

# September 2023 OA TODAY NEWSLETTER

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## STEP NINE

**Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.**



***The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous***, p. 64 (second edition), says, "...the purpose of Step Nine is to clear away guilt and ill will that stands in the way of establishing better relationships with people whom our lives have touched." Thankfully, eight steps precede this one. It is working those steps that showed me how angry I was; I had been oblivious.

I was also able to admit I had drawers full of resentments. I recognized that I'd squandered most of my time living in a past that I wanted to be different or in a future that never materialized. First reluctantly and then gratefully, I acknowledged how unsatisfactory – how sad and painful – my personal relationships were.

***(continued on page 2)***

## Newcomers' Corner

.....My childhood memories are almost all negative. As the obese daughter of a mentally ill mother and a hardworking and caring but absent father, I was hungry for love. I sought acceptance by any means, including being first to laugh at the many jokes told at my expense by my peers and by going along with what others said I should do. But there was one beautiful exception to my grade school experience, a moment of pure joy that I treasure to this day.

A real, published author was coming to our school. In preparation, we all made books for her to read. At the assembly, she singled me out for all to hear and spoke of my talent. The feeling of being acknowledged for something positive was such a unique experience that I practically floated out of the library. I told myself that one day I would be a published author too.

Nearly thirty years later, I had become weary from decades of my mind and body waging war on each other. I had some brief periods of success with various diets, but I based my self-worth on my weight and always came up short. Whether I was restricting myself or in binge mode, food was always on my mind. If I had willpower, I felt in control, but the loss of that control inevitably followed, and with it, faith in myself. As another holiday binge season neared, the thought occurred to me to just give up the war and accept being fat. Then I heard about Overeaters Anonymous.....

For the whole story, see [Lifeline](#), 07/26/2023

***(continued from page 1)***

Love is the spiritual principle of Step Nine, and it represents an area where I have always been uncomfortable. This discomfort was rooted in fear and mistrust, but all that guilt and ill will I hadn't known about was fueling it and keeping it ragged and raw.

Also in the **12 & 12**, p. 59, we are told that the purpose of the previous step, Step Eight, is "to learn attitudes of mercy and forgiveness." I will never forget how I felt when I heard those words for the first time. Neither mercy nor forgiveness was the direction my thinking was prone to take, and I was both moved and rattled. More importantly, I was awakened to what was missing in my life and what I longed to experience.

Step Nine is where I began to practice attitudes of mercy and forgiveness. A lot of practice was called for, and it still is. But the transformative quality of making amends has been and remains undeniable.

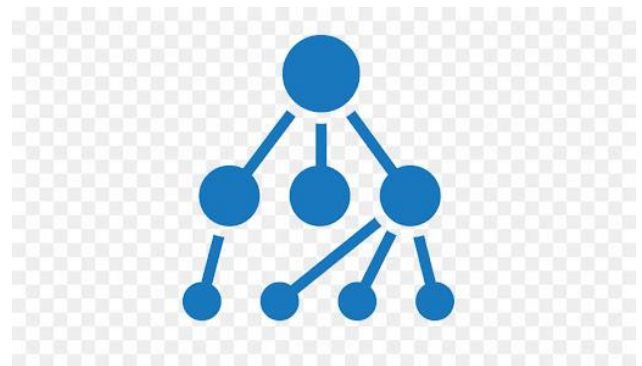
Step Nine was also the first time program suggested I go outside OA's safe spaces and talk with others whom my life had touched. Thankfully, I had learned a great deal about the "exact nature of my wrongs." And, thankfully, I was no longer a chronic apologist who never changed, and I was no longer alone. I was open to change, beginning to change, and I had sponsors, program fellows and a Higher Power to guide me.

It is said that love is a choice. Before I joined OA, I pushed love as far away as possible. I was powerless over the pain it caused me and powerless over the pain I caused others.

There may be some program newcomers who arrive at our doors with the purpose of clearing away guilt and ill will, but I was not among them. One of many program miracles is that I kept coming back so I could change and grow enough to experience the healing nature of Step Nine.

Now, I can see another person from a position of love rather than focusing on any faults. Now, I can accept love without suspicion. Now, I can pass through life without regularly doing harm to others and to myself.

Anonymous



**STRUCTURE**



**TRADITION NINE**

**OA, as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.**



When I was asked by a member of the newsletter committee to write this reflection I had to look up the tradition before I could answer. I wasn't sure what it said. Fortunately, what I found was a Tradition 9 article online that asked readers to imagine OA without these guidelines.

So, I imagined a president or queen of OA with a cabinet or board of directors deciding everyone's food plan, timeline, and 4th Step inventory format. That imagined OA was not anything like the fellowship we have - the one that welcomes us in and helps us to feel at

***(continued on page 3)***

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home with each other and ourselves; the one that helps save our lives and gives us lives worth living.

Recently, my sponsor reminded me that I don't do well with bossy, dogmatic people - even the ones I agree with. I don't even do well with the bossy, dogmatic part of me! I don't like anything that reminds me of "my way or the highway." I suspect I'm not alone in that dislike. Tradition 9 protects our recovery communities from the belief that there actually is one right way to live, eat, sponsor, or recover.

The way the tradition is written and interpreted recognizes the gifts of organized members and the value of collaboration in "service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve." I've peeked behind the curtain a bit in the last few years, serving as Intergroup representative and being part of ad hoc committees for some recovery events. It brings me great joy to watch members offer the gifts they bring to the table without anyone assigning tasks or critiquing efforts.

If someone momentarily forgets and starts to direct instead of facilitating, I've not seen arguments or showdowns. I'm sure there are some moments in our local, regional, and world history when that's happened because we're human beings, but it seems like "practicing these principles in all our affairs" gives us a way to move forward with some grace and eventual ease as we remember our primary purpose and our pledge.

Debbie K.



### **"Fall"ing For My Recovery**

Most people operate on a calendar from January-December. I worked in school-food service until our granddaughter came to live with us over three years ago. My husband returned to teaching after taking two years off, and our granddaughter is a full-fledged kindergartner. Our calendar year is August to July.

My granddaughter couldn't wait to start school and be a kindergartner. I couldn't wait either. I wanted to get back on the right path in my OA recovery.

My physical, emotional, and spiritual life has been a true challenge for me. My recovery program took a real hit when my then two-year-old granddaughter moved in. She came with emotional trauma. I slowly went into relapse for over a year. I came out of relapse over a year ago, but I continue to struggle with my self-will getting in the way. My granddaughter's emotional pain and behaviors weigh heavily on me. I'm grateful our son agrees his daughter is best in our care.

I'm ecstatic for my granddaughter to be in kindergarten and for my husband to be teaching again. HP and I have uninterrupted time together! Half measures avail us nothing. That is how I feel like I've been living the past three years. *(continued on page four)*

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I have never given up hope or my meetings throughout the past three years. I thrive for the connections with others. But I have been lax in so many other areas of my program.

I have my exercise program back. I really enjoy that time to walk and talk with God. I took the suggestion of another OA member to also practice yoga.

I asked the dietician for sites I could search for healthy supper recipes. I tend to stick to the same routine for breakfast/lunch, but I was getting sloppy again for supper meals because I was out of time or out of energy. I'm grateful for new and healthier supper ideas.

I talked to another OA member about their form of meditation. Whenever she talked about her practice over the summer, I kept feeling my HP nudge me to get more information. My self-will pushed back until I was uncomfortable enough to ask for help. Quiet time with God is becoming a necessity for me.

I have consistently had prayer time, meetings, my daily OA readings and sometimes journaling in place. I'm grateful to others that have offered their experience in areas in which I was in desperate need of help. I'm trusting and relying on my HP to keep me on the right path.

I'm grateful I can put my hand in yours with no judgement. I'm grateful to be an OA member and I will keep coming back. Never quit before the miracle.

Sue S.



## **ATTENTION: September 9 Recovery Event Postponed**

Organizers for the Super Saturday that had been announced for September 9 have contacted the Intergroup newsletter to ask that we announce the September 9 recovery event must be postponed. A neighboring church has a festival on the same weekend, and past experience shows that parking would likely be impossible given the size of the other event.

The new date will be announced on our [website](#). Intergroup will also email group reps.



## **Webster Groves Saturday Meeting Discusses Possible Location Change**

The Saturday morning 10 a.m. Step and Tradition study meeting in Webster Groves, currently meeting at the First Christian Church on Lockwood Avenue near the golf course, is considering a move. The location being considered is in Clayton near Brentwood and Clayton.

Reasons a move is being considered include:

- Another group uses the chapel space on the third Saturday of each month from September until May. The alternative OA meeting space is in a room where WiFi connection is unstable and often totally missing.
- Only a small number of members are willing to help with tech demands of a hybrid meeting. The new space in Clayton is set up for hybrid meetings, so fewer service positions would be necessary to have meetings from there.

A group conscience is planned for September 23.

Member, Webster Groves Meeting

## OA Participating in September 24 Recovery Festival, Kirkwood

Members of our Intergroup have plan to staff an outreach tent at a recovery festival at Kirkwood Park on Sunday, September 24. We will be provided with a tent, a table and two chairs. (There is no charge for first year participants but there would be for subsequent years.)

Three two-hours shifts have been established (noon to 2, 2 to 4 and 4 to 6 pm). Some literature will be made available at no charge. Slips of paper will be distributed that include the WSO website address, the local Intergroup website address, plus the QR code and a web link that can be used to download a free PDF of our pamphlet, "**Where Do I Start?**"

The event sponsors are hoping to get the use of a golf cart to transport people from the parking lots to the tents. If you go to the festival, please drop by and visit the OA table and help other festival attendees who are interested find our resources.

Newsletter Editor



**September 9 – ATTENTION – PLEASE NOTE - SUPER SATURDAY POSTPONED; watch for new date on Intergroup website. (See details on page four)**

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

**September 24 – noon-6 p.m. –** OA will staff an **outreach table** at a recovery festival with live bands at Kirkwood Park, Kirkwood, MO

**September 29-30 – Fall Assembly, Region 4** (virtual) – download flyer from the Region 4 website at [THIS LINK](#)

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

**October 27-29 – Fall Retreat -** Toddhall Retreat Center, Columbia, IL (see flyer on page 6) – space is growing limited so register soon!

**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.

**ARTICLES FOR THE NEXT NEWSLETTER ARE DUE BY SEPTEMBER 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 permission.



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](http://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!*