came to Overeaters Anonymous. I have no frame of reference for surrender, or spiritual awakening. These events, which happened simultaneously, constitute by far the most beautiful experience of my life. The gifts placed before me in the wake of this experience are equally mysterious: I am unshakably abstinent; I go through all the ups and downs of my life without having to eat over anything. That in itself is miracle enough, but there is more. Each one of the promises of the Big Book is coming true. God is doing for me what I could not do for myself. It is all an incomparably beautiful mystery.

For today: I celebrate the miracle of my new life in OA.

Optional Question: How can I share the daily miracles OA has brought into my life?

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

July 25

The fairest harmony springs from discord.

Aristotle

How we humans hate discord! We have a talent for creating it, of course, but we don't like it. Compulsive overeaters eat over it, alcoholics drink over it, and others indulge their various weaknesses over it.

It took the twelve-step program to teach me to simply endure, to go straight through a difficult, discordant time without yielding to the urge to escape into the food or to yell for somebody to "fix" it.

My rewards are many: new strengths and capabilities, the peace that comes with acceptance of what is and the joy of knowing I am free.

For today: As I practice acceptance of life's discords, life turns around and gives me harmony.

Optional Question: What are some of the rewards my life in recovery has given me?

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

July 26

Little privations are easily endured when the heart is better treated than the body.

Jean Jacques Rousseau

The comforts of material possessions do not make up for emotional and spiritual impoverishment. Being a product of this society, I tell myself that if I had this and that, I would feel better. So I get this and that, and I find that my purchasing power does indeed seem to reduce anxiety, but not for long. No matter what I do, it is only a distraction and I return again and again to myself.

When I am close to my Higher Power and the people I love, I am not aware of the car I drive, the house I live in. I am not fighting temptation, nor am I wanting and wishing. I am neither afraid nor overconfident.

For today: When I am busy cultivating loving relationships, I can easily do without a surprising number of things.

Optional Question: What simple joys can I develop and cultivate in my life today?

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

July 27

He who is being carried does not realize how far the town is.

Nigerian proverb

Dependency is soft and cushy and makes it unnecessary for me to know how far the town is. So, what's the catch? The catch is that I can never grow past that stage of childhood in which I am an extension of my parents. Failure to meet others' expectations will send me back again and again to seek approval that will never come.

I do not choose to stay on that treadmill today. If I catch myself bending over backward to please, or dismissing my own opinions as inferior, I ask God for the courage to change direction.

For today: The OA program of recovery is leading me out of the gilded cage of dependency toward the freedom of thinking for myself.

Optional Question: How is the OA program helping me achieve the freedom to think for myself?

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

July 28

That is the happiest conversation where there is no competition, no vanity, but a calm, quiet interchange of sentiments.

Samuel Johnson

How good it feels to be with OA people! Whether in a meeting, at a coffee shop gathering or on the telephone, the talk is a quiet sharing unlike the conversations we know on the “outside.” We discuss endlessly what the illness is like and what the program has done and is doing for us. If we participate long enough we hear our story, or at the very least, find something with which we can strongly identify. Even the most competitive people eventually find that there is no need to impress anyone, to prove that they are better than anyone else.

The principles of the program, embodied in the steps and traditions, make Overeaters Anonymous a community of loving, caring people whose only goal is freedom from compulsive overeating for themselves and others.

For today: The company of OA members is a precious gift, available to me at any time I want it.

Optional Question: How much time do I spend interacting with OA people each day?

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

July 29

*Renunciation is a piercing virtue
The letting go
A presence for an expectation.*

Emily Dickinson

Putting my faith in this program means letting go what I have in the expectation of something better. I must be prepared for moments of confusion and upheaval, feelings of uncertainty and, yes, even fear. However useless or destructive the old may be, it is given up with difficulty. I may be surprised to find that what God wills for me may not necessarily be what I ordered up, as one does from a menu. But I have already seen that everything I turn over to my Higher Power is taken care of far better than I could have imagined.

For today: What I need most to turn over to God is already clear to me.

Optional Question: How often do I expect a specific outcome when I "turn things over" to my Higher Power?

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

July 30

*Nothing on earth consumes a man more quickly
than the passion of resentment.*

Friedrich Nietzsche

I can experience resentment as a feeling, rather than have it consume me. It is all right. I am not acting it out—running, escaping, whirling into insanity. I reach for the telephone, the Big Book, come face to face with a friend. I am not alone, nor am I frightened. Resentment is a feeling, not a deed. I can experience much without wreaking havoc. I can speak my thoughts, show my “bad side,” and God—and my fellow OAs—accept me without reservation.

For today: Thank God for the healing power of this program.

Optional Question: How do I deal with resentments?
Do I have a way of working through them?

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

July 31

The heart has such an influence over the understanding that it is worth while to engage it in our interest.

Lord Chesterfield

If logic were the dominant influence in human behavior, who would be a compulsive overeater, or an alcoholic or an excessive, obsessed anything? Emotional problems cannot be reasoned away or resolved by scientific method. Logic is wasted on nameless fears that appear to have no basis in reality. I feel what I feel, not what my head says I “ought” to feel. My persistence in trying to control my emotions through reasonableness ends in dismay and frustration.

In OA, I am learning to look deeper, to the language of the heart.

For today: Prayer is not logical, and yet it works. Where rational intelligence fails, I place my faith in a source of help that is beyond my understanding and know that I will receive what I need.

Optional Question: How have prayer and meditation helped me find the language of my heart?