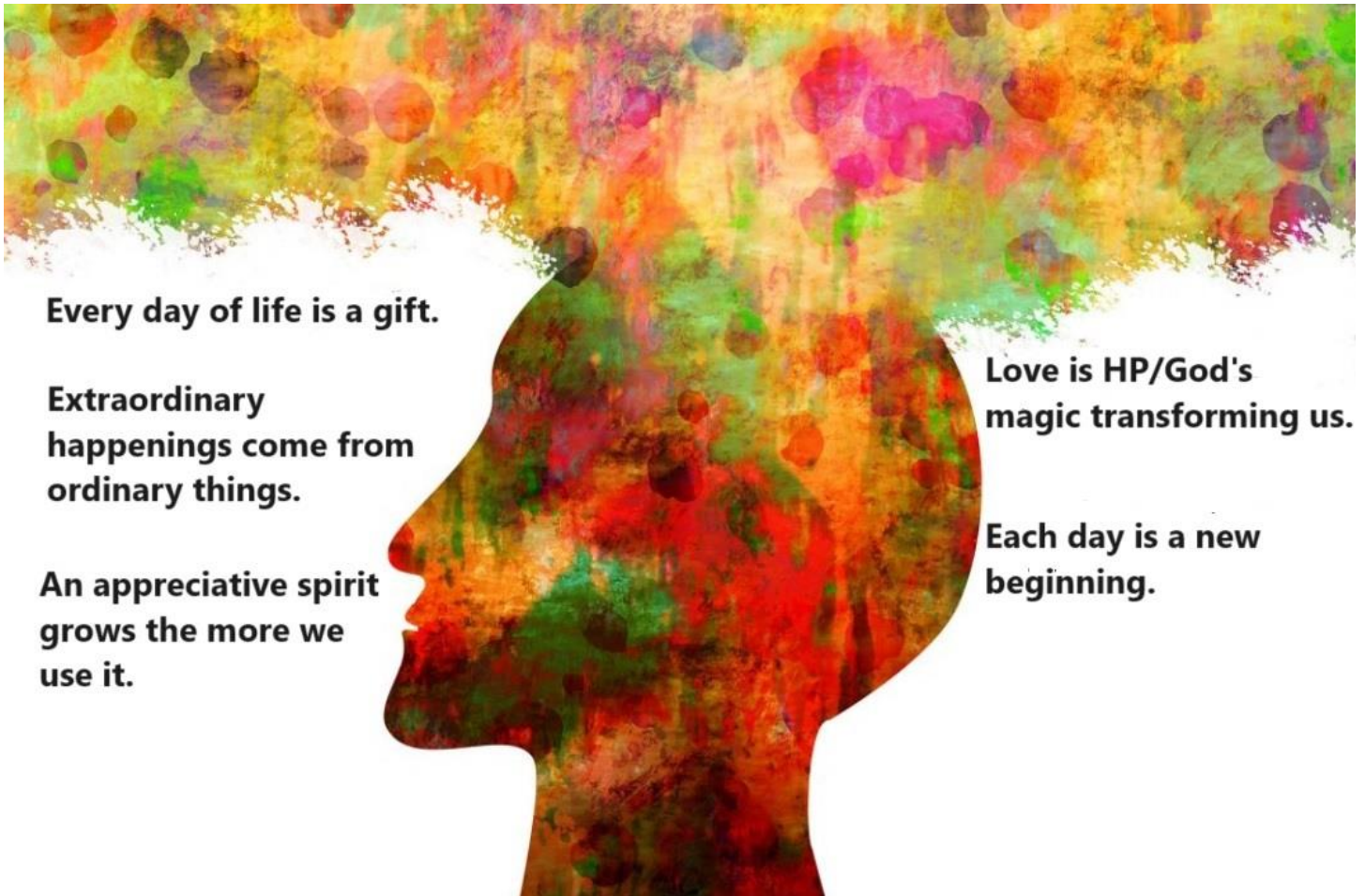


IDEA Day 2023 – GRATITUDE IN ACTION



Every day of life is a gift.

Extraordinary happenings come from ordinary things.

An appreciative spirit grows the more we use it.

Love is HP/God's magic transforming us.

Each day is a new beginning.

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to IDEA DAY 2023 – Gratitude in Action! My name is Jill, and I am a grateful compulsive eater and food addict. As defined in OA.org: IDEA Day is: International Day Experiencing Abstinence (IDEA). It is celebrated every year on the third full weekend (Friday included) in November. IDEA Day encourages OA members worldwide to begin or reaffirm their abstinence from compulsive overeating. Our theme for today's IDEA Day event is Gratitude in Action. We will hear from 4 of our members on their experiences with these five topics: Every Day of Life is a Gift, Extraordinary Happenings Come from Ordinary Things, An Appreciative Spirit Grows the More We Use It, Love is HP/God's Magic Transforming Us and Each Day is a New Beginning.

Topic 1: Every Day of Life is a Gift

Hi Friends, my name is Bibi. I am a grateful recovering compulsive overeater. Before I start my topic, which is: Every Day of Life is a Gift, I want to mention that I refer to my HP/Higher Power as God. That's my personal preference. You are welcome to hear it as you choose- Source, Universe, whatever. No matter what has happened before- good, bad or mediocre, the next moment, the next day is a gift with a NEW blank SLATE. I get to wake up and say to God – THANK YOU FOR THE GIFT of waking me up once more – of getting to breathe once again, of seeing the Sun rise, of hearing my Bonita doggie snoring. Of feeling her spooning me in my safe beautiful home facing the water and of no bombs going off.

I roll out of bed each morning onto my knees. I ask God to EMPTY ME OUT of all my loose ends and inner junk to make room for HIM. Then, I ask God to fill me up with His Love, His Protection and His Guidance for the present – the gift of today. And the 3rd part of my morning prayer is to: Ask God to send me on my way doing the Services He has in mind for me this Glorious Day. I Always end with – God's Will – Not Mine – Be Done, Amen.

I'm so aware and grateful for all I have and don't have in my life. I trust God for Everything – even though I might not understand at the time – for example why I got another chronic autoimmune illness after Jesse died – I don't know – yet I still had the Faith revealed and that I would better understand down the road. And that did come in time, to fruition on many levels – I have so much Gratitude for what my autoimmune illness has taught me and the gifts keep coming.

For example: today I accept that one of the components of Epstein Barr Virus is Chronic Fatigue. So, I end my day early because I don't want to have an autoimmune flare up. I put my phone and myself to bed at 7/7:30 pm and call it a Good God Day.

I am also exquisitely discerning about avoiding stress – people, places and things – including politics. I used to be a Human Doer before my diagnosis. Now... I'm a Human Being and exercise way more self-care. Only God can do for me what I can not do for myself. And if I can do it – God lets me with His Guidance.

In general – I find that in my growing recovery, how I say things is more in alignment with my God Given Gratitude. I no longer say: I HAVE TO or I NEED TO. I say: I GET TO because I recognize it is a Gift.

Like the Gifts of – I GET TO start each day – talking with my sponsees, talking with my Sponsor, doing my reading with my daily OA buddy, read and then write to my Voices of Recovery Group and of course pray and meditate.

Now!!! I'm ready to start my day in partnership with my God.

Topic 2: Extraordinary Happenings Come from Ordinary Things

Good morning! My name is Peggy H. I am a compulsive overeater and a sugar addict. This morning I would like to speak about this concept.

After many failures in other weight and food management programs I presented myself to OA. I believe it was a grace from God to bring me in to these circles and I came in with an open frame of mind and I was willing to listen.

What I received was a warm welcome, phone numbers were made available, time- tested literature was presented and there was sublime honesty!!!

(spoken) I am grateful, I am thankful!!!!

I began to weave meetings into my life. Hope and recovery began to wash over me. I prioritized my health and my needs.

With zoom meetings there is an abundance of meetings, many different types of meetings, various time slots and great geographic availability.

(spoken) I am grateful, I am thankful!!!

My self-concept begins to alter. I become more confident. I am better able to deal with life's problems. I have a new courage, I can more easily approach a stranger, I smile more often, offer help to others and listen more attentively.

I am wisely counseled. "don't compare your insides to someone else's outside. God does not make junk.

(spoken) I am grateful, I am thankful!

A higher power, my god begins to order my life. As the father of Greek tragedy Aeschulus said, "when a man's willing and eager God joins in."

(quoted in for today.)

A power greater than me propels my days, it may be god, a higher power, the oa group....whatever I choose. I turn my life over to this entity on a daily basis.

(chanted) I am grateful, I am thankful!!!

I cease ruminating about past failures...future fears. The now of life takes over my focus.

My OA buddies, our literature. The big book, the 12 and 12, for today and voices of recovery pull me up by my bootstraps. I live one day at a time.

(chanted) I am grateful, I am thankful!!!

Ralph Waldo Emerson said, "a friend is a person with whom I may be sincere. Before him I may speak aloud." (for today)

I select a sponsor, an OA coach who can lead me through the mystery of the 12 steps of alcoholic anonymous....this long- tested program of recovery, a day at a time.

(chanted) I am grateful, I am thankful!!!)

I find that I am not spending money on expensive sweets, fast foods, double servings. I have extra grocery money.

I linger in the produce section, I research unknown fruits and vegetables, selecting colorful offerings. Vegetables become a priority and lean proteins and appropriate carbohydrates are in my shopping cart.

(chant) I am grateful, I am thankful!!!

I begin to show my gratitude by doing service. I volunteer to be a "meeting rep." And I volunteer to help on committees. I am asked to be a sponsor and guide another member in this beautiful 12 step program to the best of my ability.

I learn so much from these experiences. I'm truly enriched on a daily basis.

(chant) I am grateful, I am thankful!!!

So indeed! Extraordinary things happen from ordinary things.

I invite questions and sharing now.....

"I kiss the sun, and hug the sky,
with you, my love, my higher power,

We will live this love together,

hand and hand,

As we walk this beautiful program,

One day at a time!

Thank you for letting me be of service and thank you for your time in attendance.

Topic 3: An Appreciative Spirit Grows the More We Use It

Hello, I'm Jill, a grateful compulsive eater and food addict. My topic is "AN APPRECIATIVE SPIRIT GROWS THE MORE WE USE IT". I'm going to talk about some of the many ways my appreciative spirit is used. Then I will look at how I can tell that it is growing.

The first way I use my appreciative spirit is to live in the moment. VOR pg 20 says: "OA tells us to stay in the moment. Yesterday is the past, tomorrow our future, today our present - a present from my HP to be enjoyed one minute at a time. I am learning to stop and smell the roses, take notice of my surroundings and have gratitude."

The next way I use my appreciative spirit is in Prayer. VOR pg 11 says "I thank God for my abstinence and my recovery" and FT pg 78 says "Thanking God every day is as necessary for me as breathing."

Another way to use my appreciative spirit is to give thanks. There are so many ways to be thankful: daily gratitudes is one way. Sometimes, I make a gratitude list and when I do this as part of my daily routine it is a great way to exercise my appreciative spirit.

Another way I am thankful is when I recognize miracles. FT p 146 says "There are many miracles in Overeaters Anonymous. It is a miracle that I am abstinent today, that I have the courage and faith to turn over the running of my life to God. It is a miracle that others who suffer from my illness have provided a place for me to go where I am accepted just as I am. And it is a miracle I have a path to follow that restores me to sanity."

I also give thanks by recognizing blessings. FT pg 174 says "The fact that I am here at all is a blessing." It also says "The fact that I no longer have to compulsively overeat is a supreme blessing indeed. Continuing the way I was going, I might not still be around today. That makes each day a gift." I like what FT pg 342 says about blessings: "One of the greatest blessings a compulsive overeater can hope for is a capacity for awe: to be filled with a sense of mingled wonder, gratitude and reverence for that awesome Power in each of us that heals us of suffering no human skill or medicine could touch, and turns around the most wretched of lives. For those who are so blessed, the first priority of each day is to give thanks."

The next way I use my appreciative spirit is by doing service. FT p 146 says "Perhaps now is the time to express my gratitude by offering what talents I have in service to OA." I learned early in program, that there are many benefits to doing service such as building self-esteem, feeling a part of the fellowship and making close friends amongst service-fellows.

The final way I came up with to use my appreciative spirit is by doing something called "esteemable acts." Early in my program, I learned that esteemable acts are effective at building my self-esteem. These can be something as simple as picking up the phone, perhaps calling a newcomer, or any action of self-care, for example, flossing my teeth.

After looking at ways I use my appreciative spirit, I think it's important to identify how I can tell that it is growing. VOR pg 20 says "OA is teaching me to slow down, breathe deeply, pray like crazy and trust. I

can trust my HP, the principles of OA and myself because I am becoming trustworthy.” FT p 111 says
“There is no greater triumph than feeling good about myself – not because of acquisitions or recognition, but because I have come to like myself, to accept and feel at peace with myself. It is for this reason that many members of OA say they are grateful to be compulsive overeaters. They have passed from the defeat of incurable illness to an inner tranquility that is entirely independent of any outside condition. Beside such a triumph, all the achievements and possessions of a lifetime pale to insignificance.” And finally, I think the perfect way to express my appreciative spirit is in FT pg. 267
“Thank God for what I was, and what I have become.”

Topic 4: Love is HP/God's Magic Transforming Us

Good morning, my name is Roz. I am a very grateful recovering compulsive overeater and addict. I am not grateful for the disease, but grateful for its recovery. I have told you who I am and what I am. Nothing will change, except that which I am willing to change. I do not allow food to master me. It did. It was my master and I was its slave. No more, a day at a time, please G-D, keep me free. My topic is love and how my Higher Power, whom I choose to call G-d, has transformed me into a more loving and more open minded person happy with her life. My life prior to program ended on November 3, 1983, when I walked through the doors of this life saving program.

I had lived a life filled with fear, guilt, shame, negativity, grief, panic attacks and low or no self esteem, smiling outwardly to the world, but weeping inside. I checked off the first message I heard: I had a disease of fear, doubt and insecurity, which had manifested itself in the way of compulsive overeating. It was not a moral issue. Those 2 sentences were so powerful. I was just getting free of 10 years of panic attacks. I had recently been diagnosed with seriously high blood pressure. Oh, whoa I thought, that meant either death at age 38 or a stroke, making it hard on my 3 young children. I thought it was okay to be fat, grossly obese, or morbidly obese, all listed on my medical records, as long as I was healthy. I was not healthy anymore. I was scared every day of my life.

I wanted and needed to be liked and/or loved, so I did everything asked of me. Today, I pick and choose what is good for me and does it support my recovery. Program gave me solutions to follow. One solution was to find a Power greater than myself. One problem: my negative, fearful mother had drummed into the family not to trust anyone. I don't know whether she included G-D. So about 6 weeks into program, I challenged G-D. I stated that if I was truly to believe and trust, I needed the most important happening in my life to go away and disappear. I had food thoughts that never left, even after I put down the problem foods. My head was constantly filled, not to my liking. So I asked this Power to please remove the thoughts for 10 minutes and I timed it. Gone. Not wanting to believe it may be permanent, I added more minutes. Gone. It took days for my study, but the food thoughts have never returned. Now I trust. I have a very strong relationship with G-D. I pray to G-D, I talk to G-D, I even invite G-D to be with me for medical procedures.

It is a privilege to be in this program of recovery. With this privilege there is also the responsibility to pass it on, which I do through my service.

I love me today. I love life today. Each day I state I choose to be happy today. Please put people in my life to support my happiness. Again, I ask, I get. Do I want relief or do I want recovery? Part time or full time? No fooling around for me. That first bite may bring me up to 304 pounds again. I am humbled by all I have learned in OA. I have been transformed into a patient, tolerant, and understanding person, who is nonjudgmental. Without change there is no change. Besides loving myself, I ask the young Roz to forgive me for not having the strength to fight off the bullies who emotionally beat me regarding my weight.

My first sponsor taught me the GAS of this program: Gratitude, Abstinence, and Service. If I practice all 3, I will stay here for the miracles I am promised. As it has been 40 years since I entered this program, my first sponsor was correct.

It is very difficult for me to do the footwork, turn it over and allow G-D to take care of the results. I believe that something magical does happen when I believe, trust, and act in faith that G-D will take care of me. That is true gratitude.

Topic 5: Each Day is a New Beginning

BIBI

On pages 25 and 26 of AA's 12&12 – It talks about coming into Program and thinking it's important to accept and do what the Program suggests: Like: accepting some kind of Poer Great than myself or putting down one's drug of choice.

The Literature says that as a Newcomer He/She is then probably told by their Sponsor: Take it Easy. The hoop you have to jump through is a LOT WIDER than you THINK. It goes on to say "He/She Got Through with room to spare."

This tells me that Program offers us a NEW BEGINNING every moment. Our Program is Expansive, Inclusive, Understanding, and Compassionate – NO ONE IS EVER KICKED OUT.

We can pick ourselves up – With the Fellowship & Start a NEW BEGINNING.

Remember: this is a WE Program – Not to be done Alone.

PEGGY

"I kiss the sun, and hug the sky,
with you, my love, my higher power,
We will live this love together,
hand and hand,
As we walk this beautiful program,
One day at a time!

Thank you for letting me be of service and thank you for your time in attendance.

JILL

Hi again! I've found that the saying "each day is a new beginning" is a real stress reliever. I don't have to worry if I do not measure up today because tomorrow offers me a do-over. Another chance to start fresh and do better than the day before. Early in my program I was in very bad shape physically, emotionally and spiritually. Whole days would go by when I could barely do anything that I considered to be productive. I was taught that I did not need to stress over this because to have a good day, all I had to do is to be abstinent. In the event I could not do even this, all I need do is wake up fresh the next day knowing that each day is a new beginning – a new chance to have an abstinent day.

ROZ

Each day is a new beginning. My worth as a human being and my happiness are not measured in money or in what I own. It comes from my usefulness to myself and others.

I get to wake up with fresh ideas for a new start on the day. I meditate. I pray. I listen to the still quiet voice of my Higher Power, my G-D, to direct me to goodness and patience. I do not have to start my day with step zero, which is stop the pain. My day begins anew with the proclamation: I am powerless over people, places, foods, and things, that my life has become unmanageable. That is step1. Step 2 lets me say I did come to believe that a Power greater than myself can restore me to sanity. In step 3 I daily make a decision to turn my will and my life over to this Power's care. I end with the statement: I DO turn my life and will over to You.

My faith in the reality of G-d grows stronger every day. Each day that I ask G-d to remind me I am a compulsive overeater reaffirms my belief that G-D loves me and my day gets better. Thank you G-D for all You have given me, thank You for removing what was meant to be removed, and thank You for loving me as I am.
