

July 2024 OA TODAY NEWSLETTER

St. Louis Bi-State Intergroup of OA
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Humility
a strange thing.
The minute you think
you've got it,
you've lost it.



STEP SEVEN

Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.



The first word of Step Seven is humbly; the second is ask. How do I ask humbly? Am I instructing HP on what to take or how to go about it?

Many a time I have asked to be relieved of a defect and immediately I'm put in a situation that magnifies the defect I've already decided I know all about. I've even developed skills around the defect that mask my intentions and manipulate others so they don't question what I'm doing. It lets me continue to practice the part of the defect that gives me a payoff.

I love Step Seven, because it teaches me that I can acknowledge my character defects, but I'm not required to change them. I am as powerless over my behaviors as I am over food. But there is a way to be relieved of these unconscious and often inconsiderate behaviors. *(continued on page 2)*

Newcomers Corner The Power of NOT Part 4

Editor's Note: For the next several issues, the newcomers corner will include excerpts from a long article by a contributor who has lost several hundred pounds – and found a new way to live - since coming to OA.

Step Three – Faith. Do Not Doubt. That itself is a big order! There are many things I doubt. Specifically, though, Step Three ask us to have faith that there is something that is larger than us. That's it. Doesn't have to be a deity from any religion. Doesn't have to be anything anyone else understands – Nature, Trees, Love, Self-Care, Owning Zen Cats.

You just have to believe that YOU are NOT the biggest thing in the universe. OK. That I can do.

My faith has evolved over the years. I started out believing in the program. Program was bigger than me. Then, a friend said "If no already defined Higher Power works for you, write a job description for a Being that does. Amazing tip.

I start each morning reciting my gratitude to my HP. Then I commit to my food plan, and I promised that I will practice the principles in all my affairs for the day. At night, I check in. Do I owe amends? When did I experience happiness?

My channel to that support is open all day. I reach out for direction whenever I need to. Something Bigger Than Me Has My Back.

(Continued in the August OA Today)

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Step Six is about recognizing my behaviors, Step Seven supplies me with the way to change. What is necessary to bring about change is awareness, acceptance and then action. Step Seven is the acceptance step. If I rush to get to the action steps, eight and nine, I will be doomed to repeat the cycle again and again.

When I become aware of a defect that is getting in the way of my relationships, I get to feel whatever comes up. There is usually fear, because what will I talk about if I don't share snippets of gossip or judge others' looks or behaviors? How will I fill in the hours of my day if I'm not over-busy or over-distracted? What will happen if others don't recognize my value? How do I keep my ego afloat?

Step Seven is so wise. It's not about making myself fit into my vision of what perfect must look like in order to be acceptable to others. It's about loving myself, revealing my flaws, and then letting go of the need for competition or acknowledgement. I get to consider what I believe and desire, and recognize I am the person my Higher Power created, not what others wanted.

If I let go of others' expectations and only deal with mine, I don't have to explain myself or live up to standards I don't even want to meet. I made a choice long ago that I just didn't want to be perfect, because I was confused about what perfect means. My favorite prayer is "God, help me to be a better person than I want to be." This little prayer does two things. It puts me in contact with my Higher Power, and it gives HP permission to change me.

Over the years, change has happened and I enjoy my place in the world so much more. Letting go of the defects that didn't serve me or others - needing to be seen as better than, or at least as good as - kept me anxious and uncomfortable. Being me with all my foibles

means realizing that just being makes me worthy of love. It allows me to be loving in return.

That's what Step Seven delivers. The last paragraph on page 56 in the **OA Twelve and Twelve** reminds me that "God does for us what we could never do for ourselves." But first we have to ask.

Anonymous



TRADITION SEVEN

Every OA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.



When I first heard this tradition, I automatically interpreted it in the context of financial support. It goes without saying that passing the basket keeps our groups afloat and enables us to support our Intergroup, World Service, and Region. And it is important to our recovery that we do not rely on outside donors, taking full responsibility for ourselves and honoring one another's anonymity.

But it was not until my home group's survival was endangered by declining attendance that I fully appreciated this tradition to the fullest, learning that the concept of self-support applies to service as well as finances.

When I started attending my home meeting five years ago, it was a boisterous, thriving body of 40-plus members. A couple of years ago, our numbers dropped precipitously. Sometimes only a handful of people would appear. We analyzed this drop in membership, and several theories of why, why, why this was happening were offered in our group conscience.

(continued on page three)

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A conversation with my sponsor directed me toward program, toward the solution and away from the problem. My part was to support the meeting in whatever way I could by attending, being abstinent, honoring the Seventh Tradition financially by putting what I could in the basket, accepting a service position, sponsoring, and turning the rest over to HP.

Each and every week, I made it a point to get to that meeting, no matter what, because it needed my support and I needed it.

Today, this meeting that once appeared to be on life support is thriving again. This happened because a few people did what they could, when they could, and gave back to others what they had been given. Newcomers trickled in, and many of them liked what we had and stayed to give of themselves in myriad ways, faithfully practicing the indispensable Tradition Seven.

Jane C.

Reprinted from July 2016 **OA Today**



Intergroup Email Changes

When Region 4 was disbanded and St. Louis Bi-State Area Intergroup needed to move its website hosting, the new platform included a monthly charge per email address. In an effort to be good stewards of the Intergroup treasury, the Board of Trustees made the decision to cancel individual emails for Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary and Treasurer. Anyone wishing to contact these members can do so through info@stlouisoa.org.

Intergroup has maintained individual emails for webmaster@stlouisoa.org and for newsletter@stlouis.org. Feel free to reach out to the Board of Trustees with questions at the info@stlouisoa.org address.

Intergroup Chair



New Book in OA Bookstore!

Since OA's founding in 1960, our Fellowship has become truly global, spanning many nations, languages, ages, cultural backgrounds, and personal struggles. **Diverse Voices** honors the incredible variety within our Fellowship and illuminates how this variety shapes individual journeys to recovery through the Twelve Steps.

Diverse Voices: A Common Solution (#954) includes more than 55 stories in more than 200 pages. Order your single copy (US\$13.50) or case of 25 (\$303.75) today at bookstore.oa.org or purchase your e-book: [Amazon Kindle](#), [Apple Books](#), [Barnes and Noble Nook](#)

Compulsive eating and compulsive food behaviors are the great unifiers of our Fellowship. No matter how different our many voices may seem, we believe that you will come to understand that whatever your personal background, attributes, or struggles with food, you are welcome in OA.

Finding Joy by the Numbers: Recovery from Relapse

Secret! I had a secret! I had been in full-blown relapse for over three years. All that time I was doing three things.

1. I kept it a secret. (That was very bad for me. Living a lie killed my morale and self-respect. It deadened the spirit inside me.)
2. I didn't turn to the program for help. (There is so much help out there - the Steps, Tools, other members! But I wanted to keep my secret more than I wanted to get well.)
3. I thought I'd get abstinent on my own. (Has this ever worked for anybody? It surely didn't work for me.)

Recovery from relapse seemed like a true miracle. Every part of it was full of HP's grace. I'm sure everyone's journey to recovery is different. This is how it happened for me.

1. I realized I hated myself and joined a newly forming step study group to help me with my destructive self-neglect.
2. My loving and inspired sponsor told me it would be better to find different help from someone with symptoms more like mine.
3. Instead of feeling rejected or anything, I took it as a wake-up call. (An amazing miracle of grace.)
4. I found someone to be a food sponsor. I told her my secret. Now one person knew the truth. And I found that the sincerity, earnestness, and commitment that I had been praying for all this time had come to me.
5. In the first month that I worked with the food sponsor, I wrote my Fourth Step in the step study group.
6. I found someone to hear my 5th Step.
7. I told her my secret. Now two people knew the truth!
8. She gently encouraged me to tell my secret to everybody by asking for a 30-

day coin at my next meeting. I said: "No Way."

9. But that night my Higher Power said to reach for recovery. The next day I agreed. Soon everyone knew the truth. The secret was over.
10. I found loving support from all, even from myself – the self-hatred was gone! Once again, I was living in joy.

Elizabeth C.



Artificial Intelligence, Volunteer Translators Will Soon Improve Translation of OA.org

A new artificial intelligence (A.I.) translation feature will soon launch on oa.org, offering better quality translation and giving National and Language Service Boards and other service bodies the ability to manually edit web page translations for even greater accuracy.

At launch, more than forty languages will be supported, covering all languages for which the World Service Office has records of registered meetings, licensed literature translations, World Service Business Conference delegates, and recent visitors to oa.org. OA.org will even recognize the member's browser language and automatically open the website in that language.

Volunteer translators are needed! If you are fluent in a non-English language and meet basic abstinence and service requirements, you can make our translations even better! [Learn more on our Translator Collaborator application form.](#)

From WSO Bulletin



Tool of the Month: Action Plan

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 Action Plan.

“To Do” List vs Action Plan

I love creating daily “to do” lists of what I need to complete each day to feel like I am accomplishing something. Crossing off what I have completed gives me purpose. My upbringing within my family was heavy on accomplishments and doing and work.

My “to do” lists change daily and are less thought-provoking and unorganized than action plans: Clean the bathroom, vacuum the living room, take out the trash...single tasks that don’t necessarily lead to emotional satisfaction.

I must admit - I like a little pay off. I throw in a little healthy pleasure on my to do lists... as a reward for completing my tasks (play with colors, design a new quilt, read for 30 minutes).

But an action plan is much more: A new way of living, a personal commitment and adherence to the principles in the program: working the steps, listening to my HP, communicating with my sponsor and other fellows...a healthy way of transforming and calming my emotional disturbance with acceptance, grace and humility.

Action plans provide a specific direction, a north star, while navigating rough waters. Beginning with an alteration of thinking, of facing oneself honestly, addressing insecurities, biases, fears and transforming unhealthy way of looking at things, I consider an action plan a reframe of my thinking, retooling my mental and emotional thought processes and adjusting my focus on what is the best way to manage myself in a specific situation where my emotions might take over. It is a way of living life comfortably, being in the moment but with purpose.

I think of action in a recovering mindset. When we have a visionary mindset, we see a future state of our surroundings, encounters, and experiences, and together we now have the ability to move towards a new freedom and a new happiness.

Jody A.
OA Member

Two Meetings Changing Zoom Logins Effective August 1

These two meetings will have new Zoom login information coming soon:

- Saturday 10:00 a.m. Webster Groves Step & Tradition Study (WSO # 08734)

AND

- Monday 7:00 p.m. Newcomers Meeting (WSO # 11652)

Be sure to check the latest [Where and When](#) before you join these meetings in August.

Question of the Month: How Do You Bring Recovery Along on a Summer Trip?

For some of us, eating away from home can be an open invitation to the higher quantities our disease desires. Or to eating some of our “yellow-light” foods: ones we don’t eat frequently because they call to us sometimes, but that we don’t react to as insanely as our “red-light” foods. For others the lack of structure can feel frightening by itself. Doing things a little loopy-goosy threatens the firm boundaries we rely on.

So we each have to work out with our Higher Power and our sponsor what will work for us. There are, however, a variety of strategies that we hear in meetings that we may be able to adopt or adapt for our own situations. Here are a few:

Strategize with a sponsor before leaving.

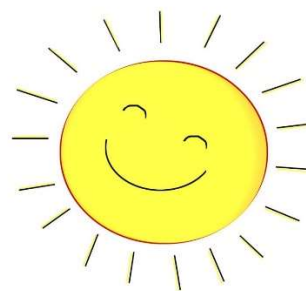
Failure to plan is planning to fail. Talking to our sponsor before we depart and developing a strategy for the trip is a great way to bring a sense of structure to the journey.

Call ahead, when possible, to see what the menu will be. Especially when visiting loved ones and friends, we can easily call to see what will be on the menu. If we’re concerned little or nothing will meet our needs, we can not attend, or we can ask if we can bring something we can eat.

Check out eateries along the way in advance. We can plan where we want to stop if we are driving. The internet allows us to search out and check the menus of eateries before we leave. If we are going on an extended vacation, we can look into restaurants around our hotel or the area we are visiting to ensure we have someplace to get the food we need.

Bring food in the car/plane/train just in case. Having a small snack item might be a saving grace if we are caught in awful traffic, sitting on a runway, or what have you and unable to eat our scheduled meal. Whatever that small item is, we tell our sponsor about it and keep it in reserve for an emergency.

Don’t always eat out. If we are renting a house or have a hotel room with a fridge or a small galley, we may be able to buy the food we usually eat and keep it handy. That reduces our eating out and increases the structure we’ll have.



Use a 3-0-1 plan and don’t touch binge foods. This is the first plan listed in the “Dignity of Choice” pamphlet. If we truly don’t know what our food choices will be, we can keep things simple by committing to three moderate meals a day, nothing in between, one day at a time, and no binge foods.

Stay in touch with a sponsor. Just because we leave town doesn’t mean we leave our sponsors behind. We may need them more than ever while traveling. Even if we can’t call them without risking our anonymity, we can certainly text or email, both of which are silent. Also, if something is bugging us that may lead us to eat, staying in touch with a sponsor will help us avoid eating over feelings.

Be sure to do a 10th Step inventory at night. The rationale here is to ensure that we check in our eating. Did we respond to anything in our day by making excuses based on our circumstances while traveling to eat compulsively? ***(continued on page seven)***

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Is there anything that occurred during the day that we need to deal with before we might eat compulsively tomorrow?

Most important of all, however, is that we trust and rely on our Higher Power. Many times, traveling brings with it stressors such as traffic, lost luggage, or simply the strangeness of being away from home. If visiting family and friends, we may feel ill-at-ease being a houseguest or longstanding conflicts may rear up. In many cases, we may be visiting our eating buddies. Our old way of dealing with these things was to eat for ease and comfort. Now we are in the business of trusting and relying on God. We replace food with God. We sit with difficult feelings and situations, knowing that by not reacting to them with extreme actions or with compulsive eating, we will be OK. We accept a little discomfort now in exchange for keeping the abstinence that allows us to be sane in this world.

Reprinted from **Seacoast OA**
November 15, 2015



Intergroup Chair Report

Summer greetings!

Just after the mid-May World Service Business Conference, the OA Board of Trustees, Region Chairs Committee, and Unity with Diversity Conference Committee published a Statement of Support for The Rainbow (LGBTQ+) Specific Focus Service Board (see p. 14 of the June **OA Today** newsletter at [THIS LINK](#)).

What is a “Specific Focus Service Board?” According to our World Service Organization: “Specific-focus service boards are composed of two or more groups or intergroups to serve the common needs of groups and intergroups

with the same specific focus, regardless of geographic proximity.”

At our June 9 Intergroup meeting there was a discussion about the various types of specific focus meetings available to our Fellowship and some sharing about experiences attending them. There are a wide range of meeting topics, including: 100-Pounders; Anorexia/Bulimia; Asian Pacific Islander; Atheist/Agnostic/Secular; Bariatric Surgery; Black; Indigenous and People of Color; Health Issues; LGBTQ+; Men; Women; and Young People.

To underscore this range of experience, strength and hope within our Fellowship, a new OA book has just been published: **Diverse Voices: A Common Solution**. This book contains over 55 stories, by us and for us, and is a wonderful example of Unity in action. You can find it in the WSO bookstore or download online for an e-reader.

Our next Intergroup meeting will be on July 14 at 1:30pm. All are welcome!

In grateful service,
Eileen M.

ARTICLES FOR THE NEXT NEWSLETTER ARE DUE BY JULY 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.

Every Day Can Be Interdependence Day

In July, my thoughts often turn to independence. According to an online dictionary, independent means:

- not subject to control by others
- not requiring or relying on others (as for care or livelihood)

As a compulsive overeater, it is clear that I am not subject to the control of others. There are many people who love me who would magically change my relationship to food if they could, but they cannot.

They are not alone. When it comes to food, I cannot control myself either. I am powerless over food.

Because I have been taught that being independent is the goal for human beings, I have assumed that I must keep my food problems to myself. Surely I can whip myself into shape and not rely on others for help. But my quest for independence did not go well, and my health declined as my weight went up and up and up. Ashamed to admit my failure, I embraced the distorted independence of isolation.

In OA, I have found a better way. Instead of being independent, my life has more joy and freedom when I am interdependent. The dictionary says interdependence means:

- dependent upon one another
- mutually dependent

I embrace this when ***Our Invitation to You*** is read at the beginning of my home meeting: “The amazing secret to the success of this program is just that: weakness. It is weakness, not strength, that binds us to each other and to a higher power and somehow gives us an ability to do what we cannot do alone.”

And the ***OA Promise*** expresses our interdependence so well: “I put my hand in yours, and together we can do what we could never do alone. No longer is there a sense of hopelessness, no longer must we each depend upon our own unsteady willpower. We are all together now, reaching out our hands for power and strength greater than ours, and as we join hands, we find love and understanding beyond our wildest dreams.”

Happy Interdependence Day – every day!
Anonymous



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

July 27 – “Telling Our Story” – 9 a.m.-noon – hybrid Recovery Event – see page 9

September 6-8 – Region 5 Convention – Independence, OH; Registration details available at [THIS LINK](#)

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

October 11-13 – Fall Retreat - LaSalle Retreat Center, Wildwood, MO

October 13 – 1:30 p.m. – IG meeting**

November 10 – 1:30 p.m. - IG 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 IG Representatives expected to attend. All welcome!

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

St. Louis Bi-State Intergroup
Overeaters Anonymous

RECOVERY TIMES:

TELLING OUR STORY

SUPER SATURDAY - Hybrid

Hosted by the Webster Groves
Saturday Morning
Step & Tradition
Study Group

July 27, 2024

Registration: 9 am CDT
Program: 9:30 to noon CDT
\$6 Suggested donation

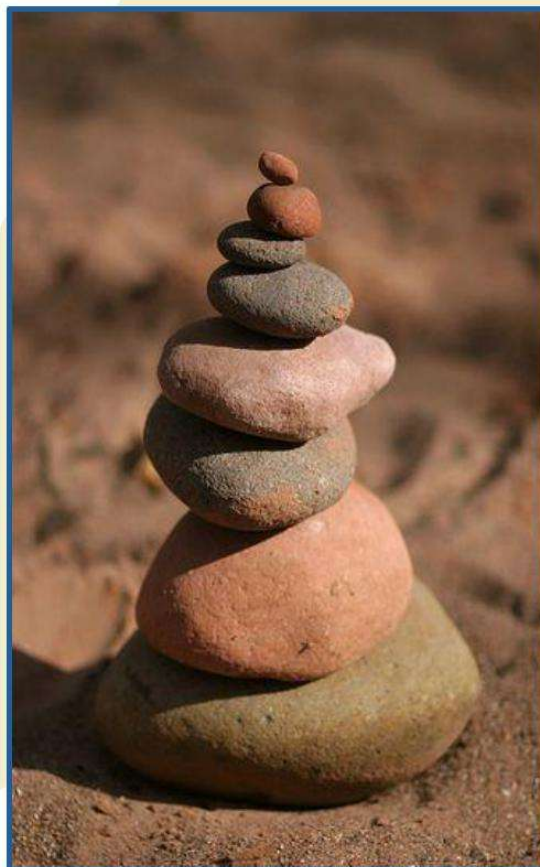
IN PERSON:

Webster Groves
Presbyterian Church
45 W. Lockwood Ave. 63119

- Accessible
- Use east entrance off side parking lot

ON ZOOM:

Meeting ID: 840 7543 7936
Passcode: 260867



Questions? Call Dianne S. 314.238.4052

All are welcome! Please never stay away from any OA event for financial reasons!