

June 2023 OA TODAY NEWSLETTER

St. Louis Bi-State Intergroup of OA
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STEP SIX

Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.

Well, that seems easy enough. Cool; I can quickly progress to being a perfect person! The problem is that Step Six requires me to be entirely ready to give up all forms of control surrounding my character defects. Wait a minute! Completely release my defects of character? Who will I be without these survival traits? I know they cause me trouble, but they also define me.

One of the stickiest things about character defects is that they have been our “go to” for dealing with problematic situations or events. There is a familiarity and comfort with them. They have a proven track record of working for us, so we were able to survive.

The problem is that they are not needed any more and cause more troublesome issues – especially if we are trying to live in recovery of some sort. We recognize that they are bad habits, but the fear of change – of what will I be if I don’t have these character defects – often causes one to cling to them.

(continued on page 2)

Beginning the Journey To a New, More Joyful Life

Have you tried over and over again to control your eating and weight, but nothing has worked? Compulsive overeating, under-eating, food addiction, anorexia, bulimia, binge eating, or over exercising ... no matter your challenge with food or body image, ***you are welcome here.***

What is OA anyway?

- We are for anyone struggling with food or trying to determine if they have food issues.
- We believe compulsive eating is a disease like alcoholism is a disease.
- Our life-changing approach is physical, emotional, and spiritual, and based on the Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA).

You can use our online [Find a Meeting Tool](#) to find meetings in the following formats: face-to-face, online, telephone, and non-real-time. Once you’ve found a meeting that you want to check out, you show up.

Set aside an hour for your meeting. You’ll be invited to share your first name, but we take anonymity seriously. You may hear some readings and members share about their journeys. Participate as much or as little as you want. You are welcome to share but you don’t have to. If you have questions, you can talk with individual members after the meeting. Click [HERE](#) if you want to know more.

(Step Six article, continued from page 1)
OA's 12 and 12 p. 46: "In honestly facing Step Six, we confront the fear that our defects are like threads woven into the very fabric of our beings; if God removes them, we feel we'll surely unravel."

The issues of control and doing things on my timetable have always been a challenge for me. Through the OA program, I have discovered that there is a huge difference between:

- Encouraging God to go ahead and get rid of these pesky, self-destructive behaviors and attitudes. And hurry up about it!
vs
- Having God remove all my character defects – as He sees best.

In the first perspective, I'm still clinging to control and trying to run the show, *granting* God permission to remove my character defects. Along with this sense of control is the *expectation* that God will go about this my way and on my timeline. When I really look at this; it doesn't sound too much like the Spiritual Principal of *willingness*!

The second perspective of "having God remove all these defects of character" means that I must be willing to:

1. **Surrender completely – everything.** For me- I had to come to a new understanding of the word surrender. My old comprehension of surrender was tied up with fear of loss – specifically of control. I had a very hard time with being vulnerable and defenseless. This was a direct connection for me to my struggles of maintaining abstinence throughout my time in OA. Over time, I was able to accept that **surrender can mean choosing to live.** That meant accepting that I couldn't do this on my own – and not having shame about that fact.
2. Accepting that God's timeline is the only one that matters. I'm powerless over having my

character defects removed on my timeline. This has been the difference for me of "saying" I'm entirely ready and truly "being" entirely ready.

Another obstacle stems from not only the comfort and familiarity of our character defects, but there is often an enjoyment or a thrill with them. This opens the door for me to rationalize and justify continuing to use my defects. You know- "Strive for progress, not perfection". Yeah, right.

The *key* is the harder I try to remove my defects of character on my own, the more they control me. When I face the *truth*, I am aware of and accepting that I'm just as powerless over my character defects as I am over compulsive overeating. I cannot do this alone. Only a power greater than myself can remove them.

When I'm truly, honestly working Step Six, I'm committing myself to growth and change every day - no matter how much it may scare me. My defects of character eventually become more of a burden than helpful. That's when I'm entirely ready to surrender them to my Higher Power. I need to experience the "emotional relapse" that my deeply engrained defects cause me. Recovery has given me the gift of being more "awake" to how my defects lead me into emotional relapse – just a short hop to losing my abstinence and sanity with food.

OA's 12 and 12 p. 48-49: "As we work Step Six, we recognize and acknowledge our human fear of change. Then, because we are willing to go to any lengths for recovery from compulsive overeating, we move ahead with this step. No longer will we allow fear to keep us from doing what is best for us...We find we can cope with both good times and bad, learning and growing spiritually from each experience, as our Higher Power intended us to do all along."

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(Step Six article, continued from page 2)

My character defects were coping mechanisms that served me well at one time. They have an opposite character asset – like the flipped side of a coin. My newly discovered assets give me a new set of survival skills that are stronger, more courageous, and life-affirming.

Jennifer L.

groups can concentrate on recovery from compulsive overeating instead of on problems associated with money, property, and prestige, which cause so much conflict in the world around us.”

Jennifer L.



TRADITION SIX

An OA group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the OA name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.



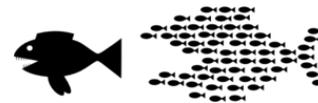
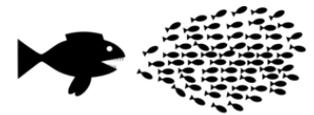
Two slogans neatly sum up Tradition Six.

“Keep It Simple”

Our PRIMARY purpose is to carry the message of the recovery possible through the 12 Steps and 12 Traditions to compulsive overeaters who still suffer. Other enterprises may have value, but they threaten to divert us from our primary purpose. Many outside programs may be inspired by, even based on, the 12 Steps, but do they govern themselves through the 12 Traditions?

“First Things First”

We learn to focus on our primary purpose and exclude anything that might interfere with our ability to carry OA’s message. **OA’s 12 and 12 p. 128** *“OA’s lack of attachment to any kind of outside enterprise gives our Fellowship a marvelous freedom. We operate with a minimum of worry about funding, administrative problems, or the success and failure of non-OA ventures. By avoiding any such affiliations, OA*



SOLIDARITY:

The Spiritual Principle of Tradition Six



**Save the Date: Super Saturday
Planned for September 9**

The Sunday 5 pm Recovery from Relapse meeting is hosting a Super Saturday event on September 9. It will be in the afternoon. Watch for more details and a flyer in the **OA Today** newsletter soon!

**Eureka Meeting Starts Hybrid
Option on June 13**

The Tuesday 7 p.m. **Welcome Home** meeting in Eureka will resume meeting face-to-face, beginning June 13, 2023, but will also continue to offer an online attendance option. The focus of this newly hybrid meeting is the Big Book and Newcomers. Contacts for the meeting are Jennifer L. at 314-229-2118 or Grace B. at 314-616-4038.

The face-to-face meeting will be at St Francis Episcopal Church, 602 Rockwood Arbor Dr, Eureka, MO 63025. Contact Jennifer L. or Grace B. for the login information and passcode.

World Service Business Conference (WSBC) – April 25-29, 2023

After three years of meeting online, this face-to-face event was electrifying. There were 178 voting Delegates, Chairs, and Trustees. We saw friends and met new ones from 15 different countries: United States, England, Sweden, Iran, Russia, Ukraine, Italy, Brazil, Columbia, Canada, Greece, Israel, Poland, Spain, and Australia.

We voted on forty motions and proposals within five business meeting sessions. Those present could attend up to five different workshops. Attendees participated in one of seven committees: Unity with Diversity, Region Chairs, Conference Approved Literature, Bylaws, Public Information/Professional Outreach, Young People, or Twelve Step Within. A lot of excitement and innovative ideas were captured and actions to take were written down.

We elected six trustees, some returning, some brand new. OA meetings were held several times a day. Shuttles took people to the store, and there was a little time to explore Albuquerque if you were so inclined. The highlight was a lovely banquet (with abstinent food choices), a speaker, and a dance.

Nine from Region 4 were able to go and be inspired and motivated to dive in for another year. You've got plenty of time to consider going next year. What do you need? One year of current abstinence, be involved in service beyond the group level for two years, get elected by your Intergroup. Your entire week is funded by your Intergroup. If your Intergroup can't afford it, Region 4 can help out.

Interested and want to know more? Send in your questions to Admin@oaregion4.org, and we will get back to you.

From R4ward



Jumping Into Summer Fun Without “To Do List” Tyranny

I can't believe we are halfway through this year! I am ready to jump into June and a summer of fun. A couple of weeks ago I started creating a to-do list of things I'd like to get done... by summer. The list is growing and is threatening to steal my summer fun.

I prayed about this and talked to my sponsor. I have decided this summer to not do away with the list, but when time allows I can choose to do something on the list or decide if something stays on the list. This is a change for me to let go and let it be. My HP has been waking me up, having me look at things differently, giving me clarity and awareness.

Prior to the OA recovery program, and intermittently in the program, I was a top-notch, black and white thinker! Perfectionism fit me like a glove. I was a hard worker with little idle time so that I could keep feelings stuffed. I was a compulsive overeater, filled with self-loathing, angry at the world, and caught in the vicious cycle of shame and guilt.

Change is still hard for me, but before program, and at different times throughout my recovery, it was brutal. Every time I hit a rough patch in my recovery I would blame a sponsor, a fellow traveler, stall at a step. I'd get resentful because I didn't seem to be progressing like

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others who came into recovery. I wanted to win this race, but I often felt like I never left the gate. I resisted change because my attitude was to act like a know-it-all, with an “I’ve-got-this” mentality.

In actuality, I was so frightened, I stayed stuck in the never-ending cycle of doing the same thing over and over expecting different results rather than having the courage to try a different path. I’m grateful today to know I’m living this program one day at a time, competing with no one, or I would probably combust.

I’m a compulsive overeater and I’m powerless over food. I’m grateful for my HP who loves me immeasurably. Today I’m willing to grow in the relationship with my HP so I can be teachable today. When I humble myself I’m surrendering to my HP so I can be open to change.

I’m learning the more I relax, breathe, pause, trust the program, work the steps, I’m gaining the courage to keep moving forward to the next 24 hours. Today I can’t control my compulsive overeating, but I have a program of recovery to help me one day at a time. I’m able to take action and leave the rest to God.

I’m looking forward to summer fun and all it has to offer. May I relax and take pleasure in the beauty of summer.

Sue S.



Abstinence While Traveling? Members Share Their ESH*

For me, keeping abstinent during travel, either for work or pleasure, begins days before I leave the house. I start with a commitment to abstinence and create a realistic action plan, talking this through with a sponsor. I consider what I am looking forward to with this trip and nurturing gratitude for this opportunity, the rhythm or schedule of the travel, e.g., traveling by car, train or airplane, where am I going and with whom, access to phone, internet, privacy, and meetings.

Considering the rhythm of trip allows me to plan a few things that I have found are necessary:

- If I am traveling with or visiting people with whom I may still be processing stuff from the past (such as family of origin), what do I need to do to take care of myself? Early in program, I had to concentrate on eating slowly with my family so I did not give into old habits of quick overeating. After meals, I would go to bathroom, breathe and cultivate gratitude, and brush my teeth to provide a pause and recentering after the meal. I offered to be of service and wash dishes and get my hands in soapy water to avoid looking for food after meals (which was a prime binge time for me).
- I need to talk about expectations with travel companions. For example, I may want to let them know that I need to eat within a schedule and what kinds of food (such as no fast foods) as well as my need for rest/sleep.
- I also plan what snacks or alternative meals I might need to bring with me, especially if the travel involves airports where good food options can be limited or non-existent - especially when flights could be cancelled. I pack healthy

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snacks that work with my food plan - including lunch, dried fruit, water bottles, raw vegetables, and nuts.

- I commit to making phone calls to my sponsor or program people while away.
- I plan to take literature with me. If space is tight, I can make copies of specific pages of daily readers, take pamphlets or choose one book. If I have access to the internet, I may have access to these resources online.

Once I leave for the trip, I keep focused on being flexible (practicing letting go of my desire for control) and staying open to new experiences. I say the serenity prayer often.



Things will not always go as I planned, and yet I can still be happy and choose serenity.

I get to practice taking care of myself and being honest with those I travel with when I need to stop for food and rest. If you travel in a car with me, you will hear me say at the beginning, "I hope we can agree to stop when hungry or tired or we need to pee and that we will give the driver a 30-60-minute warning for that." That statement is so easy and has prevented many arguments and being too hungry, angry, lonely or tired.

Just like at home, I plan my food either in morning or night before--make choices and let them go. I focus on enjoying the moments of this experience, gathering memories that fill me up. If something happens that ruffles my feathers, I can talk to HP (often going to bathroom for a little break from others), write in

my journal or text a program friend. Slogans help. Live and let live, keep it simple, one day at a time. These are a few of my favorites.

May your travel open up new opportunities for living more fully. You can take HP and all the support of the rest of us "trudging this path" with you. Blessings!

Julie J.

Note: ESH = Experience, strength, & hope



When I was given the opportunity to write about how I navigate my abstinence while traveling, I was reluctant to commit because—I am getting ready to travel soon! Still, it is a wonderful thing to recall the ins and outs, details of how to remain and protect my abstinence while away from my own routines and out of my space of control. I love traveling but I always pack my disease, so I must always pack my abstinence as well. It has become easier with time, although I needed to create a space with my boundaries and well being to the fore in order to make it work.

If I travel to see friends and loved ones, I let them know I will be coming with some things in hand or will stop at the store to stock up a few vital things. Usually they offer to purchase them—but I prefer to do that myself. It gives me the immediate boundary of self care that allows me to go forward in just the way I like. I virtually always make sure my first meal of the day is just as I choose so that the day begins with comfort and certainty. I can be more flexible and make adjustments to accommodate others if I have a great morning frame of mind. Having begun the day with abstinence in my behaviors and actions, it is not worrisome to move into the choices I will need to make.

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I am rarely bothered today with travel choices in food—so long as I have clarity of intentions, say out loud any thoughts or pressures I feel (sometimes with my loved one but more often with a trusted OA fellow by text), and find some quiet space to take a deep breath and a prayer when I feel challenged.

Probably the most important aspect of my abstinence while traveling is staying in humility. I keep in touch with how I am feeling, and I stay aware of exactly who I really am and what role I am serving in the moment. I do not ask others to be different or project my feelings onto them. The boundaries I live by work better if I have clarity on who I am relating to. And finally, I seek clarity of the world as it actually is. What my real options are and how to take care of myself is better when I understand the nature of the place I am in. That is real work I do as I travel. It relieves the burden of my disorder and allows my choices to stay in the good recovery work I do.

I attend meetings when possible, although that is less available than other tools; and I often text and pray throughout the day. I am an early riser so I take the time others sleep to meditate, read and journal. My abstinence takes my time and attention and I believe that work allows me to be more present to the environment I am in and the people with whom I interact. A less reactive, more centered, and aware me is a happier thing for everyone around me!

Christina D.



ARTICLES FOR THE NEXT NEWSLETTER ARE DUE BY JUNE 20, 2023. 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. OA service units may reprint articles without requesting permission.



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 8

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

September 9 – Super Saturday – see page 3

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 9)

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



Overeaters Anonymous
St. Louis Bi-State Area Intergroup

Super Saturday

Hosted by the Saturday Morning
Step & Tradition Study Group



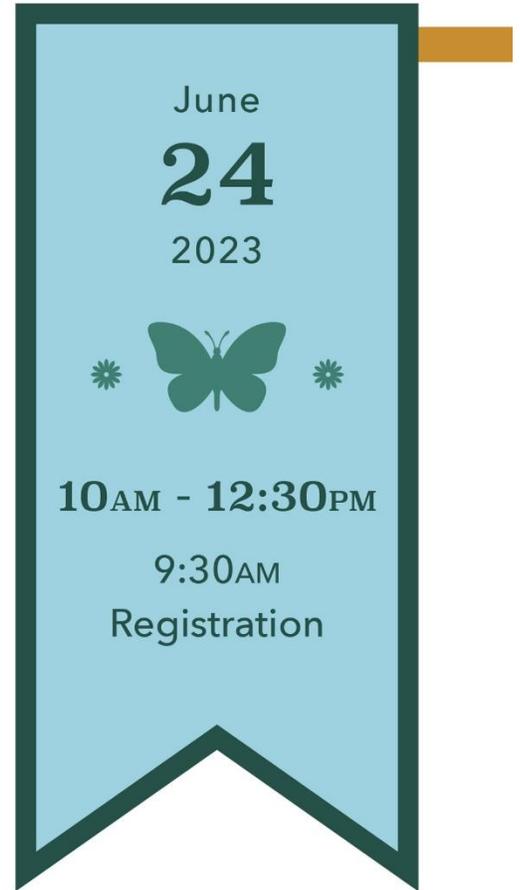
Suggested
Donation: \$6



Never stay away from an OA event
for financial reasons.



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



June
24
2023



10AM - 12:30PM

9:30AM
Registration

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.



**Attend in-person
or by Zoom.**



Meeting ID: 820 8473 3087
Passcode: 900535

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



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