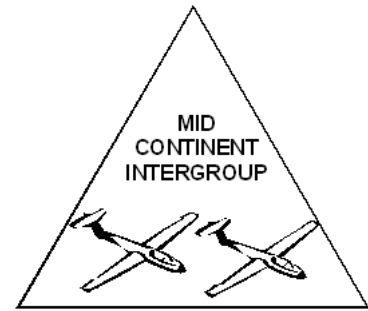


THE PILOT

MID-CONTINENT INTERGROUP
7701 E KELLOGG DR STE 835
WICHITA, KANSAS 67207-1767



January 2013

[The following article was retrieved from
<http://www.startribune.com/opinion/commentaries/183571151.html>
on 3 January 2013]

Overcoming Overeating

Article by: ANONYMOUS

Star Tribune Updated: December 15, 2012 - 9:22 PM

More scientists are calling it food addiction. Here, one addict talks about how he uses Overeaters Anonymous to manage it:

I am a food addict.

As the world's medical professionals grapple with the surging problem of obesity, they should take into account that there may be a lot of people out there like me.

We overeat year-round. But the holidays between Thanksgiving and New Year's are special. Our eating goes into overdrive.

I knew overeating was not good for me. I knew what was nutritious and what wasn't. Knowledge, however, availed me nothing.

I overate for emotional reasons, but I also had a voracious physical craving. I binged on candy, fried foods and just plain volume. Once started, the eating continued until I was in a food stupor. I didn't realize that my inability to stop could constitute an addiction.

Two-thirds of Americans are overweight, and one-third are obese. How many are food addicts? The science is relatively new, but the fact that the large majority of dieters regain their weight suggests the number could be quite large. Philip Werdell, director of professional training at the Food Addiction Institute in Sarasota, Fla., estimates that about half our obese population are food addicts.

I went on many diets over the years and topped out at 253 pounds, which for my frame was obese. But here's the kicker: Despite my food addiction, I no longer overeat. We call it "abstinence." After decades of big weight gains, I've been maintaining a healthy weight (170 to 175 pounds) since 2002.

Out of desperation to escape the agony of nightly overeating, I discovered an answer that worked for me: an Overeaters Anonymous program that uses the HOW format. HOW stands for honesty, openmindedness and willingness. The first step was a huge one: I admitted I was powerless over food.

The idea that overeating is an addiction has yet to gain general acceptance. A friend of mine once told me that the key to not overeating was to push oneself away from the dining-room table. Easier said than done; he was not a food addict.

In the scientific community, there's been a shift in thinking. In the early 1990s, there were only a handful of peer review articles suggesting that food substances can be addictive, Werdell says. "Today, we have move [replace with "more"] than 3,000 peer review

articles and books substantiating the scientific basis for food addiction.

"There's evidence," he says, "that some people have a predisposition to drugs and an addiction, and now there's evidence that some people who are overweight and eating out of control have the same genetic markers. Brain scans show that a person develops a weakness in the brain in the dopamine receptors, which change when a person drinks alcohol or eats sugar."

Dr. Nora D. Volkow, director of the National Institute on Drug Abuse, is outspoken on the subject. "I believe there is an addiction dimension to food intake," she said in an interview.

Whatever the cause, it's clear that food addicts' relationship with food is different from that of normal eaters.

Michelle Goldberger, program director of COR, a residential eating recovery program in Wayzata, says: "The food addict's body reacts differently to food than normal eaters, much like an alcoholic reacts differently to alcohol." But unlike alcoholics, who can quit drinking altogether, recovering overeaters still have to eat.

For an addict, says Goldberger, "once you put [food] in your body, you can't control the amount you take ... [Y]ou can't stop [overeating] for long without a 12-step program, which is a proven method. It works for addicts who have surrendered trying to do it on their own."

The 12-step program, based on the principles of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA), has been adopted by OA and other groups to combat addictions.

My food addiction went out of control 14 years ago. I lost 80 pounds on a commercial diet program, but found I could eat more if I also ran long distances. The more I ate, the more I ran—up to 40 miles per week—while I gorged myself with food. My evening meal alone, which could extend from 7 to 11 p.m., would frequently include a large plate of spaghetti and tomato sauce, half a pound of hamburger, nine or ten large pieces of fruit, a couple of large shots of bourbon, and seven or eight slices of bread with a lot of reduced-calorie margarine.

The quantities I consumed were hugely embarrassing, so I kept it a secret, even from my wife, who says she had little inkling how bad it was. My physician, Dr. Chris Armstrong, told me recently he was amazed at my stamina as a runner, until he realized I was simply racing against the food. Outsiders were impressed by my exercise, not knowing why I was doing it.

•••

Out of options, I walked into my first OA meeting, one using the HOW format, and found myself in a roomful of overeaters. What struck me was how many of them were losing weight with little or no exercise. There were overeaters, anorexics, bulimics and exercise bulim[i]cs like me.

OA is not a do-it-yourself program. In HOW, we create a food plan with the help of a dietitian. We call our sponsor every day to report what we are going to eat, and we stick to it. My binge foods, including sugar and potato chips, became history. I get a good-sized meal, but everything is weighed and measured precisely, according to my food plan.

I have met hundreds of people in the Twin Cities who have lost 50, 100 or several hundred pounds using the HOW format, and have kept the weight off. Werde, who besides the Food Addiction Institute oversees ACORN Food Addiction Recovery Services, said he has counseled about 4,000 people with eating disorders. He says he's referred about 80 percent of them to HOW programs or other structured 12-step food addiction programs.

"Food addiction is a progressive disease," he says. For some who are not yet in a final, desperate stage, he recommends a traditional OA meeting where the serenity they gain from a 12-step program can stop their emotional overeating.

Traditional OA has kept Sarah, a fellow member of OA in the Twin Cities, from bingeing on sugary foods like cookies, candies and cakes for 22 years, she told me. "I don't need the precise nature of the HOW program, but I like that it's there," she says. "It's important that there are meetings that meet everyone's needs."

Theresa Wright, a dietitian from Norristown, Pa., says, "One of things that helped create the food addiction was the behavior of using certain foods to manage feelings." That can become a habit, she says, and "at some point the body may change and the absence of those foods causes a kind of physical or emotional pain.

"For some people, traditional OA is enough to manage the problem. Perhaps their illness has not advanced as far. Others need a more-structured program. In both cases, the spiritual growth process of the 12 steps is essential. I believe people should do whatever works to bring them to a sense of peace and healing, and I believe that is an individual choice."

•••

Twelve-step programs recommend that people do a "fearless moral inventory." We write down our resentments and our role in the conflicts that produce them and disclose this confidentially to another person, often our sponsor. We make amends to those we have harmed, except when to do so would hurt them or others. These steps are necessary to clean up our side of the street. Without resolving them, we can drift back into our addiction.

We addicts suffer from the misconception that we are the center of the universe. So, we're also encouraged to find a power greater than ourselves that can help us as we struggle to recover. For some, that high power is God, as one understands God. For others, it can be the group or a value system.

Joining a 12-step group was a recognition that my efforts to stop overeating had failed. "If you could have done it by yourself, you would have done it already," says Wright.

Dr. Armstrong says a key reason OAers can succeed is that they get positive vibes by reaching out to other overeaters, reinforcing their own recovery.

Bill Wilson, the cofounder of Alcoholics Anonymous, stressed how reaching out to others could keep him sober. Stuck in a hotel in Akron, fearful of getting drunk again, he sought out another alcoholic to help. It was Dr. Bob Smith. Together, they formed the AA fellowship and started the 12-step movement.

There are about 60 weekly OA meetings in Minnesota, 13 using the HOW format. Food addictions may appear to be in remission, but the addiction does not go away. That's why we keep going to meetings and do 12-step work within the program. We're all just one bite away from a binge, staying abstinent one day at a time.

It's nice to no longer live in hiding and denial. I have far better relationships with my wife and adult children, having made amends to them. I've also made good friends in the OA program, people I'd never have met were it not for our shared addiction. And I've become more empathetic to other points of view and far less prone to anger.

I'm no saint, of course, and like others in the program, I conduct a nightly review to see if I've developed new resentments and if I owe

someone an apology. It's nice to feel "clean," no longer haunted by the food cravings and monstrous portions that left me overstuffed, guilty and ashamed.

If you think you may be one of us, stop in at a meeting. There are no dues. We pass the hat, and you can throw in \$2 or \$3, but it is not obligatory. And you will be anonymous.

To find an Overeaters Anonymous meetings in Minnesota that are near you, including meetings with the HOW format, go to overeaters.org and click on "Find a meeting."

The author of this commentary is an employee of the Star Tribune and a member of Overeaters Anonymous. He is writing this article without a byline because a basic tenet of OA is that members maintain their anonymity in the media

Literature Selection ~ *Twenty-Four Hours a Day* ~ 1 January

Thought for the Day

When I came into A.A., was I a desperate person? Did I have a soul-sickness? Was I so sick of myself and my way of living that I couldn't stand looking at myself in a mirror? Was I really for A.A.? Was I ready to try anything that would help me to get sober and to get over my soul-sickness? *Should I ever forget the condition I was in?*

Meditation for the Day

In the new year, I will live one day at a time. I will make each day one of preparation for better things ahead. I will not dwell on the past or the future, only on the present. I will bury every fear of the future, all thoughts of unkindness and bitterness, all my dislikes, my resentments, my sense of failure, my disappointments in others and in myself, my gloom and my despondency. I will leave all these things buried and go forward, in this new year, into a new life.

Prayer for the Day

I pray that God will guide me one day at a time in the new year. I pray that for each day, God will supply the wisdom and the strength that I need.

o o o o o o o o o o o o o o o o

Literature Selection ~ *For Today* ~ 1 January

"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: *I give up trying to handle my food and my weight.*

Literature Selection ~ Seeking the Spiritual Path, p. 29 f.

Living Every Day as It Comes

New Year’s Day has always been difficult for me. I would make a zillion resolutions and break them all within a week. Loving weight was always at the very top of the list, of course. Sound familiar? Now I see the insanity of it all. A compulsive person has no business making resolutions. Why? Why can’t I be like the rest of the world in this respect? After three years in recovery, the answer is clear to me.

When I make resolutions, I am taking back control over the most important things in my life. This immediately puts me in a vulnerable position, because taking my life in my own hands means I must let go of God’s hand. When I take control away from God, my recovery is at risk. My program begins to unravel. Emotional and physical abstinence become more elusive the harder I try to hang on to them. It’s a cycle I know well.

Now I know I have another choice. First, I don’t have to make New Year’s Day such a big deal. Like all holidays, New Year’s is filled with hype, but I can choose how to participate. I can simply acknowledge that the old year is coming to a close and a new one is here. I take a moment to thank my Higher Power for all he’s done for me in the past year; it’s a good time for a gratitude list. I use to spend New Year’s Eve dwelling on my failures and planning how I could “do better” next year. This time, I can dwell on the good things and be grateful for them.

Next, instead of making empty resolutions such as “lose weight,” “be a nicer person” or “manage money more wisely,” I can simply renew my commitment to my recovery program, to my Higher Power, and to the Twelve Steps. By working the Steps, I know my life will be just as it’s supposed to be.

This year when someone asks what resolutions I’ve made, I can smile and say, “Oh, I’ve made only one, and that is to not make any resolutions.” I can go about my new year doing the things my Higher Power has for me to do. I have no way of knowing what’s in store for me, and today I am thankful for that. I take joy in living every day as it comes—with tears, laughter, love—and I’m so glad to leave the rest to God. Happy New Year. Happy New Life!

~ Colorado USA

Literature Selection ~ Lifeline Sampler, p. 112-113.

Who’s Weak Willed?

Normal people think we overeaters are weak willed.

We know better. I, for one, am very strong willed. As a matter of fact, that is my real problem, not the food. It’s what I, with my unyielding determination, choose to do with the food that kills me. That’s why the program does not work for me until I choose (i.e. am *willing*) to work the program.

Some OAs take the first step and use it as an excuse for continuing to practice their compulsion. But it is not enough to admit that I am driven to compulsive overeating and that it is destroying me physically, mentally and spiritually. That is the necessary first step, of course, but there are eleven more steps after that.

When the fog begins to lift and I see that my path is leading me to the cliff’s edge, it’s time to change course. But which path to follow? I know all the diets and all about proper nutrition, so why can’t I just do it?

Fact one is that I do not behave rationally around food. I have to admit that I don’t know all the answers and that I can’t change myself without help. The answers and strength must come from outside myself.

That is step two.

What a blow to the ego that admission can be for some of us! But it is this leveling process that gives me success. I stop playing God.

If I know of a path that can lead me to the good things in life such as physical health, positive thinking and true spiritual serenity and I wisely decide to follow that path, then I have taken step three. This is giving up my old self-destructive “I’ll do it my way” attitude and accepting a new and beautiful way of life.

The only spiritual belief I need at this point is that the OA program is an infinitely better one than my own. It is my will again that makes this decision.

My will is at work throughout all of the following steps and my sustained abstinence. I alone choose to either put the food in my body or use the tools and the program. Every time I make these choices. At every meal, through every between-meal temptation, I choose: Revive the old self-destructive ego or follow the OA program.

Weak-willed compulsive overeaters? No way. ~ July 1980

Literature Selection ~ Voices of Recovery ~ 12 January

“Each morning brings a new surrender, a new admission of powerlessness, and a new commitment to abstinence through Steps One, Two, and Three. It is a quiet time, a new beginning, a new day.”

~ Lifeline Sampler, p. 69

How am I going to spend today? Will I waste it by looking at my past mistakes, or by daydreaming about what the future may hold? Living in today is often difficult. Once I let go of yesterday and tomorrow, I can live today to its fullest. Planning and dreaming will not change what my Higher Power has in store for me tomorrow, so I will turn that over and rest in the knowledge that I will be taken care of. This frees me to accept the gift of the present. It is what I do today that really matters. I can only be happy by spending today gratefully accepting who I am, what I have, and what I can do in this moment to better myself. Today will eventually become tomorrow, without my worrying or interfering with my Higher Power’s plans. Let me live as if tomorrow is just another word in the dictionary. Let me live in today.

oooooooooooo

SKY PILOT’S “FUEL” FOR FLIGHT

Realization is achieved by action. This does not mean here that only fussing and straining will yield results. The meaning is rather: “Action is the ultimate realization of the person who acts.” That is to say, only by acting does man achieve the fullness of his reality.

~ Josef Pieper

ASK Anna Nimity

Dear Anna,

I am new to OA. I have met members in my group who have been in the program for 15 or 20 years or more. I was expecting to get this problem taken care of and move on. Why would anyone hang around so long? Are they just slow learners?

Soon to be Cured

Dear *Soon to be Cured*,

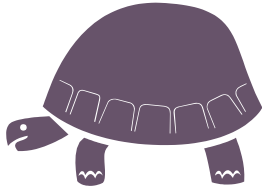
The disease of compulsive overeating, like most addictions, gets worse over time if left unchecked. The Big Book tells us that our recovery is a daily reprieve based on the maintenance of a fit spiritual condition. Many members find that attending meetings regularly is essential to keeping that fit spiritual condition.

It is common that at first we go to OA meetings because we feel we *have* to; as recovery progresses, we go to meetings because we *want* to. So no, those long-time members are not slow learners—they are enjoying continuous long-term recovery through regular fellowship with other OA members. Keep coming back—you may be amazed at how those first few meetings turn into years and years of wonderful recovery.

Yours in humble service,
Anna.

Myrtle the Turtle:

Strive to keep the physical, emotional and mental aspects of life in harmony and balance.



“BIG BOOK” READING LIST FOR January 2013

1	Doctor’s Opinion	17	63-71
2	289	18	348
3	171	19	501
4	382	20	XI-XXIV
5	72-80	21	Make a plan of action
6	80-88	22	522
7	328	23	470
8	246	24	30-37
9	446	25	37-43
10	388	26	375
11	Gratitude List	27	494
12	486	28	437
13	151	29	553
14	531	30	232-239
15	476	31	239-245
16	58-63		

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Next Intergroup Meeting 8 January 2013 @ 6:30 PM

Intergroup Office: 7701 E Kellogg Dr Ste 835

All are welcome!

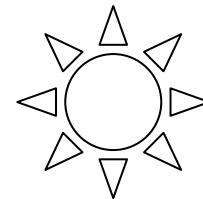
www.oawichita.org

Mid-Continent Intergroup

No Treasurer’s Report for month ending 30 November 2012

Checking:

Beginning Balance (8/1/12)			\$
Donations			
Mon (10:00 a.m.)	\$		
Mon (7:30 p.m.)	\$		
Wed BB (5:30 p.m.)	\$		
Fri (noon)	\$		
Sat (9:30 a.m.)	\$		
Sat (1:30 p.m.)	\$		
Anonymous Donations	\$		
Share-A-Thon	\$		
Corrective Adjustment	\$		
Total Donations			\$ _____
Expenditures			
Rent	\$		
OA WSO	\$		
OA Region IV	\$		
Telephone	\$		
Total Expenditures			\$ _____
Net (Donations – Expenditures)			\$ _____
Ending Balance (8/31/12)			\$ _____
Publicity Budget (Fall ’11)	\$	\$	\$
Prudent Reserve (12/31/11)	\$		\$



MID-CONTINENT INTERGROUP OFFICERS

(Terms are 2 years in duration, and are limited to 2 consecutive terms per position)

- Chairperson: Deb S 316-734-6790 (2nd term, ’11)
- Vice Chair: Laura L 316-687-5904 (2nd term, ’12)
- Secretary: Barb H 316-733-2136 (1st term, ’12)
- Treasurer: Jane V 316-558-1625 (1st term, ’11)
- Literature: Jill C 316-371-2045 (1st term, ’11)
- Pilot Editor: Bruce C 316-630-0863 (1st term, ’12)
- Parliam.: [unfilled]

All officers are willing to lend an ear for your concerns, comments and questions! Please thank them for their generous service to OA!