

# AUGUST 2020 OA TODAY NEWSLETTER

St. Louis Bi-State Area Intergroup  
PO Box 28882 Saint Louis, MO 63123-0082

## 8

### STEP EIGHT

*Step Eight: Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.*

-OA.org

### STEP 8

For so long, I've felt like I lived on an island inside a stone fortress. I lived this way because I believed that people wouldn't like me and would eventually try to harm me. I hid my feelings, actions, and motives because I was ashamed of all of them. I was ashamed of me. In my disease, I had no integrity, no honesty, and no faith, so I could not possibly expect people to see those things in me. My greatest fear was that people would discover how truly debased I was.

I'm beginning to understand that when I make amends for the actions and behavior I'm ashamed of in my life, I'm freeing myself from a prison of self-abuse and self-hatred by taking action. The more I'm aware of how I've been inconsiderate and unkind, the less I feel the hurts from other people that I've been nursing. I don't know why I've been afraid to write this amends list, and I've spent a lot of time trying to figure it out. Getting out of the food has given me a greater sense of compassion for other people. It has given me a smaller sense of myself and how I fit into the grand scheme.

More and more, I'm being asked for naked honesty from my Higher Power. I am learning

to live on integrity, faith, and honesty rather than personality. My amends is part of this process. If I can face writing the list and making the amends one at a time, then I can move through some of my fear of living a life not based in defense and self-preservation. I can instead begin to act according to truth and compassion, even when it does not serve my own selfish interests.

— *Edited and reprinted from The Heartbeat of Recovery newsletter, Region One, Winter 2006*

### TRADITION EIGHT

*Overeaters Anonymous should remain forever non-professional, but our service centers may employ special workers.*

- OA

**Tradition Eight:** Overeaters Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers.

**Spiritual Principle:** Fellowship

I began giving service after my first meeting. I couldn't remember the names of individuals; I was too blown away by their candor about food obsessions and behaviors. However, I wanted to become part of their meeting. I helped put away chairs because I didn't want to leave the company of these people who thought and behaved like me (fellowship). I showed up early next week to help set out chairs. I had no idea this was service to the group, I just wanted to belong (fellowship).

I was asked to lead, once I met the abstinence requirement. I had no idea this was service; I just wanted to be accepted by the group (fellowship).

My sponsor asked me to represent the meeting at Intergroup. I didn't know this was service; I just wanted to meet MORE people like me (fellowship). My sponsor gave me a newcomer's name to help

through the 12-Steps. I was frightened to lead a newcomer astray, but I wanted to help someone suffering as I had (fellowship).

I was asked to consider service beyond Intergroup. I was doubtful I had anything to offer beyond listening to the proceedings, but I wanted to meet EVEN MORE people like me (fellowship). How many of us are there, I began asking? To my amazement, there's someone just like me in every nook and cranny of the World (fellowship).

Through the step by step process of saying "yes" to requests from fellow members, I gradually worked my way into abstinence, service beyond the group level, service beyond our local Intergroup, and service heading sub-committees at the World level. My experience in positions of non-professional service in OA has taught me how to manage my personal practices better. My professional life improved as result of learning from the OA traditions, most significantly from learning what it is like to live in harmony with others (fellowship).

Being in service with OA has taught me much about my crippling resentments, character defects and character strengths. (I was glad to learn I had any.) Service has taught me how to navigate others' personalities that I found offensive - as well as my own weaknesses. There is much, yet, to be learned about self as well as living at peace with others (fellowship).

I have something from OA that monetary compensation cannot provide LIFE. I have a larger World than I ever dreamt possible. I have real friends in the OA fellowship. I have deeper friendships outside of OA. I have an honest relationship with my spouse and children. I'll continue to give freely and live in Program, not just practice it.

My spiritual practice of daily reading/meditation reminds me service in

OA has allowed me to not just have knowledge of Program promises, but experience Program promises. Huge difference. The first is information; the second is wisdom. -Susan T



**“The hurt had a beginning, and it can have an end as well”** – OA 12&12, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed, p. 61

The first time I remember hearing someone speak on Step 8 I was in the process of doing Step 4, and knew that my ex-husband would have to go on an 8th Step list. I also knew bone deep that I would never make amends to him because he had deserved everything I had ever done to him! I was willing to share this with my sponsor and she reminded me that 4 came before 8, and that by the time I got to 8 I just might be willing. I was with others, but not him. I did put him on the list in that 3rd column- the when hell freezes over column- the first column- willing to make amends to these now; second one- willing to do so later; then the one my ex belonged to!

Shortly after that I was at a recovery convention and found a button that said exactly how I wanted the 8th step to read, "We made a list of all people we had harmed and asked God to remove them." But instead it reads, "Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all." It took 8 years for me to recover enough for me to be able to see him not as my horrible ex, but as a person, and once I could see him as a person I could become willing to make the much needed amends. My stance became whether or not he deserved the amends no

longer mattered, because I deserved to be free of the guilt and resentment. I got there by reading and doing the writing on step 8 in OA's 12x12. And this continues to be my go to when I am hurt. "Our grievances are only so big and no bigger. The hurt had a beginning and it can have an end as well." And writing helps me see this in black and white written in my own handwriting.

My sponsor had encouraged me to put myself on the list, and that's how I got to OA. I was becoming willing to change in all manner of ways except my eating and food behaviors. I could tell her anything except that I regularly binged and stole food. The pain, and guilt finally got so bad I told her and she sent me here to OA. In the morning of what would prove to be my first day in OA I went to my regular step meeting and it was Step 8, and for the first time I understand the difference between wanting and willingness. For quite some time I had wanted to lose 50 pounds, stop binging and stealing food, and couldn't understand why I persisted in self destructive eating anyway. I wanted someone/something outside of me to fix me, and I was unwilling to do the things necessary to do the work that change required. At that meeting I became willing to make amends to myself with food. Later that evening I attended my first OA meeting which was on Step 1, and that opened the door to letting others guide me into both the willingness and the skills I needed to become first abstinent then at ease with food. Today I am so grateful for all of the tools we have, and because of them and my willingness to change I get live well every day, and in doing so am well. Thank you all for making this life possible.

– Anonymous



*Lessons from the Microwave*

### *Lessons from the Microwave*

Teachers come in all different shapes and sizes and not all of them are human beings. For instance even the microwave can be a great instructor.

All my life I have felt rushed - never feeling there was enough time to pack it all in or get it all done whatever 'it' was/is. I have rushed through meals, inhaling my food, recalling little of the taste of any of it. I have rushed through experiences I should have appreciated and savored. The examples are endless. What the microwave taught me is there is enough time and that even three minutes can be an eternity.

To illustrate: my daily routine consisted of getting to work, hitting the break room - putting a cup of water in the microwave setting it for three minutes, then rushing like a crazy woman trying to get as much done as I could before it beeped. I would dash back to my office, pull items out of my tote, organize them on my desk, log on to my computer, head back to the break room, put my lunch in the fridge, wash a cup or two in the sink, and still find myself impatiently standing in front of the microwave that still had time left before it was done. This routine played out day after day, week after week. I was aggravated - the microwave wasn't. I can be slow on the uptake though eventually learned the lesson it was trying to teach me - *three minutes can be a long time!* This is good information for someone like me to know.

Now when I am stuck in traffic and running late I remind myself that three minutes is a long time (acceptance); that I am powerless over the traffic (Step One); I don't have to be insane (Step Two); and I can just breathe and know I will make it in plenty time (Step Three – turn it over).

*Missouri Anonymous*





"If you're looking for something healthy to eat, the menu is gluten-free and printed with soy ink."

### OA LITERATURE

Now that OA Office is officially closed:

1. You will still be able to order literature through me, Marilyn F. E-mail@literature@[stlouisoa.org](mailto:stlouisoa.org). (I will then be in contact with the purchaser(s) to set up a time and place to meet for your transaction, which will need to be by check).
2. Or Online-The [Bookstore@OA.ORG](http://Bookstore@OA.ORG)
3. E-Books are available on Amazon Kindle, Apple Book or Barnes and Noble Nook; soft cover books. Large Print Twelve and Twelve, Second Edition; and A New Beginning are only available on Amazon.

OA receive a royalty share for all purchases of new books and e-books made at the third-party Website listed above

There is a new publication available entitled: Body Image, Relationships and Sexuality

Also: Looking for someone(s) to coordinate a recording on CD of The Voices of Recovery for sight-impaired members.

-Marilyn F. Literature Chair

### September Retreat – Call for Volunteers

Our Fall Retreat begins on Friday evening, September 11 and ends on Saturday afternoon, on Zoom. We will need five to eight willing helpers.

If you plan to attend the retreat and are willing to serve as a timer or a chat monitor, please contact Cyndy L. ([cyndydaybyday@gmail.com](mailto:cyndydaybyday@gmail.com)) to sign up.

Here's a brief description of the jobs.

**Timers:** A timer will alert the speakers when they reach the end of the scheduled time. The timer will also time the shares as needed. Specifics will be provided closer to the event.

**Chat monitors.** During the sessions there may be a need to have someone for the attendees to contact if they are having technical problems, or just have a question. People will enter those problems or questions in the Zoom chat box. The chat monitor will just be watching and dealing with things in the background. The monitor doesn't have to know how to fix something so much as know who to let know that someone needs help.

**ARTICLES FOR THE NEXT NEWSLETTER ARE DUE BY August 20, 2020.** Please send your submissions, well ahead of time, to the OA TODAY Editorial Staff at [newsletter@stlouisoa.org](mailto:newsletter@stlouisoa.org) (strongly preferred) or mail to St. Louis Bi-State Area Intergroup PO Box 28882 Saint Louis, MO 63123-0082. Personal stories express the experience, strength, and hope of individual members and not of OA as a whole. Other OA groups and service boards may reprint articles from this newsletter without requesting permission.

