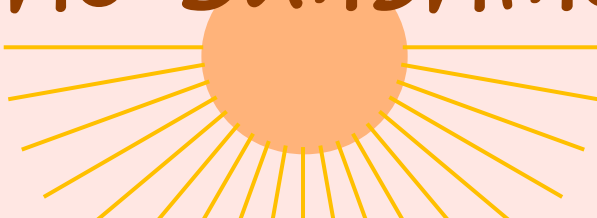


Fall
Edition
2024

The Sunshiner



Experience
Strength
& Hope

The other abstinence.

Dear friend in pain, in panic or in distress, my heart beats for you. I feel a lump in my throat, because it wasn't so long ago that I was you. And will be again.

Before becoming abstinent, there's desperation, if we're lucky. That drives us toward good things, like Program. But before and after becoming abstinent from compulsive eating, distress, panic, anxiety can still set in from time to time.

The other abstinence is where possible, to let go and let your Higher Power.

But how??

Work the Steps, if you can work the Steps.

Journal if you can journal.

Stop eating, compulsively — at least try.

Connect with another human being, if you can. But if you can't, I've been where you are.

Stand up. Ground yourself, as if you were barefoot on a patch of grass.

Even if you're alone, stand tall. As if the world could see the phenomenal you.

And then breathe. Deep breaths, then hold, then let them go.

Ask yourself, what in this moment (other than food for drink) will feed my spirit? Then be strong as you make the decision to let those things in, the self-caring, nourishing things. And nothing else, to the best of your ability. Guilt free.

We are one, dear friend, connected by our dark pasts. Today we can try our best to reach for something better than the punishment, the injustice of food. We can abstain from a lack of love and reach for the good things that break the spell.

Your friend in Program,

Deb B

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Back to Basics

-Meaghan H. Co-Editor of the Sunshiner

September frequently arrives with new school supplies, sweater weather, and a return to school or our 'regular' routine after a break in the summer months. For me, it can also be a time to reset.

Over the years, when my program has gotten messy or felt stale, it has been suggested that I go "back to basics." It's a way of simplifying the program and going back to the basic building blocks of what worked when I first got abstinent – when I was willing, when I was in pain, when I was in the throes of the disease.

Long term abstinence is gift that I am so grateful for. But I also recognize that I have become complacent in many areas of my program. Life is bigger, yes, and unfortunately, it has sometimes crowded out the old practices I used to do, which got me abstinent and sane. When I'm feeling stuck, restless, or trying to complicate my program (or food plan), going back to basics is a solid starting point that removes a lot of the noise in my head.

For myself, when I think about going back to basics, it means:

- Getting to more meetings (as a newcomer I went to at least 3 a week!)
- Calling/staying in touch with my sponsor
- Doing service (including a service position)
- Morning and night prayer on my knees
- Calling members – ensuring I have a solid 'God Squad' – to provide support to others, and so I have folks to call when I need them
- Writing
- Actively working the steps

Lastly, for me, this slogan gets me out of my perfectionism and reminds me that I'm not bad for having let things slide, there is always an opportunity to renew my program. And, I don't need to wait until Monday morning to do it;)

- Meaghan H.

[Reworking the Basics - Lifeline \(oalifeline.org\)](http://oalifeline.org)

How did I get to the point of isolation? I binged; I ate to numb myself from my problems and stress, my disappointments in life. I was embarrassed by my eating behavior and didn't want to face my friends, so I withdrew. I forgot what I'd learned through working the [Steps](#); I forgot because I stopped working them. I forgot because I stopped connecting with others and with God.

Meetings, telephone, electronic messaging, and face-to-face contact are what build one's strength in this program. Connecting with others, in any form, is what reaffirms my purpose in life and drives me to take action. The more I act, the better I feel. The better I feel, the more I want to connect.

I missed the connections I'd had when I'd been working my program. I wanted them back. So, I took the first step by reconnecting with God. "Get to a meeting," he said. So, I got myself to a meeting, and then to another, and another. It was all starting to come back to me. I listened to the shares of others, and then I began to share. It felt good to be a part of something again and to feel hopeful. I realized that part of my recovery was dependent upon sharing myself with others.

As I began to rework the basics of the program that I'd forgotten, I found that, outside the program, I could exist in food situations with others. I felt strong again. This strength helped me use the program to deal with my problems, the stress and the disappointments I was experiencing. I no longer had to hide.

I will never be a normal eater. I am different from non-compulsive eaters. I may stand out in a group of normal eaters, but I never have to feel alone. I accept my disease and know that there are many people just like me in OA. I have a responsibility to myself and to others in the program to do whatever I can to be a good example of a recovering compulsive eater.

— Liz B., Chicago, Illinois US

Reprinted from Lifeline magazine, posted April 1, 2019

The Theme for the Winter Sunshiner is

"Hope."

Sharing your recovery through the Sunshiner
is a wonderful way to do service.

Email submissions, suggestions, and feedback to

sunshiner@oa-ottawa.org by December 19th

A Return to Step 1

By Kim P.

Back to basics for me means a return to step 1, another exciting beginning no matter where we are in our recovery. I am truly powerless over food and while I consume foods that ignite my food addiction, my life is UNMANAGEABLE. I put unmanageable in capital letters because part of food addiction is my ability to forget and minimize the suffering and destruction that underpin my unmanageable life in active food addiction.

It's important to remind myself just how unmanageable my life can get. I get to return to basics every time I action my first step. It's a privilege to return to basics, and it's a life sentence in a self constructed prison to live in the food with no hope.

Since this is a program of action, how do I action step 1?

For me, the action of writing a step 1 inventory list of where my life is unmanageable today, how I truly feel about it (don't be afraid to go deep here, break the surface) and I surrender to my HP unconditionally. I write a "chosen ideal" of where I'd like to be instead of where I am and surrender that ideal to my HP as well. After all, the BB acceptance passage reminds me that I don't know what's good or bad for me or anyone else...so I let HP into the chosen ideal selection process.

Small lists, small actions, small prayers, small shares at OA meetings...yield BIG strides toward recovery, a HUGE miracle of abstinence just for today, and zooms out to a CONSIDERABLE contribution to the health and wealth of OA communities. Looking for another step 1 back to basics action?

Call another member today and ask them about back-to-basics actions they take.

