

# March 2024 OA TODAY NEWSLETTER

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## STEP THREE

**Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.**

My name is Robin, and I am a compulsive overeater. I have been in food recovery for over twenty years, having returned to program after two relapses. The first relapse lasted four months, and the second lasted four years. I have been abstinent almost nine years now by the Grace of God.

The Third Step Prayer (*Alcoholics Anonymous*, 4th ed., [also known as the **Big Book**], p. 63) is one that I say every time I pull my car out of the driveway to go anywhere. It has become a habit, and I am grateful. In doing my Fourth [Step](#), I had no idea I was so selfish. When I say the Third Step Prayer, I pause after saying “relieve me of the bondage of self” and name the different forms of selfishness that have been emerging or have the potential to emerge in the course of my day. I am not perfect. Some forms of selfishness revealed to me have been self-importance, self-righteousness, self-absorption, self-indulgence, and self-seeking.

*(continued on page two)*

## Are You Powerless Over Food?

It was May of 2015, and I was up 30 pounds (14 kg) after a yearlong sugar binge. Although I'd been on a constant roller coaster of losing and gaining, this was the biggest weight gain I'd experienced in seven years. It was also the low point when I began to realize my powerlessness over food.

I had not yet found OA, but I was already beginning to take the [First Step](#). The following summer, an awareness came to me that there just had to be a Twelve Step program for overeaters. I actually typed the words “overeaters anonymous” into the search engine without knowing of OA's existence. I was overcome with emotion when I saw OA at the top of my results. Immediately, I looked to see if there was a meeting in my area, but after getting that information, I lost courage. I wanted to call the contact, but I was too afraid.

Months later, I was again entering a new diet program. My husband, having witnessed years of my obsession with food and diets, was discouraged; he told me I needed to seek help. I realized that, months prior, my Higher Power (God) had led me to OA. In an exercise of trust, I called the contact for the meeting I'd originally hoped to attend. I was encouraged to hear a friendly voice inviting me to come the following week. That first meeting brought a feeling of hope I'd not had in my whole history of compulsive overeating. There was love, kindness, and empathy there—these people got it.....

From [New Members Shares](#), OA.org

*(continued from page one)*

These don't emerge every day, but every day, I am reminded.

After naming these various forms of selfishness, I then have a discussion with God about how these can keep me in bondage and what that really means. The bottom line is that whenever I try to take over, be the center of attention, be right, or focus all on me, I am actually fearful. I am saying I don't trust God: I don't trust he has "it" all figured out already and has my best interests at the heart of every situation and every relationship, because I want things my way.

I am then directed to the **Big Book** and some promises. "In thinking about our day we may . . . not be able to determine which course to take. Here we ask God for inspiration. . . . We are often surprised. . . . What used to be the hunch or the occasional inspiration gradually becomes a working part of the mind" (pp. 86–87). This is all to say that for every single situation in my life, every single day, I need to keep turning to God instead of myself. When I do my review at night, I can see what I did well and what still needs work, and I need to remember "Thy will (not mine) be done" (p. 85).

*Robin*

From [Lifeline, October 1, 2020](#)



## TRADITION THREE

**The only requirement for OA membership is a desire to stop eating compulsively.**



Tradition Three is such a lifesaver for me. It has allowed me to understand that I belong to a large community who  
even when they are angry  
or appear dismissive  
or don't seem to enjoy  
the same perspective –  
even when they  
seem to reject me -  
they entirely accept me as a member.

It is a group with whom I belong only because I wish to recover from my eating obsession. There's nothing else in my world, no personal relationship or decision I've ever made, that is entirely dependent on simply my choice. Or at least, I have not ever understood belonging in this way.

So, a remarkable event happens when we choose to give away our disorder. I don't mean when we choose all of the tools and actions and engage in recovery – I mean when we simply decide, we have a disorder and wish to recover from it.

This choice, without actions, and without results, entitles us to be a full participating member. We work as a group in support of one another but as individuals to determine how to address the sometimes confusing, often repetitive and laborious, actions and thoughts that allow us to figure out what and when to use the tools - and what abstinence means.

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Every one of us, similarly, working out all of the questions, struggles with our own sense of what our spiritual connection is. We have found that a 12-step program is the very individual ability to moderate our own path, in concert with a whole community who is talking out loud these thoughts and decisions. Does everybody else get to be in the same boat even if they do not look alike or have the same behaviors? Sometimes it's very disconcerting to have people in disagreement about so much be on exactly the same recovery course.

Sometimes it might seem a relief if there were just a way to blend into one goal/image - with rules that give certainty and structure. But like many, I have rarely made a rule I did not break.

Tradition Three has allowed me to become part of a community for which I qualified as a small child, and to remain apart as an individual with my own issues, searches, imperfections, concerns, and struggles. It is the one true fact I can rely on in an uncertain world. Having come late to this awareness of this community, I have every intention of continuing my recovery into an indefinite tomorrow.

Today I am a part of a community even if my decisions disagree with my own yesterday or someone else's good sense. I depend upon my OA fellows to continue sharing their differences and their similarities - and accepting me in order for us all to recover together. It is a miracle of inclusiveness.

Christina D.



## Accelerated 12-Step Workshop Begins Online on Monday, March 4

The Columbia, MO, Overeaters Anonymous meeting is hosting an accelerated, online 12-Step Study Workshop beginning Monday March 4, 2024, from 1:00-3:00 PM Central Time. To attend, text Mary C. at 913-406-5010. You will be provided a meeting ID and password. Mary C. will also be glad to answer any questions you may have.

About the study:

- Closed workshops are fifteen two-hour sessions.
- Potential group members attend all sessions.
- Workshops are closed after the introductory session.
- The study uses the [OA Twelve Step Workshop and Study Guide](#).



## Announcement from World Service

Have you ever talked with your health care providers about the OA Fellowship? A new edition of the *Professional Community Courier* to carry the message to health and wellness professionals is now available. Download it at [THIS LINK](#).

**Note from your editor:** I tried this with one of my doctors on February 26, and she had never heard of the OA Fellowship. She thanked me for sharing the resource.



## Tool of the Month: Meetings

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 Meetings.

Meetings are many things to me – a safe place, a place for learning, a place for fellowship, often including an opportunity to hear from recovering compulsive eaters all over the world. There are in-person, hybrid, online, telephone, and non-real-time meetings. We have special event meetings like Super Saturdays and conventions which may be hosted by an intergroup, region or the World Service Office. Finally, there are service board meetings for intergroups, Region and the annual World Service Business Conference. Whew!

Meetings are a haven for me. That word shows up in the **Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous** multiple times and in the **12 Steps & Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous**. The dictionary gives me synonyms like refuge, sanctuary and oasis, a perfect fit for the way I feel when I walk in or sign on. I know I can take care of myself in

any way I need to on any given day. I may choose to share or not, to be on camera or not. Because of our Traditions, I can trust that what I share will be held in confidence.

Meetings are a place for lifelong learning. At literature study meetings, I “discover” ideas that strike me as if I’ve never come across them before. Similarly, when speakers and other fellows share, the way they put their experience will often resonate in a particular way. This process continues over time and the learning accumulates.

Meetings are also a wonderful way to practice service. Just being there, reading part of the format, and sharing are basic and vital to all meetings. I can open the doors, set up the space, lead for the month, learn to provide security for virtual meetings. My fellows are always ready and willing to help me learn a new skill to serve the meeting. As I become more comfortable with serving my home meeting, I may become willing to explore service at Intergroup, Region or World Service.

Of course, none of this could happen without my fellow compulsive eaters who understand as no one else can. It’s because of the Fellowship that I’m alive today. It’s because of their compassion and kindness that meetings are a place of safety and solace. It’s because of their willingness to share their experience, strength, and hope that I no longer have to go to meetings – I want to go!

Anonymous





## Online Unity Day Event February 24 Highlights Fellowship's Diversity

According to OA.org, [Unity Day](#) is a day set aside to affirm the strength inherent in OA's unity. Unity Day is celebrated in February on the last Saturday of the month in even years and the last Sunday in odd years. It is observed by OA groups worldwide at 11:30 a.m. local time.

The Early Birds Meetings of St. Louis hosted an online Unity Day recovery event on Saturday, February 24, from noon until 2:30 p.m. Three panels of speakers shared their experience, strength, and hope, speaking for ten minutes each. Then ten minutes of sharing by the attendees was allowed before taking a five-minute break after panels one and two. The Responsibility Pledge and OA Promise were recited to close the event.

The first panel featured people whose symptoms and food plans are different. This helped emphasize that OA is not a diet club, and members may choose the food plan that supports their own health and recovery.

The second panel included a member fairly new to the program, a member attending for a few years, and also an "old-timer." There are no dues or tests to become a member. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop eating compulsively.

The final panel shared the diverse ways they practice spirituality. Religion is an outside issue in OA, and atheists and agnostics are welcome to attend. Each OA member is entitled to formulate a god of their own understanding or to embrace a Higher Power that is not associated with any deity.

An additional demonstration of unity with diversity in the recovery event was speakers and attendees from multiple nations. Ours is truly a worldwide fellowship, and it is our weakness that binds us together. "...as we join hands, we find love and understanding beyond our wildest dreams."

Anonymous



## Set Aside Prayer

*Note: A member of the second panel at the Unity Day Event started her share with the "Set Aside Prayer," a prayer in circulation within recovery groups. It is reprinted here.*

God, please help me set aside everything I think I know about myself, my addiction, the Steps, the Fellowship, and especially You; for an open mind and a new experience with myself, my addiction, the Steps, the Fellowship, and especially You. Amen.



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

**March 4 – Accelerated Online 12-Step Study Introductory Session – see page 3**

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

**April 20 – 9:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. - Recovery Event hosted by New Me and New Horizons - "Refresh, Renew, Recover" - See flyer on page 7**

**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.



**ARTICLES FOR THE NEXT NEWSLETTER ARE DUE BY March 20, 2024.** Please send your submissions to the OA TODAY Editorial Staff [newsletter@stlouisoa.org](mailto:newsletter@stlouisoa.org) or mail to St. Louis Bi-State Area Intergroup, PO Box 28882, STL, 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.



**Refresh**      **Renew**      **Recover**  
The Steps      Our Commitment      Our Abstinence

 **OVEREATERS ANONYMOUS**<sup>®</sup>  
ST. LOUIS BI-STATE INTERGROUP

**Where and When**  
**Saturday April 20, 2024**  
**9:30A - 12:30P**  
Registration Begins at 9A  
**Concord Trinity United Methodist Church**  
**5275 South Lindbergh Blvd,**  
**St. Louis, MO 63126**  
(Between Gravois and Tesson Ferry)  
**ADA Accessible Building and Parking with Elevator**

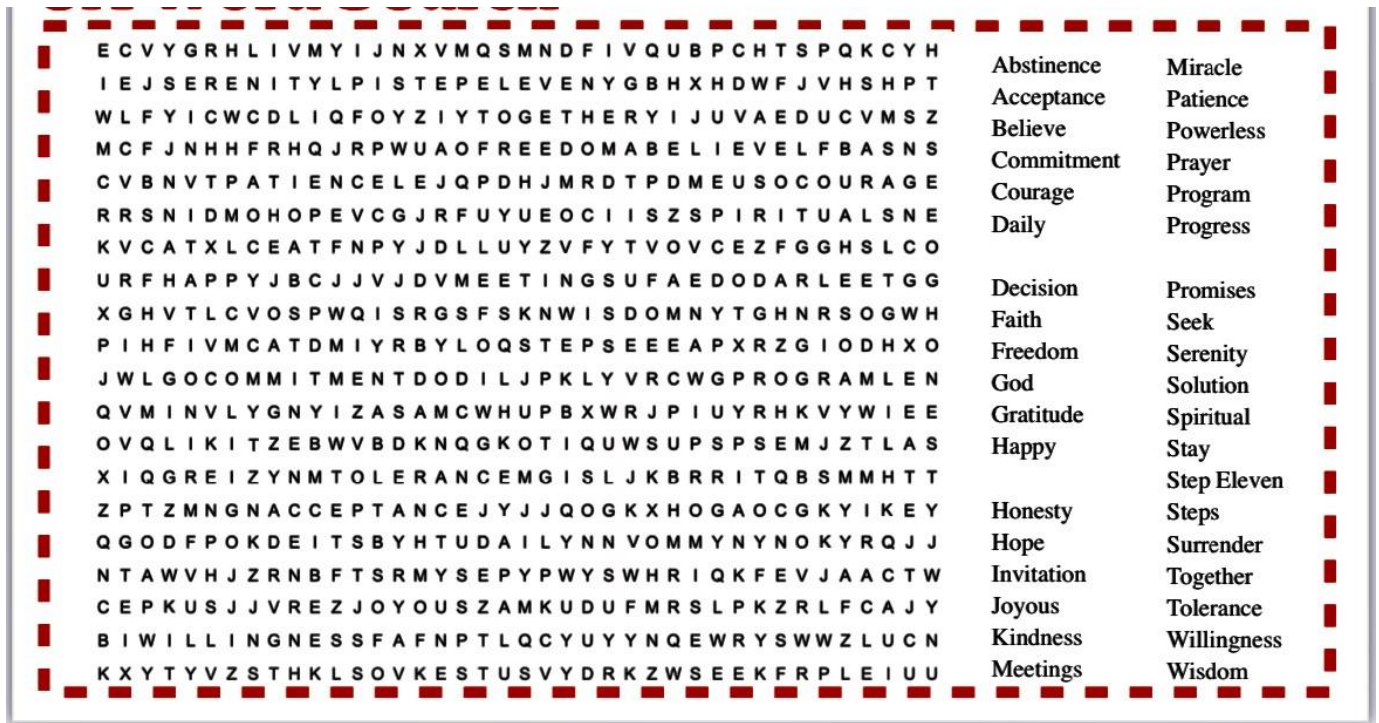
**Suggested Donation: \$7**  
Cash or Check  
Please don't stay away from any OA event because of financial reasons.



**Oasis Table and Literature Provided by New Horizons**

**Questions?**  
Call or Text Marilyn F  
**314-401-2552**  
(leave voicemail if no answer)

**Sponsored by:**  
St. Louis Bi-State Intergroup  
**Hosted by:**  
New Me and New Horizons



Reprinted from Region 7 Newsletter

For a **Unity Day Podcast**, go to [THIS LINK](#).

If you listen to the podcast, the webpage suggests these questions for reflection and journaling:

- How can I be more open-minded and nonjudgmental about all OA members, whatever their individual traits?
- How can I become more open-minded and nonjudgmental about the way others work their program?
- How am I practicing love and tolerance of others?
- How might I contribute to the unity and diversity of OA as a whole?
- Do I believe the OA program is broad enough to accommodate me and my path to recovery?