

# My Spiritual Awakening

My spiritual awakening began slowly with a simple acknowledgement that I was not doing well, which is an understatement. Although I kept trudging along, I was exhausted mentally and emotionally, and having physical problems, which I could no longer ignore. What came after was a period of giving up. I'd like to say it was because I did not know what I should do, but that would be a lie. I knew what I needed to do, lose weight, but just couldn't do it anymore. I was powerless.

At the "end of my rope" I walked into an OA meeting room. Frightened and apprehensive, because I knew from a past AL-ANON experience that I would need to deal with the whole "God thing." That was a huge stumbling block. There was a lot of trepidation on my part, but I had already decided that I would keep an open mind about this whole "God thing." As I walked through the door, the full force of acceptance, kindness, welcoming smiles, and even a few hugs greeted me. Little did I know at the time that my heart was being opened. My spiritual awakening began at this first meeting when the end of *Our Invitation to You* was read. "If you decide you are one of us, we welcome you with open arms. Whatever your circumstances, we offer you the gift of acceptance. You are not alone anymore. Welcome to Overeaters Anonymous. Welcome home!" I sobbed.

Hearing these words was a moment of acknowledgement. What happened during this meeting was a profound realization that I was loved and accepted, as is, unconditionally. This realization reminded me of what I had been saying for years. A dog's love is unconditional. She doesn't care what you look like, what your race or ethnicity is, whether you're rich or poor, what religion you practice, or whether you brushed your hair that morning. I would always say, "this must be what God's love is like," but I never believed that for myself or that I was worthy of that kind of love. Feeling the unconditional love in the OA meeting room that day was transformative, so began my journey of spiritual awakening.

Since then, there has been lots of ups & downs (especially at first). However, as I continued to attend meetings, found a sponsor, worked through the 12 steps, read, wrote, prayed & meditated, I awakened spiritually a little more each day.

1. No longer do I have a "God thing" going on. I've made peace with God, which has enabled me to make peace with myself.
2. I can't believe that I actually look forward to talking with my Higher Power every morning and evening. Also knowing that at any moment during my day, I can check in with Her for guidance, just to say "hello", or to say "thanks" allows me to stay focused on my daily recovery.
3. My emotions are more balanced. No more (or rarely) do I experience those crazy mood swings where I'd go from high to low or low to high in three split seconds. I am so much more patient.
4. Because I can now love and accept myself just as I am today in this moment, I find myself more loving and accepting of others. I am less judgmental.
5. My Higher Power is filling up the emptiness that I had always felt before, not the food. With each breath I take, I am breathing in my Higher Power's essence. It fills and sustains me, making me whole.

I'm so grateful for these past two years. Now I look forward to each new day and what it might bring. Knowing that by working the 12 steps, using the OA tools, and having a personal relationship with my High Power, I can live in recovery, one day at a time.

-Laural R.