

DECEMBER 2020 OA TODAY NEWSLETTER

St. Louis Bi-State Intergroup of OA
P.O. Box 28882, St. Louis, MO 63123
info@stlouisoa.org, www.stlouisoa.org
Phone: 314-638-6070



STEP TWELVE

Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these Steps, we tried to carry this message to compulsive overeaters and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

PAY IT FORWARD

When I first came into program almost 11 years ago now, I was so very sure of myself, sure that with my “smarts” I could figure out this program, lose all my weight, and walk away with no one the wiser that “I had to go to OA, a 12-step program, to get fixed”. I was ashamed. I was sure others would further ridicule me if I admitted I was in a program, and frankly I had enough “not good enough” talk in my head as it was.

I determined that the best course of action was to get in, work the first 11 steps in a hurry, and get out without ever HAVING to do Step 12. Oh, the horror, I thought. I have to GO OUT and TALK to people about this program??? Well, that wasn't going to happen.

I would joke about it once I began actually participating in meetings – “never 12 for me!” - and I would laugh, tossing it off. Even once I began actually doing Step 12, and it became a passion for me, I would still joke about how I never wanted to take that last Step.

As I was thinking about writing this article, it occurred to me that I needed to stop telling myself that story, much less sharing that with anyone who would listen. That was well and truly my addict brain at work, and thanks to this program, I choose to be someone who does not practice, “Selfishness – self-centeredness! That, we think, is the root of our troubles. Driven by a hundred forms of fear, self-delusion, self-seeking, and self-pity, we step on the toes of our fellows and they retaliate.” (BB, pg 62)

How much more selfish could I be than taking what is freely offered, and running away like a thief in the night? Our OA Preamble reminds us each meeting that “We welcome everyone who wants to stop eating compulsively. There are no dues or fees for members; we are self-supporting through our own contributions... Our primary purpose is to abstain from compulsive eating and compulsive food behaviors and to carry the message of recovery through the Twelve Steps of OA to those who still suffer.”

That's it. Love, acceptance, a new way of living – a full life full of joy, and the only thing that is asked of me is to live by the principles, and reach out my hand to someone else, as a hand was reached out to me.

(continued on page 2)

Most of our traditions mention the role of service in recovery. I think Tradition 8 speaks most clearly on this for me right now. “But sponsoring, leading, speaking, explaining OA to newcomers – “carrying the message” – is our Twelfth Step work, and it must always be free from the dollar motive.

Compulsive overeaters will listen to those of us who give freely from own experience.” The AA Big Book also tells us on pg 89, “Practical experience shows that nothing will so much insure immunity from drinking as intensive work with other alcoholics. It works when other activities fail. This is our twelfth suggestion: Carry this message to other alcoholics! You can help when no one else can. You can secure their confidence when others fail. Remember they are very ill. Life will take on new meaning. To watch people recover, to see them help others, to watch loneliness vanish, to see a fellowship grow up about you, to have a host of friends – this is an experience you must not miss. We know you will not want to miss it. Frequent contact with newcomers and with each other is the bright spot of our lives.”

It surely is for me, giving service at the group, Intergroup, and Region level has brought so much to my recovery; but nothing, *nothing* compares to working with sponsees. To be there as someone finds their feet in the program, and the promises start to come true for them, as they came true for me, that is truly a **Pay It Forward** moment. It feels better than any selfish act I ever did while in my addiction.

Melanie T.



TRADITION TWELVE

Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all these Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.



I had a lot of trouble with the concept of Anonymity when I first came into program. How does fellowship work if you can't know one another? That was my thought, and I stayed mostly to myself for my first few years in program - not knowing how to manage to trust someone I wasn't supposed to know.

But Anonymity is not just the dictionary definition of “the quality or state of being unknown to most people.” What the 12-step tradition of anonymity brought to me, eventually, was a comfortableness with sharing openly, knowing I was safe to express myself and no one would gossip about it.

I could share any feeling. I even learned I had more than one feeling! If I was honest about how I felt before program, I would say Bad – with a horrible churning anxiety always in my gut. That was all I ever felt, for years.

Now I get to feel a rainbow of emotions: Joy, Fear, Excitement, Despair, Love, Loathing, Serenity.

In addition, I get the space to practice the principle of Humility, absolutely one of my favorite life lessons received from working these Steps. To never be on the “ladder of worth” again is an amazing gift. (See second paragraph, page 52, **Overeaters Anonymous, 3rd Edition**)

I am just another member of this fellowship, a true society of equals. It has been truly transformative to get to practice each Step's principle in such a safe and loving space. Then, when I was ready, I take that out into the world with me.

The ripple effect on my life still amazes me. I am a better human in the world, because I get to be “Just another member” of OA.

~Anonymous~

SHARE THE GOOD NEWS: OA CHANGES LIVES!

Thank you, God; my favorite December holiday does not have to hurt anymore.

Holiday of Miracles

This afternoon I chose to protect my emotional health by not turning on the TV and chose to find some spiritual literature and journal. I read several pieces of literature when I came across a pamphlet that discusses emotional eating, a problem with which I have struggled. I felt the topic worthy of my reading and writing.

“We need others to love us because we cannot love ourselves.” That fallible belief and thinking was what made the holiday so painful for me. When I was growing up, it seemed the holiday meant the measure of the love you have for me and that this was the day I would find out! If I received nothing or a small item and my siblings and others were getting multiple, expensive gifts to my one, I was totally devastated and destroyed.

Then Overeaters Anonymous entered my life, and no one threw me out.

Journaling about what I read brought this additional epiphany! I had left college to work on my emotional and mental issues. I wanted to know why I was so destructive when it came to me and sex. I took a seasonal job at a well-known department store, telling myself that I would buy myself whatever I wanted so that I would not be so unhappy on the Big Day.

While in my group therapy session, I met a very loving woman who was concerned about her weight, losing her marriage and her husband. I guess I was there because I was afraid of losing “me.” One session, she said her husband gave her an ultimatum: lose the

weight or he was going to “trade her in for a newer model.” I started laughing hysterically, and she told me she found nothing funny. I apologized, but I explained that he was the one with a problem. She wasn’t the one who needed therapy as much as he did. I said: “How could he say such a thing?! You are not a car. You are not a thing or object. You are a very loving, caring, giving, sensitive person, and, if he cannot see all of that because of your weight, he doesn’t deserve you anyway.”

The next week was our last session before the holiday that had always hurt me. The woman who had shared about her husband’s ultimatum wished me a merry holiday and said, “I have a gift for you, because I love you. You gave me my life back.”

The holiday now reminds me of miracles. When I say that I am not enough, my HP says I am. I have learned to “boomerang love.” By giving it, I receive it, one hundred fold and more.

In OA, I learned that people come in all shapes and sizes, and in God’s eyes, we have worth, value. We come in different shades of pigment, but our humanity is the same. We are all worthy of love, respect, and grace.

~Anonymous, A Grateful Member~



News from Your Intergroup

Dear Fellow OAs,

How is it possible that it's December? Our St. Louis Bi-State Intergroup (IG) wishes everyone a Holiday Season of peace, love and abstinence.

Our November Annual Business Conference was a great success. First and foremost, on behalf of our entire OA Community, I'd like to express our gratitude to our "trusted servants" (Tradition 2) who have served us so faithfully throughout 2020. A few of those who are rotating out of service are:

- Pat M who has served as our IG Treasurer for the last three years, thanks for your diligent caretaking of our financial resources.
- Susan T who has served as a World Service Delegate for the last four years, thanks for representing us at World and serving on the Twelfth Step Within and Bylaws committees.
- J-MO who has served as our Region 4 Representative for the last four years, thanks for representing us at Region and serving on the Outreach committee.
- Liz P who has served as our Newsletter Chair for the last year, thanks for taking the reins and giving us a terrific newsletter each month.

Welcome to our New Treasurer, Marina F. Thanks for stepping up for this important Board Officer position. Also, welcome Cyndy L. who will be a World Service Delegate; your WSO experience will continue to be a great asset for our IG. J-MO is stepping up as our Newsletter Chair; your writing experience and dedication to our Community are much appreciated. Our Vice-Chair, Christina D, and Public Information Officer, Melanie T

were re-elected to continue their valued service to our IG.

We also passed all the proposed changes to our Bylaws and Policy and Procedure Manual. These changes were basically to update these documents to current practice. Most groups/meetings voted to make their Zoom/Teleconference ID/phone number and password available on our Webpage. We will respect the group conscience of Groups/meetings that do not want this information made "public". Anyone wanting to attend these meetings will still need to call the contact person for this information. We also voted to make this St. Louis Bi-State Virtual Meeting list available to the Region 4 webpage. If any group wants to include Zoom/Teleconference info in their WSO listing, go to the WSO webpage and update your group info to include this in the notes.

I'd like to invite groups that currently do not send a representative our Zoom Intergroup meetings to consider asking a volunteer or co-volunteer to attend one for two meetings. Try us; you'll like us! There are no abstinence or length of membership requirements. It's great to be involved in our many service opportunities. You get to make new OA friends ("Frequent contact with newcomers and with each other is the bright spot of our lives" BB pg. 89), and personally my service is vital to my recovery and abstinence. Contact me at chair@stlouisoa.org to get Zoom info.

All are invited to attend the 2021 Budget Planning meeting of the Board of Trustees on December 10, 2020 at 1:00 pm. This will be a Zoom meeting, ID 940 5580 8391, password Serenity, or phone in 312-626-6799, password 75183374.

Be safe dearest OA friends.

With gratitude for service,
Dianne S., IG Chairperson

**SLOGAN SPOTLIGHT:
Progress, Not Perfection**

Thank God, that through the rooms of Overeaters Anonymous, I have learned this saying! Before I came to the rooms of OA, I compulsively ate without even realizing it – then I was 12-stepped into this program.

At that time, I was always looking for perfection. I couldn't find it in myself. I couldn't find it in the people in my life. I couldn't find it in institutions, or gurus, or anywhere else. And I ate over it. All the time, it seemed. I just never realized it.

Because OA has taught me “progress, not perfection”, I have been able to let go of so many things, and I don't have to fight about things if I don't want to. I didn't come to OA because I felt like I needed to let go of anything. I had no idea what was to come! A mark of progress for me today is letting go of perfectionism by giving it over to the God of my understanding.

Letting go is not easy for someone who is very practiced at controlling behaviors, but like so many things in these rooms, it is simple. Like the first step teaches me, in order to let go, I must first realize that I am grasping on to something. The rest follows as I follow the 12 steps, as written, in their suggested order. What a concept! Today I am grateful for the progress that I have made, and that God continues to guide my progress as I recover in the rooms of OA.

And because some of those reading this might need a reminder: this, for me and many of us, is a disease of forgetting. Every day I need to reaffirm to myself that I am a compulsive eater and that there is a workable solution to my malady. I also still don't remember the first time I heard the slogan, but I can tell you today that it has saved me from “returning to the bottle” so many times. I

appreciate hearing it in meetings, too. And thank OA, my God with skin on, for that!

~Anonymous~

Progress...



...not perfection!

**SERVICE OPPORTUNITY:
Writing for the Newsletter**

Thank you for trusting me to do service as newsletter editor. Here are “sections” that will be featured over the next year, so think about whether you have something to submit:

- **Step of the Month** and **Tradition of the Month** will be our lead articles; same number as the month
- **Share the Good News: OA Changes Lives** will feature first person accounts of recovery
- **Intergroup News** will come from our IG chair or other Board members
- **Recovery Events** – we want to share your flyers (I need them as Word or JPG please), and consider writing up a “wrap up” of how it went for the month after your event
- Special topics will include slogans, tools, and more

While electronic submissions are preferred, we consider publishing items submitted as hard copies. Please include your contact information as I sometimes need to discuss edits with the writer.

J-MO, Editor

**** IT'S PLAY DATE TIME! ****

We absolutely insist on enjoying life.

Big Book of AA p.132

Feeling lonely and bored these days?

Let's plan some informal Zoom play dates.

Possible examples:

- Book Club
- Travel photos
- Sing-along
- Show and tell
- Sewing circle
- Nature talks
- Puppet shows

Are you in? Do you have other ideas?

(please!) Just email info@stlouisoa.org, with Play Date in the Subject line. You will be contacted as we get started.

Elizabeth C

It Works When We Work It

So many of us spend countless hours trying to understand how we came to have an eating disorder. Some hope that uncovering the roots of our food issues will somehow make the malady go away.

But "Our Invitation to You" (page 1, **Overeaters Anonymous, 3rd Edition [OA3E]**) reminds us that: "*We have learned that the reasons are unimportant. What deserves the attention of the still-suffering compulsive overeater is this: There is a proven, workable method by which we can arrest our illness.*"

Our own best thinking led us to insanity in our relationship with food and lives that were unmanageable. The way forward is a way of action, not simply thinking.

Step 10 begins with the word "Continued" and reminds us that "*Repetition is the only*

form of permanence that nature can achieve." (For Today, p. 204)

"If we are to experience permanent recovery from compulsive overeating, we will have to repeat, day after day, the actions that have already brought us so much healing," says page 69 of **OA3E**. Many anorexics and bulimics would also vouch for the same.

In other words:

Less analysis = Less paralysis
More action = More traction

Keep coming back! It works when you work it!

~Anonymous~

RECOVERY EVENTS!

We have had several successful Zoom recovery events during this year: e.g., Zoom retreat in September, Super Saturdays in October, temporary sponsor training in November, 47 at the 9 a.m. Thanksgiving Gratitude Meeting! - and Holiday Booster scheduled for December 5th. (Flyer page 6.)

The 2021 Calendar is OPEN at this time. Please talk with your group(s), and let's get this calendar filled up with Recovery! IG has the Zoom account available and technical assistance is also available. For info or to list your event, please contact our Vice Chair, Christina D, at vicechair@stlouisoa.org.

ARTICLES FOR THE NEXT NEWSLETTER ARE DUE BY December 20, 2020. Please send your submissions to the OA TODAY Editorial Staff newsletter@stlouisoa.org or mail to St. Louis Bi-State Area Intergroup, PO Box 28882, STL, 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.

Maintaining Abstinence, Emotional Sobriety and Spiritual Fitness

ST. MARY'S SUNDAY MORNING MEETING PRESENTS

the annual

HOLIDAY BOOSTER

Saturday, December 5, 2020

9:00 AM - NOON

Zoom Meeting ID: 830 110 9886

Passcode: 919533

If you plan to join the meeting by phone, call Carol H. at 314-775-4764 for available numbers

OVEREATERS ANONYMOUS

SUGGESTED DONATION: \$6 - NO PREREGISTRATION REQUIRED

Using the group number 06234, you can donate online at stlouisoa.org

(choose CONTRIBUTE), or mail check to:

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