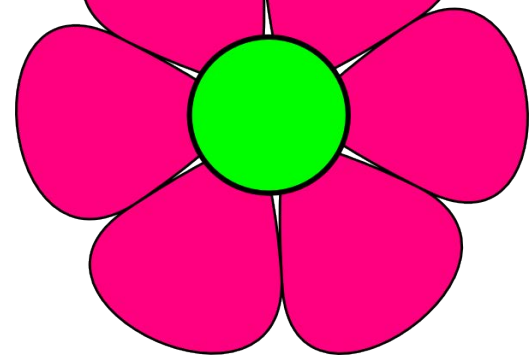


# APRIL



# OA TODAY



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[www.stlouisoa.org](http://www.stlouisoa.org) (Local Website)  
[www.oaregion4.org](http://www.oaregion4.org) (Region 4 Website)  
[www.aa.org](http://www.aa.org) (World Service Website)

## OA ANNOUNCEMENTS

### INTERGROUP ANNOUNCEMENTS:

\*\*April 21-22: Region 4 Assembly in Wichita, KS. Elizabeth C, J-MO, and Cyndi L will be there to represent us. Ask them what Region 4 is about and how you may be of service.

\*\*No Intergroup Meeting in May.

\*\*Intergroup meets Sunday, June 11, 1:30 p.m., Missouri Baptist Hospital, Auditorium area. Intergroup representatives and those in service positions expected; everyone welcome.

### OA SURVEY -- PLEASE HELP US BETTER SERVE YOU!

The membership survey has been extended. There are only 10 questions, so it will take 2-3 minutes. Go to [stlouisoa.org](http://stlouisoa.org) and click on the button that says "Take Survey" -- it's that easy! The password is 'bistate'.

### UPCOMING SUPER SATURDAYS/SUNDAYS:

Next Super Saturday will be held in June (Details to follow). If your group is interested, the month of MAY is still available.

# STEP FOUR

“Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.”

## How Does This Step Work and what does the step mean?

At my first meeting I saw a banner of the 12 steps on the wall, and decided right there that I would never do Step 4. Never!

About 9 months into a different recovery program, I was driving to a meeting with 2 friends, who had been in recovery a couple of months longer than I, and they were talking about their progress in working the 4th Step. I immediately decided they were NOT going to get well before me, so as soon as I got home, I pulled out a pen and paper and started writing. I wrote an honest biography. Or as honest one as I could at the time. I did not think my food behaviors were anything that needed to be inventoried. As my eating disorder progressed, and my compulsions became more insane, I finally told my sponsor my crazy food behaviors and she, who is not a compulsive overeater, promptly sent me to OA.

I got an OA sponsor and began to work the steps and to include food behaviors this time. I discovered destructive patterns that led to food and food behaviors that led to more destructive patterns. The Big Book's example on page 65 was the guide I used that helped me begin to see my particular patterns. I realized that until I was able to see a pattern, I was absolutely powerless to change my behavior and would, one more time, get stuck in the pattern. However, once I saw the pattern, I was outside of it and could choose to not step back into that pattern. This was the beginning of changing some old destructive behaviors. My change process was slow and convoluted - I would do an old behavior and not realize for hours then feel shame and swear to not do it again; after awhile I would again slip, but remembered more quickly and get back on track; then one day I remembered in the middle of doing it and stopped, and one fine day I saw the pattern before I stepped into it.

There was a history of sexual abuse in my family so relationship and sex inventory was especially scary. I did the column process with this inventory too. I named every significant man in my life beginning with my father and including the man I was currently with and my relationship with each. The gift of recovery was that as I reviewed the inventory I could see that the destructive relationships had bottomed out soon after I had gotten in recovery, and that each one was more and more mutual and supportive.

My two most recent inventories have been very challenging in very different ways. A few years ago I began to believe that I did nothing right. I had come to see myself completely as just a collection of character defects, and shortcomings. I was challenged to do a fearless and moral inventory on all the things I did right, and to only inventory them and my gifts. I discovered that for me it is easier to tell you (and myself) when I am bad than when I am doing well and being skilled.

My most recent one has been to inventory my wants and my desires, and what my patterns are when I claim I want something—frequently it is I should not want/desire things, and as I have before I get to look at where these thoughts and feelings come from then I get to take all of it and go onto to share it in Step 5.

-Anonymous

# TRADITION FOUR

“Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or OA as a whole.”

## How Does This Tradition Work?

Today, I attended a meeting where they held their monthly group conscience. The main issue was to start using a timer for each members' share. This was quite a 'HOT' topic. This was brought up because at our last meeting, a member refused to stop sharing once they were cut off. Conflict ensued and feelings were hurt. In light of this, the group decided to hold a longer discussion and allow everyone to share their thoughts on the matter.

Some people were in favor for the timed shares. They did not want their group turning into a place for people to go on and on. They felt it was important that everyone was given the time and opportunity to share.

Others felt that it was rude to cut someone off, even if they went over the timed limit. They felt that if someone needed more time, it should be granted.

Every member was able to share their opinions, and at the end of the meeting, it was agreed that the timer would still be used for each share. Next, if the sharer continued, the Chair would continue to chime the timer about a minute after their overtime. Finally, the group decided to incorporate the sharing guidelines into the opening group format.

This seems like a lot of drama over just a simple matter. I was pretty frustrated during this long ordeal. However, looking back, I can see how this matter was very important to our group. We can only succeed together and just like individuals in recovery, our group needs to take regular inventory. We are a program based in solution and each of our groups can decide what works for them to succeed.

The beauty of this program is that my group decided to make a change. We do not force or put down any other groups who do not follow our lead. What works for my group might not work for every group. Each group has the ability to create a structure that works for them. As long as they are not abusing the OA program, they are able to operate on their own accord.

I found my group and I am so grateful that we have the traditions to keep it strong and current with my recovery.

-Anonymous



## *Groups NOT Meeting on Upcoming Religious Holidays in APRIL:*



*NOT meeting on Sunday, April 16:  
SL423: 10:30AM, OA Office, 63123*

*God* GRANT ME THE *serenity*  
TO ACCEPT THINGS I CAN NOT CHANGE,  
THE *courage* TO CHANGE THE THINGS I CAN,  
AND THE *wisdom* TO KNOW  
THE DIFFERENCE.

# VICTORY IN PROGRAM

My Story of Recovery in OA.....

“Hi, my name is Tina, and I am a compulsive overeater”.....this statement was true long before I ever set foot in a meeting. My struggles with food started around the time I was 12 years old. I remember being a size 3 in juniors and the next thing I remember, puberty hit and I was a size 12. When I was younger, there really wasn't an abundance of food in my house, and I had two siblings to share it with. However, as I got older, it seemed there was more food around, and I was more than willing to eat it.

I remember putting myself on a diet around 12 and really limiting my food. My body image issues started then as well. I was not happy with how my body looked and was always obsessively comparing myself to those around me. I remember eating so much at my 12th birthday dinner that I just felt stuffed and awful. Of course that did not stop me from having cake about an hour later. I went back and forth between probably a size 12 and a size 8 through my teens and early 20's. While dating my first serious boyfriend, I became so stressed I could not eat much. I lost a lot of weight without really trying. He was tall, dark and handsome, and I thought he was a little out of my league. I remember thinking that if I was not skinny enough, he would leave me. I even accused him of this one day. He was not the one for me anyway, but looking back I realize how I was a compulsive overeater with this disease no matter what my size was.

When I married my husband at 23, I was back to a size 12. A year into marriage I crossed into a size I told myself I would never be – a 14! A few years later I discovered that I could work out so hard it would compensate for what I ate. A bright light came on in my compulsive overeater brain and I thought “I can be skinny and still overindulge!” For me, a compulsive overeater raging in this disease, that was the best revelation ever!

Unfortunately, I worked out so hard I injured my neck, upper back and shoulders and ended up in and out of physical therapy 3 times. I would do an hour long aerobic kickboxing workout, then an hour of weights. The company I worked for hired personal trainers for a period of time. I signed up and did two workouts a week with them that were intense. I ate what I wanted on the weekends and did not gain weight, at least not for a while.

Fast forward to my pregnancy with my son. I was 30 and boy did I use it as an excuse to indulge every craving for fast food and sugar! I had morning sickness the entire time but managed to gain 50 pounds anyway. After he was born, I thought the weight would just go away since it was “baby weight”. About 20 pounds came off pretty easily, but not the next 30. I joined a popular weight loss program and got back to pre-baby weight after about a year.

However, the weight climbed back on, all of it, and then some. When I reached my delivery weight of 220 pounds, I stopped weighing. That is when I really freaked out. I was at the same weight I was when I delivered my son, but there was no baby in there! In addition to the weight, my food behaviors were becoming very destructive. I would sneak my son's snacks and cookies when no one was looking. It became so bad, if he had to leave the room while eating a snack, he asked me to please not eat it while he was gone. That was really hard to hear.

My therapist had recommended OA to me several times and I thought “I don't want to go be in a room with a bunch of overweight people”. I had not accepted the fact that I was overweight and truly did belong in the program.

When I finally did walk into my first meeting, I felt so welcomed. They read Step One that night just for me. I opened up and shared a little of my story and the crazy things I was doing. Not only was I eating my son's snacks, I could not stay away from the pastries at work, which were giving me severe migraines. As I was sharing, I looked around the room and everyone was nodding their head like they understood. No one looked at me like I was crazy! It was in that moment that I realized I was home. These were my people.

I've lost the weight, but more importantly, I have gained my sanity back. My son does not worry about me eating his food anymore. I do not binge anymore and then compensate for it by exercising to the point of injury. Thank God for Overeaters Anonymous!

Tina W.