

October 2023 OA TODAY NEWSLETTER

St. Louis Bi-State Intergroup of OA
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STEP TEN

Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong, promptly admitted it.

Ally had just come home from an OA meeting. Since it was the first week of the month, the group had read the Step 10 chapter in the OA 12&12. The topic of Step 10 was bothersome for Ally. She knew she was not taking a personal inventory and promptly admitting when she was wrong.

Why? She knew. Ally worked as a floor manager in a busy shipping company. On a daily basis, she was barking orders, pushing unmotivated employees and vendors, dealing with unrealistic bosses and budgets, and always reminding everyone to meet the unending demand of deadlines.

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For Newcomers: Compulsive Eater Writes Letter to Her Eating Disorder

In the October 11, 2022, edition of **Lifeline**, available at OA.org at [THIS LINK](#), Jessica, a compulsive eater shared a letter that she had written to her disease after an all-night binge. The letter said in part:

I'm so tired. I'm so tired of analyzing. I'm tired of counting calories and servings. I'm tired of scales. I'm tired of lack of portion control. I'm tired of being scared. I'm tired of being alone. I'm tired of being tired.

You have done nothing but hurt me on a repeated basis.

You lure me in with empty promises of comfort.

You tempt me with satisfaction and fulfillment only to leave me feeling sick.

You make me degrade myself and relive every mistake from my past.

You make me lie to those whom I love most. All the while, you lie to me daily.

I'm tired of you.

I'm tired of starting "tomorrow."

I'm tired of guilt and shame.

I'm tired of feeling like the only person who suffers.....

Jessica has been in OA two years and abstinent for one. OA may be right for you as well. We recommend that you visit six of our meetings before you decide. Find a list of meetings at stlouisoa.org at [THIS LINK](#).

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She often felt like a real jerk on the job. Worry, remorse, guilt, negativity, fear – if she actually had to think about these things and how she may have harmed someone – she wouldn't be able to do her job.

Ally wearily looked over the Step 10 inventory that had been passed out to the group today by the eager beaver "let's do this" meeting leader. The [resource](#) said:

Step 10 Inventory

In the evening we review our day. We do this to "become increasingly aware of our true motives and emotions." We may use the following questions:

- *Have resentment, dishonesty, selfishness or fear cropped up?*
- *Did I engage in worry, remorse, guilt or negativity?*
- *Have I asked God if corrective measures need to be taken?*
- *Do I need to discuss something with another person right away?*
- *Have I harmed anyone? Do I owe an apology?*
- *Do I need to review one or more of the Steps?*
- *Is there someone I need to help?*
- *Do my actions toward others demonstrated love and tolerance?*

To close list three things that you are grateful for today.



PADDIE – (The voice of Ally's Progressive and - Deadly Disease) was thrilled to jump into Ally's negative attitude. – "Don't worry about doing a Tenth

Step. You've been doing everything else – writing, meetings, phone calls, service, and literature. Your abstinence is mostly solid.

Doing a Tenth Step every day would be a lot of work with a limited return because you cannot change the environment at work.



RIA (The calm, quiet, and loving voice of Recovery in Action) – "You can't change your work situation, but you can change yourself. You haven't been feeling good about work for a while. Why not talk it over with your sponsor?"

PADDIE – "Don't talk to her. You can't do a Tenth Step every day. That is just too much to do. Watch some You Tube videos instead."

RIA – "Remember – Abstinence is done one day at a time. Recovery is a daily process. You can trust program."

Since Ally was in the good habit of talking with Suzanne, her sponsor, at the same time twice a week, she did talk about her issues with the Tenth Step. "I did start to do the Tenth Step that was given out at the meeting. I did not get anywhere. (Pause) If I admit to making a mistake, that would make me look weak at work. And that would scare me."

Suzanne listened carefully and then said, "You can't change work; you can only change yourself. Try this in small pieces. Think of one person or situation at your job where you were wrong."

Ally said she had been irritated lately with Jackie, the floor administrative assistant for making scheduling errors. Their last conversation left Jackie in tears and tense.

"Would you want someone to treat you like that?"

"No."

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"Then go through the Tenth Step list of questions about the Jackie situation. Write it all down," Suzanne said.

Ally sighed and did it. Much to her surprise, she discovered her fear of being weak – of which she was already aware – reminded her of growing up in fear of her father's harshness, which often made her tense and cry. After listening to Ally read her writing, Suzanne asked, "If your father would have apologized for what he did, would that have made him weak?"

"No, it would have taken courage and meant a lot to me."

"Can you give this to Jackie?"

"I can't apologize for every mean thing I do at work!"

"Remember – take it a person at a time, one piece at a time. But do it."

So, the next day, Ally apologized to Jackie for being too harsh about the scheduling and listened to a relieved Jackie as she explained, without fear, what happened. The problem was surprisingly simple to fix, once they could talk about it safely.

RIA –*"Good job, Ally! As it says in the OA 12&12 (page 72, 74) 'By doing this (Tenth Step Inventory)...(you) can save (yourself) days of resentment and fear by resolving disputes as they arise, instead of allowing wounds to fester...More gifts are in store for (you) as (you) continue working the program and experiencing the miracle of permanent recovery, one day at a time.'"*

And afterward, Ally was surprised to notice she wasn't so hungry for junk food. And that unexpected gift felt really good.

Anonymous



TRADITION TEN

Overeaters Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence, the OA name ought never be drawn into public controversy.



Opinions - everyone has them. If we spent our time in meetings sharing our opinions on what's going on in the world rather than focusing on recovery from our addiction to food, we might soon be sitting alone.

Our members are as diverse as any group of people can be, which is why we limit our meeting discussion to our singleness of purpose - how to work the steps on a daily basis. Of course, we are allowed to refer to concerns we may have, but not to try and persuade others to agree with us. The purpose of sharing our own life experiences is to help us resolve our conflicts and to change our behaviors, not to influence others.

Even when we are asked our opinions as OA members about the latest method used for weight loss or gain, the latest fad in food plans or exercise, our answer will be that OA has no opinion on such matters. We as individuals are free to have and share our opinions, but not as a spokesperson for OA.

When speaking at an event or writing an article I remind those in attendance that I am not an authority on OA, nor do I give direction or advice to others on any matter concerning OA as a whole. I am free to share what has worked for me in these areas, one on one when asked, but again, I am not representing OA, only my experience. When I remember to avoid bringing up conflicting topics, then I can listen and share the message of OA with others who share my disease.

Anonymous

“Camp OA” June Super Saturday Leads to Summer Buddy Contact

When I was a youth, I attended Summer Camps as a Boy Scout. It was always a busy and exciting time. This Super Saturday – **Camp OA: Making Summertime Recovery Time** - was both busy and exciting, and it was also historic. It was the first post-COVID in person/Zoom (hybrid) Super Saturday our Intergroup had attempted.

At the end of the meeting, some of us decided to continue our connection by drawing names from a basket. Bill and I agreed to post at least once a day on a shared message space.

Our messages were usually very brief. We shared our action plan and meal plan. Thanks to the buddy system, I have a friend now who shares my recovery and supports me daily.

HP is working through Bill many days because his message often comes just when I need a little push to stay in recovery. I get a different view of OA in action through Bill’s messages. We have continued to message into the fall. I appreciate his perspective and continued support.

Staying in contact with Bill on a daily basis reinforces the Step 5 and 6 work that I am currently doing with my sponsor.

Vernon K.

I began the journey this summer with my summer buddy following the June Super Saturday. My buddy and I have texted our meal plans and other OA commitments most days. It is a great reminder every day of the value of this friendship. I don’t have to recover alone.

My illness tells me to hide away and the tone of my buddy’s texts pulls me out of myself. “Oh yeah, here are my plans....” In addition, I

forward the text to my sponsor, helping me be accountable.

Bill T.



Fall Retreat: Embrace The Spirit of Recovery

After four long years, the annual fall St. Louis Bi-State Intergroup OA retreat will be returning, October 27-29 at Toddhall Retreat Center in Columbia, IL. If you have been missing the connection that occurs when you are around other members in person, this is your opportunity to get a whole weekend of connections. Spots are filling up though, and registration will close at the end of the day on Thursday, October 12th.

We will have sessions discussing spirituality, creativity in recovery, healing, and gratitude for the relationships we have developed. There will also be a bonfire on a Saturday October evening that could be chilly (and gathering around a fire can be fun even when weather is warmer). The grounds include a labyrinth garden and 1.3-mile walking trail, as well as plenty of conference room space and rooms available for groups of two-four people to break off for small group time.

If you’re not able to come for the whole weekend, or aren’t available to stay overnight, we have a commuter option available. The retreat center is only a short drive across the Mississippi River from South County in the metropolitan St. Louis area. Your meals would still be provided if you chose this option.

Would you prefer to bring your own meals? That would be fine too. There is a limited amount of refrigerator space and microwaves for those who choose to do so.

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If cost is a concern, we have plenty of We Care funds available. If you need to utilize those funds, you can reach out to our Treasurer, Marina F. Her contact info is available on the [registration page](#) of the website as well as the flyer. Your request will be kept confidential between you and Marina.

If you have any questions about the retreat, I would be happy to answer them for you. Please don't hesitate to reach to me, Jeremy C., at 314-503-2760. You can call or text me at that number. I hope to see you there.

Jeremy C.



Recovery Event Calendar Empty After October

The Fall Retreat at Toddhall is the last special recovery event that we have listed for 2023. No home meeting has yet stepped up to host the "Holiday Booster" event that often has occurred in December. Might your home meeting be able to do service by hosting a recovery event in November or in December? It's also not too early to start thinking about recovery events for 2024.

Some months have designated OA themes or anniversaries, and a group choosing one of those months may wish to coordinate their recovery event around those themes: They are:

- January - OA Birthday (since 1960) – third weekend in January
- February - Unity Day - the last Saturday in February in even years and the last Sunday in February in odd years at 11:30 a.m. [local time around the world]
- August – Sponsorship Day – 3rd weekend in August
- November - IDEA Day - 3rd weekend in November (International Day Experiencing Abstinence)

- December - Holiday Booster or Twelfth Step Within Day (12/12)

Here are some beginning thoughts, and you may find more guidance on our Intergroup website [HERE](#) (the Super Saturday Guidelines) or on the [World OA website](#).

The hosting group makes decisions like whether to offer the event in person or on Zoom. The hosts choose the date taking into consideration other scheduled OA events. Please consult the Vice Chair before you set the date to avoid conflicts with an event scheduled by another group. That email address is: vicechair@stlouisoa.org.



Intergroup Highlights October 2023

Happy Fall!

I'm happy to report a team of six volunteers from the Saturday 10 a.m. Webster Groves Step and Tradition Study meeting staffed the Overeaters Anonymous Public Information Booth at Recovery Fest 2023 in Kirkwood Park. Many people stopped by to inquire about our program and take brochures. Thanks for your service.

Next up is our Fall Retreat October 27-29, if you haven't already registered, please consider attending and register now. Join us for a closer look at the spiritual path in your recovery. The retreat is at Toddhall Retreat Center with a beautiful, wooded campus near Columbia, IL. There is an option to join just Saturday's sessions and meals, and as always, confidential We Care Scholarship Funds are available. www.stlouisoa.org. Never let lack of funds keep you from an OA event. Your OA fellows desire your presence!

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We are quickly approaching our last two Intergroup meetings for 2023. On October 8, we are looking forward to hearing from our Region Reps and Assembly guests who will have attended the Region 4 Assembly September 29-30 and learned about other Regions which our Intergroup may align with in the Spring of 2024.

Our Annual Bi-State Intergroup Business Conference is Sunday November 12. We will consider motions to add/change Bylaws, revisions to the Policy & Procedure Manual, and have an election for nominated trusted servants. The deadline for submitting Nomination Forms is Friday October 27.

Your Intergroup Needs You – Board of Trustee Chairperson and Secretary trusted servants will be stepping down as of December 31, 2023. These two positions are critical in operating our Intergroup. We also have openings for Region Representatives (2) and World Service Business Conference Delegate (1). Nomination Forms are available on www.stlouisoa.org. Click on the Member & Intergroup Information Box or go to [THIS LINK](#).

Your current Retreat Chair and committee have reserved a facility for a Fall Retreat 2024, but a 2024 Retreat Chair is needed, as is a 2024 Convention Chair.

If you have any questions, please contact Dianne S at chair@stlouisoa.org or call or text 314-238-4052.

With Gratitude for Service
Dianne S, Chairperson



Without A Scare in The World

My five-year-old granddaughter is already getting excited about Halloween. She loves going to the fall festivals, pumpkin farms, and most of the activities she attends have their own Halloween parties. The candy she receives comes home to sit on my kitchen counter, and this is all occurring well before Halloween Trick or Treat night.

I am grateful my granddaughter isn't a food addict like I was at her age. By the age of five I had already honed my skills. I ate sweets, treats, snacks until they were gone. It was as though I had done a good deed by quickly getting it out of the house through my stomach.

I ate all of the junk food items before my three older siblings even had time to notice them. I ate in private, so no one noticed who ate all the snacks (as if they couldn't guess since I was the only obese person in my family).

Every time my dad went to the store I was right there to go with him. It was my duty to help him because - in my opinion - I was a responsible, dutiful daughter. I felt like I was doing him a favor, choosing the best snacks to have in the house so he could focus his attention on other food necessities for our family. In those days I could wander the store, and my father didn't have to fear his child being aisles away.

My character defects were a security blanket that I pulled around me for over 50 years. But in time, I grew sick and tired of being sick and tired. A friend was going to join OA, and my doctor suggested I try OA too, so I made the decision to give it a chance. I'm grateful that I
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did.

Halloween/Christmas/Valentine's Day/Easter are reasons to celebrate, but for many of us compulsive eaters, these holidays center around candy and other sweets. Many of us are in families or workplaces that encourage us to imbibe or over-indulge. At times I struggle with self-will, rather than God's will for me.

My HP has guided me to loving self-care ideas that are useful at any time. As we head into the first of the food challenge holidays, I would like to share some of these:

- I ask my husband or granddaughter to put the candy out of my sight, or out of my reach because I am highly allergic to it. My granddaughter understands allergies, and I'm sharing a truth/fact about me and focusing on nothing else.
- I tell myself it is not my candy and it is not acceptable to steal what isn't mine. I remind myself I would owe an amends for stealing candy that isn't mine. It would be objectionable to me to hurt my granddaughter by stealing from her. I want her to know she can trust me.
- I have love notes posted around my bathroom mirror and on the refrigerator to remind myself that self-care is all about loving me today. I don't need to abuse myself today by ingesting sweets that are deadly to me. One cookie is too much and 1000 will never, ever be enough.
- I follow my food plan and send it to my sponsor. I remain mindful so mindless eating isn't a possibility. Having enough protein throughout the day helps me with cravings.
- One day at a time. I can get thru the hours of today by taking the next right step. I go to meetings or add extra meetings when I'm struggling. Zoom meetings are easy to access at any

time. Making outreach calls or texts are monumental, especially to my sponsor. I look forward to getting outdoors in nature for a walk and talk with my HP.

- I have a mantra I use to get me thru tough moments in a day – "My HP knows all of me. No matter what, my HP continues to love me. My HP willingly, lovingly gives me what I need for each day." When I'm honest, open, and willing I'm able to take the next right action step.
- My husband and I give candy an expiration date. After a week our granddaughter gives her leftovers to Poppa to take to work to share with others. He usually discards it in the garbage, but she doesn't need to know that yet. As she's getting older we are opting to buy back her candy that's left after a week. It's worth it for me to know it's out of our home.
- Find your talent. Take joy in creating and expressing yourself.
- WE can do this together.

"Witching" you a Happy Halloween!

Sue S.



Moving Past "Legacy Addictions" To Serenity Day by Day

One of the things that we most need to learn in recovery is how to stop behaving in ways that lead us into situations in which we get hurt and hurt others. As the first full paragraph on page 62 of the **Big Book** describes this familiar pattern: ***"Sometimes they hurt us, seemingly without provocation, but we invariably find that at some time in the past we have made decisions based on self which later placed us in a position to be hurt."***

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It may just seem like “the human condition,” but can addicts afford to drift in and out of what “**Our Invitation to You**” labels as “inner turmoil” and “emotional havoc?” As page 66 of the **Big Book** states: **“If we were to live, we had to be free of anger. The grouch and the brainstorm were not for us. They may be the dubious luxury of normal men, but for alcoholics these things are poison.”**

By working the Steps to the best of our ability and using the Tools, we can learn to pause. We can think before we speak. We can choose an action that will not bring additional chaos to a situation.

Lead with kindness. Lead with love. The transformation is remarkable when we do not allow our anger, frustration, and disappointment to spill out on the other people in our lives.

I am not suggesting that these feelings are not to be felt or shared. A fearless and searching moral inventory in Step Four and admitting what we learn to another human being and to our Higher Power in Step Five is one way we practice this. We also continue this in our Step Tens, whether a daily process or a “spot check.” We certainly can talk about our most troubling feelings in our regular interactions with our sponsor.

It is possible to share feelings in ways that do not strike out and hurt others. That may come as a shock if you grew up in a family with a legacy of addiction and legacy addictive behaviors. (I did.) Learning the skill of sharing our feelings in healthy ways is difficult and unlike the way we lived before. It can feel unnatural and uncomfortable. But learn it we must if recovery is what we want.

When we spend more time focusing on program and less time on the disappointments of life, we find the benefit of “living in the

solution.” What we dwell on, we invite into our lives. It is important to inhabit gratitude. We can discover in our innermost being that what we have right now in our life is enough. Enough is the place from which Serenity springs.

Anonymous



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

October 27-29 – Fall Retreat -

Toddhall Retreat Center, Columbia, IL (see flyer on page 11) – 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 OCTOBER 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.



Call for Stories about Mental Health and Recovery

Overeaters Anonymous is developing a new piece of literature featuring personal stories from OA members in recovery who live with chronic mental health conditions. We are looking for stories that focus on your mental health challenges in relation to your physical, emotional, and spiritual recovery from unhealthy relationships with food and body image.

If any of this is part of your lived experience, please consider sharing your story as a vital service to our OA community!

Questions to get you started:

- What is your experience with balancing your mental health issues and your OA recovery?
- How have the Steps, Traditions, and Tools helped you maintain your recovery while living with a mental health diagnosis?
- What accommodations have you needed to make in order to manage medication side effects, such as weight gain, extreme fatigue, loss of appetite, or memory loss?
- How has the program helped you respond to OA members who don't understand mental illnesses or the need for medication?
- How have you dealt with mental health issues in your role as a sponsor or sponsee?
- How have other OA members supported your recovery in the face of mental health challenges?

Send submissions to info@oa.org by November 30, 2023 with the subject line: "Mental Health & Recovery."

Please note:

- Submissions are assumed intended for publication, are subject to editing, become the property of OA, Inc., and will not be returned.
- All submissions must contain the author's full name and address, but you may request anonymity with publication. Your state, province, or country may also remain anonymous upon request.
- Submissions should be typed and submitted with a signed release form.
- Please keep stories to 800 words or less.
- **All languages welcome!**





Mental Health Story RELEASE FORM

(must be included with all submissions)

Stories must be received by the World Service Office by **November 30, 2023**

AUTHORIZATION AND RELEASE FOR SUBMITTED STORY

I warrant that I am the sole owner and original author of the accompanying submitted story ("Story"), and that I have the full right and authorization to submit the Story to Overeaters Anonymous ("OA"). I understand and authorize OA to edit, copy, distribute, publish, reproduce, or copyright the Story for any lawful purpose. By submitting my Story to OA, I agree that it becomes the property of OA, will not be returned, and may be used in any type of distribution media.

I agree that I will make no monetary or other claim against OA for the use of the Story. I waive any right to inspect or approve the finished product wherein my Story appears. I hereby hold harmless and release OA from all claims, demands, and causes of action that I, my heirs, representatives, executors, administrators, or any other persons acting on my behalf (or on behalf of my estate) have or may have by reason of this authorization.

I have read the authorization and release information and give my consent for the use as indicated above.

Printed Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Author's Contact Information (required):

Include your full name, address, email, and phone.

Author's Attribution:

For authors desiring anonymity in publication, please indicate specifically whether this applies to your name, city, state, and/or country.

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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!*