

September 2016

OA TODAY



St. Louis Bi-State Area Intergroup

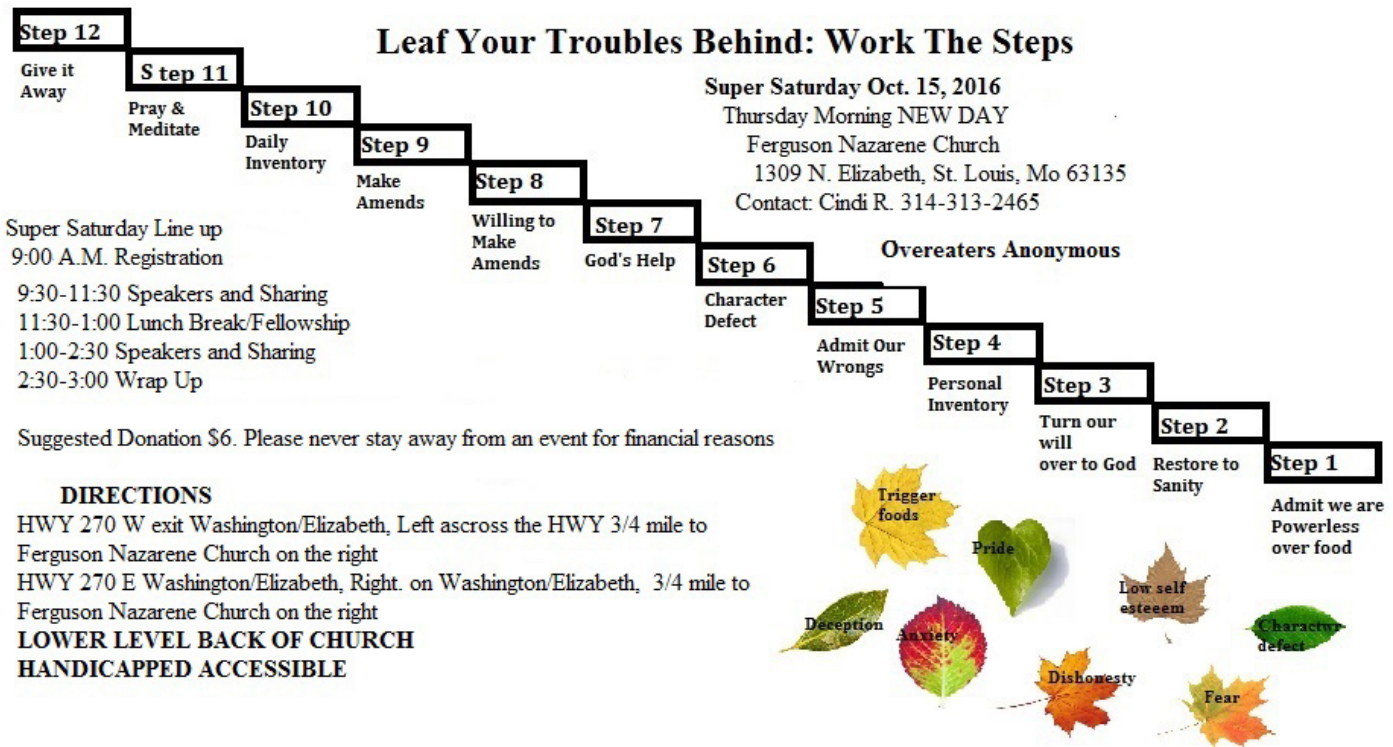
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OCTOBER SUPER SATURDAY



STEP NINE

“Made direct amends to such people wherever possible except when to do so would injure them or others.”

What Does This Step Mean?

When I got to Step 9, I had a list from Step 8 of people who were easy to make amends to, hard to make amends to, and in between. I made amends to my easy list quickly. I prayed about the others and worked with my sponsor and counselor about what to do with those that were hard or in between. I had lived in 2 other states and my friends had scattered all over the US, but I didn't know where. I am not on social media and my sponsor agreed with that decision. If my Higher Power wanted me to find those people, he would bring them back into my life. My HP, sponsor, and I gradually figured out ways to make amends. For people I knew when I was growing up, I went to old schools and areas I had last seen those people. I made amends by reading my letters there. For people I knew when I was out of state, I went to locations that were similar to the locations where I had lived. At first, it seemed silly to read letters, but then it started working. I let go of the guilt and shame. I no longer held on to the old resentments and fears. I began forgiving myself. I forgave them along the way, but I felt the freedom after making amends in person, on the phone, or just by writing letters and reading them.

Step 9 can be scary, but it is so worth it! The principle behind Step 9 is love. Keep love as the number 1 goal, but remember to learn to love yourself as well!!!

Anonymous

How Does This Step Work?

Step 9 scared me when I first got in program. I thought I was a good person and therefore, I was a victim of what others had done to me. I didn't want to admit my wrongs. But luckily, my sponsor told me that we were going to work one step at a time. By the time I got to step 9, I was ready. I was still scared, but I knew that to stay abstinent, I needed to amend my wrongs.

I started by going through my 8th step list with my sponsor. I identified the folks that I needed to make amends with personally. I kept my amends simple and about me. I said what I had done wrong and did not focus on what the other person did. I said I was truly sorry and that I would strive to be a better person. Then, I did the hardest part of the amends. I asked if there was anything I left out. This was hard because unlike the script I was using for the amends, here, I did not know the outcome. It was hard. My brother told me things I did not even realize had hurt him. It was painful. But once he had said what he needed to say, I once again said I was sorry. I told him that I would change the behavior.

Recovery is not for the weak. Even though amends can be hard, the benefits FAR outweigh the difficulties. My brother and I have a much better relationship than we had ever had before. I am a part of his life. I do not repeat my old behaviors and if they should come up unexpectedly, I apologize and persevere to not repeat.

The amends are really there for us. This program teaches that I have to change every part of myself. I have to get rid of the baggage and shame of my past and change into the person I want to be. That 'good' person I thought I was. With this program, I can finally accomplish that.

Anonymous

Message from the OA Intergroup:

There is a new OA book! It's called Twelve Step Workshop and Study Guide. We approved the draft at the World Service Business Conference in May, and already it's published and available. This is how the oa.org Bookstore describes it:

“Everything you need to lead a journey through the Steps, including leader scripts, Fourth Step Inventory Worksheets, and hand-selected references from OA-approved literature, is included. Use it to lead a group of OA members or one-on-one with your sponsees. Together, you can discover proven ways to incorporate the Twelve Steps of Overeaters Anonymous into a way of living - and a life beyond our wildest dreams.”

TRADITION NINE

“OA, as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.”

What Does This Tradition Mean?

It took me awhile to become comfortable with Tradition 9. To my ordered, “by the rules” mind, Tradition 9 felt a little “loosey goosy” as the saying goes. Who’s in charge? Then how do we get anything done? Who makes the decisions? These are a few of the questions I remember asking myself.

How wonderful that all of us are in charge, in one form or another. We’re all in charge of our side of the street, our own program, and we have relinquished that iron-fisted control that we have all known so well. By practicing the steps and traditions to the best of our ability, we come together from many different perspectives, always keeping in mind our primary purpose...to carry the message of recovery to those in need.

How wonderful that many things get done in our St. Louis Bi-State Intergroup! Meeting groups come together to host Super Saturdays; committees form to plan and implement a Retreat, Public information projects, and letter writing campaigns to health care professionals.

How wonderful that we all have a voice in the decisions that are made at our local meeting group level, at Intergroup, Region, even World Service. How gratifying it is that these decisions are, again, based on following our primary purpose...to carry the message of recovery to those still suffering from compulsive eating.

Our Intergroup is made up of a small, dedicated group of folks who show up 9 Sundays per year to keep track of a budget, plan events and other projects, and to send representatives to Region and World Service events. They have been, and still are, short of help, on the board and the Intergroup as a whole. We ought never be organized, but that does not give us a pass on not giving service and contributing some of our time. It’s good for our program, and it’s good for the group, as a whole. “Trusting our higher power rather than any organizational structure, we can now take responsibility for our shared lives and for the OA fellowship in which we are recovering together.” (Page 183 from the OA 12/12).

Thank you Intergroup Board and Reps for your service to our fellowship – you are a wonderful reminder of this important tradition.

Anonymous

How Does This Tradition Work?

When I first came into this wonderful program, it was for all the ‘wrong’ reasons. I wanted to find the person in charge and have them fix me. Still eat the same food, but get skinny. I soon found out that our program operates in a unique way. We are responsible, similar to our own program, for OA as a whole.

After I got both feet in OA, I was told that I could only keep my recovery if I give it away through service. I volunteered to be our group’s intergroup rep. This was a way for me to give back to our group. This simple service of attending the monthly meeting, allowed me to feel a part of a community. I was no longer a ‘taker’, like I had been when I first came into these rooms. I could now take information back to my group and feel like I not only worked my program, but participated in a larger community.

What made it even better was that when I was at the Intergroup meeting, the leaders were not professionals. They were working together to make the OA program better. This made me realize that I too could contribute. I did not have to have years in the program or be a professional, all I had to do was participate. Suit up, and show up.

This is what I did when I first got abstinent. Now, I continue to be of service. I am not cured. If service worked in the beginning, it will work now. If I want to keep my recovery, I have to continue to give it away. Service will keep me here.

-Anonymous



Step Principle & Recovery Characteristic:

Abstinence, Serenity, and Step 9

A slogan I've often heard in the OA rooms is that abstinence is the most important thing, without exception. It's true that abstinence is the foundation of our program. But if I'm building a house and stop after pouring the foundation, all I have is a concrete-lined hole in the ground. What good is refraining from compulsive overeating, in and of itself, if I remain a seething bundle of resentment and anger? To make a home, I need to go beyond the foundation and erect a framework, encase it in strong walls, and then add the things I love. To construct a life of serenity, my most treasured gift from my higher power, I had to emerge from the food fog first. Then on this foundation, I could build a strong and durable recovery, beginning with Step 1 and methodically working all the way through to the maintenance steps. My home group is called Abstinence First for a reason.

The most amazing waystation on this road to serenity was Step 9. I made amends to a motley assortment of people, culminating in a sincere encounter with my ex-husband who I had once hoped would have a fatal car accident on the way home from work! And just a few weekends ago, I stood up in front of family members and friends in attendance at our son's wedding rehearsal dinner and gave this same man heartfelt thanks for what he did for our son's recovery from heroin addiction.

None of this would have been possible had I not laid the foundation with abstinence, and then followed up with a push through my newcomer's single-minded focus on food to a new way of life, starting every day with, "God, grant me the serenity..."

Jane C

Principle of Step 9: Justice

By the time I got to Step 9, I think I was almost chomping at the bit to get it over with. I had admitted my shortcomings, had made an inventory of those I'd harmed, and I had enough health and healing from my time in the rooms that I knew I'd feel better.

But there was a part of me that had mixed emotions – some fear...some guilt...some shame. Maybe I'd call to make the amends to my college roommate over my jealousy of her (she was thin and beautiful – I was not) and how it often hampered our friendship – and she would laugh or just be embarrassed for me or be mad that my problems with addiction had negatively impacted her and us.

As is often the case, though, my fears were unfounded...both in this specific case and in all of the times I called to make amends. Folks were forgiving, willing to receive my amends, and often happy to have things cleared up. In fact, very often people weren't even aware of something I'd done that had been bothering me for years and had barely caused an issue for them. Surprise.

You want to know what the toughest amends was? And honestly still is? Forgiving myself. I have made so many mistakes...failed so many times. But guess what? Everybody does. I often remind myself that I have always and am still doing my best and, in truth, I think that's what most of us do -- our best. So let's step forward into Step 9 with some courage for the process, some humility toward others who we have harmed, and some grace for ourselves. It's a powerful combo.

Anonymous

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. This fall, all three levels are asking for help:

September: Please focus this month on donations to World Service. If every member around the world gave \$2.50 a month directly to WSO, then World OA would be fully self-supporting, and could use any other potential income for extra efforts toward our primary purpose, carrying the message. Remember everything WSO does for us – literature, the website oa.org (100,000 hits a month, 100 pages packed with useful information including finding meetings), the world office that handles mail, email and phone questions – and lots more. The website makes it easy to give one-time or recurrent donations, or checks can be mailed to the world office address available there or on any OA book or pamphlet.

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