

February 2016

**OA  
TODAY**



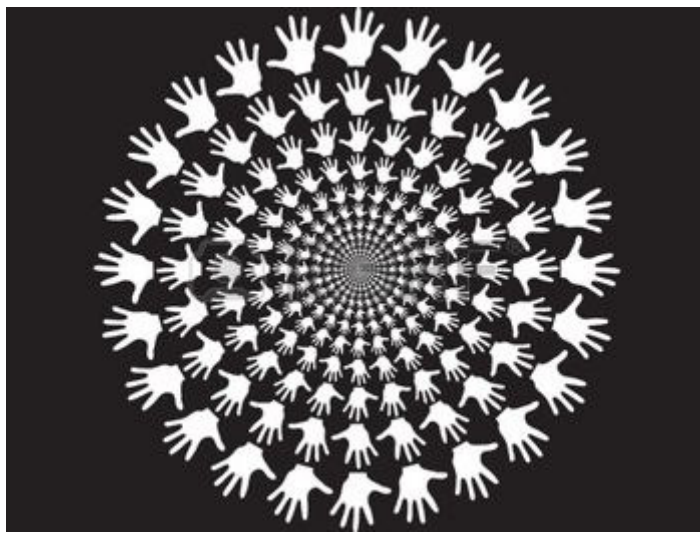
**St. Louis Bi-State  
Area Intergroup**

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**www.stlouisoa.org (Local Website)  
www.oaregion4.org (Region 4 Website)  
www.aa.org (World Service Website)**



**Overeaters Anonymous**

# **International Unity Day**

*St. Louis Bi-State Intergroup Overeaters Anonymous*

**Super Saturday ■ February 27, 2016**

*Hosted by area OA members who want to promote unity!*

**Webster Groves Christian Church**

**1320 W. Lockwood Avenue ■ St. Louis, MO 63122**

*(Entrance off rear parking lot ■ Handicap accessible)*

**Registration: 9:00am ■ Morning Program: 9:30 to 11:30am**

**Lunch break: 11:30am to 1:00pm ■ Afternoon Program: 1:00 to 3:30pm**

**Suggested donation \$6** *(Please never stay away from a recovery event for financial reasons.)*

**Directions:**

From St. Louis, take I-44 west. Use the Berry Road exit, turn right at the bottom of the ramp, travel north on Berry to Lockwood, turn left on Lockwood to the church (which will be on your left bordered by a golf course).  
If you take I-270, go east on I-44 to the Big Bend exit. Take Big Bend east to Berry Rd. Turn left onto Berry, travel north on Berry to Lockwood, turn left on Lockwood to the church (which will be on your left bordered by a golf course).

**Contact:** Ellen W. at 314.603.3712

# STEP TWO

“Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.”

## What Does This Step Mean?

To me, the meaning of Step 2 is hope. When I arrived in OA, I had nearly lost all hope of living free from compulsive operating. I had tried everything: diets, counselors, medicine, nutritional education, intuitive eating, exercise, etc. I had also tried prayer. I often begged God to remove this disease from me... to make me “normal,” but the disease continued to rule my life.

When I came to OA, the hope I received was in the compulsive overeaters living in recovery. Through their stories, I came to believe that they had been as I was (Who else would pretend to have an obsession with food? Who else would lie about eating out of the garbage can?). Then, through their shares, their phone calls, their hugs, their love, and the light in their eyes, I came to believe in the transformation they talked about and lived. I wasn't sure how their transformations came about, but I could *see* a difference, and therefore I could believe. This was the hope that started my program.

Today, my hope is grounded in a Power greater than me (and greater than my disease) whom I call God. I believe that God heard my prayers before I came to OA, and I believe that God wanted to free me, but I was not able to let go of food. I was not able to step out of the driver's seat and let God guide me.

In OA, I have been shown (and am being shown) how to let God be the God of my life, so that I can live in recovery. When I am willing to let God be God, miracles happen. One of these miracles is abstinence and freedom from compulsive overeating for over four years. To continue experiencing this miracle, I need to remind myself daily that food and compulsive overeating are still powers greater than me. I also need to remind myself that there is a Power greater than me, greater than food, and greater than compulsive overeating. If I have doubts about this power, I can ask God to give me hope again, and I can remind myself of the miracles He has done and is doing in my life and in the lives of others.

Thank you, fellow compulsive overeaters, for continuing to nourish the living hope that feeds into the rest of the 12 steps and keeps me abstinent, one day at a time.

Shawna

## How Does This Step Work?

I came to OA for the third time five years ago and finally stayed. The main reason was because I finally hit my bottom. I gained and lost weight so many times that I could not count them. I am a lifetime member of two nationwide programs, and I weighed more than I had ever weighed and was miserable. I had forced myself to purge after refraining for over 20 years. I now know that I had purged in other ways though.

Coming to OA, I knew I was powerless and within the last few days of binging, I also knew my life was unmanageable (Step 1). I did not know there was a choice. Step 2 provided the choice! I could choose the disease—the compulsive overeating, or I could choose God. I chose a God 22 years before, but I never truly surrendered. I asked others how to surrender, and no one could explain. That is until I came to the rooms of OA and stayed. Here, I found people who did the same odd things with food. I came to realize how odd the behaviors truly were. I learned to become willing, choose God, and surrender.

Five years ago, I wrote the following and it is still true today: I am willing to work the 12 steps. I am willing to forgive myself and others for wrongs. I am willing to listen to God and learn to follow his direction the first time. I am willing to put God and my program first in my life. I am willing to stumble and fall, knowing God and others are there to pick me up. I am willing to watch for signs of relapse, so I can try to prevent it. I am willing to let God drive and take control, because his ways may hurt, but they are always better than mine! I know God can restore me to sanity! I am willing to learn to trust God! I am willing to allow God to LOVE me!

Anonymous



## Babysitting Available at OA Meetings

**Two OA Groups are offering baby-sitting at their weekly meetings:**

**The Tuesday morning 9:30am OA meeting at St. Mark's Presbyterian Church (601 East Claymont, Ballwin MO 63021) uses the childcare room right across the hall from the meeting space with a babysitter who is a fun-loving, young mom and niece of a long time OA member. No need to call ahead. Contact person: Deb at 636.530.4582.**

**The Saturday morning 10:00am Step Study meeting in Webster Groves at Lockwood and Berry began babysitting on January 23rd. Contact person: Ellen W. at 314.603.3712.**



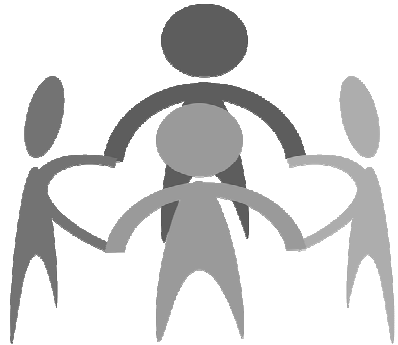
# TRADITION TWO

**“For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority — a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.”**

## What Does This Tradition Mean?

Just as the Twelve Steps come in the order that they do for a reason, Tradition Two is rooted in Tradition One: *“Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends on OA unity.”* If we are to experience unity in OA, Tradition Two cautions us that OA must never splinter into competition for power and status, whether within a home meeting group or within an intergroup, region, or our world-wide fellowship.

OA looked very strange to me as a newcomer. I wondered, “who is the leader?” In time, I participated in my first group conscience and discovered that decisions were made by whoever showed up that day, not by some elite group of gold-card carrying super-members. As one who has spent a lot of time working with political structures in both church and society, this seemed very odd indeed. It was also incredibly refreshing; I felt no pressure to have all the answers. We could find them together, and, in fact, we could not find them without each other. It was an HP thing.



Then I started hearing about Intergroup and agreed to represent my home group there when an appeal was made for someone to fill the vacancy. I thought this might finally be the place where OA would look like a board of directors or council, but no. Again, leadership was about service to the whole, not governance or “running the show.”

One of the things I love about OA is that no one has power over me, to make me do anything. Yet Tradition Two reminds me that taking my turns at service is important to the continued health of the fellowship as a whole. By staying spiritually fit, I can be open to hearing a prompt within myself when it is my turn to serve my fellows. If we each accept our responsibility for service, OA will always be there to embrace newcomers who arrive as desperate for help as I was in at my first meeting in October 2010.

JMO

## How Does This Tradition Work?

In my life there were two problems with having a loving God as my ultimate authority:

1. I knew for sure that there was no God.
2. I already had an ultimate authority.

When I was little, that authority was my loving father. He raised us kids after the early divorce, and I knew for sure that he was all powerful and always right. When I was married, it was my husband who was always right. I deferred to him on everything. Only when I had been divorced for a while did I realize that I was now my own ultimate authority. Finally I could do whatever I wanted. I liked that – even though I was a severely depressed compulsive overeater, and what I wanted was to destroy myself.

Then I found OA. As I absorbed the love around me, I got my first inkling that there might be a Higher Power after all. OA also gave me my first ever experience of being part of a group.

But I found that in the group there were people who didn't agree with me on things, not even on OA issues. Now what? I began to attend group conscience meetings to find out. At first I sat still and didn't share. Then I was careful to please my new friends by agreeing with them. But meanwhile I had begun to trust that a loving Higher Power actually valued me. That gave me the courage to start speaking up.

Now I had to deal with my angry feelings when I strongly disagreed with something. At first I held deep grudges. Later I came to realize that we all had the good of OA in mind. We just disagreed about how to get there. That helped me a lot. I realized some other things about group conscience meetings:

- Even when I was in the minority, people listened carefully to me. I was heard, not ignored. This gave me the tolerance to listen to others;
- A group decision, even if I don't like it, is much better than some decision imposed on us from above (fortunately, in OA there is no “above”);
- I can accept whatever decision the group reaches, and try it out with an open mind;
- If there do turn out to be problems with it, I can usually bring the issue up again later.

Now the challenge for my life in the wider world is to apply what I have learned in OA.

- Speaking my truth;
- Listening to others;
- Considering the common good.

Anonymous

## The Principle Behind Step Two: “HOPE”

After years of sobriety in another 12-step program, I found myself hitting bottom with my OA addiction. The feeling of powerlessness was much more prominent for me in my food addiction.



In step 1, when I admitted that I was powerless— I *truly* felt powerless, I felt crazy. I had too much awareness to push down the truth about my behaviors. My life was completely unmanageable, and I was white-knuckling it. I knew I was in full blown addiction. I *knew* a lot of things. I *knew* I needed to go to meetings, get a sponsor, read the literature and follow a food plan, etc.—and I did those things.

What I didn't do was to stop and ask God for help. I wanted control. Was *God* going to restore me to sanity? Or were *my actions* going to get me where I wanted to go? What I found out is that my will power alone could not keep me sane. I needed God to give me strength to make good decisions on a regular, daily basis.

Without fail, when I don't bring God into my life and decisions with prayer and meditation, I ease right back into insane living. I have a group of people that support me with their help; they show me my insanity and remind me of the solution. The word “hope” is defined as a *feeling of trust*. I trust that God can bring sanity and serenity into my life.

Alex Z.

## Positive Characteristic of Recovery: “ACTION”

A very wise long-time OA member gave me this very sage advice when I was expressing my resistance to the program: “*Certain things never get easier with waiting; you just need to do them. Once you start, it will get easier with time.*”

Why was this like a revelation to me at this point in my life? Maybe I was just ready to hear it, or maybe this person said it in a different way; but it wasn't new information to me. It just reached that part of my brain that needed to hear it. I could not wait for the next full week to start fresh, or wait until this holiday was over, or until the next full moon! I needed to rip off the band-aid and take action.

Once I stopped worrying about messing up my food plan or my abstinence and taking things slowly, it was like opening up a new world.

I always judged myself by what big things I did for other people. Look at me, the people pleaser. The trouble with that is this does not allow us to take care of ourselves and figure out what is going on underneath.

The program of OA lets me release the coping mechanism of food, and slowly learn who I am. When I text my food and my plan for the next day to my sponsor, I am taking responsibility for myself. I do not have to worry about all of those other people's lives.

It opens us up to all of our happiness and a genuine love of ourselves and those around us.

Cyndy

# JUST DO IT.

### What Are You Doing Monday Evening?

Are you looking for a somewhat-different, stimulating OA meeting? Try Mondays at 6:00pm at the OA Office, Suite E, 9907 Gravois Road, Affton MO. The group members read from the *For Today* daily entries for the upcoming week and then share their thoughts. See you Monday evening?

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