

July 2021 OA TODAY NEWSLETTER

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STEP SEVEN

Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.



Step Seven is one of the shortest steps but also one of the most powerful. In the **Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous**, Steps Six and Seven are referred to as the steps that separate “the men from the boys.” If we take out the patriarchal language, what they are really saying is that these are the steps that require us to be adults. My disease stunted my emotional and spiritual growth. The Steps, and especially Step Seven, teach me how to be a healthy grown-up.

Before OA, I had two reactions when I became aware of one of my character defects. Either I denied and hid from the defect, or I blamed it on someone else. Both of these reactions are very childish. Children will hide when they have done something wrong or blame it on someone else. “So-and-so started it” is something I’m sure we’ve all heard, either from ourselves as children or from other children. Neither reaction accepts responsibility for my/our own behavior. The humility we need in Step Seven forces us to see who we really are and accept ourselves.

So, what does it mean to be humble? The best definition that I’ve come across for it says that

a humble person knows they are not perfect. A humble person also knows that they are not God. On page 183 of **Voices of Recovery (VOR)** it says “before this step it was all about my powerlessness, my beliefs, my shortcomings, and my plans to resolve them. This step changed all of that... It is all about becoming the person that my Higher Power needs me to be in order to carry out his will.”

In Step Seven, we acknowledge and accept who we are in this moment, and we ask our Higher Power to change us in order to better serve each other and our Higher Power’s will. Whenever I have trouble with Step Seven, I look back to Step Two and think about the Higher Power of my understanding. The loving, caring, and accepting Higher Power of my understanding will not take away from me anything that I need and will not transform me into anything other than a better version of myself.

Also, on page 183 of the **VOR** it says that Step Seven “...required asking the power outside of myself to change me, to make me something alien to myself. It required more trust than anything else I was asked to do and still demands trust as I continue to evolve into a new, unknown creation.” For so long, I wanted to be a better version of myself, but I did not know how to change or was unwilling to let go of my defects of character that kept me in bondage to food.

When I worked Step Seven, my sponsor asked me to make a list of the opposites of my character defects. This list showed me what I was asking my Higher Power to do, to transform me into this new creation that will be

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filled with these positive traits. In place of fear, I ask HP to give me faith and trust. In place of resentment, I ask HP to give me forgiveness and acceptance. In place of dishonesty, I ask for awareness and honesty. On page 175 of **VOR** it says “Knowing that I could become the person I pretended to be filled me with peace. I no longer have to try to be good. God does it for me.” That is the miracle of Step Seven; Higher Power does it for us!

Anonymous



TRADITION SEVEN

Every OA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.



The principle behind tradition seven is responsibility—the state, fact, or position of being accountable to somebody or for something.

The moment I became abstinent was when I admitted out loud in a meeting that I didn't want to be responsible. I had spent years trying to control the world and everything around me, and I was exhausted. I thought I was supposed to be superwoman; keeping my home clean, my children cared for, and excel

at my job. What I was doing was trying my best to keep up appearances, with the underlying knowledge that I wasn't doing anything very well - the old if-you-really-knew-me-you-wouldn't-rely-on-me-syndrome. I talked a good game, and that was what I believed to be important.

That honest admission brought with it a spiritual awakening. I was filled with a warmth and strength that I had not been aware of before. I knew I was in God's hands and did not have to do anything alone.

Once I became abstinent and working my program, I was willing to support OA. I had been putting my \$2.00 in the basket regularly, the amount suggested in the meeting format that was read, even if I didn't know where the money went. I also became willing to be the Intergroup Rep because others were saying the meeting needed a rep and my sponsor encouraged me to try it.

This was back in the 90's so Intergroup was pretty big, and I wasn't sure what it was about, but I kept going because I had said I would. Eventually they needed someone to rewrite the job descriptions for the committee chairs. I knew how to write job descriptions, so I volunteered. It surprised me how many people, who had not been willing to do the writing, were interested in doing the editing. It gave me a chance to practice letting go. I was soon involved working on the convention committee, which lead to the next thing and the one after that. I've never questioned my commitment to service because it's always felt like the right thing to do.

The one time I decided my life was more important than giving more time to OA I ended up in relapse and had to start over in my recovery. I worked the Steps and picked up the tool of service again and haven't had to use food to live for a very long time.

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The Seventh Tradition is about being self-supporting, and that means financial support as well as physical service. If no one contributes, then nothing gets done. There would be no money to cover the expenses of OA at any level. I took a look at how successful my life became after joining OA and determined that I had been blessed with enough money that the suggested donation is not enough when compared to what I receive.

I increased my contributions, and I have not suffered for one moment from that decision. I continue to give service at my group, at Intergroup and beyond. It has strengthened my connection to OA, and, in return, I have been blessed with continued abstinence.

I recently heard a most profound explanation of the Seventh Tradition. A young man shared that the home he was raised in was not well cared for. It was dirty and needed maintenance that his parents, for whatever reason, were unable to accomplish. When he left home, he learned to take care of himself in a better way. His own home is in good order. He then shared that OA is also his home and he feels that it is his responsibility to support OA in the same way he takes care of his house. He must pay the bills and take care of the odd jobs that are necessary to keep his home in good repair.

I believe this is what I'm being asked to do when I study the Seventh Tradition. Give generously of my time and money, so that others can find support and recovery. I've never regretted anything I've given to OA.

Anonymous



HOW CAN I BE USEFUL TODAY?

- Call someone who's struggling.
- Find the [Overeaters Anonymous Facebook](#) page and Like or Follow it.
- Find the page for [St Louis Bi-State OA](#) and bookmark it.
- Tell your meeting about these resources.



E.C.



WE CAN'T KEEP IT UNLESS WE GIVE IT AWAY: CONSIDER SERVICE!

It's not too early to start thinking about how **you can join our Intergroup service team** during November elections. We all are responsible to carry the message; service helps us bring the Twelfth Step into action. Plus, we have fun and expand our personal RECOVERY by working together!

- **We will be accepting nomination [forms](#) for service board positions – chairperson, secretary, and operations administrator.** Familiarity with Intergroup and one year of abstinence is required.
- **[Region 4 reps](#)** - we are allowed five spots. Requirements are one year in Overeaters Anonymous and six months of current abstinence.
- **[WSBC delegates](#)** - we are allowed three spots, and two are open for nominations this year. The requirements are at least two years of service beyond the group level, active at the group and Intergroup service levels for the preceding year, plus at least one year of current abstinence.

Please feel free to email Dianne S. at chair@stlouisoa.org with any questions or for more detailed information.



World Service Convention 2021 - Walking in the Sunlight: One Day at a Time; Orlando, FL; August 26 – 28

Come join OA members from around the world for the 2021 World Service Convention - <https://oa.org/world-service-convention/>

Convention 2021 registration and lodging are open! Registration is US \$150 until July 30, 2021, at 11:59 p.m. MDT, and \$170 after that. Daily registration fees will not be available.



SHARE THE GOOD NEWS: OA CHANGES LIVES!

Member Gains New Sense of Balance Through Slogans, Practicing Principles

Before my first OA meeting in 2006, I lived a life of extremes and almost no element of my life was in balance with any other. I would never admit this to myself or anyone else, but from the outside it was probably rather obvious. Compulsive eating and exercise dominated my days and nights. Over-achieving, rushing through projects and interpersonal relationships, and an overly-competitive mindset nearly drove me off a cliff mentally, emotionally, and spiritually.

I was not right-sized! When I walked into that first meeting towards the end of my last year of my undergraduate education, it marked the beginning of me learning how to put the things of my life in better balance with one another.

As I started working the program in earnest a few years later, the slogans of recovery had started to stick in my head between the meetings I attended. Sometimes I would find

myself being pulled strongly towards the compulsion to engage in disordered eating. During these times, I found it helpful to lean on those slogans and turn to prayer. This was just one way I could strive to restore stability.

For example, “take what you like and leave the rest” could be applied in more ways and situations than I ever imagined. When I more frequently used the program principles for guidance in responding to the people, places, and situations that used to baffle me, I found that my urges to engage in my disordered eating lessened in both frequency and severity. In this way, things were becoming proper in proportion without me even feeling like I was trying. It was almost as if I was settling into a new way of living.

Today I find myself living in a world beyond my wildest dreams as I continue to work the program to the best of my ability, steadily, one day at a time. This includes following a food plan with both structure and flexibility. It also includes a reasonable amount of exercise. Just for today, I have successfully let go of over-achieving and serious competition. My projects are typically now enjoyed while I am doing them, and most of my interpersonal relationships last far longer and are far richer in connection than they used to be.

For those in my life who do not know that I am a part of this 12-step program, my actions might not look like anything special. However, those that know I am in this fellowship have told me that my time in recovery is now rather obvious because they have the difference in me these last 15 years!

Thank you to my fellows in Overeaters Anonymous and to recovery for restoring me to sanity today. I plan to keep coming back.

Anonymous

GETTING OFF THE LADDER OF WORTH: STEP STUDY BONUS PAGE!

Members Share Their Step Seven Experiences, Strength, & Hope

Over the years I have come to appreciate the value of Step Seven on a deep personal level. It is nothing less than transformative but in the most subtle of ways. Its spiritual principle of humility has guided me to an enhanced spiritual awakening. Obviously not something I could orchestrate on my own (not for want of trying). It represents both a blessing and a gift borne of having worked Steps One through Six. We needn't have worked them perfectly to become eligible for this blessing/gift. Rather, it is the recognition and acceptance of our imperfection that allows it to flourish.

The Twelve & Twelve describes humility as "simply an awareness of who we really are today and a willingness to become all that we can be." It requires no master plan or allegiance to someone else's definition of who we should become. It permits us to relax and submit to a plan far greater plan than we can imagine. The key component of this process is that we do nothing but ask our Higher Power to remove that which has caused us/others undue suffering. Having done this we are free to trust that in time these character traits will be removed and replaced with something better. I have experienced this reprieve over the years after having worked Step Seven.

Suddenly I am aware that I no longer experience the intensity of anger that I once felt or the instinct to judge/distance myself from certain others that once ruled my behavior. What a revelation! I did little more than continue to work my program to the best of my ability and practice a bit of "patience and persistence." Once more I am reminded of the single lane I occupy and of the highway that belongs to God. Proof positive that "our simple prayers, humbly spoken, are answered in wonderful ways as we open our lives to God's

transforming power...Once again God does for us what we could never do for ourselves."
What an amazing relief!

Lisa M.

*Stay
Humble*

In order to bring my will into line with my Higher Power's will for me, I must "fully concede" to my innermost self that I am a compulsive overeater and will never become a normal one. I must believe I can be restored to sanity by a power greater than myself. I must turn my will and my life over to HP in Step Three and humbly ask for my defects to be removed in Step Seven. I must work a sincere, daily program.

I believe Higher Power's will for me is to be:

- Serene instead of anxious
- Selfless instead of selfish
- Courageous instead of frightened
- Humble instead of prideful
- Mature instead of childish
- Willing instead of willful
- Self-aware instead of self-obsessed
- Accepting instead of judging
- Engaged instead of refusing
- Self-regarding instead of self-pitying
- Generous instead of stingy
- Open-minded instead of opinionated
- Loving instead of hard-hearted
- Self-trusting instead of insecure
- Connected instead of isolated
- Gracious instead of comparing
- Happy instead of being right

Anonymous

CAN I GET A LITTLE WHINE WITH THAT? A Recovery Story featuring Paddie & Ria

Due to a weight problem, she had been unable to conquer for years, Nicole Newcomer started to attend OA meetings and read the **Big Book**. "If we are to live, we had to be free of anger." When Nicole Newcomer first read this sentence on page 66, it stopped her cold. Not be angry?! That was ridiculous! If anyone knew what she had been through in her life, they would know she was entitled to be angry, bitter, AND resentful.

And another thing about OA bothered her. She really did not get the kind of sympathy she thought she deserved after sharing her turmoil, sometimes in tears, at meetings. For some reason, people were not allowed to respond or "crosstalk" after shares. And then after the meeting, members would come up and say things like "So glad you are here, keep coming to meetings, just for today, take it one day at a time, call me..." Nicole was put off and irritated.



Paddie (the voice of Nicole's **P**rogressive **a**nd **D**eadly **D**isease) is thrilled to jump into Nicole's angry state of mind. "You're right. If they really cared, they would listen to you talk

about how other people have ruined your life and made you overeat. Of course, you eat to feel better. You're the victim here. It's not your fault. Where is the quick fix?"

But Nicole also hears a whisper from **Ria** (the quiet, calm, loving voice of **R**ecovery **i**n **A**ction). "Nicole, listen to what the people at the meetings are saying about their experience, strength, and hope. They are being honest about their often-savage struggle with food - the binges, the purging, the hiding - but also how they have been able to cut down on their intake, not obsess constantly about food, and lose weight."

Paddie: "Whatever. You don't have time for this. And look at some of those people! They are still heavy."

Nicole agrees and stops going to meetings.

But **Ria** doesn't give up: "Nicole, the OA meetings will always be here."



Weeks pass and Nicole tries not to think about how she overeats nearly every day, how her clothes are getting tighter, and she is increasingly more impatient. One day, after getting off the phone with her ungrateful mother, she snaps at a client. After a "coaching" session and warning from her boss, she must apologize to an already smug client.

Later that night, Nicole has the binges of all binges. As out of control as she feels eating that night, nothing compares to the despair of waking up the next morning hung over, her stomach feeling as though it could burst from the previous night's gorging.

Paddie, right on schedule, zooms in on Nicole's vulnerable state: "Here you are once again. You will never stop. You are an ugly, fat person trapped in a dead-end life that you cannot escape. People act like they care, but really don't. It is another bad day - just eat, drink, and realize life is an 'every man for himself' proposition."

This time **Paddie** has gone too far. Nicole backs away from the abyss that is inviting her to jump in. For the first time Nicole thinks: "What is wrong with me? I could lose my job. People don't want to be around me. Why can I not keep a promise not to eat a piece of candy? I cannot stop. I cannot do this on my own. I need help."

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Ria's calm voice encourages: "Nicole, the OA meetings are still there. You can go to one today. These people will accept and love you."

Paddie brandishes his tail and tries to break in, but Nicole brushes him aside. Yes, she will go to a meeting tonight. For her, there is nowhere else to go. Over many years, she has tried and failed at diets - fasting - commercial weight loss programs - pills - health clubs - doctors - behavior modification - on and on and on. Nicole vows: *"I will give OA a real chance."*

Nicole goes on the website, reads some recovery articles, and finds meetings in her area. She goes to a hybrid meeting that night, right after work. For some reason, this time she sees hope. She sees recovery; she feels love and concern. She listens to the members, some of whom still look heavy, and appreciates how they are making progress and experiencing joy and serenity. Nicole silently nods when someone shares about surrendering and taking her food one day at a time. She sees a way out. The anger starts to melt away.

Then she shares - *"My name is Nicole, and I am a compulsive overeater, and I need help. Thanks so much for still being here."*



Intergroup Calendar of Events

July 11 – Intergroup Meeting

August 21 – Sponsorship Day (No home meeting has volunteered to host a recovery event on this theme as we go to print)

August 26-28 – World Service Convention – Theme is *Walking in the Sunlight: One Day at a Time* - see details on page 4 – register at this [LINK](#)

September 12 – Intergroup Meeting

September or October – Will there be a virtual **Fall Retreat**? If you would like to be considered for service as Retreat Chair, complete the form at this [LINK](#).

October 2 – Recovery Event at Drury inn at the Airport, St. Louis County - in conjunction with Region 4 Fall Assembly (details coming soon)

October 10 – Intergroup Meeting

November 14 – Intergroup Meeting – This is the meeting where elections are held for service positions. See page 3 for openings.

November 20-21 – IDEA Day (International Day of Experiencing Abstinence; no home meeting has volunteered to host a recovery date on this theme as we go to print)

December 4 – Holiday Booster Recovery Event – time and location to be announced

Note: Each Intergroup Meeting is 1:30-3 p.m. via Zoom. The meeting number is 940 5580 8391. The password is: Serenity. Those in elected service positions and Intergroup Representatives are expected to attend. All other fellows are welcome.