

**November 2016**

# 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.oa.org](http://www.oa.org) (World Service Website)



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

**Start Thanksgiving Day - and every day - by taking Steps 1, 2, & 3!**

## ***OA Thanksgiving Day meeting***

**When:** Thursday November 24

**Time:** 9 am

**Place:** Samuel UCC Church

320 N. Forsyth

Clayton, Missouri 63105

**Contact:** Eileen M., (314) 570-9333

## **OA ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

The St. Louis Bi-State Intergroup is anxious to offer recovery events in 2017 that serve the needs of our fellowship. Please complete a simple ten question survey at this address: [www.surveymonkey.com/r/6K3MNC9](http://www.surveymonkey.com/r/6K3MNC9). Once at the site, the password is **bistate**. The survey will be closed on December 31.

### **Meeting Location Change:**

The Monday Night Newcomers meeting (SL044) is relocating beginning November 21. (old location was Webster Groves Church of the Nazarene)

New Location: Webster Groves Christian Church, 1320 W Lockwood Ave., 63122 (near corner of Lockwood and Berry Rd.)

Meeting Room: Downstairs in Fellowship Hall; use rear parking lot, lower level entrance

Starting Date: Monday, November 21, 7-8pm

Contact: Carol H. 314-961-7253

# STEP Eleven

“Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscience contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.

## How Does This Step Work?

I started out life in a family that participated several times per week in religious practice. Most of my six plus decades of life has included some connection to a faith community of some type and both formal and informal study of religion. Therefore, when I got to Step 11, I figured, “Well, some of y’all may need this, but God and I have been friends for years.”

It turns out improving my conscious contact with the God of my understanding still had much to reveal to me. A particularly punishment-oriented image of God had been dismissed from the belief system between my ears some years earlier, but I found that this meant God was still hiding in my gut. During Step 9 work, I was freed from fear of a God whose anger at me was all-consuming. While working Step 11, I came to appreciate quiet time in the morning in which I could get to know more fully this God who did not demand perfection and purity.

This has become my daily pattern around Step 11. Upon awakening each day:

- I say the Serenity Prayer. My vocation includes a daily struggle to change things the human community should not be willing to accept. I’ll need much wisdom to sort out what I should take on and what I should release.
- I say a version of the Seventh Step Prayer that has some language adapted to feel authentic to my spirituality. I ask my Higher Power to remove my defects of character and defenses OR to transform them within me – because I know some of my shortcomings are rooted in my strengths. These need better use instead of elimination.
- I say or sing a version of the Step 11 prayer (to be an instrument of peace, etc.).
- I read a For Today reading, at least a paragraph from the OA 12 & 12 or the AA 12 & 12, and a daily devotion from my community of faith. I then journal on these three readings, focusing on how I sense my Higher Power speaking to me in what I read. I then forward what I wrote by email to ten OA friends.

I can return to prayer and meditation during the day or evening as needed, but these practices get my day started right – in a way that admits I am powerless over food again that very day. I know I will need help from others and from A-Power-Greater-Than-Myself, so I ask for it. I am thankful for the spiritual nurture I experience daily through Step 11.

J- MO

## What Does This Step Mean?

I see Step 11 as the spiritual “food” for my recovery. After Step 10, in which I’ve cleared away the old and no good (rotten, expired, unhealthy soul food of resentment, fear, dishonesty), I need to take Step 11 because I need new food! I need fresh, healthy, energy-giving food to fill my soul’s “shelves” again. Step 11 is how I become spiritually “full” again.

I think of Step 11 in 2 parts: the talking (prayer) and the listening (meditation). I need both parts to stay spiritually fit (in connection with my Higher Power), but in my own experience, I feel that I’m much better at talking to God than I am at listening. Despite this, God has taken me where I’m at and used prayer to make an incredible difference in my life. Recently, I’ve been praying more throughout the day rather than just in the morning and evening. My day can be filled with a series of short prayers: “Please help me. I feel powerless”; “Thank you! You are so incredible!”; “God, I am so angry/afraid/resentful. Could you please release me from this bondage?” These prayers (often said at work in a bathroom stall) remind me that I am not alone, that my Higher Power is always with me, in everything.

It wasn’t until last year that I really started to look at the second part of Step 11 – meditation. (I finally “gave in” to the suggestion of my sponsor and so many recovered OAers who repeatedly said that meditation had changed their lives.) To begin, I needed to look at my concept of meditation which, until then, had been somewhat nebulous. After doing some research and reading, I realized that meditation is actually quite simple and practical. For me, meditation is simply quieting the thoughts in my head and focusing my attention on one thing – my breath, for example, or HP’s love for me. Meditation gives God room to speak, to love me, and to “fill me up” for the day.

I started to meditate for just 3 minutes every morning. That’s all I could do. I sat in a chair and just breathed. It was incredibly difficult for me. I thought I was doing something wrong because I kept getting distracted away from my breath or from HP. So, I listened to podcasts, downloaded apps, and kept trying to find the perfect way to meditate. I’m slowly learning that I can’t meditate “wrong”. There is no perfection in meditation, all I need to do is “suit up and show up” for it. When my thoughts start to wander, I can remind myself “Ah, there are those thoughts again, I don’t need to address them now. I’ve only been asked to sit here for a few minutes and breathe.” Then I can turn my attention back to my breath or the object of focus. For me, it’s also important to remind myself to have absolutely no expectation of what meditation looks like or feels like. I just need to show up for the meditation, do my part, and let God do the rest.

Anonymous

# TRADITION Eleven

“Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, films, television, & other public media of communication.”

## What Does This Tradition Mean?

After having a little time in the OA program, I can begin to take our traditions for granted. I can forget how important these traditions are to our program's welfare. But, thankfully, these traditions are already in place for when we need them. Step Eleven is important to me because I know that my ego is fully capable of believing that it would be best for all the still suffering compulsive overeaters out there if I would start preaching my program at others. But this would be against the Tradition. I know that someone's preaching was NOT how I was attracted to our program. If someone were preaching the program or their methods, I would be out of these rooms very quickly. Instead, when I came in, I was surrounded by OA folks who were happy. I had never seen a weight loss group that was happy and content with their lives. I had always seen complainers (including me). But when I saw these folks smile and welcome me in, I was thrown off. I wanted to see how they got their serenity. **I wanted what they had.**

Coming in a few years ago, I was miserable and wanted outside things to fix me. However, these folks offered me a solution and steps to take in order to achieve serenity. This was foreign to me and I was still a little skittish. But through the grace of god, they just said what worked for them and were happy to share their path with me. God was doing for me what I couldn't do for myself. I was intrigued. I wanted to know more.

Because I was led by example, I was able to finally reach my bottom and realize that I needed to humble myself down, before I would recover. I needed to work the steps, just like these "happy" people had showed me how.

Anonymous.

## How Does This Tradition Work?

Reflecting back on why I crashed and burned in every single attempt on my part to lose weight using a wide variety of self-selected diets and schemes, I realize that a common thread was the continual homage I paid at the altar of pride and self-will. We are frequently reminded that we all have clay feet with a public failure by one reflecting negatively on the effectiveness of O.A. as a whole. What ultimately attracted me to Overeaters Anonymous was the selfless humility exhibited by a friend whose radical transformation was not in the physical realm – he was never obese – but in the spiritual sense. In his recovery from another addiction, he became unconditionally accepting of me, even though I could not yet accept myself. I was so much attracted by such vibes, that, when I reached the precious point of total desperation (my bottom) I was compelled – almost on auto pilot – to reach out to him alone to share my pain.

The deference paid in public media to the so-called biggest losers and their ilk did absolutely nothing to foster any sort of self-confidence or faith on my part that, perhaps, I could replicate the success of those who I've already placed on some sort of unattainable pedestal. Attraction, however, cannot be achieved if I place my addiction in hiding. Yes, I live in a world today where very few ever knew Fat Bob. I've moved several times and am now far away from places where I lived in obesity. I could easily hide that part of my past if I chose to. I am constantly reminded, however, that I cannot expect to keep this miracle if I don't share it. In meetings, I will frequently share with others the facts of where I've been and how I reached my current state of mind and body ... when appropriate and usually in one-on-one circumstances. I precede any such sharing with a simple prayer for my Higher Power to help me be useful. Many people will just open the door a crack – an idle complaint over a doctor's admonishment or a lament over a clearly forbidden foods. With others, I sometimes find myself engaged in an animated discussion over how I came to embrace the spiritual principles and actions that are guiding in my life today. Yes, the community surrounding me knows what I am – a Compulsive Overeater – and where I've been. Many contacts are often made through their referrals. It is said that it is far better to let our friends recommend us. Self-aggrandizement can only lead to my own fall as well as do damage to this life-saving Fellowship.

Gratefully submitted,  
Bob L.

# Step Principles

## Principle of Step 11: Spirituality

“All went well for a time, but he failed to enlarge his spiritual life.” This cautionary warning is found at p.35 of the Big Book as part of the introduction to Jim ‘The Car Salesman’: the man who thought if he put whiskey in his milk on a full stomach it couldn’t hurt him. To continue to enlarge on our spiritual condition is precisely the purpose of Step 11. Would Jim’s story have a different outcome if he practiced this Step? I believe so. His story begins with “I came to work on Tuesday morning, and I remember I felt irritated that I had to be a salesman for a concern I once owned. I had a few words with the boss, but nothing serious.”

### **Nothing serious??? Time to pause!**

Step 11 says “As we go through the day we pause, when agitated (disturbed, troubled, distressed) or doubtful, and ask for the right thought or action. We constantly remind ourselves we are no longer running the show, humbly saying to ourselves many times each day “Thy will be done.” We are then in much less danger of excitement, fear, anger, worry, self-pity, or foolish decisions. Jim was irritated (feeling slight anger) and had a few words with his boss (a spat – a petty quarrel). He was not in fit spiritual condition. It was time for a reset, a pause.

Anonymous

## SUGAR NO MORE

I cannot eat sugar no more;  
I used to be a "sugar whore."  
I cannot eat it with my dog;  
I cannot eat it in a fog.  
I cannot eat it in the dark;  
I cannot eat it in the park.  
I cannot eat it when I play;  
I cannot eat it anyway!  
I am powerless over sugar;  
Would be better to eat a booger!

*Anonymous (with a thank-you to a certain  
childrens' book author!)*



## **OA INTERGROUP APPEAL:**

Most of our meetings are “fully self-supporting through our own contributions,” but other levels of OA are not. They need extra income to make ends meet. We shared a special request with you from Region 4 in our last newsletter; this month, we bring this request from our St. Louis BiState Intergroup:

**November:** Every year our Intergroup asks for a special November “gratitude month” basket to be passed around at meetings. The Intergroup depends on this source of extra funding for its expenses, which include printing the Newsletters and Where & When meeting list, keeping speaker and sponsor lists, maintaining the office telephone, stocking literature locally, helping with special events and doing various kinds of outreach and public information work.

Anything you can do to help will be very gratefully received!

### **Meeting Updates for December**

*The following meetings will be meeting at their usual time on December 25, 2016:*

\*10:45AM meeting at St. Mary's Hospital

\*4:00PM meeting at the PNC Bank in Kirkwood