

December 2023 OA TODAY NEWSLETTER

St. Louis Bi-State Intergroup of OA
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STEP TWELVE

Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these Steps, we tried to carry this message to compulsive overeaters and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

When I came into OA many years ago, I was in a lonely, depressed state of mind. I could not stop eating and nothing I set my mind nor my will to changed that. But becoming a part of the fellowship, going to meetings, carrying the literature, setting up and taking down the room, leading the meeting, being the treasurer, contributing, started me on a path of recovery that definitely changed the trajectory of my life.

Our Seventh Tradition says it's okay to give service at our meetings right away. If we wait until we've worked all the other steps to give back, we may never make it to Step Twelve. There are limits set for some forms of service, but at a meeting no one will ever be told they can't pitch in and participate. In fact, service is encouraged because it changes our focus from self to others.

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I Am Not Good Enough: The Disease's Perfect Lie

.....As I have continued to work OA's Twelve Steps, I've gained a deeper understanding of my resentments and fears. One particular fear that eventually led me to the food is ***I am not good enough.***

In fact, ***I am not good enough*** is the disease's perfect lie. Every day, it led me to find "proof" that it was true. Each day, I chased perfection, and each day, I fell short of my unrealistic expectations.

But an even larger danger in believing the lie was my compulsion to hide this so-called truth from everyone. I wouldn't dare let you see my weaknesses or admit the faults in my actions. Inside, I felt shame. I felt shameful of my actions because they were not typical of someone who was perfect.

Eventually, I became so ashamed of my powerlessness over food that I decided to tell a friend about how I didn't think I was a normal eater. But when I finally tried to slip through the crack in the door and free myself from my secrets, my shame overpowered me. My disease tried to slam the door shut. I couldn't be fully honest and left out details.

Just admitting my imperfection, though, was a start.....

If you too are ready to make a start, to release the lie that you are not good enough, OA may be right for you. This is an excerpt [from a story](#) on the [Lifeline](#) blog at the [OA.org](#) website. Find local meetings [HERE](#).

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For me belonging gave me a sense of purpose that had been lacking in my life. I've never doubted that I was welcome in OA and giving back to the meeting showed my gratitude. Participating in this way fed my mind and spirit. I replaced my loneliness and feelings of doubt about my worthiness with something intangible. Feeling good about helping others and being of service took precedence. I like to say service helped expand my spiritual life. Was it always easy, no. Did I make mistakes, of course but each time I answered the call for service, the more committed I became to my program and to OA.

The results of working Step Twelve are the promise on pages 86 and 87 of OA's 12 & 12. "Those of us who live this program don't simply carry the message; *we are the message*. Each day that we live well, we *are* well, and we embody the joy of recovery, which attracts others who want what we've found in OA. We're always happy to share our secret: the Twelve Steps of Overeaters anonymous, which empower each of us to live well and be well, one day at a time."

Anonymous



TRADITION TWELVE

Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all these Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.



I was the self-appointed poster child for OA: I had physical recovery, I performed a lot of service, and I had several sponsees. My phone rang day and night. I was asked to speak at marathons and retreats. I wasn't anonymous, and I didn't want to be anonymous—I was a star.

I was lacking in self-esteem, and OA offered a platform where I could succeed and show my worth. When I attained a normal body weight and performed more than my fair share of service, recognition came my way. People looked up to me! I was finally perched on a higher rung of that imaginary ladder of worth. Self-righteousness only strengthened my grip.

Members began to look my way whenever a service position needed to be filled. By then, my life was full to bursting with service, family, work, and the fixer-upper home I'd purchased.

Then at one business meeting, a question hung in the air, needing an opinion. I always had at least three opinions on the same issue, but this time I didn't offer any of them—I leaned back in my chair and remained silent, letting someone else take the lead. It was the start of humility.

Building a persona at meetings takes a lot of energy. I imagined myself better than others because that was the only way I felt good enough. Imagine the effort it took to keep up such a sick standard! How you continued to love me defies all reason, but you did.

When the inevitable fall came, I tossed away my abstinence and sank into a three-year, 70-pound (32-kg) relapse. I continued to come to meetings, fearing what would happen if I didn't. My shame must have been palpable to others in the group, and it took every last shred of courage to show up. Ironically, the only member who ever sneered at my relapse was the other "star" in the group. The rest of you loved me through it.

When I see other OA members repeating my mistakes, I appreciate their willingness to give, and I hope they learn balance before they fizzle out and fall away from our Fellowship, unable to sustain endless service commitments and perfect back-to-back abstinence. I am aware that some members (the "experts") want

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to influence decision-making based on the length of their membership. I only know because I did that too.

We can only love the stars blazing in our meetings, make our own decisions, and keep our “expertise” to ourselves. We all have one voice and one vote, and none is more substantial than another. We are all trusted servants, not self-appointed leaders. I’m grateful that OA taught me the difference.

*Cynthia W., Wickenburg, Arizona USA
Reprinted from [Lifeline](#)*



What’s the Difference Between Anonymity and Confidentiality

Anonymity is not confidentiality or privacy. Anonymity is a spiritual foundation of humility, love, tolerance, acceptance, gratitude.

Confidentiality and privacy, on the other hand, are not spiritual principles: they are courtesies owed to every OA member, who alone has the right to declare themselves a member of OA and who alone has the right to decide who hears what they share in meetings.

The **Big Book** says at page 125, “Another principle we observe carefully is that we do not relate intimate experiences of another person unless we are sure he would approve.” Of course, that’s true. That’s true for anyone we know, not just for an OA member. This right of privacy and confidentiality is important but is not part of the Traditions. It is a courteous form of respect for another human being.

Differentiating between anonymity and confidentiality serves a few purposes. First, it emphasizes that anonymity is truly a spiritual principle and not simply a matter of privacy.

Second, it restricts the concept of anonymity to the basics of our recovery and doesn’t allow anonymity to be misused as a way of restricting information.

If an OA member is in the hospital and would like visitors, it is not a “violation” of anonymity or of Tradition Twelve to provide this information to another person. Likewise, an OA member may seek to expand their usefulness by being a resource to those who still suffer and give permission for their name and contact information to be given to anyone who might be interested in OA. For example, some OAs invite their health care professionals to offer their contact information to patients whose health is being damaged by compulsive food behaviors.

As well, this context of anonymity means that there cannot be any stars, any leaders, any experts, anyone who comes from a position of being above anyone else. One can see how this plays out in many different Traditions.

No one has the right to say that they know better than anyone else. At the same time, everyone has a duty to listen to others because, as Bill put it in more religious words, the sole dissenting voice in the room might be the voice of God.

We cannot allow personality issues to conflict with our group purpose. Personalities must be parked outside the room.

Because we are no better and no worse than anyone else in the room, those of us who are more comfortable being assertive must learn to hold back. Those of us who are uncomfortable with speaking our mind have to be encouraged to speak our mind.

Anonymous



OA Members Share Experience, Strength, and Hope About: How to Survive the HoliDAZE

Saved By a Sacred Pause

Somewhere I have heard "If you have difficulties, share how you used the program to deal with them." That's what I'm doing now.

I was home alone on a holiday, but I was OK with that. Really. I had been to two OA meetings so far and done a little service work. I felt surrounded by love from my whole OA family. Now I was happily writing holiday cards. As I finished one to my brother, suddenly a feeling of gloomy heaviness came over me. I noticed myself wondering what would taste good right about now!

What on earth just happened? I love my brother and his family. Oh. I see. His family. His very big and close family. I had just felt self-pity from comparing my life to his. "What would my life be now if I had married the right person and had kids the way he did?"

One stray thought and my feelings were turned upside down! And automatically my next thought was about food.

What did I do then? How did I use the program?

1. I gave thanks for the sacred pause. I hardly ever notice my feelings when they are happening. This was a great blessing!
2. Right away I found a different thought: "There's nothing so bad that extra food can't make it worse!" That was a good start. It bought me a little time. But I find that in a battle of thoughts I seldom win. I had to stop thinking and do something.
3. I texted my sponsor and another OA friend. That helped, but not quite enough.

4. Action, that's the key. I turned on vigorous music, put on my shoes, and exercised. In half an hour I was fine. The episode was all over.
5. I gave thanks again!

Anonymous

When They Ask, Tell Them

It's that wonderful time of year when food - and lots of it - is everywhere, i.e., family get togethers, work parties, social gatherings, etc. This is often accompanied by people endlessly and enthusiastically saying: "This dish is amazing - have some," or "This is an old family recipe," or "Why aren't you eating?" And, of course, the old stand-by: "Just have a little bit. It won't hurt you just this one time." (At that last line, I smile and think, "If you only knew...")

In the past, I would say "No thanks." But, of late, I have been responding differently as a way to attract attention to OA and help me stay abstinent.

Why? Because I want more people to know about Overeaters Anonymous, the Twelve Steps, and how it can help them fight the never-ending battle of compulsive eating.

How can we get the word out about OA? At the St. Louis Intergroup meetings, this question is often discussed and worthy outreaches such as billboards, online advertisements, a better website, and health fairs have been approved and implemented. These efforts have garnered interest and new members.

Yet, we still wonder how we can do better in attracting the still suffering compulsive eater, especially considering the magnitude of obesity and diet failure in this country. Sixty percent of United States is considered either overweight or obese. And studies show that most people regain the weight they have lost through dieting within three years.

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Those are the statistics. I used to be one of those people and now I am not. I have been in OA in since 2006 and haven't had refined sugar for 16 years and have kept off the excess weight. Early in my recovery, people noticed my weight loss and asked questions, and I told them about OA. But now I don't get as many questions. Yet I am surrounded by people I care about - whom I know and don't know - who are going through life struggling with their weight and the health issues that go with this.

One day, I was thinking about this after an Intergroup meeting and decided to rephrase the question from what can we do, to what can I do?

I thought about the principle of attraction, meeting people where they are, and how the power and success of our Program, from the very beginning, came from the understanding, honesty, and support found when a struggling addict talks with a recovering addict. With that in mind, talking to fellow food addicts during the holidays at food events is the place to be.

In the past, when people asked why I was or wasn't eating in a certain way, giving generic, safe, and not always honest responses ("I'm not hungry; maybe later"), usually took the attention off me, but it felt as though an opportunity had been lost.

Now I say something to effect of, "No, thanks. When I start eating this stuff, I can't stop" or "This food isn't good for me." If I have eaten before going to a party and someone asks why I am not eating, I respond with, "Thanks, but I ate before I got here. The food looks great, but I can't eat this type of food. Once I start, it is hard to stop." This often generates a follow up question or comment: "Oh, you have so much self-control!" or "How do you do it?" Since they asked, I tell them. "I really don't have any self-control. My weight was always a struggle until I

joined Overeaters Anonymous and that is the only way I have been able to do this."

Some people ask more questions, and some don't. That's okay. I know I have put the message out there and it is making difference. Also, I am surprised how good and freeing it feels to say this and how doing this helps strengthen my abstinence.

I don't do this in every situation where food is offered. I take care to explain OA in situations that are appropriate and adjust the message considering my audience.

What if each you reading this could do this over this holiday season at least one or two times? Think of the impact!

How? By explaining Overeaters Anonymous, in your own way, to people who are offering food and asking you why you are eating differently - something that can happen A LOT during the holiday season.

When they ask, tell them. It is really that simple.

Anonymous

An Army of Angels

My loving, Higher Power desires to be my constant companion, giving me everything I need each day. In order for that to happen I also need to suit up and show up. God provides, but I must be willing to take the action I'm capable of doing in order to reap the benefits.

I was at a small group book study meeting. After the Serenity Prayer we all began with a check-in. I immediately began sharing-blatantly bellyaching, because I was having a temper tantrum over something I found objectionable, and I wasn't ready to write about it/let it go. I was letting it reach the boiling point, causing the most insane thinking. My

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mind was plotting, scheming, how to fix the other person. The obsessive food thoughts were driving me mad. I finally closed my mouth and let the others check-in. As I sat listening to them, I also prayed and asked God to help me.

Our reading from an OA book was phenomenal. The reading spoke directly to me. In the story the person felt their Higher Power would send an army of angels to stand between them and the refrigerator. I could envision God sending an army of angels to protect me from myself! My Higher Power heard my prayer and gave me exactly what I needed. As I shared on the reading I could feel the insanity be replaced with some clarity. The food obsessions that were gnawing at me released its death hold on me.

I truly felt my Higher Power had sent me an army of angels that had me wrapped in layers upon layers of my Higher Power's love and goodness. I was able to humble myself.

God always responds when I pray, ask for help, and trust God to provide for me. God sends an army of angels with open arms. I give some of those angels names.

*strength
*hope
*faith
*trust
*service
*slogans
*tools
*gratitude
*courage
*surrender
*acceptance
*love
*humility
*hope
*honestly
*willingness
* integrity
*awareness

*openness
*spiritual

After the meeting I called my sponsor and was able to follow simple directions. As the conversation was winding down, my sponsor shared words previously spoken to her from a sponsor:

Keep it simple.

Don't forget who's in recovery.

"I am."

Then act like it.

Sue S.

Intergroup Chair's Column

This space reserved for the column from the Intergroup chair.

The chair position is **VACANT**.

There is no column.

To apply to serve, go to the Intergroup website:
<https://stlouisoa.org/>

Select Member & Intergroup Information.

Then select "Click Here for Documents and Forms."

The Board of Trustees form is third from the bottom.

Summary of STL Bi-State Intergroup Business Conference 2023



Motion 1 passed – Intent: Bring voting procedures in line with current practices. Amend Article IV Intergroup, Section 5 Nominating and Voting Procedures - Section A, Item 1, replace words “written ballot” with “anonymous ballot”; Section B, Item 1, delete all current wording and replace with “An anonymous ballot is used”; Section B, Item 3, delete all current wording and replace with “A simple majority is needed to pass a policy motion, two-thirds (2/3) are required to pass a change to bylaws

Motion 2 passed – Intent: with dissolution of Region 4 our intergroup will be choosing to associate with a different Region, so, going forward our bylaws will simply use the word Region. Remove all documentation of association with Region 4 throughout bylaws and replace with “Region.”

Proposal 1, our Intergroup will submit to WSO for consideration. OA Bylaw Amendment for WSO 2024 World Service Business Conference passed - Intent: To establish a lifetime limit for the position of trustee. Amend Article VII Board of Trustees, Section 3 Term of Office replace words “eight consecutive” with “nine” in first and last sentence and remove words “no more than twelve total years.”

Election of Service Positions: Board of Trustees Chairperson, no nominations, this position will be unfilled as of December 31, 2023. Board of Trustees Secretary - Martha P. World Service Delegate - Marysiah H. Region Representative- Amy G. 2024 Retreat Co-Chairs - Della T and Bill T. Website Chairperson- Colleen C.

St. Louis Bi-State Board of Trustees

December 2 – 1-4 p.m. – Holiday Booster Event – “**Who Is Steering Your Recovery Sled**” – see page 9

No Intergroup meeting in December

December 25 – Which meetings are happening? See page 8

January 1 – Which meetings are happening? See page 8

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

February 11 – Intergroup meeting**

March 10 - Intergroup meeting**

April 13 – Super Saturday – Theme to be announced soon

****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 DECEMBER 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.

WINTER HOLIDAY SCHEDULE

(St. Louis Bi-State Area Intergroup)



Christmas and New Years Day are on Mondays.

We have five meetings on Mondays.

These WILL meet on Christmas and New Years Day.

7:00 a.m. Zoom, ID **538 040 418**, pw **002478**, “St. Louis Early Bird Meeting” Group 801182

7:00 p.m. Zoom, ID **508 858 0200**, pw **921299**, “Webster Groves Newcomers Meeting” 11652

** Note: To dial in to Zoom meetings by phone, call 312-626-6799. Use the same meeting ID and password.*

These WILL NOT meet on Christmas or New Years Day.

11:00 a.m. Hybrid In-person (face to face) and phone, Public Library, Farmington MO, 56156

6:15 p.m. In-person (face to face), Hope Christian Church, Columbia,IL 33891

We don't know about this one because there is no contact person or IG rep to ask:

7:00 p.m. Creve Coeur, Zoom, 07276

Don't forget – check the World OA website for more:

- **Regular meetings: oa.org Find a Meeting** <https://oa.org/find-a-meeting/?type=1>
(but they don't say whether or not they are meeting on the holidays)
- **Special Events: oa.org Event Calendar** <https://oa.org/event-calendar/>

Who Is Steering Your Recovery Sled?

Overeaters Anonymous - *Holiday Booster*



Hosted by: *Sunday Evening Relapse & Recovery group*

Date: *Saturday, Dec. 2, 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**