

# May 2023 OA TODAY NEWSLETTER

St. Louis Bi-State Intergroup of OA  
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## STEP FIVE

**Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.**

### Eye Contact? I Contact!

As the **Big Book** notes, one of the promises that comes true after working step 5 is “We can look the world in the eye.” I remember as a newcomer, as I sat in a circle with other compulsive eaters, my eye contact was on fellow members’ shoes. I had a hard time meeting anyone’s eyes. Was it shame? Self-consciousness? A way to stay separate? Probably a mix of all three. How does Step 5 help me move from pride and self-hatred to self-acceptance and connection with others?

When I admit my “wrongs,” those thoughts and actions that don’t align with my true, Higher-Powered self, I get to practice honesty. When I admit these to a Higher Power, I get to deepen my conscious contact. And when I admit them to another, I get to be a member of the human race.

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## Is OA Right for You?

If you have tried to achieve a healthy body weight through many methods, only to fail repeatedly, or if your inability to control your eating is beginning to frighten you, then please consider attending an OA meeting. To find a meeting, go to [OA.org](http://OA.org) and click on Find a Meeting.

At OA meetings, you will find others who have the same concerns and who share your feelings. Chances are you will find many of the answers you need. Overeaters Anonymous is a simple program that works. There are no dues or fees. We are self-supporting through our own contributions. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop eating compulsively.

You are no longer alone. We, too, have experienced hopelessness when we tried to control our problems with food or eating. We have tried every diet and used many methods to control our body size, without success. We could not enjoy life because of our obsession with food, weight, and/or size. We could not stop eating too much even when we really wanted to. At times, some of us even refused to eat because we were afraid we would be overcome by our appetite. We felt shame and humiliation about our behavior with food.

For more information, see [THIS PAMPHLET](#).



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Notice I write “get to.” Over the years, most of my step 4s and 5s were completed with a “have to” mentality. I now believe, as the **OA 12 & 12** states, that writing an inventory is one of the most loving things I can do for myself. I’m grateful that past Step 5s have left me with feelings of love and acceptance from another. The feedback I’ve received from every person I’ve shared a Step 5 with has had a common thread: be gentle and loving, kind and compassionate with yourself. Such powerful, healing words for a harshly critical person like me.

Because I began to believe those words, I don’t carry the heavy burden of shame, nor do I need to build walls between myself and others. Over the years, my eye contact has slowly risen from shoes to eyes. With that connection, I can share what those who have heard my Step 5s have shared with me: empathy and acceptance.

With gratitude,  
Anonymous

### ***Spiritual Principle - Integrity: A Value We Can Shake On***



## **TRADITION FIVE**

**Each group has but one primary purpose — to carry its message to the compulsive overeater who still suffers.**



The **A.A. 12&12** reminds us that, “if we neglect those who are still sick, there is unremitting danger to our own lives and sanity.” And “we can seldom keep the precious gift of sobriety unless we give it away.”

Three “compulsions” are shared for why we make carrying the message to those who still suffer our solitary purpose as a fellowship:

- Self-preservation
- Duty
- Love

### **Self-preservation**

Sometimes I really NEEDED a meeting. Life can seem overwhelming. Grief weighs me down. Friends or family members may get on my “last good nerve.”

So far, meetings have been there when I’ve gone looking for them. I have attended OA meetings in at least five states, and the meetings that I found using online tools were really happening when I got there. Sometimes only one, two, or three people were present, but someone had opened the door, set out literature, etc.

If we forsake our primary purpose, if we say “Oh, it really doesn’t matter if I go tonight,” it’s possible that some meetings will not be there when a newcomer arrives or when a member in relapse goes searching for a port in the storm. My abstinence may be at risk if I repeatedly find the lights out and the door

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locked when I try to attend a meeting (or if my computer screen constantly displays a “waiting for host to join” message).

### Duty

Duty is defined as “moral obligation” or “tasks, conduct, service, or functions that arise from one's position (in life or in a group)”. The OA fellowship has consistently been there for me. I have found the OA Promise to be trustworthy, not a meaningless recitation:

*I put my hand in yours, and together we can do what we could never do alone. No longer is there a sense of hopelessness, no longer must we each depend upon our own unsteady willpower. We are all together now, reaching out our hands for power and strength greater than ours, and as we join hands, we find love and understanding beyond our wildest dreams.*

What is my response, given all that I have received in OA? I feel a sense of duty to open my hand to others in gratitude for all that I have received.

### Love

Repeatedly I have received and observed love in the rooms of OA. I have learned to be more loving toward myself and others. Letting go of perfectionism has made that much easier.

Love is more than a feeling, and love is more than words. As a writer shares on page 108 of **For Today**: “Love is shown in action: by caring, doing, remembering, listening.” And “as I practice the principles of this program, my capacity for love expands.”

Whether acting out of self-preservation, duty, or love, it is in my enlightened self-interest to carry the message. When I am there for others, sharing my own experience, strength, and hope, I help to strengthen the fellowship so that it continues to be there for me as well.

Anonymous



### Spiritual Principle of Tradition 5: Purpose



### Face-to-Face Recovery Events Returning in May and June

After a successful 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration in March, two home meetings have decided to offer face-to-face recovery events:

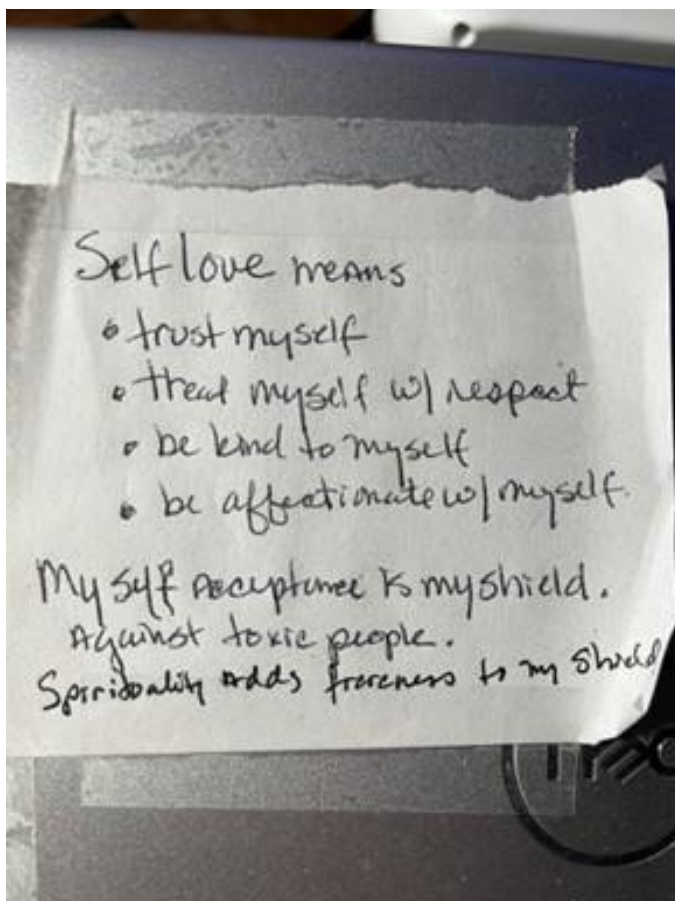
The Waterloo Monday Night Literature meeting is hosting “**High Fives**” on Saturday, May 13, in Columbia, IL. See the flyer for this recovery event on page 8 and mark your calendar!

The Saturday morning Webster Groves Step & Tradition meeting is hosting “**Camp OA: Making Summertime Recovery Time**” on Saturday, June 24. Members of the meeting have tested videoconferencing capabilities at the host location and believe a hybrid event will be possible! We’ll have a login link, passcode, etc. available in the June newsletter, but there’s a flyer on page 9 with basic details so that you can save the date NOW.

## If Loving Me Is Wrong, I Don't Want to Be Right

During the pandemic, I was part of a wonderful study group. That group helped sustain me during Cancer, a pandemic, and a move. I am grateful daily for that experience. The isolation during those early months was so intense, and being forced to be with your pod of people every minute of every day was also intense. The hours we spent were an oasis of support, learning, and friendship.

One of the things that came out of that group – we read so many books – it was wonderful – was a distillation of a chapter on Self Love. What we came away with was:



It lives taped to my computer where I see it every day. I leave myself notes everywhere that are program-related. This is just one of my

daily stops that reminds me how far I have come, and that Awareness, Acceptance, and Action keep me on the right path.

How do I learn to **TRUST MYSELF**? We start this at Step One where we learn to practice Honesty. I thought I was honest, but I was a consummate liar. Honesty with myself was way harder than honesty with others, although both sides of that coin were a hard go for me. I learned to Trust myself by being trustworthy with others. Saying what I meant, not coming from a place of people pleasing. (That was never the truth; I had sooooo many resentments spring up from doing things I didn't want to do, all because I had to be liked by everyone.)



So, I stopped. Not all at once. Every step I have taken in this program is a baby step. I learn a small thing. I practice it until it becomes a habit. Then I rest. Then I learn another small thing and add it to the first.

I was last on my TRUST and HONESTY list, but I got there. I find honesty with myself the most loving thing I can do. It keeps me aware; I cannot choose the right path if I am not aware of the path I am on. It keeps me accepting; I cannot change what I do not see. (Page 417 in the **AA Big Book** has a great paragraph that I refer to whenever I have trouble accepting.) It keeps me moving; without action there is no forward motion.

### **I TREAT MYSELF WITH RESPECT.** How?

This one is both simple and hard. I no longer abuse my body with food. I have a food plan, and I stick to it. I know the components so that if I have to be away from my prepared menu

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items, I can make the best choice given my circumstances. Honoring my body helps me to love all of me, even the parts I wish were smaller (or bigger!).

**I AM KIND TO MYSELF.** The whipping post that lives in my mind is now dusty with disuse. I allow myself to be human, imperfect, flawed. I make mistakes. I own them. I move on. There is a grief around the amount of life I lost to stress and worry that I wasn't good enough. I am me, the best me I have ever been, and I still have things I want to improve. The only person I compare myself to is me. A wise woman whose voice I hear in my head whenever that perfectionism tries to wake up says, "It is not my business what other people think of me". It is kinder to not worry about that anymore.

**I AM AFFECTIONATE WITH MYSELF.** I laugh out loud and enjoy how much my laugh sounds like my mother's laugh. I dance - even though my knees absolutely hate me for it. I visit friends and am fully present with these magnificent humans who choose to spend time with me. I cuddle up in a blanket. Then my cat comes and lays on top of me, and I am so very happy. I like me. I never felt that way before. If the price of feeling these things is living by the principles of this program for the rest of my life, then that is a small price to pay to be able to say: **I. LIKE. ME.**

This part, however, this part I just love.

**MY SELF ACCEPTANCE IS MY SHIELD AGAINST TOXIC PEOPLE AND SPIRITUALITY ADDS FIERCENESS TO MY SHIELD.**

As long as I like myself, accept myself just as I am, no outside opinion can penetrate that. Runs right off my back. Does this mean I don't listen to constructive advice? No. I remain open to all I do not know and am happy to add

to my knowledge daily. I think that keeps me in the world and growing to be of use in that world. I no longer need anyone to approve of me, and I sought that my whole damn life. Whatever their opinion of me is just that; it doesn't cut anymore. The work I have done in the program and in therapy has allowed me to find self-esteem.

HP. Spirituality. Words and concepts I struggled with when I first came into program. I am glad of the struggle. I had to work at this, overcome a lot of resentments and jettison a whole ton of expectations to find a spiritual place to live. And yes, it does add fierceness to my shield. How? I now believe that as I move toward being my authentic self, as I grow in usefulness in the world, that exactly my uniqueness is needed, and HP had that plan. Before I was more than a speck of stardust waiting to be, my place was held. Specifically, for me. That I felt out of place was about trying to be someone I wasn't meant to be. The knowledge that I have gifts that only I can give is fierce indeed.

There are so many benefits from choosing to walk the 12 Step path. Learning to love myself was just one.

Anonymous

**ARTICLES FOR THE NEXT NEWSLETTER ARE DUE BY MAY 20, 2023.** 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

## May I Show Up And May I Suit Up

It's just rounding the corner into May, and my husband and I have already received graduation, wedding shower, wedding, and baby shower invitations. I'm so excited for the graduates, the couples beginning their marriage, and parents awaiting the arrival of their precious baby.

I know food is going to be served at all of these celebrations. I'm well aware my self-will can get the best of me. I always have to remind myself that my way doesn't work, but my HP does have a solution for me. May I heed my HP's wisdom, courage, and strength. May I be honest and open to all possibilities. May my will be in alignment with my HP's will.

For me, I do give thought about the food that will be served. If it's at mealtime, most likely I'm going to find something safe to eat such as vegetables and fruits. If it's at a time between meals, I can choose not to eat, or I can arrange to leave before food is served.

I never know what might trigger me: food that I don't normally eat might look attractive to me this time, excess food being offered has triggered me in the past, and I can get a bad case of the gimmes (someone telling me to get something to eat, asking me why I'm not eating, asking me if I tried the sweet food items, talking about how good a particular food is and that I should try it, the aroma of a particular food that triggers a feeling or memory from long ago, etc.). Feeling slighted or wronged by someone can get me in victim mode causing "poor pitiful me" to overeat.

Using a mantra can usually help me get through whatever is triggering me, but I have had my share of lapses. I'm grateful to have my sponsor to talk to.

Before attending these parties I try to be mindful of HALT - not being too hungry, angry, lonely, or tired. That sounds easier said than done but loving myself today means I take care of myself in healthier ways than before program. Those barriers, or feelings (usually fear) that I haven't taken time to address need some type of resolve before attending so I can truly enjoy celebrating the people and event. I'm at great risk if I go without lovingly caring for me first.

My HP and sponsor are more than willing to listen and guide me. If I can't reach my sponsor, I have other program people I can call. Being aware of my inner being/feelings and being conscious of taking care of me doesn't come naturally to me. Today I don't desire to stuff myself with food to avoid feeling the feelings. That is so painful, and I don't want to live there today.

It's important for me to pray to my HP, listen to my HP, talk with my sponsor and listen to what has worked for my sponsor in these situations, journal, write out a plan for me, commit my plan to my HP, sponsor, and my fellow members at my OA meetings if I want to.

May the spring/summer celebrations be all they are meant to be. May I embrace the celebrations with love for others and myself, by remaining abstinent - living, loving, learning in the present moment one day at a time.

Sue S.



## News from Region 4

The next **Community Conversation** is set for Sunday, May 21, 2023 – 5:00 p.m. The topic is **Twelfth Step Within** – What are we doing to support those in our rooms who are having trouble? Contact Annette – [chair@oaregion4.org](mailto:chair@oaregion4.org) – with questions.

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/91896335029?pwd=anM0WHQ4aDFhMGxjUnBHemFodU5tZz09>

Meeting ID: 918 9633 5029

Passcode: 182172

**Big Book Study** (virtual) May 19-21 - go to [Upcoming Overeaters Anonymous Events - Find an Event](#) on the Unity Intergroup website.



## News from World Service

Overeaters Anonymous has created a fun skit about the use of all OA Approved Literature. See it here: [New Skit: One Piece of Literature - Overeaters Anonymous \(oa.org\)](#)

**New – [The Twelve Traditions Workbook](#)** -

This workbook focuses on the Spiritual Principles of the Twelve Traditions and explores them through guided questions.

Find this workbook and more at the [OA.org Bookstore link](#).

For **events** happening throughout the worldwide OA Fellowship, click [HERE](#).



**May 7 – 1:30 p.m. - Intergroup meeting\*\***

**May 13 – 9-11:30 a.m. (Registration at 8:30 a.m. – “High Fives” Super Saturday** in Columbia, IL – see flyer on page 8

**May 19-21 – Big Book Study** (virtual), see Region 4 announcements on this page

**June 11 – 1:30 p.m. - Intergroup meeting\*\***

**June 24 – 10 a.m.-12:30 p.m. (Registration 9:30 a.m.) – “Camp OA: Making Summertime Recovery Time” Super Saturday in Webster Groves, MO** – see flyer on page 9

**July 9 – 1:30 p.m. - Intergroup meeting\*\***

**September 10 – 1:30 p.m. - Intergroup meeting\*\***

**September 29-30 – Fall Assembly, Region 4** (virtual)

**October 8 – 1:30 p.m. - Intergroup meeting\*\***

**October 27-29 – Fall Retreat -** Toddhall Retreat Center, Columbia, IL (see flyer on page 10)

**November 12 – 1:30 p.m. - Intergroup meeting\*\***

**\*\*Note:** Each Intergroup Meeting is 1:30-3 p.m. via Zoom. **The meeting number is 940 5580 8391. The password is: Serenity.** It's also possible to join by telephone: Dial-in: 312-626-6799, meeting ID 940 5580 8391, and password 75183374. Those in elected service positions and Intergroup Representatives are expected to attend. All other fellows are welcome.

# High FIVES

Living in Step 5, Tradition 5, and Principle 5

## Super Saturday



DATE: May 13, 2023

REGISTRATION BEGINS: 8:30 AM

PROGRAM TIME: 9:00 AM - 11:30 AM

LOCATION: Hope Christian Church  
9273 Coachstop Rd  
Columbia, IL 62236  
(HANDICAP ACCESSIBLE)

SUGGESTED DONATION: \$6.00

Please do not stay away from this or any OA event for financial reasons.

For more information, contact:

Chris (618) 340-0778 or Verna (618) 980-4304

Brought to you by the Waterloo Monday Night Literature Meeting, in support of the St. Louis Bi-state Area Intergroup of Overeaters Anonymous.





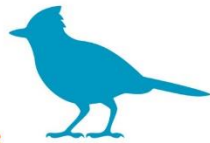
**Overeaters Anonymous**  
St. Louis Bi-State Area Intergroup

## Super Saturday

Hosted by the Saturday Morning  
Step & Tradition Study Group



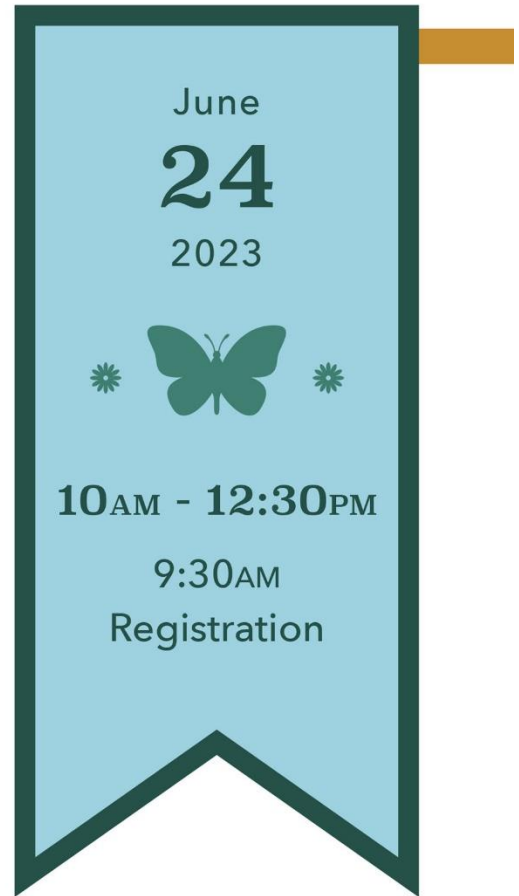
Suggested  
Donation: \$6



Never stay away from an OA event  
for financial reasons.



**Questions? Contact Eileen M.**  
at 314-570-9333.



## Webster Groves Christian Church

1320 West Lockwood  
Webster Groves, MO 63122

Lower Level. Enter from the rear  
parking lot. Accessible parking is  
available in the rear parking lot.



**Save the Date**  
**October 27-29, 2023**

***EMBRACE THE***  
***"SPIRIT OF RECOVERY"***  
***FALL RETREAT***

***TODDHALL RETREAT CENTER***  
***COLUMBIA, ILLINOIS***

***MORE INFORMATION TO FOLLOW***  
***WWW.STLOUISOA.ORG***



**St. Louis Bi-State  
Area Intergroup**