

August 2023 OA TODAY NEWSLETTER

St. Louis Bi-State Intergroup of OA
P.O. Box 28882, St. Louis, MO 63123
info@stlouisoa.org, www.stlouisoa.org
Phone: 314-638-6070



Welcome Corner: To the Newcomer

Recently, I have been asked to speak a couple of times to folks who are newer to our fellowship. I appreciate every opportunity I get to give away the knowledge I have received in these rooms to others looking for help for their addiction.

Welcome to those who have just found us. I hope you stay. On page 6 is a layout that I developed through meetings, reading our literature, sponsoring, and being sponsored. It is hard to see how this program works, so I developed this arc of recovery chart. It short hands the Steps, Principles, and a bit about how each Step builds on one another. It's my idea of a road map of recovery. Folks have said it is helpful, so I offer it now for our **To the Newcomer** column.

Oftentimes we come to these rooms looking to get our "perfect body" and thinking that if we had it, all would be right in our world. A perfect body leading to a perfect life is a myth. A healthy body, with a healthy life is imminently achievable, however.

We follow a set of suggestions, with the help of a sponsor, that allows us to look at our life and learn how to be emotionally stable, spiritually grounded, and to care for our physical body, rather than harm it. All the steps are necessary, in the order they are presented. There are no short cuts to recovery. However, there is no time limit either.

(continued on page three)

STEP EIGHT

Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.

No More Regrets; Principle – Self-Discipline

I had the best experience with Step 8 just recently. I was working with a sponsee and as we came to this step, we decided that we would work these last steps with a focus on her and the amends she needed to make to herself. We used this focus for all the work we did in the last five steps.

Step 8, however, was where I really saw things begin to change. I began to hear the change in her language and how she talked about herself, her body, her goals, her family.

(continued on page two)

(continued from page one)

Step 8 helps us learn about the patterns we have in our relationships and what changes we can make that will help us heal. We learn about forgiveness, and we learn the true meaning of amends.

In a 12-Step program, we do not apologize, Step 8 is not some long exercise where we go over all our faults and prepare a grueling, grovel-tour of people from our past. We clean our side of the street so that we no longer have to carry the guilt baggage around with us anymore. This is where we look at our behavior and decide what changes we are going to practice moving forward so that we no longer hurt others or ourselves.

Amends is about letting people know that 1) we now are aware of and recognize the harmful behaviors we practiced that hurt others while we were in our addiction; and 2) that we are now deliberately choosing new behaviors so that we no longer hurt others or ourselves.

It is important to remember when making this list, that this is for us. This is where we choose what "learning a new way of acting on life rather than reacting to it" will look like for us.

For my sponsee, this process was transformative. She made a list of all the ways her addiction had harmed her, physically, emotionally, and spiritually. We talked about these and then discussed new choices she could make so that she would no longer hurt herself. It was amazing, we cried more than once through this process. What an honor to help her find her path to loving her body, her curious mind, her struggle with the concept of a Higher Power.

A new way of living opened up. She chose to love her body by continuing with a healthy food plan where she weighed and measured her meals daily, and that she would contribute

foods on her plan to family or friend gatherings so that she could relax and be fully present, rather than distracted by food.

She chose to keep walking and doing yoga so that she would stay healthy as she aged and able to do all the things she wanted to keep doing. She chose to continue to take quiet time in the morning, and to add quiet time before bed to both start and end her day with time spent with her HP. She noted that she cherished this time with herself and safeguards it; admitting to annoyance when she is interrupted, and also recognizing that she can keep asking with kindness that this time she has set aside be respected by those around her.

We have finished our journey through the steps together and she is ready to sponsor, something she never felt up to doing before, always sure that she didn't have what it took. In the end, she found that she does have a lot to share and give. She found the discipline to care for herself, and with that she now felt the call to give it away, letting the Serenity she found help someone else find their path as well.

Anonymous



A REALLY BIG THANK YOU

This is a long overdue message to Candice B. Thank you so much for making sure the Newsletter was mailed out to those of our fellowship who do not use computers during the pandemic and for quite a while after. I believe you gave this service at your own expense for almost three years!

Thank you. I know you made a difference during a time of great uncertainty. What a gift you are.

Melanie T

(continued from page one)

Each person's journey is their own and it takes as long as it needs to take. Think about how long you practiced your addiction. Unlearning those out of balance habits takes time, patience, practice and persistence.

It is a simple program. It is hard to do. The journey will be what it will be.

Trust the process. Lean into the fellowship. Believe that this will work.

I am proof that miracles happen. I swore when I was a newcomer that I would never give service, never take that 12th step and talk about being in a 12-Step program.

However, once the miracle happens, you can't wait to give it away.

I hope you stay. I hope you find friends you never knew you needed.

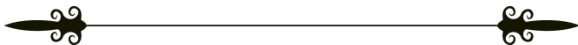
I hope – and that in itself is a miracle.

Melanie T.



TRADITION EIGHT

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



Roles in Recovery

The 8th tradition asks us to treat support jobs that require skills differently than our 12th-step outreach work. Recognizing that outside, non-OA fellows could be hired to perform work like accounting, office management, administration, or the like means that OA may free their

members to bring service in meetings, outreach events, and other foundational work with people with eating disorders seeking recovery.

But, as importantly, it opens up the possibility of an OA fellow being BOTH that skilled paid worker (thereby ensuring consistent accountable focus and attendance through employment) AND a member who does 12-Step work, sharing experience, strength, and hope with others. Having those two distinct roles within one person may seem confusing! Yet some of us have been able to observe people who navigated and practiced both employment within a 12-Step fellowship and their own recovery – and managed to do it with humility!

I believe those asked to play such a dual role will need to understand exactly who they are in each circumstance, bringing discretion and discernment to each role. There will be much to learn about ourselves and others if balancing these roles.

As skilled workers, we perform what we have learned/been educated for, and perhaps received esteem and success in our lives practicing. But in OA we are one among many; we do not receive more esteem/accolades/status/acclaim because we have skills. This can allow us to understand we are not our skills. Our value is not our performance. Performance will not earn us value as an OA member. We finally embrace that, employed in or out of the OA Fellowship structure, we have skills, receive value as a result, and yet, are not the skill themselves. We are distinct humans whose recovery is the value.

Our recovery journey is shared through 12-Step outreach (outside the rooms or inside), by simply focusing on our own recovery, experience, and wisdom. Our journey is the point of our program. *(continued on page four)*

(continued from page three)

Our recovery depends upon 12-Step work, and our humility is centered in being both available and vulnerable to share and be teachable.

Our professional skills can be and are useful, volunteer or paid—but they are not the sum of us! That comes in connecting, as **Our Invitation to You** reminds us, in our weakness, not our strength. Loving and using our skills remains important, but now, having appropriately valued the role of being an OA Fellow, we understand how important the 12 Steps are as markers of our journey.

When we are able to fully embrace our recovery journey, we will also navigate the world outside the OA rooms with a better sense of equality and acceptance. Just as we are not our work, our fellows and others we meet in the world are not their work. We look to their humanity and offer each one a sense of acceptance and the benefit of seeing them, not their work, as defining. We reframe the value of ourselves and of others yet continue to enjoy and use the practice of skills that benefit us all.

Humility is the means by which we ensure each one is truly seen and supported on their journey. It is not an easy lesson, but it is a deeply valuable one to embrace.

Christina D.



Family Reunions

My husband and I are going to be traveling to our family reunions this week. Up until a few days ago I was looking forward to time with our children, our siblings, nieces, nephews, great nieces and nephews, and a few cousins.

The past few days we have gotten texts or phone calls about a family member saying something that was objectionable to them about another family member. Of course, they

thought we should know because doesn't everyone enjoy a little drama in their lives?! A little gossip to put others down and boost our egos?! Surely our opinions are the wisest because we live such a righteous life?! For a brief moment I admit I was sucked in hook, line, and sinker.

Thankfully I immediately felt "that feeling in my gut" that I was in a bad place, drowning in my own character defects. My HP threw me a life saver and I was scrambling to hold on because I could feel the pounding waves of defects pulling me under.

Strangely, those defects don't always feel so bad. Sometimes they take the focus off my own problems. Sometimes I feel a camaraderie with another when dishing dirt on another person. Sometimes it's just fun to feel superior.

Thank goodness my HP is my loving parent, guiding me to safety where I could dig my feet into the sand and get grounded. Thank goodness I could see the reality of what was happening. Thank goodness for my HP giving me "that gut feeling" otherwise I would have morphed into a chameleon, saying and doing whatever the other person needed me to be at that moment.

I am grateful for the teachings of this program. I was able to set boundaries to be loving and respectful to myself and others. I could say what I needed to say without being mean. My motives were pure. I wasn't out to get something to boost myself. I allowed myself time to respond so I could go to my HP in prayer. I didn't have to eat over it. I didn't have to beat myself up for having character defects. My defects are just part of my humanness. When my HP is ready to remove them from me then so be it.

I'm grateful to not have to live the life of a chameleon today. For me that life was full of
(continued on page five)

(continued from page four)

insanity and anger because it was all about pleasing others, trying to get others to see the good in me, trying to get somebody to like me because I was unable to love and accept myself. I'm grateful for the OA recovery program and learning to live a life that brings me love of self and others one day at a time.

I'm grateful I can attend our family reunions with respect and love of others, an honest desire to be with family and have fun, being mindful of my food plan, knowing I can reach out for help at any moment, reminding myself that I am not alone. I put my hand in yours.

Sue S.

SELF
discipline

ARTICLES FOR THE NEXT NEWSLETTER ARE DUE BY AUGUST 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. 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.



September 9 – Super Saturday – see page 8; Dial-in is also possible. By telephone: 605-475-4909. Passcode: 807189#.

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.



❖ Where We Were

❖ How We Recover

❖ How We Stay in Recovery

❖ Bookmark These Pages

❖ Slogans

Step One – Honesty – Start to See the truth, we have a problem.

- ❖ Step Two – Faith – There is a solution, choose to believe in it.
- ❖ Step Three – Hope – Self Will blocks us from the solution, choose to surrender your will.
 - Words to understand.
 - Surrender – Stop fighting.
 - God – A word that describes a concept of a power greater than us.
- ❖ Step Four – Courage – Dig Deep to find the things that block you.
- ❖ Step Five – Integrity – Keeping your word, to yourself and others, releases the noise of lying.
- ❖ Step Six – Willingness – Releases the “I want”
- ❖ Step Seven – Humility – We are enough, just as we are, and so is everyone else.
- ❖ Step Eight – Self Discipline – Time to go to any lengths, we clean our side of the street.
- ❖ Step Nine – Love – Time to learn what this really means.
 - Words to understand.
 - Amends – means to change. We change our behavior in order to live a new life.
 - Love – Acceptance of another, just as they are, without any expectations of receiving anything in return.
 - Humility – knowing and behaving in a manner that shows that we understand our place in life, neither above others or below them, we are neither the best nor the worst, we are just humans moving the best we can through life.
- ❖ Step 10 – Perseverance – This is a daily program, no vacations. If you can practice your addiction for years, use that same skill to live in your recovery.
- ❖ Step 11 – Spiritual Awareness – Make a relationship with your HP – as you understand them – a priority, spend time with HP daily, be aware of their presence in your life.
- ❖ Step 12 – Service – Time to put it all together, see outside yourself, focus on others, give away what you have learned. You have to give it away to keep it.
- ❖ BB Page 417 – And acceptance is the answer...
- ❖ BB Page 83 – Promises: If we are painstaking...
- ❖ BB Page 66 – Dubious luxury of normal men...
 - Anger, judgement
- ❖ Awareness, Acceptance, Action.
- ❖ One Day at a Time.
- ❖ Let Go and Let God.
- ❖ Progress, not perfection.
- ❖ Don't give up until the miracle happens!



WORLD SERVICE OFFICE

July 11, 2023

What Is an Outside Issue: Are We Being Open-Minded in Our Meetings?

Beloved Members, Groups, and Service Bodies of Overeaters Anonymous,

We all come from different backgrounds and experiences. The OA program is for everyone with a desire to stop eating compulsively. We are meant to be inclusive and welcoming to all.

A subcommittee of the Unity with Diversity Conference Committee has been in contact with some members of specific-focus groups, including BIPOC, LGBTQIA+, and Health Issues, and has found that, despite all previous statements on inclusivity, there are still members who don't feel safe or included. The subcommittee was distressed to hear that some OA members, when sharing their life realities, were told that their life experiences were considered outside issues and were shut down.

How will we ensure that everyone is included?

The Unity with Diversity Committee's primary concern is that *all* OA members, in *all* meetings, feel safe while sharing their experience, strength, and hope and are not told that their share is an outside issue. Everyone needs to be able to share at meetings about factors in their lives that could cause them to act out with food.

The Unity with Diversity Committee is discouraged that efforts to date have not brought about sufficient change.

It is an urgent matter that people are not silenced at OA meetings. Action is required from the Board of Trustees and the whole Fellowship to create a safe space for all to share.

Respectfully,

OA Board of Trustees and Unity with Diversity Conference Committee

6075 Zenith Court NE • Rio Rancho, New Mexico 87144-6424 USA

Mail address: P.O. Box 44727 • Rio Rancho, NM 87174-4727 USA

Tel: (505) 891-2664 • Email: info@oa.org

Website: www.oa.org

Who Is Driving Your Recovery Bus?

Overeaters Anonymous – Super Saturday



Hosted by: Sunday Evening Relapse & Recovery group

Date: September 9, 2023

Time: 1:00 – 4:00 pm (registration starts at 12:30pm)

Location: Gethsemane Lutheran Church – lower level 3600 Hampton Ave.
St. Louis, MO 63109 (at Pernod) - Enter through glass doors
from parking lot (Ramp and elevator accessible). Additional
parking at church across side street.

Contact person: Jennifer N. cell # (618) 960-8668

Suggested Donation: \$6 (please never stay away for financial reasons)

Come and enjoy:

***Great speakers**

***Fellowship with friends**

***Sharing time**

***Experience, Strength, and HOPE**

St. Louis Bi-state Area Intergroup of Overeaters Anonymous

2023 Fall Retreat
Embrace the "Spirit of Recovery"



DATES:

Oct. 27-29, 2023

LOCATION: Toddhall Retreat Center, 320
Todd Center Drive, Columbia, IL 62236

Center is ADA accessible

Check in - Friday 4-5:30pm

Check out - Sunday noon

INCLUDED WITH REGISTRATION

- **MEALS:** 5 meals (Refrigerator space and microwave available if you prefer to bring your meals.)
- **ROOMING:** Single (limited availability) or double occupancy with 2 ADA double rooms (All rooms have private bath - linens, towels, soap and shampoo are included.) See pricing below.
- **TENTATIVE ACTIVITIES:** panel on spirituality; sessions topics include creativity and spirituality, healing through the spirit of action; evening bonfire, free time, labyrinth walk, yoga, games, journaling and more

ADVANCED REGISTRATION REQUIRED - Two ways to register: **ONLINE** at stlouisoa.org or **MAIL** form below with check.

QUESTIONS? Contact Jeremy C 314.503.2760 or Marina F 815.343.6412

First name: _____ Last name: _____

Email: _____ Telephone: _____

Early Bird Overnight Registration by **Sep 1** *Price is per person:* single \$215 (limited availability)

double \$165 - If you do not specify a roommate, one will be assigned.

Name of roommate: _____ (must register separately)

Regular Overnight Registration from **Sep 2 to Oct. 15** *Price is per person:* single \$230 (limited availability)

double \$180 - If you do not specify a roommate, one will be assigned.

Name of roommate: _____ (must register separately)

Commuter registration - includes 5 meals but no overnight accommodation

\$140

We care fund donation: \$ _____ ADA room needed Willing to do service:

Send check and registration to Marina Fruth, 14644 N. Court 6, Effingham, IL 62401

Make checks payable to St. Louis Bi-state Area Intergroup. *If financial assistance is needed, please contact Marina F. at 815-343-6412. No one should stay away for financial reasons!*