

**March 2016**

# OA TODAY



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## 2016 Intergroup Budget Adopted

*Be Sure to Note This Change in Literature Costs*

At the January meeting of the Bi-State Area Intergroup of Overeaters Anonymous, the Board of Trustees presented a budget draft that was balanced - \$25,070 in income and the same in expenses, once \$585 in literature income was added to \$25,655 in anticipated expenses. For the past two years, the Intergroup had been spending down a surplus of funds beyond our "prudent reserve." As the "group conscience" for the more than fifty groups in the Intergroup, we felt led to live by faith and to use funds in ways that could reach still suffering compulsive eaters instead of building up the bank account beyond the amount needed for reserve and cash flow.

There were no suggestions for changes to the budget, so the Board of Trustees has now made the budget official for 2016. Each month, Intergroup representatives will receive a monthly statement showing how our finances are going, actual versus budgeted, that you can share with your home groups.

In the new budget, pamphlets, newcomer packets and subscriptions to **Lifeline** are not paid for by Intergroup, so all home groups should make a plan for how to cover this from your Seventh Tradition funds. Intergroup covered up to \$25 in pamphlets, a Lifeline subscription, and newcomer packets during the period when we were trying to spend down those surplus funds. (Not all groups took Intergroup up on the offer.)

Please note there are two ways to get Newcomer Packets. A deluxe version is available for \$3.50 (or \$3.00 each if you order in large enough quantities) from the World Service Organization bookstore at

<http://bookstore.oa.org/>

A slightly briefer version of the Newcomer Packet will be available soon at the Intergroup office on Gravois and at Super Saturdays and multi-day recovery events for \$1.50.

From JMO on behalf of the Intergroup Board of Trustees

# STEP THREE

“Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God *as we understood Him.*”

## What Does This Step Mean?

To be liberated from the slavery of powerlessness, to be released from the panic of an uncontrollable life, to be set right from the confusion of insanity, an addicted person with obsessive thinking, compulsive behaviors, and “allergic” substances – in our case, food – has to make a leap of faith and embrace a strategy that goes counter to the “stinkin’ thinkin’” of a willful, hamster-on-a-wheel approach to life; namely, **let go and let God!** This is a basic meaning of Step Three.

In other words: I am being choked! I am being squashed! I am being suffocated! I am being crushed! I am being threatened! I’m trapped! I am being driven crazy! I’m losing my battle of being alive! What do I do? Not, for sure, what I’ve always done, like returning to the same old unworkable tactics that actually never are successful.

Time for some risky business, for a jump into the unknown, for a gamble into something completely beyond my limited “me-ness”: to surrender, submit, yield to that power outside of me that gives meaning and purpose, direction and success, surety and victory over my disease, my disorder, my chronic disarray in life.

I say with all the strength and trepidation and apprehension I can muster up, *“I admit I can’t do it by myself. I acknowledge you can. So I acquiesce to and accept your power working within me, outside of me, and around me.”* If need be, I “fake it till I make it”; I do it “as if” I really believe it and want it.

**I turn over my will and my life to the care of that God whom I have come to discover present and working in my life.**

In doing so, I take the responsibility of seeking the will of this God in the people and circumstances around me, in the promptings of my honest and humble gut, and in the messages and literature I use to reveal this God. ➔



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## How Does This Step Work?

How has Step Three worked in my life? Just today, I had a talk with my sponsor. I told her how yesterday I had asked my sister for a favor and my sister told me no (the nerve!). My sponsor teaches me, “If my ‘no’ is not acceptable, my ‘yes’ is meaningless.” So here I am building a huge resentment because my sister is not doing what I want her to do. And after all, it IS all about me (the addict) and “I want what I want, when I want it.”

Then I started surrendering this whole mess to God, asking Her how I can get rid of this resentment. She pointed out to me my outrage just a few weeks ago when another family member made unreasonable demands on her sister. And of course I had an opinion on this outside issue. So God helped me see I was doing the same thing that I judged and condemned someone else for doing.

As I finished telling my sponsor that I was able to work through the whole mess, she pointed out to me that yesterday was good day. And it had nothing to do with what happened and everything to do with what I did. It was a good day because I was open and willing enough to go to God and listen to what She had to teach me.

When I say the Third Step Prayer, I ask God to take away my difficulties. For years, I thought I was praying to have my problems removed. Then one day the epiphany struck me—my difficulties are taken away when I go to God and see the TRUTH. My problems (and other people) do not change—only my perception of them. So now I ask God to direct my vision. I pray to allow my judgment to become discernment.

And you know what? It turns out I am happier in God’s care than my own. Joette



I also take the responsibility of not only listening, but also of following up on what I hear; not only of breaking the cycle of destruction within me but also of working with the shattered pieces of my brokenness as the steppingstones of my healing.

Taking this step, I walk out of the darkness into the light. Ben F.

## The Principle Behind Step Three:

# “FAITH”

I didn’t have a lot of faith in myself growing up, much less in God or a higher power. I felt that I would fail myself or God would fail me, like in the past. For that reason, I think that faith brought me to this program. All else had failed in helping with my eating. When I came to my first OA meeting, the last thing that I wanted to do was put faith in a power greater than myself. I shied away from faith most of my time in program. From 2005-2008, I gained 46 lbs. I hate to say that it was my highest weight in my entire life. I knew that I needed to do something. I got a sponsor and started working the steps and putting down the food. I achieved back to back abstinence that eluded me the first twelve years in program.

Since this program is a spiritual one, I knew that I

couldn’t neglect my faith any more. I had glimpses of God doing for me what I couldn’t do for myself. I started changing what I was doing. I joined a women’s prayer group this past fall where I am learning about their faith and how they apply it in their life. I started off the New Year with a silent retreat that made me think about things differently.

My faith can be very strong on certain days. Other days it can be very lacking. As it says in the Big Book, “Faith without works is dead.” That saying sums it up for me. It is something that I need to do on a continuous basis and remind myself of the ninth step promises. I know that my faith is stronger today than when I first came to OA. I feel that God/HP has been rewarding me with his grace because of my faith. Today, I appreciate the faith, love and support that God, my sponsor, OA members, and friends outside of this program have given me.

Anonymous

# TRADITION THREE

“The only requirement for OA membership is a desire to stop eating compulsively.”

## What Does This Tradition Mean?

Tradition Three is probably my favorite tradition as it is the one that brought me to my first meeting. My therapist had told me about OA and had suggested several times that I try a meeting. I was very fearful of going to my first meeting. I actually had the fear that I was not going to qualify for the program or that I would realize when I got to the meeting that I did not belong there. As an addict, I am a classic over-thinker!

After I finally agreed to try a meeting, I remember looking at the “where and when” that my therapist gave me. Tradition Three was written at the top of it. When I read “the only requirement for OA membership is a desire to stop eating compulsively,” it helped ease my fears and push past one of the many excuses I had come up with for not going. I called the contact person for that meeting and I remember asking her “so anyone can come to this, right?” She assured me that anyone could come.

My life has never been the same since that first meeting! Tradition Three reminds me of that night when I finally made it to my first meeting, which serves as a great reminder of where I came from. It also helps me to encourage newcomers that they are welcome, and also qualify for the program. I love the wording ‘*a desire*’ to stop eating compulsively. We need the desire to stop, but not the ability. Our Higher Power is the one who gives us the ability!

Tina W.

## How Does This Tradition Work?

I believe the best way that showed Tradition Three worked was when I first arrived in OA. All I wanted to do was lose weight while eating all my binge foods. Was that too much to ask? I hated that I was unable to eat the same as my friends, who were all skinny, and here I was, 280+ pounds and miserable. Thank God the only requirement for membership is a *desire* to stop eating compulsively. I desired abstinence but I had no idea how to achieve what seemed to come so easily to the old-timers. It took me three months of trying and starting again before I finally hit my bottom and got abstinent for good. That whole time, my sponsor led me through my craziness.

I would call her and say “I ate a cookie...but all my other friends were eating big pieces of the rich cake so I think I’m fine.” She would gently say “well, that’s still sugar; we will start again.” That annoyed me so much! I just couldn’t see my madness.

But I had the desire, because I saw that these 12 step programs worked. My way no longer worked for me and I wanted to change so badly; I just didn’t know how to achieve abstinence. Tradition Three worked because I did not get kicked out or shamed for not getting abstinent right away. They just told me to keep coming back.

Finally, on New Year’s Eve I hit my bottom (hopefully that is the only one I will have) and because of this program and the ability to come back no matter what, I finally became willing to do whatever it took. It was hard at first, but the rewards have been tremendous. Now, after 7 years of beautiful freedom, I am so glad that the only requirement is a desire.

Anonymous

## Positive Characteristic of Recovery: “COURAGE”

Courage is the launch pad from which my OA recovery was ignited. Honesty and integrity didn’t have a chance without being preceded by the courage to attend that first meeting, or to ask someone to be my sponsor, thereby overcoming the fear of rejection and of venturing into the unknown.

The act of courage that brought me to program actually took place ten months before I entered the rooms. I cast aside my co-dependency and told my heroin-addicted son he could no longer live in my home. It took courage born of desperation to accept that he might die. Five years later, we both have continuous abstinence in our respective 12-step programs. Every one of us has it within oneself to commit acts of courage, big and small, every single day. Without it, we cannot progress in our recovery. It appears in many forms: acts of service, forgiveness, admission of wrongs, doing the next right thing when there is an easier, less honorable path.

I recently got a lesson in courage from my aforementioned heroin-addicted son. We were discussing what we would change about our lives if we knew we had six months

to live. The gift of acceptance had left me struggling for an answer. I quipped, “Nothing, except for my hair, of course.” My unruly, frizzy, curly hair subjected me as a child to taunts of “brillo head” and “chia pet.” As an adult, it was, “nice perm,” or, “Is that natural?” Well-meaning friends would say, “Have you tried straightening it?” Those who were constantly given weight-loss tips from helpful friends and relatives can relate, I’m sure.

I followed up my answer with, “Well, the serenity to accept the things we cannot change, right?” He said, “Or the courage to change the things we can.” I realized in that moment that, like a compulsive overeater who has not yet come to OA, I had not tried everything. I had previously contemplated wearing a wig, but let fear hold me back. I thought people would think I was sick, or that people at work would stare. With my son’s reminder that acceptance isn’t always the whole answer, I took the plunge.

My sponsor tells me to wear the world as a loose garment, a statement attributed to St. Francis of Assisi that we often hear in program. My wig is an embodiment of that loose garment, removing a source of possible resentment. I now move among my fellow travelers with ease and lack of self-consciousness, with new openness and willingness, all because of the practice of that mother of all spiritual principles, courage.

Anonymous

OA

HOPE

## #CarryTheMessage

**Super Saturday, April 2, 2016**

*Sponsored by the St. Louis Bi-State Area Intergroup of Overeaters Anonymous*

Embassy Suites St. Louis Airport Hotel  
11237 Lone Eagle Dr, Bridgeton, MO 63044

**\*\* near the corner of Lindbergh and 70 — see directions below \*\***

### ***Featuring several out-of-town speakers!!***

9:00 a.m. registration

9:30—11:30 speakers and sharing

11:30—1 p.m. lunch break

1:00—3:00 special workshop, speakers and sharing

3:00—3:30 wrap-up and entertainment

Accessible building, rooms and parking

Suggested donation \$6 — please never stay away from a recovery event for financial reasons

For more information, please contact Susan T at 314-283-0204

#### **Important Directions:**

**Start from Eastbound Interstate 70. The only way to get there!**

**Turn onto the southbound Lindbergh exit (exit 235A).**

**Don't go all the way to Lindbergh!**

**Turn off from the exit ramp right into the Crown Plaza Hotel.**

**Go past the Crowne Plaza to the Embassy Suites.**