

March

OA TODAY



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

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OA ANNOUNCEMENTS

Please help our intergroup find out how it can best serve the membership. Even if you are brand new, please take the survey! We want to hear from everyone. There are only 10 questions, so it will take 2-3 minutes. Just go to stlouisoa.org and click on the button that says "Take Survey" -- it's that easy! There is still time to be counted. The survey is still open - the end date has been cancelled. The password is 'bistate'.

OA FUN AND RECOVERY FROM THE STEP 1 FOR EVERYONE MEETING

WORD SCRAMBLE

1. OETHNSY
2. EPNONESS
3. SSENGWILLNI

An OA Prayer:

**Help Me Find the Way
to RECOVERY
to ABSTINENCE
to GOOD PHYSICAL
to EMOTIONAL
to SPIRITUAL HEALTH**

STEP THREE

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

How Does This Step Work?

I have a decision to make. I can choose the problem or I can choose the solution. When I came to program 7 years ago, I never dreamed that I would choose the solution for 1 day, let alone 6 years. Steps 1, 2, and 3 are the key! I take them every day, every meal, every moment. When I wake up in the morning, HP has given me the gift of abstinence. I must choose to receive the gift. I must remember that I am powerless over food, and life really (Step 1). I must remember that I have the choice (Step 2). Then, I chose my solution, my HP (Step 3). My HP doesn't have to be yours. Each of us can have a very different HP!

When I choose my HP, life is so much better! Before program, I had tried so many diets, bought so many diet books and become a lifetime member of 2 different nation-wide diet clubs. I would choose a diet (with my all or nothing thinking) and work it hard, but the minute I went back to “normal eating”, I was crazy and binging all over again. I was miserable. This was because I was choosing a diet and not my higher power.

Recently at a work lunch, I was discussing praying before choosing what to eat. People looked at me like I was crazy, but it's natural to pray about what I eat now. Yes, I choose to pray over my meal as well, but I mean pray about what HP wants me to eat. Before planning my meals, I pray about what HP would have me eat. I pray before shopping for the food. I simply pray and choose HP, rather than ED (Also Known As Eating Disorder) who is doing push ups in the corner waiting for me to mess up. I choose HP every day, every meal, every moment, ONE DAY AT A TIME!

Tami H.

What Does This Step Mean?

The very first thing I do in the morning is say a third step prayer. It's a good reminder that I'm not running the universe. I tried to do just that for years and the results were not pretty. The fear, anger and neurotic anxiety that came with my self-centered life was too much for me to handle. Food took the edge off and for years was an absolute necessity. In fact, food was so powerful for me that I'm sure at times it was the only thing that kept me sane. I knew I needed to change when chronic illness and depression set in. I was over 300 pounds. Sometimes on weekends I would stay in bed all day with the covers over my head. I only got up for a few hours at night to go get food and binge in isolation. I had a sense of impending doom and a dark feeling that just wouldn't go away. Doctors tried to help me, but they never could quite understand. They looked at me baffled when each of their treatments failed. I started to clash with my therapist of five years. She just couldn't understand my pain. No one could. Life was hopeless in my mind. I thought the world was a rotten place and resented anyone who told me otherwise. I tried everything and eventually realized that I was screwed if I kept going at it alone. I have the mind of a food addict, and my ego wouldn't allow God in to heal me. In a last ditch effort after a bad relapse into the worst binging I had ever done, I figured I had nothing to lose. I made the surrender of all surrenders. It worked! Pure Grace. I relied on my sponsor heavily in the beginning, but eventually I came to rely on God as I moved through the steps. I did not think I could get well so when the obsession to eat left me, I knew there was a God and miracles were possible.

I have no issues with letting God run the world today. Life is under new management. When I found the humility to ask God into my world, I actually got a much better deal. Instead of having God in MY world I get to live in HIS. That is a huge distinction-a shift in worldview you really must experience for yourself. That's what the Big Book means on the last page of the basic text when it talks about the "Fellowship of the Spirit". It's the community of those of us who live in the realm of life where recovery is not only possible but is joyful and profound. When you get there, food becomes a non issue. Healthy habits come naturally and abstinence is effortless. It's a whole new experience!

Adam S.

TRADITION THREE

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

How Does This Tradition Work?

Our OA 12 and 12 points out that many organizations have a whole list of qualifications for membership, but OA has only one – the desire to stop eating compulsively. When I walked through the doors of OA a little over nine years ago, I did not have that desire. I was not even close. My wants were more superficial and far less informed. I longed to be thin. I hoped to look and dress better. I wanted to be more physically able. Other wants bubbled below the surface, strident, but repressed: the desire to stop hating myself, the yearning to feel like I fit in somewhere, the need to stop the madness of obsession and perfectionism, and the desperate longing to be free of shame. I knew nothing about achieving any of these things. I had believed for years that weight was my problem, and weight loss was the solution. Any success I ever achieved in that area was temporary in nature, coming as it did from a misguided direction.

Then came Tradition Three. It described the one desire that had never occurred to me – the desire to stop eating compulsively. At first, I wasn't really able to process the meaning. The connection between my misery and compulsive eating was buried in years of hard-core denial. What I had spent decades wishing away were the consequences of that eating. Slowly, however, because of the heartfelt testimony of women and men living in recovery, I began to accept and appreciate the necessary distinction. Program showed me that I could not be rid of those consequences without letting go of the cause.

The more membership qualifications an organization has, the more likely it is that members can become disqualified or discredited. What if certain policies are not adhered to? What is someone's idea of how to proceed differs from another's? What if some members believe their approach is the “only” way? We, in OA, sometimes believe so much in our personal paths that we believe all should follow them. Fortunately, Tradition Three is more circumspect, and more generous.

The AA 12 and 12 is emphatic. In its Tradition Three chapter, p. 139, it says, “A.A. is really saying to every serious drinker, ‘You are an A.A. member if you say so. You can declare yourself in; nobody can keep you out. No matter who you are, no matter how low you have gone, no matter how grave your emotional complications—even your crimes—we still can't deny you A.A.’”

I love this. A few times over the years, my abstinence has been questioned by a program member who was not my sponsor and knew nothing about my plan of eating. Those individuals knew exactly what worked for them and sincerely thought they were helping me by measuring my plan against theirs. No matter the intention of the other person, I admit that those encounters felt like attempts to disqualify me. I thank my Higher Power that Tradition Three says this isn't the way this 12-step program of recovery works. And, I am grateful that OA adopted this very important tradition from AA. On p. 141, their 12 and 12 discusses why AA eventually dropped all membership regulations, saying, “Who dared to be judge, jury, and executioner of his own sick brother?” Amen to that.

-Anonymous

OA FOR THE FUN OF IT Presents: AMAZING OA MAZE



Step 1 for Everyone Meeting

VICTORY IN PROGRAM

I am celebrating over 6 ½ years of membership in this miraculous program. My life has been transformed. I came through the doors of OA an angry, arrogant, unhappy, obese person, so mired in bitterness and resentment, so “drunk” on the constant stream of sugar in my bloodstream, that I could hardly think straight or participate in any kind of life. I longed for perfection...the perfect weight, the perfect body, the perfect job, the perfect life.

What followed was such a paradigm shift that even now, I sometimes wonder if I’m living in someone else’s skin. Wait. I am in someone else’s skin. Someone who is happy. Who has let go of youthful resentments and hurts; who has cleaned up the wreckage of their past; someone who takes an honest but kind inventory of themselves and knows when to say sorry. Someone who maintains a normal body weight and takes care and nurtures their body with healthy food and exercise.

Let me assure you, I did none of this alone. My OA friends, my sponsor, even my family members have all had a significant hand in this transformation. But most of all, my victory in OA is due to a belief in a power greater than myself, and a willingness to turn my will over to that higher power. Friends are not always available, sponsors and family members have lives of their own to deal with, but HP is always there for me. Is my life perfect? Not even close. But in OA, I have finally learned to live life on life’s terms...good, bad, or indifferent. Every day that I celebrate another abstinent day is a day of victory and gratitude. This I wish for all of my OA brothers and sisters. In love and fellowship,

Martha P.



I had a victory yesterday and I was so eager to share it with my people who get it. For a VERY long time, I have only shopped in plus size clothing stores. Last night, I was waiting for my husband and I was next to a "regular" clothing store. I decided that I would go in and try on some clothes. I set my mind right and decided that I would grab a size that I thought would fit and try it on. I decided that if it fit, great! If not, that's ok, I'll try again later.

Well, I was actually laughing out loud in the fitting room because these pants were so big that I could have gone down two sizes. I was aware that I was losing weight, but in my mind, I was still a plus-sized gal who didn't belong in regular people's stores. I had such an experience in that fitting room. Not only did it really occur to me how much smaller I am, but I realized that I can start SEEING myself as a different person; not because I've lost weight, but because I am a healthier person inside and out.

Thanks for listening!!

Coly

ANSWERS:

STEP 1 FOR EVERYONE MEETING

1. HONESTY
2. OPENNESS
3. WILLINGNESS

