

October 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 TEN

Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong, promptly admitted it.



Oh, no! Where will I get my Tenth Step journal now that Region 4 is disbanding? This was my first thought when I heard the news last year about the upcoming demise of Region 4. After all these years in the program, my first thought is still all about me!

You see, a few years ago, I decided that I needed to do a more directed Tenth Step at the end of the day. I had seen a Tenth Step journal at one of our events - a journal published by Region 4. Using the suggested guidelines for Steps 10 and 11 from pages 84 to 88 in the **Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous**, Region 4 had published a journal for daily practice of these steps.

Each day has two pages, one for morning and one for the evening. The morning page had a place to make a food plan, list gratitudes and something we like about ourselves as well as space to reflect on the morning meditation. The evening page incorporated the questions from page 86: "Were we resentful, selfish, dishonest or afraid? Do we owe an apology?" etc.

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Newcomers Corner The Power of NOT Part 7

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 6 – Willingness. Do Not Hold on To Things That Do You Harm. This is where the rubber meets the road. Time for action. Our outsize and undersized behaviors are now shaken loose in the 4th and 5th Steps.

It is time to start practicing who we want to be in the world. A lifelong project for sure. I started this very simply. I carried around a card of the principles of this program and their opposites. When I reached a place where I wasn't sure what the next right thing was, I asked for help. Then I paused and I read my list.

What healthy habit is going to help me get to that next abstinent moment? Change for me felt painstakingly slow. It took me forever to run every decision through this matrix: Was it honest? Am I fearful or faithful? I would go through each principle, then I would decide, then I would act. Step 6 is all about action.

My shorthand to letting go and letting Higher Power? I **Do the Next Right Thing.**

(continued in November)



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Again, there was also a place to reflect on what we had done right during the day. Finally, at the bottom, there was an opportunity to ask for the removal and replacement of defects, concluding with prayers for others.

By using these journals, I found that my recovery continued to progress and that I was able to more quickly identify and deal with the things that blocked me from following HP's will for me to be happy, joyous, and free. But what to do without Region 4?

Once again, HP provided. On a Zoom call with representatives from the other regions, I learned that Region 4 was not the only one creating these kinds of journals. I immediately jumped on the Internet and searched for other regions' versions. So far, I've used the [Region 1](#) and the [Region 7](#) journals, both of which are similar but not identical to the Region 4 version. There are things I like and dislike about both of them so if you are interested in this practice, I suggest doing some research before purchasing one.

But no matter what, my suggestion is to do Steps 10 and 11 on a daily basis. Try it and you may come to like it! My personal lesson for today is that even though my first thought was self-centered, my second thought was to share with all of you these wonderful resources. Happy journaling!

Anonymous



TRADITION TEN

Overeaters Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence, the OA name ought never be drawn into public controversy.



AA played such an important role in the development of 12 Step programs, that AA's literature on Tradition 10 has been a guide for OA related to "outside issues." In the **Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous** on page 182, the tradition reads, "No A.A. group or member should ever, in such a way as to implicate A.A., express any opinion on outside controversial issues – particularly those of politics, alcohol reform, or sectarian religion. The Alcoholics Anonymous groups oppose no one. Concerning such matters they can express no views whatever."

Bill Wilson clarifies this tradition in the **AA 12&12** on page 180, when he writes, "Nor does it mean that the members of Alcoholics Anonymous, now restored as citizens of the world, are going to back away from their individual responsibilities to act as they see the right upon issues of our time. But when it comes to A.A. as a whole, that's quite a different matter. In this respect, we do not enter into public controversy, because we know that our Society will perish if it does."

Tradition 10 has sometimes been difficult for me because I have strong opinions about OA. My life has changed for the better since I did the work of this program. Living by the principles has bought peace and happiness to me. I want everyone to have that.

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What I have to remember with this step is my Humility, learned in Step 7, which reminds me daily that I do not know everything there is to know. Therefore, I do not judge others for their opinions, I keep my mind open and looking to learn. As I do not know everything, I cannot then “have all the answers” about any subject.

In program we can clearly see this principle at work in Sponsoring. We are guides. We can share what worked for us, but the most important thing we do is lend a steadying hand as our sponsee finds their own new path.

This tradition protects these rooms. To state an absolute opinion about a 12 Step group, could lead someone who needs to find us choosing not to look at this recovery path due to some bias that an opinion of an outside issue may bring.

There is a story about an early newspaper article in which it was reported that “belief in Jesus Christ is essential to success” in the program. Yet we have many members in countries all around the world who have benefited from a roomier concept of a Higher Power of our own understanding. The OA group in question had to fight for years to try to correct this misinformation, which is actually still being circulated today. In short, even if a particular specific religious-based stance is my belief, and I credit that as part of my success in this program, I cannot speak for OA as a whole and say that is a belief held by the organization.

Keep your passions! As you walk the steps, it is certainly hoped that you will return to interests, passions, hobbies, and causes out in the world. For me, the ultimate hope of recovery was an awakening to a full life, where I am present and engaged with my own experiences. Unless they specifically pertain to disorders around food, those passions don't belong in the rooms. Here we focus on the addiction of disordered eating. Period.

It is worth noting here that many members of OA who are double or triple winners and attend more than one Anonymous group. The issues and practices of those groups, while similar in structure and principles, focus on their addiction, which is different from ours. We keep our focus on recovery from disordered food behaviors by only using OA literature in our meetings. All other addictions are outside issues.

Personally, and this is entirely my experience and journey, I find recovery everywhere. I have a playlist of songs that remind me of my commitment to my abstinence. There are movies I watch because they reinforce the good lessons I learned in this program. There are books from other 12 step groups that I have found incredibly useful especially with topics that just wouldn't quite click for me. I leaned in, looked further, and found the path that works for me.

Do I want to shout to the world how OA had changed my life? Yes, I do. The happiness, confidence, and exuberance I feel daily are all byproducts of my work in OA and with my therapist. I would love to help others find the healing I have found. However, this program is not for everyone. It is hard work, and not everyone wants to work that hard. And it is not up to me to tell anyone else what path they need to take.

So, what I do with this outside issue promise I make to OA is this: I live out loud. I speak my story when asked, or the opportunity presents itself, always remembering to lead with humility and the caveat that this is my experience only. I hope I walk this line well. I understand the necessity of these rooms being open for that next person.

Tradition 10 is not easy, but it is worth the work. It is one of the ways we nurture the OA unity on which our personal recovery depends.

Melanie T.

400

On August 17, 2024, I stepped on the scale for my check-in. 250 lbs. I had finally made it to 400 pounds lost in this program. I ran to tell my husband and just cried happy tears. It had taken me 5432 days in this program, 4533 of them abstinent from the compulsive eating that had truly defined my life.

I walked into the rooms April 10, 2010, weighing 650 pounds. More than that through, I was lost, defeated, I no longer really wanted to be living. I felt like I lived in a dirty bubble that I couldn't see or touch anything. I didn't want to be in OA, didn't want to be in that room. My therapist told me I had to go as part of my therapy for depression, anxiety, and panic attacks. So, I did. I knew I was in a bad place. I was at my bottom.

When you are 650 pounds, ironically you can disappear. And that turned out to be exactly what I was looking for. My denial was so strong. I absolutely knew for certain that I was eating healthy and that I must have the most efficient metabolism known to humanity. Addicts don't live life, but we are really good at pretending we do. It involves a lot of people pleasing, lying, manipulating, juggling of facts and who you told what to. The constant treadmill of keeping up with all the balls that I was juggling had exhausted me. I told my husband I couldn't go back to work. I had no bootstraps to pull on. And in my most selfish act to date as an addict, I stopped my life, and my incredible husband let me. He took care of me – and I was awful to him. I cut our income, much of which I squandered feeding my habit, by 40 percent. That makes a dent in the family budget.

I need to say that one more time. I stopped contributing at all, without discussion, without notice, without any thought as to what this would do to our home. I wanted to disappear, not have to juggle everything for everyone all

the time. (I asked for all that drama.) I wanted to be fat enough that people would stop expecting things from me. And I wanted to be left alone to get on with the long, slow suicide I had begun. I just burdened my entire existence on my husband - just fell down and didn't get back up, expecting to have my every whim still satisfied, while not even continuing the pretense of being a partner in our marriage. I will never do that to him again. He shouldered me for too many years.

The only reason I am able to write this today is because of him and you all. The fellowship and love in the OA program helped me to find a way to not hate myself. Then I dared to think that maybe there was a point to living – maybe. Then I really leaned in. I did my steps, my amends, started volunteering at meetings and events, did intergroup service, made friends, and started sponsoring ... and I continued to yo-yo my way down the scale towards a healthy body weight.

I have a solid daily routine which includes a healthy food plan, meditation in the morning where I set my intention to live by the principles of this program, a large list of the things I am grateful for, and a moment to check in with my HP. I am happy. Love my husband, now that I have learned what that really is. I am present in my life every day. I have no need to hide anymore. My life is full.

In OA I found acceptance, compassion, understanding, and love. I found a me I like. I dared to be me first in these rooms. To my great surprise, people liked me. I worked at it so hard – learning to trust the reflection of who I saw in the eyes of my friends in these rooms. I dared to believe in myself because they believed in me. I dared to like myself because they liked me. I dared to take this me out in the world, and I know I will live this program every day I have left.

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I found love, both the giving and receiving, I had to learn how to do that, and you all taught me. And my husband showed me with his patience, his support, and his unending belief in me.

For a long time, I stalled. Food plan was the same, daily routine same. But I would bounce up and down, up and down 30-40 lbs. Mostly though I could not seem to get and stay below 300. Still, I persevered. I knew if I left, that I would truly be giving up. And I wasn't that person anymore.

I wanted to live. So, I went to work, no stone unturned. I am now on a couple of new medications that have all my cylinders firing. Now eating the same food plan, I bounced up and down on, has me consistently moving down the scale.

On Saturday, September 14th, I hit 411 pounds taken off. I only have 49 lbs to my skin surgery target. I'm going to get there.

Thank you all for traveling this road with me.

Melanie T



**CELEBRATE
RECOVERY**

Editor's Note: In keeping with Tradition 11 and the author's sense of humor about a certain October holiday, two photos with seasonal masks superimposed have been provided.





Scales: To Weigh Or Not to Weigh.....

In 2022 and 2023, I had regained all my weight, so in August 2023, I decided to work with a dietitian. I strictly adhered to his instructions, and by February 2024, I was within 1 pound of reaching my goal weight when things went crazy.

Apparently, I hit a huge wall. My psyche just couldn't handle achieving this milestone, and I began to gain. No matter how hard I tried, I couldn't get back on track with my dietitian's instructions until I started OA on August 21, 2024. By then, I was up nine pounds.

I made my abstinence strictly following my dietitian's weekly menus. Within three weeks, I was within three pounds of my goal weight.

Wisely, my sponsor suggested I no longer weigh myself. My dietician also agreed to withhold my weekly weigh-in. September 13, 2024 began my newfound freedom!

Soon, I realized that my disease has used those scales to bully me for literally decades of my life. It never once told me, "You're perfect the way you are." It was always – you're too heavy; you've gaining too fast; you're losing too slowly; you're too fat; you should have gotten more exercise; you shouldn't have eaten that extra helping; if you hadn't gained this weight to begin with, you wouldn't need to lose it

again; here you go again, gaining more weight; what's wrong with you; you're such a failure.

My sponsor's suggestion had persuaded me to say good-bye to one of the meanest, longest lasting tools my disease has used against me. What matters today is being in OA, being abstinent, working the Steps, using the tools, and being in fellowship – not what I weigh.

On the day I quit weighing myself, someone said, "If I weigh my food, I don't have to weigh my body." Another said, "I'll worry about the little scales, and I'll let my HP worry about the big ones." It was the perfect day to hear these comments. And what did I say? "I'm so grateful today that the scales are no longer one of my tools of my program."

In summary, the scales were about me trying to control. Now, without them, it is about me having faith in OA, my food plan, my abstinence, my sponsor and dietician, and most of all, my loving God.

Disclaimer: This is my story – not my recommendation for anyone else in the program.

Anonymous



Recovery is Alive In Region 5

I attended the Region 5 Convention on September 6-8, and I want to share what a delightful event it was. Region 5 covers the states of Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, North Dakota, Ohio, and Wisconsin. This year's convention was held in Cleveland and over three hundred OA members attended. The theme was **"Follow the Twelve Steps Road,"** and the committee had incorporated it into the names of the sessions, the entertainment, and the decorations. The feeling of fellowship was palpable when we first arrived.

There were many members there that I recognized from previous years of service at the World Service Business Conferences and Conventions, so for me it was just lovely being welcomed by old friends and meeting new ones.

The keynote speakers shared on the diversity of our disease, anorexia, bulimia and compulsive eating. Hearing more about them helped me identify with all of them.

There was a charming skit about searching for the perfect sponsor using the characters from the Wizard of Oz.

There was a lot of excitement in the "marketplace", baskets to bid on and other treasures to help raise money to help carry the message within the region.

There were meetings happening throughout the weekend. My favorite session name was "I'm sorry my house fell on your sister." The topic was Step Nine, and how to be discerning when making amends.

Here's a five-point plan for dealing with strong emotions.

1. Sit and write what's going on.

2. What is this making me feel?
3. What's my part?
4. Use the steps – powerless, unmanageable, believe that you can be restored,
5. Decide to trust God.

"The more rules I put in place the less I was trusting God." "Become a person of good character."

It's difficult to filter the experience down to a simple description you haven't heard before, but the loving feeling of being together is indescribable. This is why we gather – to enjoy being a part of. To give back what we have received and to carry that light forward to the next person.

Next year's convention will be in Milwaukee, WI, May 23-25. Save the date so you can "Be Alive in '25" and join me there.

Cyndy



Tools Series Concludes; Holiday Inoculation Focus Begins

From the Editor: During the first nine months of 2024, we featured a Tool of the Month series of articles to support the recovery of our readers. We hope that you found this helpful!

Now as we move into what some of our members call "the eating holidays," we will offer one or more articles aimed at supporting your abstinence during the holidays in each of our newsletters through the end of the year. We also welcome your letters to the editor at info@stlouisoa.org if you have a holiday abstinence tip that you would like to share.

Finally, be sure to check the [Events](#) section of our Intergroup webpage; it will list holiday recovery events. This newsletter will have information about meetings open on holidays.



Staying Abstinent During The “Eating Holidays”

Today I sat down to write a cozy little article with tips for staying abstinent during the upcoming “eating holidays.” You know, things like “Consider the Consequences,” “The disease tells me lies in my own voice” and “Just don’t take the first compulsive bite no matter what.” There are lots of those tips in the pamphlet “A Lifetime of Abstinence,” and lots on the OA website oa.org (for instance in the Strong Abstinence Checklist).

Then I remembered all the times I have turned my back on those tips. I have to have a strong willingness and a strong commitment before I can even consider using a tip.

These holidays will have extra food temptations. Cravings can be strong. Extra strong. When the disease is telling me lies about how I deserve a little extra right now, what force is strong enough to keep me willing to fight for abstinence?

In OA, we find an answer. No human power can relieve my obsession, but a spiritual power can. Everyone has a different way of relating to a spiritual power. One thing I do is think about OA as a whole. OA is way greater than I am. I think of the thousands and thousands of us around the world who are working daily to maintain abstinence and who are living in the joy of recovery one day at a time.

Getting back to the upcoming holidays and how to cope with them, I think of two phases, preparation and follow-through.

Preparation is partly the habits we build while earnestly working the program. What works best for me on a daily basis? The steps, of course, and contacting my sponsor, and using the other tools that mean the most to me, like writing or being in touch with the fellowship. I have things I can do and people I can reach, and I can do that in a crisis because I have the habit of doing it routinely. Preparation also includes making an action plan for the holiday. For instance, am I going to give out candy for Halloween and expect myself not to eat any? Or could I think of some safer alternative?

Follow-through is what I do at the moment of serious temptation. For instance:

- Notice what is happening.
- Pause.
- Pray for willingness and commitment.
- Remind myself that “I am worth fighting for.”
- Now is a time when I can usefully think about all the tips I can find or remember.
- Then I can think what to do. Contact someone? Distract myself? Move away from the food table? Leave the room altogether?
- And then do whatever it takes.

That’s all for now. Here’s hoping for an abstinent holiday season for all of us!

Elizabeth C



Intergroup Updates & Highlights For October 2024

Public Information and Outreach - For the second year a team of volunteers from the Saturday 10 a.m. Webster Groves Step and Tradition Study meeting staffed the Overeaters Anonymous Public Information Booth at Recovery Fest 2024 in Kirkwood Park. Many people stopped by to inquire about our program and take brochures. Your service is appreciated.

The Annual Bi-State Intergroup Business Conference November 10 - We will consider motions to add/change Bylaws, as well as revisions to the Policy & Procedure Manual. If you or your meeting wish to submit a Motion for the Business Conference, it is due by October 10 and should be sent to info@stlouisoa.org. Forms to use for bylaw changes and a variety of other Intergroup business needs may be found at https://stlouisoa.org/?page_id=344.

Your Intergroup Needs You – Our Board of Trustees Treasurer will be stepping down as of December 31. 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 trusted servant is never alone; our outgoing Treasurer will be available to mentor. We also have openings for Region Representatives (2) and World Service Business Conference Delegate (1).

The deadline for submitting Nomination Forms is Friday October 24. Nomination Forms are available on www.stlouisoa.org. Click on the Member & Intergroup Information Box, Documents and Forms for details on these positions.

If you have any questions, please reach out to me at info@stlouisoa.org, or via text or call at 314-570-9333.

In grateful service,
Eileen M., Chair



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**

November 28 – find Thanksgiving Day meetings at [THIS LINK](#) and a flyer for the special Gratitude event on page 10.

****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](#).

ARTICLES FOR THE NEXT NEWSLETTER ARE DUE BY OCTOBER 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



Overeaters Anonymous

THANKSGIVING DAY

gratitude meeting

NOV 28, 2024

ZOOM ID: 538 040 418

PASSWORD: 002478

9:00-10:00 AM CST

Contact: Debbie K. 636-634-6201



\$5 suggested donation
to www.stlouisoa.org



No one should stay away
for financial reasons.

