

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

January 1

Year's end is neither an end nor a beginning, but a going on with all the wisdom that experience can instill in us.

Hal Borland

Whether it is the beginning of a new year or a new month, week or day, it's tempting to make resolutions, to swear off, to promise to reform. Before OA I did not know that these pledges were misguided attempts to be in control, to try yet again to make a normal eater out of myself.

Do I want abstinence with peace of mind? Have I been able to achieve it on my own? I can admit my powerlessness now or I can wait for another calendar "beginning." But the best time to give up my will, my old ideas, my defects is any time I am ready to grow.

For today: Instead of resolutions, promises and vows, I mark this day as I do all others: by surrendering my will and my life to God. *I give up trying to handle my food and my weight.*

Question: Instead of resolutions and vows, what actions will help ensure my abstinence today?

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

January 2

Looking forward into an empty year strikes one with a certain awe, because one finds therein no recognition. The years behind have a friendly aspect, and they are warmed by the fires we have kindled, and all their echoes are the echoes of our own voices.

Alexander Smith

The old and familiar is more comforting to contemplate than the new and untried. What will be new? Whatever old idea I give up, a new one will take its place. Beliefs I was sure about have turned out to be wrong. Foremost among them was the idea that if I took complete charge of my life, asking no help from any quarter, it would turn out the way I wanted. But it never did. It was only when I gave up being in charge that the reality of abstinence with peace of mind entered my life. All my progress toward sanity and balance come from that one magnificent change.

For today: I pray to be willing to give up more of my old, mistaken notions that I cling to as absolute truths.

Question: What old, misguided notions am I willing to ask God to remove today?

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

January 3

Strong hope is a much greater stimulant of life than any single realized joy could be.

Friedrich Nietzsche

Compulsive overeaters recovering in OA have reason to believe in the power of hope. It is the saving grace of our illness, a life-sustaining force that motivates us to keep going. Hope brought me to Overeaters Anonymous. I needed to believe that I had within me the power to change, to grow.

The joy of life today is in the constant flowering of hope. A problem is solved and immediately there is hope that an even tougher one will go the same way. When I most despair of finding a solution, the answer appears.

For today: There is powerful hope in admitting defeat, in giving up my mad exertions to control situations that are not mine to control.

Question: How has hope helped me become abstinent and give up my futile efforts to control everything?

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January 4

*To be alive is Power
Existence in itself
Without a further function
Omnipotence enough.*

Emily Dickinson

I am alive. I can make of that fact anything I want. I need no terms or conditions to exercise the power of life. All I have to do is live now. It is enough. There may be life in the future, and there was certainly life in the past, but my footing is in the present. Today is where the past has its meaning, and where the future is shaped. Looking far forward, mapping out my life in the future, I waste the power of the present. And lingering in the past, twisting its circumstances and falsifying its memory is an injustice to both past and present. I am thankful that my past has brought me to this present, where I am learning to use all my energy and spirit to live.

For today: I revel in the power of being alive, and I thank God I am not afraid to exercise it to the fullest today.

Question: How am I choosing to revel in the power of being alive today?

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January 5

He does not believe that does not live by his belief.

Thomas Fuller

Do the principles I believe in have any relation to my daily life? I may think the twelve-step program is great, but how can I say it works if I merely admire it rather than live by it? When I arrived in OA, what I heard rang true because it came out of experience, not theory.

Anyone can “learn” the program, but to achieve the recovery it promises takes more than intellectual understanding; it takes a sustained effort to apply its spiritual principles in every area of my life. Only then—when I am practicing what I say I believe in—can I give it away to another compulsive overeater.

For today: I discipline myself by not “talking program” unless I am trying to work it. If I believe that ours is a program of recovery, I will live by that belief.

Question: Which program principles do I believe in and apply to my life?

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

January 6

The philosophy of waiting is sustained by all the oracles of the universe.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

I need only to look and see that all things happen in their own time. The resolution of each problem has its own timetable. No amount of wishing, wringing of hands or raging will effect a change.

Acceptance is the simple act of going through what is presently facing me, be it pain, anger, despair, hopelessness or their opposites. When life as it really is becomes a fact that I accept as naturally as I breathe, events lose their power to throw me off balance or disturb the basic rhythm of my life.

For today: Acceptance also comes in its own time, and I do not berate myself for not having it on demand.

Question: How do I cast aside my interpretation of events and see things as they really are?

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

January 7

The Infinite Goodness has such wide arms that it takes whatever turns to it.

Dante Alighieri

Is there some deep, secret trouble I am withholding, even from my Higher Power?

A woman once told her group that, though she turned to God for help with “serious” matters, she felt her weight problem was too petty to bother God with. She then admitted that, although she now turns her compulsive overeating over to God, she still has to overcome the idea that some things are not worthy of God’s attention.

For today: God alone knows how badly I need help in all aspects of my life. I unhesitatingly ask for that help.

Question: What aspect of my life will I humbly ask God to help me with today?

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January 8

The process of changing a life-style is more important than reaching a goal or measuring a performance.

Theodore Isaac Rubin

There are many fundamental differences between diet clubs and Overeaters Anonymous. But perhaps the major difference is that in OA preoccupation with diet and weight loss is replaced by the vastly more interesting, satisfying and rewarding process of changing ourselves from the inside.

We begin this process with step one: surrender. For some of us that is impossible at the outset, so we do what we know has worked for others. We go to meetings, we make an effort to express our feelings openly, and we *act as if* the power to change, to abstain from compulsive overeating is already ours.

For today: I reject the idea that I can deal with compulsive overeating with diets, scales and weight charts. I do not have to measure my progress in this program.

Question: How can "act as if" help get me through a difficult situation?

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

January 9

The ability to simplify means to eliminate the unnecessary so that the necessary may speak.

Hans Hoffman

One of the most profound utterances in the history of Alcoholics Anonymous is Dr. Bob's parting plea to Bill W.: "Let's not louse this thing up. Let's keep it simple."

Overeaters Anonymous has its share of compulsive complicators. They lard the program with mandatory procedures and other distractions. If newcomers succeed in finding out what the program is about in this welter of the unnecessary, it may well be because they have an innate ability to simplify.

For today: I pray to be reminded of the simple principles of this program, especially when I am tempted to present personal interpretations as the only way.

Question: Where can keeping things simple make my life easier and more effective?

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

January 10

The art of being wise is the art of knowing what to overlook.

William James

“Take what you like and leave the rest” is a saying most of us hear as newcomers.

We are not all alike. What one person enthusiastically recommends may not suit me at all. Of course, sometimes I cannot know in advance what to overlook. When I must choose, I go with what seems best and give myself time to see how it works.

There is one suggestion each of us would do well to take: follow the twelve steps. The steps are the program of recovery in its entirety; everything else is intended to support that process. The tools are just that: tremendously helpful implements for working the steps.

For today: I practice the twelve steps to the best of my ability and use whatever aids give promise of working for me.

Question: In what areas of my life do I twist the suggestion "take what you need and leave the rest" into "do what you want and ignore the rest"?

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

January 11

How much time he gains who does not look to see what his neighbor says, or does or thinks, but only at what he does himself, to make it just and holy.

Marcus Aurelius

What a sad waste of time it is to occupy myself with other people's affairs—gossiping, pointing a finger, taking another's inventory, comparing status and possessions. The motive, beyond a surface self-satisfaction, is obviously to keep from putting my own house in order. That is a fulltime job: taking my own inventory, making my own amends, becoming more aware of my own defects.

There is surely no more exciting adventure, no greater privilege than to continue working this program of recovery.

For today: There is never enough time to work my own program and someone else's.

Question: What actions can I take today to keep my own house in order?

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

January 12

The great enemy of the truth is very often not the lie—deliberate, contrived and dishonest—but the myth, persistent, persuasive and unrealistic.

John F. Kennedy

My food addiction was acquired so I could survive and cope in earlier, painful circumstances. Thus began two myths: First, that pain was to be avoided at all costs, and second, that eating would relieve the pain free of charge. These myths were useful then, but they are insanity today.

As I become willing to accept the truth that is revealed to me in this program, the myths I clung to so desperately lose credibility. I no longer need to be anesthetized; I can stand still and feel my feelings. I don't think something is wrong if I'm not happy every minute.

For today: The more I accept the reality of what is, the more comfortable and serene my life becomes.

Question: What myths do I tell myself that keep me from living a more serene life?

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

January 13

Many strokes overthrow the tallest oaks.

John Lyly

If I slip, I will try again. Practice makes perfect, and I expect to practice abstinence until I “get it.” What is the alternative?

It’s an encouraging sign to be able to give myself a chance to go back and do things differently, without judgment or self-condemnation. For example, did I really hear—and act upon—program suggestions and slogans such as “half measures availed us nothing”; “willing to go to any lengths”; “keep it simple”; “one day at a time”? Whether I am struggling with abstinence or personality defects, those are words on which I can rely.

For today: I will not waste time blaming myself, but instead, try again.

Question: Which OA slogans do I rely on to keep me on track, working the Steps continuously?

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

January 14

*A friend is a person with whom I may be sincere.
Before him I may think aloud.*

Ralph Waldo Emerson

Talking about feelings is essential in Overeaters Anonymous. When I go to an OA meeting, the people there are like close friends—whether I know them or not. The more open and honest I can be when I share, the better I feel and the greater my chances of recovery.

One member gave away a fifth step and was stunned by an immediate lifting of the severe depression he had been suffering for months.

OAs are as different as any group of people anywhere. But we have one thing in common that bonds us instantly: we are compulsive overeaters.

For today: There is no one I can talk to who will understand me better than an OA member.

Question: Who can I talk to about things that trouble me?

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

January 15

Competitions are for horses, not artists.

Bela Bartok

The art of living is probably the highest form of personal expression: one is not concerned with who is behind or ahead, but rather with the enjoyment of now. There is no waiting for a payoff, for that day when certain things are settled or when that ship comes in. The art of living requires that I like myself, accept what I am and stop wishing I were otherwise. There is no room for pretense. People who have developed the art of living are sweetly loving and deeply sensitive while maintaining their independence. They are as respectful of their own values and opinions as those of others.

For today: In looking to others in the program for help, I am careful not to deny my own right of discovery.

Question: How has working with others enabled me to become more self-sufficient and independent?

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

January 16

Humor is a prelude to faith and Laughter is the beginning of prayer.

Reinhold Niebuhr

One of the best things I can hope to find at an OA meeting is laughter. There is something so pure, so cleansing and healing about laughing at ourselves, it is truly akin to prayer.

When I laugh at the easy humor of a speaker, I am aware of that sense of awe one feels in the presence of profound mystery.

For today: Thank God for the gift of laughter, and for those who carry the message on its wings.

Question: What role does laughter play in my recovery?

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

January 17

*We should take care not to make the intellect our
God.*

Albert Einstein

My mind can easily get in my way. It tries to be logical. It figures out problems and thinks it has answers. Then my life becomes chaotic. It is only when I let go and let God that I feel serenity. It is only when I give up that I see the answers God puts before me. It is only when I stop trying to control that my life goes smoothly.

God runs my life better than I do. I must remember to stay out of the way.

For today: I accept whatever is put before me, knowing that acceptance is fundamental to spiritual growth.

Question: What person, place or situation am I having difficulty with accepting?

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

January 18

The best way out is always through.

Robert Frost

I used to take the long way around, avoiding problems, escaping feelings. In OA I heard it called the easier, softer way. But is my way really easier? No! It is the hard and painful, life-of-hell way.

I am grateful for the awareness of old patterns. Today I count on God's help to remove those faults I expose when I take the honest way out of my difficulties.

For today: Practice of steps four through nine prepares me for facing rather than trying to escape my problems.

Question: How do my old ways of dealing with problems differ from how I resolve them today?

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

January 19

I have never seen a person grow or change in a constructive direction when motivated by guilt, shame and/or hate.

William Goldberg

If you eat too much you're a glutton. If you weigh too much you won't be popular with the boys (or girls). Heaping new guilt upon old, I tried to reform myself. I dieted, lost weight. There, now I looked terrific. But for how long? And did I like myself any better, inside?

Of all the remedies I tried, only in OA did I feel accepted for what I was, not for what I might become. Only in OA did I feel my problem was nothing to be ashamed of. Only in OA was I able to lose the weight and keep it off. Without guilt, without shame, without self-hate.

For today: I let no one—including myself— try to shame me into changing something about myself I wish were different. I pray to be relieved of guilt and self-hate, and to accept and like myself exactly as I am. That is where I can begin to change.

Question: What false images of me will fall away as I learn how to love myself?

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

January 20

When a man's willing and eager, God joins in.

Aeschylus

When a job or situation or personal problem seemed too hard, I used to say, "I can't do it." In OA I have tapped a source of power greater than myself. All I need to start the action is willingness. Sometimes willingness comes easily, sometimes it is locked head-on with defiance. Then I feel heavy with the load.

What is the willingness formula? Prayer. When the miracle happens, I watch a defect evaporate, a task easily done, a problem solved. God does for me what I cannot do for myself.

For today: I pray for willingness to get on with the twelve steps of recovery. That is the only way I know to replace my fears and insecurities with confidence and courage. When I am willing, there is no void and all things are possible.

Question: God will do for me what I cannot do for myself. What can I do for myself today?

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

January 21

Being entirely honest with oneself is a good exercise.

Sigmund Freud

Turning things around is the primary function of the twelve-step program. Where once my inclination was to sweep everything under the rug, to avert my gaze from reality, today I find relief from much resentment and anger by looking honestly at myself. Where once I was quick to blame anyone and anything for my troubles, today it is my own motives and actions that get my attention.

Self-honesty is an excellent treatment for what ails me, especially for the destructive emotions of anger and resentment.

For today: Self-honesty makes me feel good about myself.

Question: Where does dishonesty still exist in my life, threatening my peace of mind?

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

January 22

Nowhere can a man find a quieter or more untroubled retreat than in his own soul.

Marcus Aurelius

Am I too caught up in external priorities—achievements and acquisitions that have nothing to do with my spiritual wellbeing? A good antidote is to take time each day to free my mind of such concerns, let my thoughts wander, perhaps into thankfulness for my new life, into awareness of myself as a being created by God, in exploration of ways I can be useful to another person.

My innermost being is a retreat where I can reach out to my Higher Power, renew my spirit and nourish my life.

For today: I need no formal knowledge to pray and meditate, just a conscious effort to open myself to whatever comes.

Question: When and where can I take time for prayer and meditation today?

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

January 23

The individual never asserts himself more than when he forgets himself.

André Gide

Before I found OA, my theme song was I, I, I, played to the tune of me, me, me. Not knowing what I really needed, I had to have what I wanted when I wanted it. With the twelve steps of recovery, I have stepped out of myself. The miracle of abstinence is greater than I am. Spirituality is the nurturing part of me, and as I practice the principles of the program, it becomes stronger, pushing away self-destructive motives. My life becomes spiritually centered instead of self-centered.

Like abstinence, the results I most ardently desire usually come about when I forget I'm supposed to be in charge.

For today: I do the tasks that are before me with a light heart and an incomparable sense of freedom, knowing that control of my life is in God's hands, not mine.

Question: What miracles have I experienced by letting go of outcomes?

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

January 24

Every man has his own courage, but is betrayed because he seeks in himself the courage of other persons.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

Other people always seemed better than me—more confident, more at ease, better able to deal with life’s problems. I only knew how I felt and how others looked.

When I came to OA I heard, “Don’t compare your inside with someone else’s outside” and “God does not make junk.” Each time I am aware of the tendency to put myself down, I affirm and follow through on my belief that I deserve the same credit I give to others. I treat myself as I would treat someone I love and respect.

For today: Liking myself, as God does, opens new doors, evokes a new spirit that gives me courage and makes room for true humility.

Question: When my self-esteem is low, what prayers and affirmations do I rely on to restore my self-respect?

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

January 25

If the blind lead the blind both shall fall into the ditch.

The Bible: Matthew

From diets to designs for living, I looked for direction to anyone and everyone who appeared to have solutions to my problems. But instead of answers I found new—and sometimes worse—problems, and in the end I lost a little more of what self-esteem I had.

I found independence when I came to Overeaters Anonymous. The self-honesty this program teaches enables me to trust my perceptions and listen to my feelings. I am no longer attracted to people who would have me believe they know what's best for me. My Higher Power is the only source from which I seek such knowledge.

For today: If I don't know which way to go, I turn the problem over to God in steps three and eleven, completely confident that the answer will come. I may discuss the matter with my sponsor and others whom I trust, but I give myself time to learn what God would have me do.

Question: When I face indecision, what actions will help me receive the answers I seek?

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

January 26

We suffer primarily not from our vices or our weaknesses, but from our illusions. We are haunted, not by reality, but by those images we have put in place of reality.

Daniel J. Boorstin

My life didn't match life as it was shown in movies, books, on TV. So I thought something was wrong and I had to fix it. That delusion led me to demoralization and despair.

Today, with OA's steps of recovery, I know illusions are an escape from reality and the price I pay for that escape is my illness. Reality is what is. Today, I do not have the illusion that I am the center of the universe, that I should try to make everyone love me, that my opinions are facts. My illusions are being replaced with enlightenment, my resentment with serenity, my anger with love.

For today: Staying in the real world is far less painful than hiding in food and fat.

Question: How have my illusions been replaced by life as it really is?

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

January 27

If we find nothing of interest where we are, we are likely to find little of lasting interest where we wish to go.

Edwin Way Teale

It is better over there—more action at that table, that group, that city, that country. Ah, if only I were there I'd feel better.

What an old idea! Where I live is inside; nothing on the outside changes that. Yes, I can find a distraction, a place to escape. But it won't last. Time now to look within; take an inventory, make an amends, a twelfth-step call. Wherever I go, Tibet or Timbuktoo, Mt. Everest or the moon, I take myself with me.

Do I like the company?

For today: Through this program, I am regaining the zest and enthusiasm for life that is my birthright.

Question: How does it feel to take time to look within and "know thyself"?

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

January 28

Self trust is the essence of heroism.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

In the years before OA, when I tried to fight my illness with willpower, I could seldom trust myself around food. As the disease progressed, the opinion I had of my “intestinal fortitude” fell lower and lower.

Self trust is yet another gift of the program that gives me freedom from obsession—and abstinence—one day at a time. Complete trust in myself is not always possible, but when it comes, self doubts disappear, furtive struggles and fears are gone. I treat myself with kindness and consideration, and my word to myself is as good as the commitments I make to others.

For today: I trust myself to be abstinent.

Question: How has sustained abstinence helped me to develop self-trust?

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

January 29

To be nobody but myself, in a world which is doing its best night and day to make me everybody else, means to fight the hardest battle which any human being can fight and never stop fighting.

E. E. Cummings

In OA I am getting to know myself. I no longer have to borrow from other people a way of thinking, looking or being. I am accepted for what I am, and in turn I can accept myself. I can be spontaneous. I can reach out and be close to others. Even when I am alone, if I am in touch with myself, I am not lonely.

To have the courage to be me, to accept myself without glossing over the truth: these are the goals toward which this program is directing me.

For today: In accepting myself as I am, I accept God's will for me today. Only through self-acceptance am I able to change.

Question: What is there about me that is courageous?

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

January 30

The best part of our lives we pass in counting on what is to come.

William Hazlitt

What a waste. A life of expecting and waiting. Was the event ever as good as the anticipation? Seldom. Disappointment gave me climate to complain, reason to brood—and to seek relief in food.

In OA, I am in today—now, this minute—which is the only reality. Yesterday is a memory, tomorrow is not here. I will appreciate this minute for what it is. I will be conscious of a life outside myself so I can hear its sounds, feel its warmth and coolness, know another's presence. Fear disappears, control vanishes; I let go and let God direct my life.

For today: In OA, I am regaining the capacity for simple enjoyment I once had: to explore, to accept, to trust and delight in present-moment pleasures as a child does.

Question: What actions can I take to live fully and delight in this day?

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

January 31

To say yes, you have to sweat and roll up your sleeves and plunge both hands into life up to the elbows. It is easy to say no, even if saying no means death.

Jean Anouilh

It takes no effort, no risk, no investment of myself to stand back and not participate. There is no chance of being disappointed. Oh yes, I can look on, criticize a little, give advice. Not today! Today I choose to shout YES to life, to take whatever comes my way—indeed, to go out of my way. By forgetting myself, I can feel and not be afraid, experience and not regret, make decisions and not worry. I throw old cautions to the wind—some may even call me foolhardy—but I know I am not alone; I have a Higher Power to keep me balanced.

For today: I put aside old habits of negativity so I can experience a new closeness to others, to the present, to myself. I exchange my “Yes, but” for “Why not?”

Question: How will I put aside my fears and say "yes" to life today?