FOREWORD

A Zest for Living  By Rozanne S., OA's cofounder

A new day was beginning. The early morning sky was blue; the breeze fresh and crisp. Suddenly my phone rang.

“'Oh, Rozanne!” the caller cried. “What shall I do? I’ve been in and out of OA for twelve years, but I only have one foot in the OA door. Meetings are so boring; eating plans are confusing. I still have to lose twenty pounds, but I don’t seem to be able to do it. I’m not really happy inside. How do you maintain your enthusiasm about OA and the program?’

How indeed. This was a serious, thought-provoking question. What happens to us after we’ve been in OA for a period of time? Is inventory-taking becoming too much trouble? Does our prayer and meditation time grow stale? Is our carefully crafted food plan turning into the same old thing each day? Is it easier to go to a movie than to a meeting? Do the speakers all begin to sound alike?

Sometimes we find ourselves resting on our laurels. Maybe we’ve been at a normal weight for quite awhile. Family relations may be smoother. Our job situation is finally stable. The threat to our health from overweight is diminishing. We no longer overreact to every little thing. OA becomes one same old happening after another.

What happened to that pink cloud feeling we had as new-comers? It was so exciting; everything was new and hopeful. Recovery could be ours! Where did that euphoria go?

Perhaps we can’t maintain that ecstatic newness forever, but we can find something even better—a joyous appreciation of life without excess food.

What steps can we take to maintain a zest for living no matter how long we’ve been in OA, no matter what life throws at us?

First we must remember what it was like during the depths of our overeating. Hopelessness and despair were our constant companions. Frustration and rage overwhelmed us. Life scarcely seemed worth living.

Next we must realize that, with God’s help, our dark past is our greatest possession—the key to maintaining our own happiness while bringing joy and peace of mind to others. We must share our experience and talk about our recovery honestly. Let’s give other overeaters hope that, if recovery happened to us, it can happen to them.

Each day we make an effort to “act as if.” As we go about our daily activities, we smile. When someone asks, “How are you?” we answer, “Fine.” This is not intended as a denial of our feelings. Rather the very act of affirming we are okay banishes self-pity and makes us feel better. A positive life becomes reality.

This doesn’t eliminate the need for inventories, for clearing away the wreckage of the past and sweeping up the emotional debris of the present. What is this attitude does engender is the feeling of “my glass is half-full” instead of “what’s the use—my glass is half-empty.”

Most important of all, before rushing into each new day, let’s center ourselves with the Higher Power of our choice. According to the Third Step, we make a decision to turn our lives and our wills over to the care of God as we understand God. What a relief!

Now we can relax and enjoy life.

In the end that attitude is what this program is all about. During my initial recovery thirty-one years ago, two later relapses and my current recovery in OA, I learned that life doesn’t have to be full of tears. I don’t have to be a victim of my past. I can take responsibility for my present and approach my future with anticipation and excitement.

I can be gentle with myself where my feelings are concerned and firm with myself when it comes to my daily food intake. Being at a normal weight is terrific; enjoying life each day is a positive challenge.

Recovery is a journey, not a destination. Let’s take that trip together. The “Road of Happy Destiny” mentioned in the “Big Book” can be trudged, but it can also be walked, skipped and run.

How do you want to live the rest of your life? The choice is yours.

A NEW BEGINNING