

April 2022 OA TODAY NEWSLETTER

St. Louis Bi-State Intergroup of OA
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Word of the Month

cour·age

n. 1. the quality of mind or spirit that enables one to face difficulty, danger, fear, pain, etc. with self-possession, confidence, and resolution 2. bravery

me that the solution to the problem was in Step 2 and Step 3 which deal with the Spiritual Solution solutions of Hope and Faith. I came to believe that I had a disease that I was not able to control, and I needed help from a Higher Power.

(Step Four Article continued on Page 2)

STEP FOUR

Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.

In October of 1985, I came into OA broken - feeling I would never be enough and weighing 250 pounds. I hated my body and myself. I knew something was very wrong, yet I could not accept that I could not control my food addiction or that I had lost the ability to distinguish between reality and fantasy.

For years I thought I could control my compulsive eating disease with anorexia and bulimia. It wasn't until I got a sponsor who helped me to work the Steps that I started realizing that I wasn't being honest with myself. I needed help to break through my insane thinking and my denial. Step 1 showed me I had a problem. My sponsor told



Is a Problem with Food Or Body Image Making You Anxious?

Have you tried repeatedly to control your eating and weight, but nothing has worked? Compulsive overeating, undereating, anorexia, bulimia, binge eating, night eating, exercise addiction....these are just a few of the ways that people suffer in relationship to food and body image.

We are here for anyone struggling with food or trying to determine if they have food/body image issues. We believe compulsive eating is a disease like alcoholism is a disease. One way to determine whether OA might be right for you is to take the [OA QUIZ](#).

If you determine that you are one of us, please join us for [OA MEETINGS](#) and read our monthly [NEWSLETTER](#).

(Step Four Article, continued from page 1)

My sponsor told me it was time to take Step 4, because it was the beginning of the Action Steps. In the beginning, I was hellbent on procrastinating doing the 4th Step. My first try at Step 4 was to look at how other people had hurt me. My sponsor gently let me know I was not supposed to take other people's inventories, and she gave me some suggestions: "Step 4 requires you to have Courage to take a thorough look at yourself - the positive and the negative. It is about you finally becoming intimate with yourself."

My sponsor had me answer the following questions.

1. Am I willing to look honestly at myself? What stands in the way?
2. Have I sought help from my Higher Power, my sponsor, or other members of my OA program?
3. What suggestions have I tried to see if they might help me to do my 4th Step?
4. Do I understand the spiritual principles of an inventory?

I needed to approach the Step with self-love, kindness, honesty, and balance and recognize that it required a fearless moral inventory. I began to realize that the first three steps had prepared me to take this inventory. While I was doing the inventory, I could go back to them and realize and get the help I needed so that I could become aligned with God.

When I reviewed my Step 4, I also needed to look at my part:

- Did I cause the problem?
- Have I tried to control it?
- Is it in my power to cure it?
- Did any of my actions contribute to the problem?

By doing Step 4 I have found that self-trust can come from self-knowledge by opening

the door to the actions necessary for healing. My recovery is not finished once I take Step 4. I need to continue to work each step. This is a one day at a time program and I also need to continue working the steps and saying a 4th step prayer inspired by the language on page 67 of the **Big Book** when I am dealing with resentments.

4th Step Prayer: *God, please help me show those I resent the same tolerance, pity and patience that I would cheerfully grant a sick friend. Father, please show me how I can be helpful to him and save me from being angry. Lord, help me to avoid retaliation or argument. I know I can't be helpful to all, people, but at least show me how to take a kindly and tolerant view of each and every one. Thy will be done. Amen.*

Marysia



TRADITION FOUR

Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or OA as a whole.



Today, I attended a meeting where they held their monthly group conscience. The main issue was to start using a timer for each member's share. This was quite a "HOT" topic.

This was brought up because at our last meeting, a member refused to stop sharing once they were cut off. Conflict ensued and feelings were hurt. In light of this, the group decided to hold a longer discussion and allow everyone to share their thoughts on the matter.

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Some people were in favor for the timed shares. They did not want their group turning into a place for people to go on and on. They felt it was important that everyone was given the time and opportunity to share.

Others felt that it was rude to cut someone off, even if they went over the timed limit. They felt that if someone needed more time, it should be granted.

Every member was able to share their opinions, and at the end of the meeting, it was agreed that the timer would still be used for each share. Next, if the sharer continued, the Chair would continue to chime the timer about a minute after their overtime. Finally, the group decided to incorporate the sharing guidelines into the opening group format.

This seems like a lot of drama over just a simple matter. I was pretty frustrated during the long discussion. However, looking back, I can see how this matter was very important to our group. We can only succeed together and just like individuals in recovery, our group needs to take regular inventory.

We are a program based in solution and each of our groups can decide what works for them to succeed. The beauty of this program is that my group decided to make a change. We do not force or put down any other groups who do not follow our lead.

What works for my group might not work for every group. Each group has the ability to create a structure that works for them. As long as they are not abusing the OA program, they are able to operate on their own accord. I am so grateful that we have the traditions to keep my home meeting strong and able to support my recovery.

Anonymous
Adapted from the April 2017 **OA Today**

New Address for Region 4: Group Treasurers, Please Take Note!

When mailing your Seventh Tradition support to Region 4, please use their new address:

2355 Fairview Avenue N, PMB 338,
Roseville, MN 55113



Courage: The Spiritual Principle of Step 4

Courage: mental or moral strength to venture, persevere and withstand danger, fear or difficulty.

Synonyms: bravery, daring, fearlessness, heroism, virtue

Antonyms: Cowardice, fear, weakness

The definition of courage perfectly aligns with Step 4. We have already admitted we were powerless, believe in a power greater than ourselves, and made a decision to turn our will and lives over to God "as we understand Him." The first three steps required some form of courage or else we wouldn't be here at Step 4.

It took courage to admit I had hit my bottom, that I needed help. It took an enormous amount of courage to walk into my first meeting, let alone make that phone call to the OA office 15 years ago. I was a coward, hiding behind my disease, living a lie. On the outside I was "perfect" on the inside I was a complete disaster. Sure, I could keep up the lie, take the easy road. If I did that, I would most certainly not be here writing this article, let alone even be alive.

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Arriving at step 4 is daunting. Why would anyone want to write all their “stuff” down and see on paper what an absolute disaster they are? But guess what? I have more strength and courage because I have arrived at Step 4, by taking Steps 1-3.

I have already started to build the foundation with the first three steps. I have the courage to continue. As hard as it might be to examine my life and identify my part in it, I know that it is absolutely necessary to continue in my recovery from compulsive over-and under-eating.

This is how our founders experienced the miracle; this is how I have experienced the miracle. I dig deep and find the courage because it is there – one day at a time for the rest of my life.

Amy A.



Intergroup (IG) News: Chair's Column

On March 5, Christina D and I attended a Region 4 On-The-Road Brainstorming Workshop with Meg (R4 Trustee) and Mary (R4 Chairperson). Intergroup members from Missouri, Minnesota and Kansas attended. We let our creativity out of the box to re-energize, re-envision, and reframe how Intergroups carry the message, to our meetings, to our members, and to our neighborhoods and communities where our

future OA members are still living in our disease. Key questions we asked ourselves were: why do we keep doing the same things, the same ways and expect different results? What is working, what is not? What are our new opportunities? How can we reach out to members in different/new ways? How can we redefine/reframe service? How can we re-envision recovery events? What will OA meetings look like in the “new normal” world of today?

A big takeaway is that every OA member and meeting in our St. Louis Area needs to be thinking about these questions. What can **YOU** do for **OUR Community**? What special interest/talent/passion/ability has emerged in your recovery life that YOU can share as we come together as a **Community**? Members who attended our March 13 IG meeting began doing just that, and we'll continue that brainstorming at our May 15 meeting. For OA to grow and flourish and for our personal recovery life to grow and flourish we need each other. Together we get better. We need your ideas, your inspiration. We need **YOU** -- **TO PAY IT FORWARD IN OUR OA COMMUNITY.**

We have an update from WSO regarding guidelines for screensharing and/or audiobook sharing during meetings. Sharing must:

- Be temporary. Temporary means the material is removed from the shared video/telephone conference at the end of the meeting.
- Be limited. Limited means the shared material is only a small portion of the overall content of the video/telephone conference (meeting). I further clarified this with our Region 4 Trustee who instructed me that screen/audiobook sharing pages of an OA book, such as **The Twelve Steps**

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and Twelve Traditions, on the basis of reading chapters or large portions of a chapter for a step topic meeting is not permitted. This would constitute sharing the entire book over a series of meetings. However, if the shared material is only a few sentences or a paragraph to highlight the topic of a meeting, that is permissible. Our Trustee explained that OA produces copyrighted literature to be held in trust for OA's Fellowship as a whole and that literature sales are a primary revenue source to do the work of carrying the message. So, members should be reading from their personal copy of a book, be it in print or digital at any meeting - be it Zoom, telephone or in person.

- Not be copied or distributed electronically, in print, as a recording, or otherwise.
- Be accompanied by the citation "[source of material], Copyright Overeaters Anonymous, Inc. All rights reserved." I further clarified this with our Region 4 Trustee who instructed me that this citation can be verbal.
- Comply with the videoconferencing company's terms and conditions.

This entire document is available at OA.org. Search for Sharing OA-Copyright Material Electronically or use [THIS LINK](#). I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

With Gratitude for Service
Dianne S., Intergroup Chairperson
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THE JOURNEY FROM STRESS TO FEEL, DEAL, AND HEAL: A Recovery Story Featuring Paddie & Ria (Part 2)

Recap: In Part 1, of this Paddie and Ria Recovery Story on pages five and six of our [March, 2022 Newsletter](#), Sarah was feeling out of sorts. It is a cold, gray, rainy Valentine's Day and Sarah is very single this year. She has received a call from Aurelia, a sponsee, and has felt moved to write and write and write afterward. She then summoned the courage to call Iris, her sponsor. The story continues.....

As soon as Iris answered, Sarah jumped right in: "Iris, this is Sarah. Can you talk?"

"Sure, what's going on?" said Iris, concerned. Sarah rarely called this late.

"I really want to veg out in front of the television and eat a bag of junk food. I almost did not call, but I just got off the phone with my sponsee. You know how it is after talking with a sponsee. It put enough sanity in my head to call."

"What is going on?"

"I am not sure, but I did some writing."

"Can you read it to me?"

"It is all over the place and it is about stuff I have never told anyone. I don't even like to think about. I literally keep this stuff in my mental lock box up on the top shelf in my mental attic. But today was a hard day and I decided to write since that is what I would tell a sponsee to do."

"I am glad you called. Can you read it to me?"

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So, Sarah started reading. It was about the promising start of a relationship which crashed in the ugliest of ways - vulnerability and innocence crushed by misunderstanding, lies, betrayal, cruelty - the terrible feelings of isolation, shame, bitterness, and regret - trying to move on by putting it all in her mental lock box.

Iris listened with her whole self without interrupting. As Sarah read and cried, she could literally feel the painful shackles of her past loosen. "I thought I had covered everything when I did the Steps before, but I guess I just couldn't talk about this. It was too deep and so long ago. And I was no angel. I just couldn't."

After Sarah was done talking, Iris paused, wondering what to say.

Paddie - the seductive voice of our Progressive And Deady Disease - jumped into Iris' uncertainty and fatigue: *"This woman has a lot of problems and you cannot help her. It's late. You are in over your head."*



Ria - the calm, quiet voice of Recovery In Action - also whispered in Iris' ear: *"You have a strong, happy recovery. You know how to listen more than talk, and you have a lot of experience, strength, and hope. You have sponsored Sarah for a long time. She is at a low point. You can do this."*



Iris prayed and took a breath.

"Sarah, this is a lot. No wonder Valentine's Day is so hard."

Sarah gasped. She had never made that connection. It was so obvious.

"You have been in program a long time. You are not a newcomer like Aurelia who is at the beginning, learning about HALT* [*Hungry/Angry/Lonely/Tired] moments. Some things take a while to understand. Recovery is not static. I think it is either going forward or backward. And when you go forward, it is not all clear sailing," Iris explained.

"What do you mean?" asked Sarah.

Iris continued, "As you know, I came to OA 100 pounds overweight. I remember the early days - learning about Steps 1,2, and 3, surrender, HALT, food plans, the tools. It was life changing. and I lost 50 pounds in a year. But then I stopped releasing weight after that first 50 pounds. I didn't know why. My sponsor back then said that there were other issues and feelings I probably had not looked at and inventoried. And she was right. There were issues in my youth I had pushed out of my mind, or I thought I had. My sponsor had me go back to the OA workbook and do another Step 4 that focused on these hurts. After I did that 4th step, I released another 35 pounds. I was amazed and really understood more clearly why program people say 'We're only as sick as our secrets.' To have a safe and understanding person to talk about our past feelings and regrets makes it possible for us to 'feel, deal, and heal.' That is core to physical and emotional recovery."

"That makes so much sense. I feel so much freer and lighter. Thanks so much for being there," said Sarah.

"It's an honor. Believe me, it helps me as much as it helps you. You did a lot today. You took your mental lockbox out of the attic, opened it up, took out this very painful experience from your past, and looked at it. Trust God to give you the wisdom to know how to handle the issues that are in the box, now and in the future. You don't to

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tackle this all at once. You can put the box back and pull it out another time. Put yourself in God's hands and stay in the present," Iris said thoughtfully.

"I had no idea that how stuffing feelings and keeping secrets were affecting me. I have heard this before, but I think I really understand now," said Sarah, adding, "I am sorry it is so late,"

"No problem. I am glad you called before you gave into the food. You have a strong program and aren't one to call thoughtlessly. You were struggling with the food and feelings in a big way. I know how heavy the phone can be at times," Iris said.

Doing the math, Sarah paused, then asked: "You said you have released 50 and then 35 pounds. Does that mean you still hope to release 15 pounds?"

Iris smiled and said, "Yes, I do, but I am leaving that in HP's hands. However, what I have learned, even as an old-timer, is that I have many struggles and issues, old and new, that fuel my compulsive behavior. To recover more fully, I need to carefully and patiently look at and process each one."

Sarah fell asleep easily and gratefully. She woke up the next morning rested and with no regrets.

Ria smiled at how the chain of calls with a newcomer and two sponsors created a lifeboat of safety on a difficult night. Great things happen when "I put my hand in yours....."



April 1-2 - Region 4 Spring Assembly –
Hosted by Mid-Continent Intergroup, Wichita, KS

May 15 – Intergroup Meeting**

June 12 – Intergroup Meeting**

July 15-17 - Region 4 2022 Convention: in Omaha, NE – Registration is now live!
<https://oaregion4.org/product/convention-registration/>

****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 APRIL 20, 2022. Please send your submissions to the **OA TODAY** editor and Newsletter Team at 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

The Twelve Steps of Overeaters Anonymous with Synonyms

4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.

4. Made a searching

combing	digging (through)	dredging	raking
ransacking	rummaging	scouring	sorting
auditing	checking (out)	examining	inspecting
investigating	reviewing	scanning	scrutinizing
surveying	ascertaining	detecting	determining
discovering	finding	locating	scaring up
exploring	probing	prospecting	snooping
browsing	perusing	inquiring	fact-finding

and fearless

brave	bold	heroic	courageous
daring	plucky	audacious	dauntless
gutsy	gritty	plucky	daring
ballsy	heroic	valiant	

moral

correct	proper	right	proper
just	ethical	virtuous	high-minded
decent	noble	principled	creditable
legitimate	esteemed	law-abiding	reputable
respected	worthy	blameless	clean
guiltless	pure	scrupulous	elevated
respectable	trustworthy	upstanding	virtuous

inventory

list	catalog	record	register
checklist	tally	roster	file
log	account	archive	description
repertoire	stock	reserve	cache
hoard	stockpile	supply	tabulation

of ourselves.

Me	Myself	I	Our own selves
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Steps to Recovery

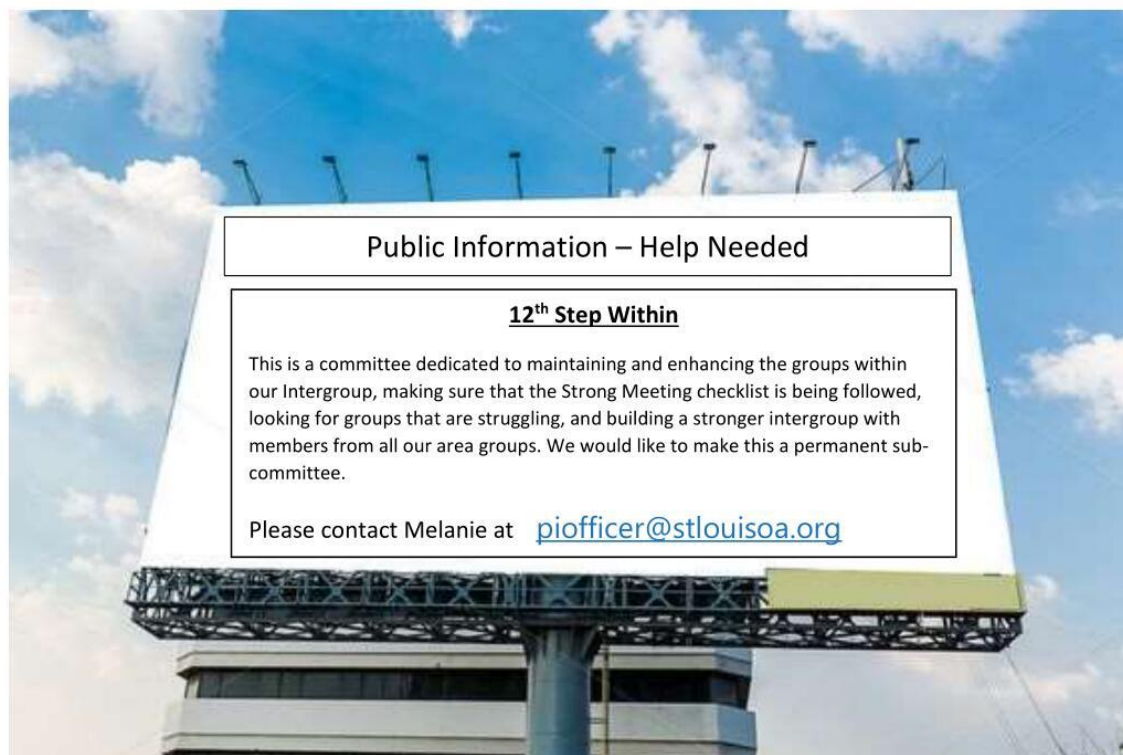
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**guidance
inventory
forgiving
strength
hope
gratitude
addiction**

**serenity
sponsor
awakening
experience
confide
consequences
sober**

**commitment
higher power
admitting
halt
willingness
choices**

**service
surrender
humility
share
counselor
recovery**



2 Other Positions still available! Bonuses Guaranteed!

Hand in Hand Directory Update **POSITIONS FILLED!!! Thank you to our new committee!**

We need a committee of 2-3 people to update our Hand in Hand directory. This service will involve phone work and entering data into a spreadsheet.

Social Media Committee

We need to expand the committee by a few people to implement our new Social Media strategy. This service will involve phone work, an occasional committee meeting, and an interest in carrying the message!

Healthcare Outreach

Call for a committee to begin building a list of doctors, hospitals, and medical associations that we can contact and talk to about this program and how it can benefit their patients.

Have a small committee working on part of this! Thank you for volunteering!!

Standard Media Outreach – We have a database of newspapers, radio stations and tv stations and contacts just waiting to be explored. Need a committee to begin contacting people and working on getting the word out in various forms. This would include requesting to air PSA's.