

JANUARY 2024 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



STEP ONE

We admitted we were powerless over food — that our lives had become unmanageable.

Here we are. It's THAT time of year, again! The time when we swear off the food, the excess pounds, the unhealthy behaviors and we promise ourselves and everyone around us that we will do better. Be better! No more!

For many compulsive overeaters, January is the time when we break out the "white knuckles". We are determined to "do it this time"! "This year will be different!"

The good news is...it can be "different". It can be different if we are brave enough to take Step 1.

Step 1 is when we admit that we are powerless over food and our lives have become unmanageable.

(continued on page 2)

Sabotaging Yourself with Food? OA May Be Right for You

When I came back into the OA rooms..... I could see myself becoming fatter and fatter, sicker and sicker, with less and less control over my body if I didn't get serious about my disease.

My wake-up call came as I was driving to an OA meeting. I had to find a bathroom because I was having a diverticulitis attack. My Higher Power came through for me. I heard the answer to my problem: "Take care of yourself and stop sabotaging your success in life." Where did that thought come from! Of course, it came from my Higher Power, who always guides me, although I don't always listen.



I knew my life would change for the better if I just listened to my Higher Power and worked out my problems with the help of my sponsor. A short time later, I did a Fourth Step with my sponsor and unloaded years of fear, anger, and worry. I felt 50 pounds (23 kg) lighter, and my mind was free to take on the challenges before me.

The person I am today is no longer full of yesterday's resentments. She is a person who seeks daily to be the OA message. I am forever grateful.

Reprinted from ["Whole New Me," Lifeline](#) blog on the OA.org website, April 5, 2022.

(continued from page 1)

Step 1 comes in many different ways and at many different times. Whether you are someone who struggles with food and is just finding “recovery” for the first time or you have been “around the rooms” and are experiencing relapse, you are welcome in OA. When we join hands, we find that we can do together many things that we could never do alone.

If you are still unsure whether you truly have a “problem” with food or if OA is the place for you, here is a quick quiz from the OA pamphlet “**Where Do I Start**”:

15 Questions: Are You a Compulsive Eater?

- 1) Do I eat when I’m not hungry, or not eat when my body needs nourishment?
- 2) Do I go on eating binges for no apparent reason, sometimes eating until I’m stuffed or even feel sick?
- 3) Do I have feelings of guilt, shame or embarrassment about my weight or the way I eat?
- 4) Do I eat sensibly in front of others and then make up for it when I am alone?
- 5) Is my eating affecting my health or the way I live my life?
- 6) When my emotions are intense—whether positive or negative—do I find myself reaching for food?
- 7) Do my eating behaviors make me or others unhappy?
- 8) Have I ever used laxatives, vomiting, diuretics, excessive exercise, diet pills, shots or other medical interventions (including surgery) to try to control my weight?

- 9) Do I fast or severely restrict my food intake to control my weight?
- 10) Do I fantasize about how much better life would be if I were a different size or weight?
- 11) Do I need to chew or have something in my mouth all the time: food, gum, mints, candies or beverages?
- 12) Have I ever eaten food that is burned, frozen or spoiled; from containers in the grocery store; or out of the garbage?
- 13) Are there certain foods I can’t stop eating after having the first bite?
- 14) Have I lost weight with a diet or “period of control” only to be followed by bouts of uncontrolled eating and/or weight gain?
- 15) Do I spend too much time thinking about food, arguing with myself about whether or what to eat, planning the next diet or exercise cure, or counting calories?

If you answered “Yes” to one or more of these questions, it may be worth considering whether you are a compulsive eater or are on your way to becoming one. It’s a New Year, and we have the opportunity for a new beginning. I’m reaching out my hand if you’d like to take Step 1 together.

L.S.





TRADITION ONE

Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon OA unity.

I grew up in a large family in a small town, and I created a view of the world based on what I learned in those two environments. I accepted my views as facts, and it took me many years to understand that how I viewed the world was very different than the way other people saw things.

I tried for years to control my own world so I could feel safe. I had to keep things under control and looking the way I thought things should be: how I kept my house, how I perceived you kept yours, how I raised my kids, what I thought you should be doing to improve yours, the way I presented myself at work, my standard of perfection, and the belief that everyone else should fit within my standard.

All of these “rules” or “expectations” that the world would work better “my” way led me to 200 plus pounds and absolute chaos in my life. I couldn’t keep up my standards, let alone make all the other people in my world meet them.

I thank God for leading me to the rooms of OA. Here I was encouraged to find my own way. My Higher Power was in charge. There were lots of different meetings and the members of each meeting had somewhat different ways of working the program. The study of specific literature, working a similar food plan, or following an established format helped the members work the steps and find the plan for living that led away from the compulsion and into a life of freedom. I had the freedom to choose which meeting and method worked for me.

I went to a variety of meetings and listened to the other members and began my journey. I am really grateful that there were choices; that no one said “my way or the highway.” Over the years I’ve changed the meetings I attend, and the way I participate. The methods that worked in the beginning have evolved over time and my recovery has grown stronger. When I sponsor, I share what worked for me, but I don’t decide what will work for the sponsee.

When I see others who do not work the program my way, I try not to put them down. That way I avoid causing conflict that may divide the organization. I don’t want to dilute the strength of OA. I don’t want to lose the goals for the greater good in the desire to be “right.” I just want OA to continue to be focused on carrying the message that there is a solution and allow members to decide for themselves how the program works best for them.

I still need OA today as much as I did back then. I am grateful the broad acceptance of all members and their practices keeps us united against our common foe. Together we get better, so long as we keep our focus on recovery.

Anonymous
Reprinted from **OA Today**
January, 2016



Tool of the Month: Plan of Eating

According to [a helpful factsheet](#) on the OA.org website, as we work the Overeaters Anonymous Twelve Step program of recovery from compulsive eating, we have a number of Tools to assist us. We use these Tools—a plan of eating, sponsorship, meetings, telephone, writing, literature, action plan, anonymity, and service—on a regular basis, to help us achieve and maintain abstinence and recovery from our disease. This month we highlight Plan of Eating.

Before coming to OA, I went on a lot of diets – which are a kind of plan of eating – but I was unable to sustain these, and I always gained more weight when I stopped the diet than I had lost during the diet. My compulsive eating began in childhood, and the progressive nature of the illness was apparent in my life. By the time a friend told me about OA in 2010, I was either eating or thinking about eating ALL DAY LONG. (I am thankful that night eating is a manifestation of the disease that I did not develop, so that I at least had a little peace daily while I was asleep.)

After starting to attend OA meetings at least once per week, I kept hearing people talk about their plan of eating, but it was clear that they were not all on the same eating plan. Some said they avoided white flour and refined sugar. Some talked about their green, yellow, and red foods to classify whether they felt safe eating various items. I also heard about very

simple plans like “three meals and one snack” or “three meals with nothing in between” each day. I heard this described as “the dignity of choice” by some, recognizing that we each have to find what works for us.

This makes great sense since OA helps a wide variety of people with eating disorders. Some of us are anorexic while others are bulimic. Some compulsively overeat and others cycle in and out of restricting. Some binge-eat or have a specific food addiction. (Yes, crunchy, salty stuff; I’m looking at YOU!)

We also have a variety of health conditions that may need attention through nutrition. I have hypertension and was taking blood pressure medicines when I started attending OA. My best friend has diabetes, and we have both received eating plans from nutritionists connected to our physicians’ offices. Our plans are quite different. There are foods that are helpful in reducing hypertension that negatively impact on the blood sugar level of a person with diabetes unless consumed in very small amounts.

My sponsor encouraged me to create a food plan that meets my body’s nutritional needs and address my medical issues. Since I came to OA nearly 300 pounds above a healthy body weight, the nutritionist suggested I consume about 1500 calories each day in a way that focused on fresh fruits and vegetables (which I love to eat!) with about six ounces of meat per day along with six servings of starches and three servings of low-fat dairy. It turned out that a serving of mashed potatoes was half a cup, not a two-cup bowl. Wow! This was much less food than I’d been eating, so it didn’t seem like enough, but guess what? I’ve been following this plan for more than a decade, and I have not starved yet! My plan is easy to use with my work schedule, food budget, and personal preferences, and all of this is important if I’m going to stick to it.

(continued on page 5)

(continued from page 4)

I am thankful to be off of blood pressure medicines due to the benefits of my food plan. When my doctor took me off my meds, my first thought, being rather new to recovery, was “what will I eat to celebrate?” Then I laughed at myself – and stuck to my plan that day.

I am about half of the way to what I’d consider a healthy body weight, and I sometimes envy people who tell me they lost all their excess weight in a single year, but I’ve learned to focus on following my food plan and to see what the scales say as information, not affirmation. I don’t have to wait until the scales say a certain number to experience happiness or self-acceptance.

I am very thankful to have plan of eating in my recovery toolkit.

Anonymous



Question of the Month

In 2024, **OA Today** will include a question of the month. One or more OA members will provide their thoughts on the question, and then we invite readers to offer their own thoughts in a letter to the editor which you may address to newsletter@stlouisoa.org.

January Question: What’s Your Favorite OA Daily Reader?

Since OA is a spiritual program, not a diet and exercise club, many of us find it helpful to read and reflect using one of the daily readers that is [approved OA literature](#). This can be a part of how we practice Step Eleven – “Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.” Indeed, when I prayerfully read from our literature and open myself to having an intuition about what

A-Power-Greater-Than-Ourselves wants me to hear and understand today, I often do sense that HP is communicating with me!

Some read from multiple readers daily while others alternate, using a different book each year. On January 1, 2024, I will be switching from **For Today** to **Voices of Recovery**. I do so with a certain amount of sadness because I admit that **For Today** is my favorite daily reader.

Why? Perhaps it’s because it was my first daily reader, so it reminds me of the miracle of coming into the program. I was in a terrible mess when I arrived, losing my health to compulsive eating and unable to stop the constant food squirrels from running through my head. Within a few months of beginning abstinence, my mind was much clearer, and my relationship with myself and others was beginning to improve.

For Today often has that “dash of cold water in the face” quality for me – revealing a blinding flash of the obvious that had been escaping me. On the blank pages provided at the back of the book, I have written some pages that I want to be able to find quickly in case of emergency. For example, when I think I’m not getting enough out of the program, February 23 on page 54 offers a handy checklist that reminds me that this may correlate to how much I am putting into the program.

When tempted to think that OA is about deprivation, April 29 on page 120 reminds me that when I was in the “captain’s chair,” I sailed myself into a storm of food trouble. Now that I am seeking “God’s will,” I find that God “takes nothing good away from me.”

I am so thankful for my OA fellows who provide us with food addiction specific recovery literature! Thanks to any of you who contributed to my favorite daily reader, **For Today!**

Editor



January 6 – Step Four: Inventories with Compassion and Love – a virtual workshop sponsored by the Inland Empire Intergroup, find details [HERE](#)

January 14 – 1:30 p.m. – Intergroup meeting**

January 19-21 – OA Birthday Celebrated

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

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

April 13 – Recovery Event – Details Coming Soon

May 5 – 1:30 p.m. - Intergroup meeting**

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



July 14 – 1:30 p.m. - Intergroup meeting**

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

October 13 – 1:30 p.m. - Intergroup meeting**

Note: There will be a Fall Retreat; details to be announced

November 10 – 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.*

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



ARTICLES FOR THE NEXT NEWSLETTER ARE DUE BY JANUARY 20, 2024. 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.

Dear OA Community:

An Ad Hoc Committee was formed at the November Intergroup meeting to serve as a communication link about the dissolution of Region 4 and the choices for a new Region affiliation. The task going forward is for all the members of our OA community to spend some time learning about our choices.

The Committee has prepared a chart (pasted in graphic format on page 8) which summarizes information presented at the Region 4 Fall Assembly. Please look it over, visit the Region's resources such as webpages, attend virtual recovery events, or visit meetings. Get prepared to make your choice known at your meeting's group conscience.

As a reminder, all of our Bi-State meetings are entitled to a vote, please plan on attending the March IG meeting. Each meeting needs to hold a group conscience meeting to guide their Intergroup Representative or Designated Person in the voting. For questions, please contact our Region 4 Representatives, Amy G gauthieramy@gmail.com or Eileen M mangogeorge2@gmail.com.

Our Intergroup needs to be prepared to vote for our new Region affiliation at our March 12, 2024 1:30 pm meeting. Zoom ID 940 5580 8391, password Serenity or Telephone 312-626-6799, password 75183374

**In Service,
Communication Ad Hoc Committee**

	Region 1: www.oaregion1.org	Region 3: www.oaregion3.org	Region 5: www.region5.org	Region 6: https://oaregion6.org/
Geography	Pacific NorthWest: Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Washington, Wyoming, Alberta, British Columbia, Northwest Territories, Saskatchewan, and Yukon.	Arizona, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico; Oklahoma, Texas, Utah	U.S.: Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan, Ohio, Wisconsin and the greater Chicago area, Illinois. Canada: Southwest Ontario (Windsor to London)	US: Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, Rhode Island, Vermont Canada: Newfoundland, Labrador, Nova Scotia, Northeast Ontario, Quebec.
Assemblies/Conventions	Assembly/Convention is held in the Fall, typically in October 2023 was first in person conference since 2019	Assemblies and Conventions, hosted simultaneously, held Fall and Spring - Hosting Intergroups determine the Convention format (virtual or in person or hybrid); split the proceeds 50/50 with the Region	3 Assemblies – 2 Face to Face in the spring and fall. Upcoming dates: Fall Assembly- October 27-29 Region Assembly, Edinburg, IN; Spring Assembly – Cleveland OH March 8-10 Region 5 has one convention per year (2024 Cleveland, 2025 Indianapolis)	2 assemblies a year 2024: April 6 and September 21; both in-person in Albany, New York 2025: April 5 and September 20; Spring virtual, Fall in-person (Albany)
Services	Sponsor List, Virtual Sponsorship program, Speaker List, Newcomer Support Publish Bland and Guided Program Journals, Board Visits IG Board Liaisons, Monthly IG Chair Support Virtual Meetings	Speaker list, Twelve Step Within e-blast, partners with local Intergroups for Professional Exhibits (Your Weight Matters/Obesity Action Coalition; National Area Health Education Centers; other professional organizations)	Intergroup Renewal- intergroups may request help with their Intergroup Renewal. In the past we have had speaker lists, every spring we decide what is important to the region. This has not been on a priority list the past 3 years. Many intergroups have sponsorship workshops	Chair and Trustee Liaison workshops to support IG's. Website has: Speaker list with 40 speakers, Twelfth-Step- Within Handbook, Intergroup Renewal Summary, RCC Abstinence and Recovery documents, Sponsor Bank presentation, podcasts, IG forum
Financial Support	PIPO Grants Assembly Representative Support WSBC Delegate Support Membership Outreach Grants	Representative Funding WSBC Funding, Special Grants up to \$250 for Outreach, Technology, Young People, Diversity to individual groups or Intergroups	Reserve to help fund intergroups who cannot afford to attend region assemblies and WSBC – last year we had funds for 5 members.	PIPO Blitz funds available to our Intergroup Scholarships to attend the WSBC and R6 assemblies
Noteworthy	Robust website, Tech help to improve/create websites, virtual meeting support, geographically targeted Facebook ads. Our Mission Statement: Sharing Hope, Offering Resources, Recovering Together	R3 has an operating budget of \$26,000. Prudent Reserve is currently \$22,000	24 intergroups	Board has an equal perspective on our different geographies, with three Board members from Canada and three from the US. We have 36 Intergroups in the northeastern US and in eastern Canada