

August 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

SELF discipline

STEP EIGHT

Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.

I confess, I rarely read the chapter in our **OA 12 & 12** on the 8th Step unless I have been asked to speak on it or am working it myself as part of my own recovery. And each time I do read it I am surprised that it has so much to say about forgiveness. On page 60 it states that forgiveness is essential to completing the step.

I tend to only remember that I need to make a list and become willing. Over time I've come to think that means to start by writing down the names of those whom I have hurt. If I want to make amends to them they go in a column labeled "Amends now." Those whom I'd rather not go in a column marked "Later (maybe)." Those I never want to make amends to go in a third column called "Never." Because I am willing to make amends to people in the first column, it can be easy to justify that my work on Step 8 is done - without any of that forgiveness stuff. **(continued on page two)**

Newcomers Corner The Power of NOT Part 5

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 Four – Courage. Do NOT Fear.

As with Hope, fear can be informative. It can provide information that I need to make good decisions about what direction I need to go next. So, I can't NOT FEAR.

I had to right size this and allow space for courage. In order to Not Fear, I had to find a tiny speck of courage and step forward into the unknown.

Step 4 is so intimidating, and hard. I cried so much during this step. And I did find courage. Things I never wanted to say out loud - not just stuff I was ashamed of, things I was absolutely certain that I would be judged for, quickly and harshly - I had to write those things out. I had to give them over to my HP. Then I had to give them away to another human being. Scary!

Over the course of a weekend, my wonderful first sponsor heard all of my misdeeds, all my hurts, all the bad in my life, wrought by me, and brought to me by others. She was kind. She made sure I knew that she had done many of those things as well. She let me know I was not alone. And beautifully, not being alone, made courage in the face of fear possible. I LOVE that about this program.

(continued in September)

(continued from page one)

Obviously there is more to do if I also need to forgive. For me, I must now put my name at the top of the list. I must begin the process of forgiving myself for the harm I have caused.

The previous steps are helpful as I review the progression of my recovery. I no longer steal food, lie about what I eat, or blame others for my compulsive eating. A thought that is helpful in this process for me is "I did what I did until I knew better and then I did better." This sums up recovery for me.

The **OA 12 & 12** also suggests that we make a list of all those who have harmed us as often there is much overlap. It is suggested that we write how we were harmed, and in doing so we place boundaries around our hurts. Not everyone on the planet has harmed me (even if it feels that way at times), and I have not harmed everyone either. The boundaries and the writings make forgiveness easier as we see that we are human and hurt others just as others are human and hurt us. We are not being asked to forgive the actions, only ourselves and others. I see this as the spiritual work of Step 8. It requires much self-discipline which is the spiritual principle of the step.

Anonymous



More Than 50 Attend July 2024 Super Saturday

The Webster Groves MO Step and Tradition Study Group that meets on Saturday mornings at 10 a.m. hosted their first recovery event since moving to a new location. The group now

convenes as a hybrid meeting at First Presbyterian Church, 45 Lockwood.

More than fifty people attended the 9:30 a.m.-noon Super Saturday which featured five speakers. About two-thirds were at the church with the rest online. **Recovery Times: Telling Our Story** was the theme. Participants were able to decorate a rock to take home as a reminder of the day. Literature was sold, and the host committee reports that eight copies of the new OA book, **Diverse Voices: A Common Solution** were sold! Thanks to all the planners and speakers!



TRADITION EIGHT

Overeaters Anonymous should remain forever non-professional, but our service centers may employ special workers.



What I love about Tradition 8 is that I never have to do anything on my own. It is a group effort to keep our fellowship alive and active. We work together to keep meetings healthy. We work in committees to keep our Intergroup (IG) active. We work with other Intergroup members to support World Service - and so on, and so on.

For a couple years I worked as a volunteer for the Bi-State IG office, helping to manage the volunteers. I enjoyed doing it because this allowed me to use organizational skills that I felt confident in. Yet, I could never have done that without those who came before and those who worked alongside me. It was not a one-woman job, and I was so grateful for the teamwork that was involved in the service.

It also was a great opportunity for me to meet
(continued on page three)

(continued from page two)

friends in the fellowship that I may not have met otherwise because I was working alongside people who went to different meetings from me. The complicated efforts of managing the financial affairs of our IG was a larger job than any volunteer could take on, so a professional bookkeeper was necessary. Today our IG no longer has an office, but the bookkeeping is still a necessary element of managing our affairs, and it is still a paid position.

I've also taken on a variety of service positions at the group level – treasurer, keeper of the phone list, meeting leader, Zoom host security training. There are so many ways that one can step up to help. No matter how big or small, more hands in the group effort are ALWAYS welcome.

Recently I started sponsoring someone after not sponsoring for a long time. If I'm going to be brutally honest, sponsoring makes me nervous because I'm a little afraid of my own ego. Sometimes I think I know it all, and sometimes I feel like I have no idea about anything! I try to channel my sponsors (yes, I have two!) when I'm talking with my new sponsee. I always need to remember that all of us – my sponsee, my sponsors, and myself – **are all only human**. Not one of us knows the magic words that will solve all of life's mysteries, issues, or dilemmas. What we do for each other is listen, love, and support each other from a place of authenticity, and if I can do that even just a tiny, little bit, then I hope I'm doing my part.

I am a non-professional, I do not pretend to know all the answers, I can only share my own experience and the lessons that I am learning.

Recently, a friend said to me: "she is just a grain of sand on the beach." What a beautiful sentiment. As a grain of sand apart from other grains, I will get overlooked, lost, and have the

littlest impact on anything or anyone. However, if I snuggle in close to all the other grains, there is a beautiful expanse – a beach, a coastline, a resting place.

Together we can do, what we could never do alone. That's what the 8th Tradition means to me – learning how to work together to keep this program of recovery thriving while remembering that we can always ask for professional help when a task asks too much of any one person. Tradition 8 allows us to survive and thrive!



My Ah Ha Moment

I was doing my daily brain exercises a couple of weeks ago, and one is a game called Quote Slide. You get all the letters, and all the blank spaces and punctuation, and then you have to put them in order to reveal the "Quote of the Day."

After I solved the puzzle, a quote by an ancient Chinese philosopher was revealed. It basically affirmed a paradox, that perfect happiness is the absence of striving for happiness.

My first thought was, "Oh! That was what I found working the steps!" My next immediate thought was, "WOW, my first thoughts are now program thoughts." And while I had already done my gratitudes for the day, and I had connected with my HP and set my intentions for the day, I was so stunned and grateful that I did them again.

I am grateful that daily practice of the principles of this program have helped me to build new ways of thinking that are so different from my addict brain. I am grateful that my daily practice of being aware of my thoughts allows me to see, in the moment, how very far along this

(continued on page four)

(continued from page three)

path I had walked. Selfishly perhaps, but I am also so very grateful that I had learned to get out of my own way.

As long as I tried to live my life by my will alone, happiness eluded me. By continuing to work these simple – yet complex – steps, I have truly turned my will over to the care of my HP. I step forward into every new day sure that whatever I encounter is what I am supposed to have in my life. I no longer fight reality. I no longer “Should” situations.

Events happen; that is reality. Some I like, others not so much. As long as I accept life on life’s terms, turn my will over, and do the next right thing, I am content with the outcomes.

12 Steps led me to a place where I could see the happiness I always sought was right in front of me. I don’t have to seek it; I have to trust it, appreciate it. I had to learn to get out of my own way.

Melanie T
Grateful for 5224 days in OA;
4514 days abstinent and
able to be present in my life



Quotes Worth Remembering

"...set aside theological arguments and examine the idea of spiritual power in light of our own desperate need for help with our lives." **The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous**, Second Edition, page 13.

"I commit my life to OA, and when I feel myself slipping back into my disease I will treat myself with massive doses of program." **Lifeline Sampler**, page 42

Borrowing Trouble?

So often I have to choose between the “easier, softer way”* and the hard way my pesky inner voice says would be the right thing to do. Maybe it’s a major life decision. Maybe it’s a daily choice about food and food behaviors. So often I want the “easier, softer way” with all my heart, almost. But how easy and soft is it, really?

Sure, it’s easy in the moment. I can be comfortable. I can go on doing whatever I want to. I don’t have to spend effort and energy doing something else instead. And I don’t have to do without something I really want, either.

But it’s what my grandma called “Borrowing trouble.” The easy part comes first, but the trouble is right behind it. It’s like ordering something for same-day delivery – I get what I want right away, but the day comes when I have to pay for it. The cost may be enormous. For me, those easier choices about life or food bring on debt collectors who not only ask for money but demand a piece of my soul. That way leads me to despair.

Choosing the right way up front is a lot easier compared to that! It so often leads me to peace and joy!

***Alcoholics Anonymous**, Fourth Edition, page 58.

Elizabeth C



Intergroup Chair Share – August 2024

New Intergroup Vice Chair: I'm delighted to announce that we have a new Intergroup Vice Chair. Amy G. was elected at the July 14 meeting, and we are grateful for her willingness to serve in this position. Our board is once again fully staffed.

Your Intergroup Needs You: We are actively looking for a new Treasurer who will be elected in November and begin serving in January 2025. This position is critical to the operation of our Intergroup. As always in OA, the incoming Board member is never alone; our outgoing Treasurer will be available to mentor.

We also have openings for two Region Representatives (2) and a World Service Business Conference Delegate (1).

Nomination Forms are available on www.stlouisoa.org. Click on the Member & Intergroup Information Box/Documents and Forms for details on these positions, or feel free to reach out to me at info@stlouisoa.org.

In grateful service,
Eileen M.



New Logins for Monday & Saturday Meetings; Group Number Changes

The following meetings have been updated on the oa.org website:

Group 11652 – **Newcomers Meeting**, Mondays at 7 p.m.; the NEW Meeting ID is 845 7606 1803; passcode is 661279.

Group 53332 - **Big Book Study**, Thursdays at 7 a.m.; the NEW Group Number is 801486.

Group 08734 - **Webster Groves Step and Tradition Study**, Saturdays at 10 a.m.; NEW Meeting ID is 825 7618 5057; new passcode 634995.

All of these changes are effective **August 1, 2024**.



OA Retreat Focuses On the Wisdom of Slogans

“Are we nuts?!” That’s right! **Not Using the Slogans.**

This year’s Overeaters Anonymous retreat will be held at the LaSalle Retreat Center in Glencoe, MO, October 11-13, 2024. We are focusing on those times when a quick slogan can ease a bit of disruptive emotions about abstinence or cravings that can lead to turmoil in our lives.

Newcomers often feel overwhelmed by the language of OA and face times of confusion as they begin to adapt themselves to this process. Simplifying terms can make the difference between success or relapse.

There are activities to keep us focused on Keeping It Simple Sweetie, One Day at a Time, Nothing Tastes as Good as Abstinence Feels, and a multitude of OA phrases to help us through tough times.

Come and share an up-close weekend with your OA friends and family as we learn how to work a better program and simplify our language to those coming through the doors the first time.

Glencoe is located a few miles north of Eureka, overlooking Highway 109. The center is located near a beautiful valley. There are trails and a labyrinth for times of reflection or to stretch your legs. The facility was built a

(continued on page six)

(continued from page five)

few decades ago, with an old-world charm. There are single and double occupancy rooms with a Jack and Jill bathroom in between. Approximately thirty (30) spaces are available at this time.

The registration form is available now on our website at [THIS LINK](#). We hope to see you there.

Retreat Planning Team



New School Year Brings Change; So Does Recovery in OA

....And then we turn our calendar to August. Yikes! My husband returns to his classroom and our granddaughter, who lives with us, will soon be a proud first grader.

I committed to the OA newsletter team that I would write an article about back to school and changing schedules. I put off writing about it because I was grieving having to release my relaxed summer schedule. I like being on my own schedule and doing things in my own time frame. I don't like my calendar dictated by a school schedule. I don't like change.

I talked with my sponsor, and we decided it would be a good idea for me to write a 10th step on the upcoming school schedule.

When school starts our supper routine of eating together as a family is going to be affected this year. Our granddaughter arrives home from school at 3:45 p.m. and is famished. My husband doesn't arrive home from school until almost 6 p.m. Our

granddaughter has three activities throughout the week so that she needs to be on the road by 6 p.m. and gets back home at 7:30 p.m.

It makes me mad that I have to adjust schedules for supper times. I fear that I'm not capable of change. I want things to stay the same so that my life is easier. I tell myself the schedule will not work out or at least is an inconvenience.

I have made supper time/family time bigger than it is. Often during previous school years, our mealtimes were tense because we were racing to get to the table to eat and then racing to finish so we could be off and running to activities or meetings.

Schedules come and go. Life changes, and I have adjusted to school schedules in the past. I will adjust again. I have already done a couple things differently this time. I started by asking God for help. I'm acknowledging my feelings.

There will be a few nights each week when we can't eat together as a family. Family time/supper times/ schedules can be revised and adjusted. I'm giving myself the okay to look at alternatives.

I have a few ideas of how we can still connect as a family before our granddaughter goes to bed. We can sit on our granddaughter's bed to talk. We can sit at the table playing a simple game. My husband can cuddle our granddaughter on the couch while I read to them. We can tell jokes or listen to Poppa tell dad jokes. We can play music and be silly and be dancing fools.

Love finds a way for us to connect. I'm grateful today that I can look at my options and ask for help. I'm grateful today I can love myself enough to reach out and hold your hand and know I am not alone.

Sue S.

Region 5 Summer Conference Report

Two St. Louis Bi-State Intergroup Region Representatives participated in our first Region 5 event on July 20, a virtual Summer Conference. There were 28 attendees from seven states, which included 4 Executive Board Members, our Trustee Liaison, 19 Region Representatives and 4 visitors. All the attendees were wonderfully welcoming to all of us former Region 4 folks.

The event was a like mini-Assembly or business meeting, and there are also two in-person Assemblies annually in Region 5. We participated in two break-out sessions, a Business Committee and an Outreach Sub-Committee.

Amy G. attended the Media Committee. All members are encouraged to send short recovery articles to be published on the <https://www.region5oa.org/> website. The length of articles is preferred to be 2-3 paragraphs. The media group also rotates a monthly check to confirm that all links on the website are working.

Amy's second breakout session was in the Communications Connectivity group, currently focusing on college campuses and young people. Amy jumped right in and will reach out to the OA Young Peoples' Virtual Intergroup, <https://oayoungpeople.org/>.

Eileen M. participated in the Finance Committee breakout which reviewed income and expenses. Great news that the upcoming Region Convention is ahead of budget with registration income!

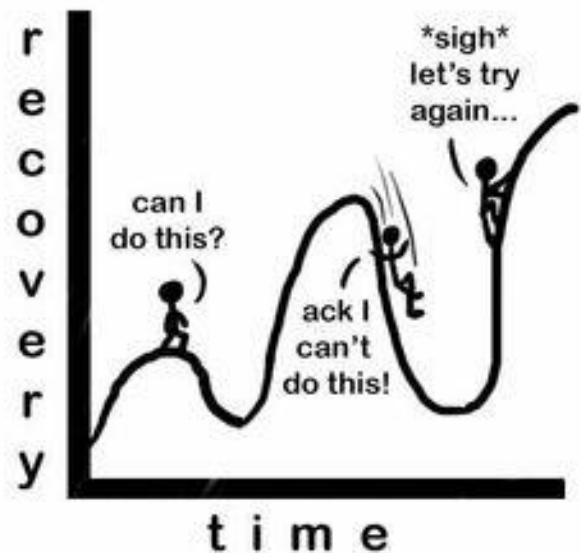
It was a joy to be in the second breakout, Everything Intergroup. Here the focus is on creating a welcoming atmosphere for the new intergroups that have just come on board. This

group will also encourage mentorship for new region reps coming to the in-person Fall Assembly.

Of particular interest – the Sponsorship & Speakers Committee is planning a workshop on Sponsorship that will be available to intergroups and can be adapted for online or in-person group events.

Just a reminder that the Region 5 Convention will be September 6-8, **Welcome Home: (Many Symptoms, One Solution)**. Advance registration closes on August 9:

<https://stlouisoa.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/Reg-5-Convention-2024.pdf>



how recovery really works



Tool of the Month: Anonymity

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 Anonymity.

Only Through Anonymity

When I first came into Overeaters Anonymous, I quickly learned to respect anonymity: who I saw, who said what—none of that was mine to share with anyone. Basically, I learned not to gossip about who, what, where, or when. This made sense to me, especially because I didn't want anyone to know who I was or tell anyone what I had said or that I was attending OA. I valued my privacy and could understand others wanting their privacy too. At the time, [The Tools of Recovery](#) pamphlet clearly stated to me all there was to know about anonymity.

My Higher Power blessed me with a wonderful [sponsor](#) who encouraged me to study the [Steps](#) and [Traditions](#). Each time through, I learned a little more and understood a little better. But I really had trouble with Tradition Twelve. How could anonymity be the foundation of my program? Surely the

foundation was abstinence or the Steps, not anonymity. Not gossiping, not saying who I saw or who said what—how did that fit in? In my personal and professional life, I knew stars and VIPs. They had specific personas, and I had certain expectations of them given that they were stars and VIPs. In my own world, I was a minor star and VIP as an instructor, coach, and manager. People had perceptions and expectations of me. Unfortunately, I felt I had to portray a certain persona and fill or exceed certain expectations, especially my own. This caused me to feel better than and less than everyone and to be filled with fear, doubt, and insecurity.

As I kept coming back and heard more about anonymity, I slowly learned that I could just be myself. True, I didn't know who I really was, but in the safety of anonymity, I learned I was one of many, neither better than nor less than. There were no expectations, either real or imagined, that I had to fulfill. My sponsor and my Higher Power loved me just the way I was, and by studying the Steps and the Traditions, I started to love myself! This allowed me to gain relief from “the bondage of self” ([Alcoholics Anonymous](#), 4th ed., p. 63) and begin becoming another person. But how was this possible?

With each reading of [The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous, Second Edition](#), I learned that each Step and Tradition has a [Spiritual Principle](#): qualities such as honesty, hope, faith, courage, integrity, unity, trust, neutrality, identity, fellowship, responsibility, structure, and others—twelve and twelve altogether—that helped me become a better me to myself and others. In reading and rereading page 168 of the *Twelve and Twelve*, I also learned, “As we recover in OA, we come to feel that anonymity is one of our most precious possessions. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of our
(continued on page nine)

(continued from page eight)

transformed lives. . . . We know that support for our recovery will always be here for us, as long as we remember ‘to place principles before personalities,’ (Tradition Twelve) respecting these vital Twelve Traditions that bind us together in the Fellowship of Overeaters Anonymous.”

Anonymous

*Reprinted from Lifeline: A Meeting on the Go
November, 2020*



ARTICLES FOR THE NEXT NEWSLETTER ARE DUE BY SEPTEMBER 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.



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 – see flyer on page ten

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 Area Intergroup of Overeaters Anonymous 🍁

2024 Fall Retreat
Are we **N.U.T.S?**
Not Using The Slogans



DATES: Oct. 11-13, 2024
LOCATION: LaSalle Retreat Center,
2101 Rue De LaSalle, Glencoe, MO
63038 *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.) Specify any dietary restrictions on registration.
- ROOMING: Single (limited availability) or double occupancy with 1 ADA compliant bathroom (All rooms have Jack and Jill bathrooms - linens and towels are included.) See pricing below.
- TENTATIVE ACTIVITIES: sessions on using the slogans to promote abstinence and working the program, sharing time, 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 to Dianne Stang, PO Box 91, Kimmswick, MO 63053. **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! Scholarships are available.*

First name: _____ Last name: _____
Email: _____ Telephone: _____

Early Bird Registration by Sep 3 *Price is per person:*

- single w/5 meals \$230 (limited availability) single only \$160 (limited availability)
- double w/5 meals \$210* double only \$140*
- Saturday only - includes 2 meals and program \$85

Regular Registration from Sep 4 to Sep 24 *Price is per person:*

- single w/5 meals \$245 (limited availability) single only \$175 (limited availability)
- double w/5 meals \$225* double only \$155*
- Saturday only - includes 2 meals and program \$100

***If you do not specify a roommate, one will be assigned.**

*Name of roommate: _____ (must register separately)

We care fund donation: \$ _____ (optional)

- ADA room needed Willing to do service Willing to facilitate a session

QUESTIONS? Contact Della 314.580.4881, Bill 636.795.2634, or Marina F 815.343.6412

