

# September 2021 OA TODAY NEWSLETTER

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## STEP NINE

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

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Step Nine is about looking at all those people who make up the substance of the events and times in your life you least liked! It is difficult to really face that there were humans who were harmed—by intention, in retaliation, through rationalizing behavior, and even through mistake and accident, that are really owed an amends. Or better said, to whom I owe myself amending so that I can release the past.

That is a challenge that, in the event, was even more difficult than Step 4—at least I only had to look and speak to one person in Step 5! Fortunately, between Step 5 and 9, there are 6-8! I became willing to truly embrace and live in humility before I act in humility with these wronged people (some of whom wronged me in worse measure). I became willing to release my defects of character (or misaligned strengths) and finally willing to look at these people and make amends. It was a big ask!

For me the action was more often with people who are no longer in my life and who cannot be reached or would be harmed by my attempt to connect. There were many ways discussed in the Steps literature of OA and AA that help us amend in person. I was bewildered by the necessity to amend those I could not reach! I was not 'off the hook' from doing an amends as I still needed to heal.

Here is how I did it: Talking with trusted fellows, writing drafts and drafts of amends—until the amends were clear, clean, absent of counter claims or excuses, or pleading for understanding. Writing and then symbolic delivery so that my true sense of release from the wrong was able to give to me the self-forgiveness that I needed to move through the events and beyond them. Finally, the ability to look at my behavior today, connect the dots from the wrong I held on to and the wrongs I commit today. That was the real and permanent amends.

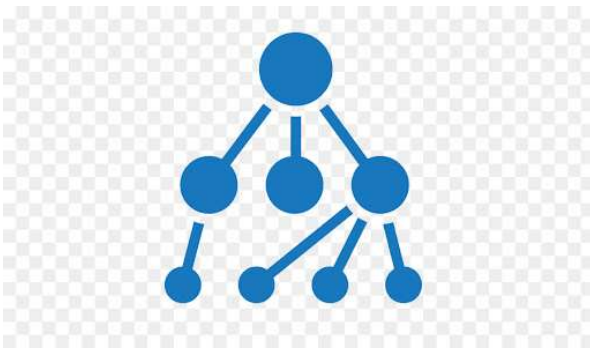
People in my life today are treated differently by me. I am a person who now uses my space in the world and in others' lives differently *because* I made amends to those past. I make a living amends so that I pay forward the humility I, and they, deserve! It was never their forgiveness I needed to heal—it was my own. It was not their lives I am allowed to amend; it is my future. That not only must be enough, it is enough.

It is sufficient that my good work today will in some small part enhance or at least do no harm to lives I touch now. When I finished the talking, writing, rewriting, and symbolic

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delivery, I found it possible to release the shame, and sometimes the rage, I felt around and about them. I found a release of energy that had taken up a lot of room inside me-my mind, my heart, my need to numb my feelings. I found space for the new energy to amend my life and embrace humility. It is grace and faith and good work that I use in my today. I am grateful.

Christina D.



## **STRUCTURE**



### **TRADITION NINE**

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



I love structure, which is the principle of Tradition 9. I like having rules to follow (unless I don't like the rule) and guidelines to refer to that help us make decisions.

This is why I like service so much. What I've had to learn in OA is that the guidelines, policies, and procedures are just suggestions and traditions, but everyone in the fellowship has the right and responsibility to challenge the guidelines if they believe there is a better way to accomplish our primary purpose.

How does Tradition 9 work at the group level? We hold group conscience on a regular basis to discuss issues the group members think are important. This can be a change in the meeting format, time, and location, how the room is set up, etc. It can also be a decision to hold a Super Saturday and who will be responsible for which tasks involved. We establish requirements for members holding the position of group secretary, treasurer, and intergroup rep. We then affirm those members who are willing to serve in those positions.

Group conscience is also a time to discuss any problems the group may be experiencing. Low attendance, lack of service volunteers, rotation of service, crosstalk, or outside literature being read are a few examples.

Many times, I've observed members who attend meetings, but leave when the group conscience is started. It can be tempting to skip it because of past bad experiences in some other kind of a "business meeting."

As a member of OA, I benefit from what I hear shared at meetings, I have found that I also benefit from participating in the business structure. It's in the group conscience meetings that I've learned patience, acceptance, and responsibility. The wonderful thing I've learned is how to disagree with someone and yet work together as a group to resolve the problem in the way most beneficial for the entire group.

As a compulsive eater I'd spent a lot of my life eating rather than addressing conflict. It was either a fight to the death or total submission, never compromise and acceptance. If I won the battle, I felt justified and validated. If I lost, I felt victimized and resentful.

These days I know that the group decision is HP's will, not mine and I'm able to respect whatever decision is made by the group conscience, knowing it is what's best for now.

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If the decision doesn't work for the group in the end, it can always be addressed again and changed as many times as it takes till the issue is resolved.

The other levels of service: Intergroup, Region, and World are a little more organized. These service bodies exist to help our groups pull together and accomplish goals that we could not do as small individual groups, any more than we can recover in isolation. Except for some legal requirements that must be followed to operate as a corporation, every decision made for OA has been voted on by the members of that service body. Those members are you and me doing service beyond the group level. Intergroup Reps vote for their group. Region reps and World Service delegates vote for their Intergroup.

One of the questions on page 182 in the **OA 12 & 12** is: "Are we mature enough to take personal responsibility for the well-being of OA and for our own recovery?" My Higher Power has never said "It's someone else's job, just take what you need." It's always been, "Give back so you can get more." Participating in the service structure of OA has taught me a lot about my character defects and assets and for that I am grateful.

Anonymous



### HOW CAN I BE USEFUL TODAY?

- Ask a newcomer for contact information.
- Call them to listen to their story, share yours, and answer any questions about OA.
- Volunteer to fill a vacant group position, like treasurer or intergroup rep.

E.C.

## My Use of the Tool: Action Plan

Since coming into the rooms 15 years ago, I have learned in OA that action is best taken on things that I can change - things on my own "side of the street." Like the Serenity Prayer tells me, this will take courage. For me, a good starting point is to identify what things in my life I would like to see change, and whether they are on my side of the street or not. If they are not, I likely need some serenity to accept them. Those things do not wind up on my action plan.

As the OA [pamphlet](#) *Tools of Recovery* suggests, my action plan brings structure, manageability, and balance into my life by focusing on what it will take to support my abstinence and recovery from compulsive eating. My action plan does this first by defining my plan of eating for the day. There is space for me to note if there are any changes to my plan of eating. This way I can be honest about what I planned to eat versus what I ended up eating. When there are changes to my plan of eating, I commit those changes to another fellow in OA.

The actions that I plan on taking for a particular day are also listed out, sometimes by time, so that I have some amount of structure in my day. These actions are realistic for what I can accomplish in a day and are directly related to what is going on in my life. I have learned the hard way that I often get the feeling my life is unmanageable when I try to do what is not necessary or not attainable in a day. I suppose I have a habit of biting off more than I can chew in a figurative sense, as well!

At times I also put actions down that I am not wanting to take. If there is a small enough number of them on my action plan, I find that I can be willing to do them anyway. Also, If I am not sure about what specific actions to take, I

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can speak with at least one other fellow to get help in creating my list of actions.

My action plan also includes using the other seven tools of recovery. There is a space where each of the other tools are listed and room to write how I used each of them. Some days I do not use all of OA's nine tools of recovery, but I have noticed that the more I tools I use, the more balanced I feel. Some days, I even get that sense of serenity that the Tools of Recovery pamphlet refers to when it states that we OA fellows will "continue to grow emotionally and spiritually while we make measurable progress one day at a time."

I thank God for the Tool of Action Plan and thank God for the Fellowship of OA. Keep coming back!

Anonymous



## Fall Retreat, November 5 and 6! SAVE THE DATE NOW!

Here's an event you won't want to miss -- the Fall Retreat: **Day of Reflection.**

There will be three Zoom sessions:  
Friday Nov 5, 7-8:30 pm  
Saturday Nov 6, 9-11 am, and 1-3 pm

Expect keynote speakers, discussions, workshops and more. Mark your calendars and watch this space for further developments.



## MORE THAN A CALENDAR – THE MEN OF OA

### A Recovery Story featuring Paddie & Ria

Frank is overweight and cannot stop overeating. He does not like the health and mobility issues caused by his excess weight. But the worst part is the embarrassment. When he looks at himself in the mirror, he feels his heavy body screams "loser!" It is embarrassing that he can be taken down and defeated by a dessert or a plate of greasy meat.

He almost envies guys in Alcoholics Anonymous for having a more "masculine" addiction, even though he knows that is a ridiculous point of view. He has started to go to Overeaters Anonymous meetings, and it has helped. But being surrounded by women - as wonderfully kind and helpful as they are - sometimes make him feel isolated.



**Paddie**  
*(Progressive and Deadly Disease)* is thrilled at the opportunity to jump into Frank's vulnerable state. "What's a guy like you doing going to

meetings with a bunch of women where you have to listen to their obsessing about body image?"

**Ria (The quiet, calm voice of Recovery in Action)** "Most of the shares in your group are about recovery. We are patient with those are struggling. Compulsive overeating affects everyone. Take what you like in program and leave the rest."



It is true there is a lot of physical recovery in his group. Frank wants that. He keeps going to meetings but hesitates to share much. He does not have a sponsor. (continued on page 5)

He is married and would feel safer and more comfortable with a male sponsor. "How do I find a male sponsor in an organization with mostly women?" he wonders.

**Paddie jumps in with a blast from the past:** *"Where is your pride? Seriously - you have a problem with candy? Your dad was right - you really aren't a real man. Real men drink beer and hang out bars. You are a fat wimp."*

**Ria -** *"You are the brave one to go where you see a solution. Your father was an alcoholic who gave you a hard time about not drinking and being who you are. You are the brave one to chart your own course away from the bar scene. Keep going to meetings. Listen to the recovery. Trust the group. Read the literature they talk about at the meeting. Use the tools."*

At a meeting, he hears about an online Super Saturday focused on sponsorship. Frank thinks, "Great! I can learn about sponsors." He makes time in his weekend to attend. To his surprise, one of the speakers is a man who has lost over 100 pounds. He pulls no punches. "I am not capable of making choices with food. I was tired of losing to food. I will get the results of my beliefs and actions."

Frank listens. It opens something inside of him.

At the next meeting, Frank takes a breath and shares, "It was great to hear a man talk about compulsive eating. Everyone in this group is great, but sometimes I feel a bit out of place. When my dad drank too much, he said cruel things to me and my sister. I think it affected my eating more than I realized."

After that meeting, a veteran member tells him about <http://www.oamen.org>, a webpage that has resources for men and information on how to connect with male sponsors. A couple of other members also tell him they appreciate his honesty and are glad he is in the group. Another member said she started overeating

as a kid to ease the stress of her father's drinking.

That night, Frank checks the OA Men's website. He sees real information - a helpline for men and links to meetings, podcasts, email groups, and sponsorship. With newfound hope, Frank is feeling calmer and is not eating away as he usually would as this time of night. He keeps a copy of the **Abstinence** book in the kitchen. His wife is grateful to see he is more relaxed.

As Frank begins to prepare for bedtime, he says a prayer of gratitude.

**Ria** whispers, "Good night, Frank. Perhaps this is the week that you will find a sponsor."



## **IG Treasurer Offers Guidance: Reduce Fees, Maximize Donations**

Your donations are vital to keeping OA alive! Thank you for practicing the Seventh Tradition.

Intergroup has opted to use PayPal as a convenient electronic way to collect the Seventh Tradition donations. But there is also a cost involved in using this service. I would like to offer some education on this so that our home meetings and individual members can make choices that maximize the amount of funds that arrive at OA.

PayPal charges a 1.99% fee plus \$0.49 for each transaction. For example: a \$5.00 donation made via PayPal would have a 59-cent fee kept by PayPal. A \$50.00 donation would only have a \$1.49 fee to PayPal, however. Notice that if you donated that same \$50 as ten \$5 donations, the fees would be \$5.90.

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This illustrates that your donations benefit OA more if you let the amounts accumulate to larger amounts before you transfer funds via PayPal. Please consider using PayPal on a Quarterly basis to minimize fees and maximize the amount of your donation that reaches OA to sustain our recovery fellowship.

Intergroup donations can be made by personal check or money order and mailed to:

**St. Louis Bi-State Intergroup of OA**  
**P.O. Box 28882**  
**St. Louis, MO 63123**

or

Donate online at the Intergroup PayPal account on the IG website. Click the [7<sup>th</sup> Tradition tab](#) at the top of the page.

Also, here is a summary of my treasurer's report to Intergroup for July. Group donations January 2021 through July 31, 2021, equaled \$7,945.92. There were no unusual expenses in July.

If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to contact me at 815-343-6412 or [treasurer@stlouisoa.org](mailto:treasurer@stlouisoa.org).

In Service,  
Marina F.



## **Sponsorship Day Recovery Event Held Via Zoom on August 21**

The Thursday Morning St. Charles group held a recovery event in celebration of World Sponsorship Day on Saturday, August 21 via Zoom. The event included two out of town speakers sharing their experience, strength, and hope on sponsoring, an interactive workshop on using the Temporary Sponsor publication from WSO, a panel discussion on sponsoring with questions from attendees, and open sharing.

We were also able to obtain a list of available sponsors and members willing to be temporary sponsors during our time. This list can be accessed by contacting Susan T. at [stownsley62@gmail.com](mailto:stownsley62@gmail.com).

The event was attended by 26 members from across the country. Here is a collection of comments from participants:

*This event was so wonderful because I heard two strong, caring, sponsors who come from different but equally supportive perspectives. We had a great workshop to discuss newcomer issues and then a great panel to discuss all the barriers and issues that present in sponsoring. It was a good learning experience.*

Christina D.

Loved the Sponsorship Event. Great speakers and panel discussion.

*Anonymous*

*The sponsorship event was wonderful. Both speakers offered their experiences as both sponsor and sponsee, and each had their own method and viewpoint as to what works for them. It was good to hear the different ways of sponsoring. The panel discussion also offered interesting responses to the questions that were submitted and gave me some new ideas on how to listen to my sponsor's suggestions and not to be so reactive to what is being said.*

*Anonymous*

Thanks to everyone who made the event happen. I'm new to sponsoring and came away with such positive, uplifting approaches. The speakers were very personable and forthcoming. The three hours went by so quickly, and I enjoyed it all.

*Karen E.*

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Wow, what a great Sponsorship event! I had the satisfaction of having been part of putting it on and helping it run so smoothly, and also the joy of being there and participating – I got so much from all of it. The program was great, thanks to Susan, and flowed well from one activity to the next. The speakers were great; thanks to Christina for finding them. I especially related to Pam, but I was glad to have Tim there to add energy and the spice of a different approach. I enjoyed the temp sponsor workshop. My group wrote a few minutes on the question about how we feel about asking for help and then had time for sharing the ideas among ourselves. In this exercise, I recognized that my life depends on asking for help from people and from Higher Power. In the panel discussion, I thought Susan did a good job of picking interesting and useful questions. She had lots of questions to choose from, and the panel did a good job of addressing them.

Elizabeth C

My top take-away sponsor idea is that a **sponsor is like a caddie**, not like the pro instructor or the swing coach. I looked up what a caddie does. “The quintessential role of the caddie is to bring added value to the game for the golfer.” Of course, they walk along with the golfer the whole way. And among the other duties, “...some golfers will ask for advice before hitting a shot. As their caddie you should be able to provide at least some insight into how they should approach their shot,” from knowledge of the basics of the game and the equipment.

Elizabeth C



### September 12 – Intergroup Meeting\*\*

**September 25 - 2021 Virtual Iowa State Convention:** “Body Image, Relationships and Sexuality”; Saturday September 25, 9AM – 4PM Central Time; Hosted by Iowa IGs

### September 25 – [Kansas Day 2021](#)

### October 10 – Intergroup Meeting\*\*

**November 5 and 6 - Virtual Fall Retreat –** Day of Reflection (more details coming soon)

**November 14 – Intergroup Meeting\*\*** – This is the meeting where elections are held

**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.

**ARTICLES FOR THE NEXT NEWSLETTER ARE DUE BY SEPTEMBER 20, 2021.** Please send your submissions to the **OA TODAY** editor and Newsletter Team at [newsletter@stlouisoa.org](mailto:newsletter@stlouisoa.org) or mail to St. Louis Bi-State Area Intergroup, PO Box 28882, St. 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.