

August 2022 OA TODAY NEWSLETTER

St. Louis Bi-State Intergroup of OA
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Taking Step 8: “For the First Time, I Really Heard the Word **WILLING**....”

On the day of my first OA meeting, I attended another 12 Step group where the topic was Step Eight. For the first time, I really heard the word willing. We become willing to make amends, whether we want to or not.

My sponsor from my other program had asked me to put my name on my amends list when I told her about my struggles with food. However, she told me she couldn't help with my food issues because she didn't have eating problems. She said I'd need to come to OA and work the OA program. I knew people that attended an OA meeting that evening, and I promised her I would go.

Continued on page 2

If Eating Is Your First Response To Fear, Anger, and Sadness..... Maybe OA Is the Place for YOU



When I walked into the rooms of Overeaters Anonymous, hope felt like a possibility, a possibility of a better life. I'd been bottling up all my feelings again; my mom had recently passed away and my wife and I had just moved into the South Bay area. Fear, anger, and sadness were churning inside me, and I did what I always did—I ate.

So, coming to OA was an act of hope. At one of my very first meetings, I saw a person cry about feeling helpless over food. Hugs were given and feelings were validated. I was awestruck at what I saw: people showing care and concern for people dealing with food issues. Was I on another planet? One of my beliefs was that I lacked willpower, but here, people were saying that compulsive overeating is a disease. 'Am I sick?' I wondered.

As I came to more meetings and met more people in the Fellowship, I saw tragedies turning into successes. I saw brokenness healed, one day at a time. I saw something there that I wanted in my life. It was in the eyes and faces of people in these rooms. Hope thrives in the rooms of Overeaters Anonymous, and I was given the gift of hope.

In OA, I've learned: no matter what life hands you today, there is always hope.

Frank C.

From [New Member Shares](https://www.oa.org) at OA.org

Step Eight Article, continued from page 1

That is where, once again, I heard the word willing in the meeting. No, I did not want to change – I just wanted to lose weight and to stop stealing food. I also wanted to stop fantasizing about getting diabetes. I fantasized that if I got diabetes, I would be so miserable I would want to change my eating. But the meeting stressed that even though I may never want to change my eating habits, all I have to do is become willing. Somehow between that meeting and my first OA meeting later that evening, I became willing, one day at a time, to make amends to myself in the area of food.

I had first taken notice of the Eighth Step while I was working on my first Fourth Step. I heard a woman enthuse about how much freedom she had received by becoming willing to change and make amends. As I listened, I knew that my ex-husband would end up on my Eighth Step list, and I knew she was nuts if she thought I would ever make amends to him. As far as I was concerned, he deserved everything I had ever done to him!

I shared this with my sponsor, and she said not to worry. I might change my mind once I got to Step Eight. I was able to become willing to make amends to others on my list, but not him! It took more meetings, abstinence, and listening, and one day it clicked. I was at another Eighth Step meeting, and someone was talking about what they had done to someone. I heard them and knew that I too had done that, and how hurtful that was. In that moment, I was able to see my ex as another human being I had harmed, and to whom I owed amends. I was able to let go of my self-righteousness and resentment and became willing to see both my ex and me as fallible and worthy human beings.

I still struggle with willingness. I hate it when foods that used to work well, don't now! I still stomp my feet, swear, and say I don't want to! And after the temper tantrum, I can read Step

Eight and know I never have to wait till I want to change. All I have to do is be willing to, just for today.

Anonymous



TRADITION EIGHT

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



How do we define special workers in OA? I always think about the fact that here in the Bi-State area, we have a bookkeeper to maintain our financial accounts. We pay this person to do a job that requires consistent perseverance to getting the job done. By compensating this individual, we ensure monthly bills are paid and reports are prepared to meet the set deadlines. This is not to say that a volunteer would not be able to do this, but the compensation establishes a contract for a routine task that has very little to do with recovery.

At the World Service office there are employees to accomplish the normal tasks of any business. A managing director, a publication manager, a comptroller, and a client services manager, plus an additional eleven people who do everything from keeping the meeting database current to the person who ships the literature. Experts are hired to cover other tasks on an occasional or temporary basis. If we do not have staff members with the skills needed, we admit that we need outside help rather than expecting our employees to cover everything. We hire plumbers and lawyers and auditors. This is the same as being a home or car owner. We all have abilities, but we admit to what we do not know.

Continued on page 3

So where does the nonprofessional come in? As members of OA, we are never paid to share our recovery. We give freely of our time to carry the twelve-step message. When we speak at a meeting or give service by working on an OA committee, as an Intergroup rep or board member, or even a region trustee, there is no compensation.

If we are a therapist, nutritionist, doctor, trainer, or any other type of professional, we do not charge the people we sponsor for our services. We do not act as counselors. We do not discuss outside philosophies in meetings. We do not advertise our outside profession to grow our business. Should someone desire to employ us, the relationship then becomes separate from our OA work. At that point a professional must set boundaries on how they will interact with their clients.

As sponsors and fellows in OA we share only our experience, strength and hope of how being in OA and working the program has made a difference in our lives.

There are times when a person who shares their experience gets a reputation for being an expert. The word gets out and people get excited to learn more from them. This is okay, but there should be no financial motive in this situation. If the person has written a book, it is considered outside literature and should not be sold nor used at an OA event. The only compensation for such a speaker would be their travel costs, air fare, hotel room, if it is necessary. Members who give such service practice humility and have no other expectation, as carrying the message is its own reward.

We are here to share our experience, strength, and hope and how OA and Higher Power helped relieve us from compulsive eating and compulsive food behaviors, nothing more and nothing less. Tradition Eight reminds us of the

need for separating our personal recovery from our egos and professional lives.

Anonymous



You Gotta Have HOPE..... But on Thursday, Not Friday

The Friday night HOPE Meeting is changing our meeting day to Thursday instead of Friday - beginning August 4th. The location and time are the same.

HOPE
Thursdays
6pm
Heart of the Apostles
1328 Commercial Blvd
Herculaneum, Mo 63048

Thank you for your help in getting the word out if you're able. Visitors welcome!

JoAnn
Compulsive Overeater

SELF discipline

Drilling Down to the Principles of the Program

Principle of Step Eight: Self Discipline

Definition: The ability to control one's feelings and overcome one's weaknesses; the ability to pursue what one thinks is right despite temptation to abandon it.

How do I grow in self-discipline?

1. Know my strengths and weaknesses.
2. Remove temptations.
3. Set clear goals and have an execution plan.
4. Practice daily diligence.
5. Create new habits and rituals.
6. Change my perception about willpower.
7. Give myself a backup plan.

If we are going to remain abstinent and find serenity, we had to learn better ways that would bring us joy instead of pain.

OA 12&12, pages 57,58

Yes, we had harmed others, but we have damaged ourselves with self-destructive thinking, eating, and living habits. We have learned that a complete willingness to make amends to ourselves and forgive ourselves for past mistakes have been essential to our recovery.

OA 12&12, page 58

Step eight is not to judge others, but to learn attitudes of mercy and forgiveness by praying, writing, and working this step with our sponsors and other experienced OAs.

Spiritual principle of Tradition

Eight: Fellowship

Definition: A friendly association especially with people who share one's interest.

In OA, we learn to give our loving support to others freely without trying to advise people or change them; nor do we look to others to work our program for us. In keeping with our nonprofessional status in OA, we willingly share and listen to our fellow compulsive eaters, but we try to leave behind expectations that they should solve problems for us or that we should solve theirs or that others will repay us in some way for helping them. Service is its own reward. When we approach others in this way, we often find that they respond to us with a new depth of love and trust.

OA 12&12, page 142

When we keep OA's Eighth Tradition, we discover a beautiful spirit of caring service, which becomes a powerful factor in our healing. We are all non-professionals in support of each other's recovery from compulsive eating, giving and receiving support and fellowship with no expectation of return. Living by the spirit of this gratifying, we can each turn to the one next to us and say truthfully from the heart, "I put my hand in yours because I care."

OA 12&12, page 143

Respectfully Submitted
Anne H





Region 4 Convention Held in Omaha, July 15-17, 2022

Nine St. Louis area OA members took the plunge and drove over 400 miles to Omaha, NE to attend the first in-person recovery convention for our region in over two years. We joined nearly 90 participants from Region 4 and beyond. Our theme was **“Celebrating Community-2gether We Get Better.”** The chatter was full of excitement, the hugs were long, the shares honest, and the recovery stories full of strength and hope.

The program consisted of three key-note speakers, a workshop track, Step study track, and plenty of general OA meetings. Volunteer members staffed registration, a boutique, and hospitality room.

Workshop topics were:

- “Adding Our Senses to the Steps” - An exercise on comparing our senses of smell, taste, hearing, touch, and sight in our disease and in our recovery. Very insightful and a new avenue to express gratitude in how my perspectives have changed with freedom from food obsession.
- “Homicide Prevention” - A study of the 12 Traditions for use inside and outside OA.

- “Intimacy and Sexuality” - A look at real intimacy and vulnerability in our relationships, applying the cornerstone of accepting differences with program members as well as in our homes/communities.
- “12 - Carrying the Message” Reaching those individuals within program and keeping the newcomer interested.

The Step study track focused on the spiritual principle of each step. Those principles are: honesty; hope; faith; courage; integrity; willingness; humility; self-discipline; love for others; perseverance; spiritual awareness; and service.

The boutique proved a great fundraising opportunity for the Region. Members were able to purchase OA literature, handmade recovery items, and a beautiful array of soft goods with embroidered OA slogans (pillowcases, slip covers, aprons, dish towels, napkins, totes, etc.)

I made many new friends, re-connected with established friends, and loved every minute. Finally, the St. Louis cluster was the last to leave the dance floor on Saturday evening. The joy of freedom expressed through dancing is a lovely thing to behold and experience.

My Love and Hope for More Face-to-Face
Recovery, Susan T

Additional remarks by attendees from our Intergroup

“Thank you, Region 4, for the opportunity for fellowship and recovery at the recent convention. My soul has been starving for face-to-face interaction with the people I love. Being together creates an energy like no other, and I loved every minute of it. The time together filled my heart, and I knew I was a part of something bigger than me. Not isolated or alone anymore.”

Anonymous

Remarks from R4 Convention, cont'd



"What a spiritual lift and gift we received by traveling to the Omaha Region 4 Convention. Friends -- old & new -- were greeted with love and appreciation. Meetings were inspirational. I brought home all I needed to re-enforce my spiritual, emotional, and physical recovery. I even bought a rock at the boutique. It is heart-shaped, and LOVE is painted on one side with OA gives HOPE on the other side. Since I lead a Step 9 meeting and was told Step 9 is the love step, I passed it around the room and had all attendees rub a little of their love into my love rock. Also, viewing the Amends Step as Love was a healthy awareness and reflection for me. My suggestion to all who weren't able to attend this face-to-face conference is to be good to yourself next time and go. That's what loving yourself is all about."

Jeanine M

"Take aways from the R4 Convention were that I had to go to Omaha to see members from the St. Louis Area Intergroup. I was able to re-connect with people whom I took on a

sightseeing tour four years ago at a different OA event. There were lots of powerful shares throughout the convention. Quotes I liked the best included:"

- I got better when I took risks
- If I correct a mistake, it's proof I'm growing
- If you plant enough flowers, there is no room for weeds
- We don't have to change who we are; we need to become who we are
- We are sick people trying to get better

Ellen W

Phrases I loved:

- I don't need to change who I am...I need to become who I am...
- I can be a work in progress and a masterpiece at the same time
- If I make a mistake, it proves I'm trying...if I correct a mistake, it proves I'm growing

Cyndy H



Repetition is the only form of permanence that Nature can achieve.

George Santayana

As quoted in **For Today**
(approved OA literature)

Outreach Idea of the Month: Talk with Your Health Professionals

When I came into OA in October, 2010, I was a hopeless compulsive eater, barely able to walk due to the damage my 430-plus pound body was doing to my joints. But on December 1, 2010, I risked a day of abstinence, and I have lived without binges since that day, living one day at a time.

The food plan that I started to use on that day – and have used consistently since – focused on reducing hypertension, a problem for which I'd taken medicine since 2001. By late February, 2011, my doctor reported that my blood pressure was starting to run a bit low, so she was going to need to take me off the hypertension medicine. She remarked, "Gosh, I don't think I've ever taken anyone OFF of blood pressure medicine before!"

A few months later, I decided to share [THIS OA PAMPHLET](#) with her. I also offered to be a resource for any of her patients who reported that they struggle with food and cannot seem to stay on a food plan meant to reduce their own suffering. She thanked me, and, even better, she took me up on it. I am not sure how many times she has offered my name and number to another patient, but one of them did call, and we met for coffee, and I shared my recovery story with her.

Recently Intergroup brainstorming about how to "carry the message" resulted in a dedicated volunteer committee that will coordinate getting our OA brochures for professionals to other members and/or groups. Intergroup funds are allocated to purchase and mail these brochures. Since I am part of the public information committee, I have agreed to be the person to distribute the brochures, so email me at newsletter@stlouisoa.org, and I will share my street address with you.

When I receive your self-addressed stamped envelope (one first class stamp, 60-cents in August of 2022), I will send up to three brochures to you. Do you have a mental health counselor, a physical therapist, and a general practitioner? There you go! That's your three! (Or perhaps your home meeting will think together about three area health care providers to whom you will conduct outreach.)

Recovery: The only way to keep it is to give it away! Outreach to health professionals is one way to do that.

Yours in service,
J-MO



Intergroup Calendar of Events

No Intergroup meeting in August

August 19 – Sponsorship Recovery Event, 6:30-8 p.m. – see flyer on page 9

September 11 – Intergroup Meeting**

September 30-October 1 – Region 4 Fall Assembly (virtual – see page 8)

October 9 – Intergroup Meeting**

November 13 – Intergroup Meeting**

No Intergroup meeting in December

****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.

News from Region 4

2022 Fall Assembly: September 30 – October 1, 2022 – Virtual (information [HERE](#) soon)

2023 Assemblies – Spring – Des Moines, Iowa - THANK YOU IOWA!!!!. Fall will be virtual.

Region 4 Language Contest - Win Up to \$100

How do we carry and share the OA message? Do we convey excitement, passion, gratitude for our recovery with action words that get us on our feet & moving toward a full & vibrant life? What language do we use?

We are looking for cool, new action words to reframe and give new life to the following:

- Retreat – Prize \$25 gift card for winning Phrase or Word
- Workshop – Prize \$25 gift card for winning Phrase or Word
- R4 Slogan – Prize \$100 gift card for the winning 3 – 6-word slogan

Criteria for winning:

- ❖ Excitement, grabs your attention & makes you want to participate, inviting, universal
- ❖ Target Demographic – Intergroups (share with groups & members)
- ❖ Differentiating Region 4 – how do we stand out?
- ❖ Mission – matches the R4 mission: The mission of Region 4 is to actively support the Region 4 Intergroups to carry the message of recovery to compulsive eaters

Send your entries to admin@oaregion4.org

Winners to be announced at Fall Assembly, October 1, 2022

Invitation to Flash Mob a Small Meeting

Try something new and **Flash Mob** a small meeting. Try it out! Those small meetings will love you for it. Ask folks from your group to join you and choose a meeting from a more rural area in a Region 4 state: Kansas, Illinois (not Chicago) Iowa, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, or Manitoba, Canada.

Our website, OA.org, has a [Find a Meeting](#) feature that will give you all you need to pick the small meeting you wish to visit.

By the way, don't forget to reach out to the Contact Person and let them know so the meeting host doesn't think it is video-conference bombing event.



ARTICLES FOR THE NEXT NEWSLETTER ARE DUE BY AUGUST 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



An Evening
Focusing on the

Benefits of Sponsorship

FRIDAY

August 19, 2022

6:30 to 8 p.m. (CDT)

If possible, please log in 15 minutes early

SPONSOR PANEL ▪ SPONSEE PANEL ▪ General SHARING

No advance registration required ▪ \$6 suggested donation

Please never stay away from an OA event for financial reasons



Zoom ID: 812 2189 1645

Zoom passcode: 530876

Dial-in: 312-626-6799 *(use same ID and passcode)*

Hosted by the Saturday Morning (Webster Groves) Step Study Group

Questions? Call Ellen W. 314-603-3712

8. Made a list

record
file
invoice
account

listing
index
archive
outline

outline
register
compilation

note
catalogue
lineup

of all persons

individuals
souls

people
our self

parties

human beings

we had harmed.

damaged
wronged
maltreated
afflicted
scraped

hurt
damaged
tormented
tortured
bruised

injured
distressed
battered
impaired
scarred

wounded
aggrieved
abused
marred
scathed

and became

came
developed into
converted
ripened into

got
transformed into
altered to
shifted into

grew
changed into
matured into
emerged into

come to be
evolved into
metamorphosed into

willing

ready
consenting
in the mood
game
minded
compliant

inclined
disposed
compliant
eager
predisposed
cooperative

prepared
favorable
amenable
disposed
agreeable
obedient

in favor
agreeable
desirous
inclined
accommodating
obliging

to make

produce
bring about
form
construct
forge

cause
give rise to
manufacture
set up
bring about

create
do
assemble
craft

generate
cause
build
cause

amends

apology
reparation
expiation

compensation
restitution

restoration
atonement

redress
recompense

to them all.

each of
every single

every

each one of the

every one