

January 2016

**OA  
TODAY**



St. Louis Bi-State  
Area Intergroup

9907-E Gravois Road (rear)  
Saint Louis MO 63123

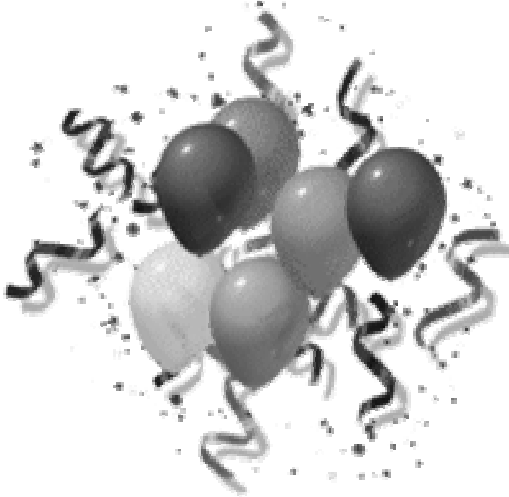
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[www.stlouisoa.org](http://www.stlouisoa.org) (Local Website)  
[www.oaregion4.org](http://www.oaregion4.org) (Region 4 Website)  
[www.oea.org](http://www.oea.org) (World Service Website)

**Happy 56<sup>th</sup> Birthday OA!**

**LET'S  
CELEBRATE  
TOGETHER!**



*St. Louis Bi-State Intergroup Overeaters Anonymous*

**Super Saturday ■ January 16, 2016**

*Hosted by area OA members who want to have a January event!*

**Webster Groves Christian Church  
1320 W. Lockwood Avenue ■ St. Louis MO 63122**

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

**Registration: 9:00am ■ Program: 9:30am to 12:30pm**

**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. 314.603.3712**

# STEP ONE

**"We admitted we were powerless over food, that our lives had become unmanageable."**

## What Does This Step Mean?

Step 1 is all about coming to the end of ourselves. Hitting our bottom. Finally coming to a point where we throw our hands up and admit that we cannot manage our eating without being self destructive.

Step 1 is so essential because if we never admit we actually have a problem, we will not be looking for or open to a solution. The solution could be staring us in the face, but if we do not even admit we actually have a problem, we will not see the solution.

My personal point of hitting bottom involved three different situations. First, when sugar and gluten became a trigger for migraine headaches, and I knew this, but continued to eat the pastries in my office. I was literally making myself sick and unable to function when I got home from work - all because of food! Secondly, when my young son started asking me to please not to eat his snacks when he left the room. He would say "Mommy, please do not eat this while I'm out of the room." It broke my heart. Lastly, before I came into program I remember going to the zoo with my husband and son. I had no energy and I was dragging myself around. Then I saw pictures of myself and was horrified! I did not recognize the person in the picture. I realized I was out of control and I needed help. I also realized that there was no limit to how much weight I could gain. That scared me.

I finally threw my hands up and admitted to myself that I was completely powerless over food. It was all of these things combined that gave me the courage and determination to walk through the doors of my first OA meeting. By the grace of God, I've never looked back.

Anonymous

**"I AM POWERLESS!"**

## How Does This Step Work?

This October was my seventh anniversary of coming into the program. I came in October 2008 and it took me until January of 2009 to get and stay abstinent.

This October, I unwillingly came to the next phase in my abstinence. I had plateaued in my physical weight loss, which is no big deal, except my doctor wanted me to get to my healthy weight. Knowing this, my sponsor pointed out that I had plateaued and asked me what was really going on that had kept me stuck.

I was back in shape but still justifying to myself that I could keep the same food plan I had when my body was telling me to change. I felt like there was a block, and I could not figure out what it was but it had been on my mind for a few months.

Thank God for a sponsor! Mine knew something was up and asked about why I was plateaued, what was the real reason. The best part of this program is that I knew she was right, because I had shared everything about myself with her, no secrets left. She knows me and was honest with me.

My reaction? I was angry and relieved at the same time. From working my program, I knew that I needed to stick close to my program; so I prayed and wrote honestly about what was going on. It turns out, the block was fear. Fear that once I achieve my ultimate healthy weight, what will become of me? As the Big Book says, "I will be the hole in the donut." But after talking to my sponsor, I know that I am powerless over food and my weight and trying to control it, makes my life unmanageable.

Once I admitted this again (the old-timer that I am), a huge weight lifted from my shoulders. My food plan has changed, and I do not care. I just want to be well and am completely willing to do whatever it takes to stay abstinent. But I am a food addict, so I will need to remind myself of this every day. I only have today.

AZ

## NEWS:

### **OA MEETING HAS BABYSITTING!**

➔ **The Tuesday morning 9:30am OA meeting at St. Mark's Presbyterian Church (601 East Claymont, Ballwin MO 63021) now offers babysitting every week. The childcare room is right across the hall from our meeting space in a fun room with toys and books. The babysitter is a fun-loving, young mom and niece of a long time OA member. No need to call ahead. There is no fee for the babysitting, although donations are accepted. The contact person for OA Meeting SL013 (Tuesday mornings, 9:30am, St. Mark's United Pres-**

**byterian Church) is Deb at 636.530.4582.**

➔ **The Webster Groves Step Study meeting on Saturday mornings at 10am located at Lockwood and Berry is starting a six-month trial of offering babysitting to OA members. It will begin on January 23rd, 2016. There will be no babysitting on February 27th because of the Super-Saturday being held that day in lieu of our regular meeting. For more information, please contact Ellen W. at 314.603.3712.**

# TRADITION ONE

“Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon A.A. unity.”

## What Does This Tradition Mean?

The day I reached out for help I was in a state of sheer desperation; not just over my innumerable failed attempts at weight loss but over an all-consuming sense of the very futility of my own existence in this world.

A small window of faith opened up just long enough for me to reach out to a recovered friend in another fellowship and to bare my soul to him. Through his gentle urging, I ended up at my first meeting of Overeaters Anonymous.

That window of faith snapped shut, however, as I heard people share their experience as well as the solution they found and then their hope for a better life. I'm grateful, in spite of my initial resistance, that I kept coming back to hear what was a very consistent message; if for no other reason, initially, than to please my friend. The message I heard was that a spiritual experience was essential if I was to be relieved of the obsession to eat more than was necessary.

Yes, we find plenty to disagree about such as over how each of us practices Step One once we admit powerlessness and, as a result, embrace a food plan; but we stay the course in advocating that this awakening can only be achieved by working all of OA's twelve steps into our personal lives. My experience indicates a necessity for us to focus on how the OA Twelve-step program of recovery has worked in people's lives while letting other programs fend for themselves. If we were to fracture over these issues, I fear that many – myself included – would flee over a perceived lack of focus on our part. To be sure, as we repeat at every meeting, we are not a “weight-loss” or a “diet” program whose only goal would be to facilitate weight-loss at any cost.

While physical recovery has, indeed, been one of the consequences of my newfound spiritual existence, to claim that we have any answer outside of the spiritual program of action embodied in the twelve steps would be to step outside of our own experience.

Yes, there are differing opinions as to how to utilize the tools and, indeed, many share differing experiences with working each of the steps, but we can't allow those individual expressions to cause us to fracture or lose sight of our primary purpose: **to carry a message of spiritual recovery to those who still suffer.**

Our meetings must stay focused and unified on this singleness of purpose lest we confuse people over what our real purpose is – “Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps” as Step Twelve begins – and the means by which we achieve that.

BL

## How Does This Tradition Work?

I grew up in a large family in a small town, and I created a view of the world based on what I learned in those two environments. I accepted my views as facts, and it took me many years to understand that how I viewed the world was very different than the way other people saw things. I tried for years to control my own world so I could feel safe. I had to keep things under control and looking the way I thought things should be: how I kept my house, how I perceived you kept yours, how I raised my kids, what I thought you should be doing to improve yours, the way I presented myself at work, my standard of perfection, and the belief that everyone else should fit within my standard. All of these “rules” or “expectations” that the world would work better “my” way led me to 200 plus pounds and absolute chaos in my life. I couldn't keep up my standards, let alone make all the other people in my world meet them.

I thank God for leading me to the rooms of OA. Here I was encouraged to find my own way. My Higher Power was in charge. There were lots of different meetings and the members of each meeting had somewhat different ways of working the program. The study of specific literature, working a similar food plan, or following an established format helped the members work the steps and find the plan for living that led away from the compulsion and into a life of freedom. I had the freedom to choose which meeting and method worked for me. I went to a variety of meetings and listened to the other members and began my journey. I am really grateful that there were choices; that no one said “my way or the highway.”

Over the years I've changed the meetings I attend, and the way I participate. The methods that worked in the beginning have evolved over time and my recovery has grown stronger. When I sponsor, I share what worked for me, but I don't decide what will work for the sponsee. When I see others who do not work the program my way, I try not to put them down. That way I avoid causing conflict that may divide the organization. I don't want to dilute the strength of OA. I don't want to lose the goals for the greater good in the desire to be “right.” I just want OA to continue to be focused on carrying the message that there is a solution, and allow members to decide for themselves how the program works best for them. I still need OA today as much as I did back then. I am grateful the broad acceptance of all members and their practices keeps us united against our common foe. Together we get better, so long as we keep our focus on recovery.

Anonymous

## The Principle Behind Step One: “HONESTY”

When I came to OA, I thought I was an honest person. In my initial conversation with my sponsor, she stressed to me that honesty was a non-negotiable part of our relationship. I thought to myself, “That’s no problem. I’m a nice person, not a liar. I just can’t stop eating.”

Within days this rosy vision of myself would be tested. I described – wait, that is the beginning of a lie right there. I actually whined and complained to her about a grocery bagger who was lazy and unresponsive to my needs. She said very matter-of-factly, “Oh, someone wasn’t doing what you wanted them to do when you wanted them to do it.” That unflattering assessment was completely accurate and revealed the lie that someone else was responsible for my well-being and happiness.

This discussion served as a model for me to take an unvarnished look at my actions and true motives for them when I’m disturbed or upset. I have in turn used this model when working with my sponsees. It taught me that self-honesty is essential to relinquishing the need to control, to taking Step 1 and admitting my powerlessness and the unmanageability of my life. The illusion of control is the most basic lie of all.

Four and a half years into recovery, I need frequent reminders to be honest. Lies I’ve told range in complexity from, “The chips at a Mexican restaurant aren’t fried,” to, “My ex-husband is responsible for every bit of unhappiness I’ve had in my life since 1975.” The *Daily Journal* produced by Region 4 is a perfect format for these reminders.

The November 10<sup>th</sup> entry in *For Today* quotes Ralph Waldo Emerson on Page 315: “*Whatever games are played with us, we must play no games with ourselves, but deal in our privacy with the last honesty and truth.*”

Jane C.

## **NEWS:**

➔ **Mark your calendars now for the OA International Unity Day celebrated as a Super Saturday on February 27, 2016, at Webster Groves Christian Church (1320 W. Lockwood Avenue, St. Louis MO 63122). Registration is at 9:00am; the program concludes at 3:30pm. For more information contact Ellen W. 314.603.3712.**

➔ **The SL123 Big Book Study in St. Charles on Thursday evenings at 7:30pm has disbanded. It was being held at St. Joseph's Hospital in St. Charles.**

## Positive Characteristic of Recovery: “ACCEPTANCE”

“*It transcends the food.*” I have heard this phrase uttered more than once in program. Many of us came to OA desperate...to lose weight...to get some “control” over food and our lives... desperate for something that we couldn’t name. We got a sponsor, we started working the program and the steps, and day by day, week by week, month by month, we started seeing results...physical recovery, a change in attitude, spiritual growth.

We also, miraculously, discovered how to live life on life’s terms, which is a skill that so many of us missed out on learning and cultivating in our food addicted lives. As a matter of fact, in “The Promises” (page 83-84 of the Big Book) it tells us that, “*we will intuitively know how to handle situations which used to baffle us.*” We have learned to accept that life is not perfect, that stuff happens...good and bad to all of us. We have learned to practice detachment...and acceptance...that one bad hour doesn’t have to spoil our day, that one bad day doesn’t have to spoil our week (or our year). We are also learning to accept OURSELVES...all parts of ourselves...the good things...the character defects and wounds... everything. “We accept that each defect, as painful to us as it may be, is part of who we are.” (OA’s 12&12, p. 61).

“Am I able to accept the vicissitudes of life, the craziness, the alternating surprises and disappointments? Is it possible to accept and allow every moment of every day to exactly as it is? Can I allow every person I meet to be exactly as he or she is at that moment?” (OA’s *Voices of Recovery*, p. 4).

This is what I strive for everyday. Some days are better than others! Some days it seems effortless to turn my will and my life over to the care of my Higher Power (darn Step 3!), and some days my self-will and ego are in charge. On those days, I definitely see a struggle in my ability to accept a situation, a person, myself.

But then I remember...this is progress not perfection. When I see the progress and recovery I have made in five short years (out of 50+ years of addiction and dysfunction), I feel a sense of serenity and neutrality coming back into my heart and mind. And with that comes acceptance...of my humanness...of my imperfection...and I feel grateful to be able to go into another day and do it all again.

Anonymous