

FEBRUARY 2025 OA TODAY NEWSLETTER

St. Louis Bi-State Intergroup of OA
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Newcomer's Corner The Power of NOT Part 11

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

Step 10 – Perseverance. Do **Not** Stop. I start my day with HP and gratitude. I set up intentions to be the person I have grown to be in this program: moral, kind, loving, honest, disciplined. I walk through my day, and then I take inventory at night. I make amends if needed. I go to bed each night with my side of the street clean.

Step 11 – Spiritual Awareness. Do **Not** Lose Contact with HP. I have a daily conversation with my HP. At any decision point, I pause and take a moment to listen and ask for help. I remain sure in the knowledge that I am an addict. Maintaining awareness of that fact and the knowledge of how my wrong-sized behaviors had impacted others is imperative if I am going to continue to fully inhabit my life. A sponsee put it to me this way, “I’m no saint; I’m just sober.”

STEP TWO

Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.

Loving Restoration

When I heard Step Two read aloud at meetings, it used to bother me. “Restored to sanity?” I thought disbelievingly. “I can’t point to a time when I ever was sane! What sanity is there to restore me to?”

Indeed, I behaved very insanely before I came into program, which was ten years ago when I was 13 pounds (6 kg) heavier than I am now. I used to sneak food and hide wrappers; plan to eat just one, but finish the whole box; and bring home several days’ worth of binge food and eat it all in front of the TV at one sitting.

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HOPE

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Also insane were the mental games I'd play. I'd fixate on food at every party and ignore the people attending. I'd deny myself "bad" food for a while, trying to feel "pure." Then I'd throw self-control out the window and dive in. When I was angry, sad, or upset, I'd drown the feelings in food before I ever had a chance to feel them.

Once I entered OA and started working the Steps, I was sure I didn't want to be restored to that state. So how could I work Step Two?

Then I remembered another meaning of "restore." I have friends who bought a house over a hundred years old, and they set about restoring it. Not only did they fix broken stairs and replace missing roof shakes, they did more. They pored over books and catalogs to understand how their house might have been intended to look when it was designed.

They researched paint colors and molding trims. They scoured antique sales to find just the right furniture to go inside. They lovingly hung curtains and found linens to match. They didn't care whether their house originally had those things; they wanted to make it the best it could be.

This is how God is restoring me. God is not just fixing what's broken, but lovingly giving me all the comforts and beauty he wanted me to have all along. I'm being restored to a much better state than I've ever been before.

*Joan P., Mountain View, California USA
From [Lifeline, 02/15/2016](#)*



TRADITION TWO

For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority — a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.



This tradition tells me to **trust** the process:

- To listen to the ideas of others with respect, even when they are different from mine; and
- To participate in the decisions made by my group, and then accept the outcome with faith that the good of all is being served.

I have been in OA for many years and no longer automatically think that others know what is best. I bring up my own suggestions and ideas of ways to enhance or make changes within my group, the Intergroup, and beyond.

Sometimes my ideas have been accepted. At other times, they have been rejected. Either way I have learned to trust that the final decision is for the good of our fellowship as a whole and go along with the implementation of that decision with an open heart.

I cannot afford to sit back and be critical of what is being done. Dissention eats away at the unity of my group, and I know I need the group more than I need to be right.

When I am unsettled about a decision that I disagree with, it's time for more step work and discussion with my sponsor. My desire is always to further explain what I was trying to accomplish, to make others understand how

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my ideas are the right ones. It's just a form of manipulation and desire to control when I do not accept the group conscience. I'm saying I know more than God. At that point, my pride and arrogance block me from compassion and humility. This is an opportunity to learn that the process can be trusted and God wants me to practice acceptance.

I have done service at levels where I lead the meeting discussions. Sometimes I know to not express my opinion just so others can express theirs. I am usually surprised at how many other great ideas there are among our members and how well things work without my input.

Tradition Two says clearly that it is okay to make a decision and find out it was a mistake. Sometimes God teaches us lessons from our mistakes. When this happens, we are able to have another group conscience and make another decision. Eventually we find what works for the group as a whole, and unity is restored.

This is an important Tradition Two question: Do our group's members volunteer or willingly accept group offices, or does our group have trouble finding members willing to do service?

Tradition Two is where I learn about my responsibility to participate in group conscience and in the service of OA. I am reminded that I have an obligation to give service to my group and to the other levels of OA as well. If no one takes on these responsibilities then the fellowship suffers. No one person is responsible for all the services and resources provided by the various service levels. When service positions are passed around among recovering compulsive eaters, we all have an opportunity to serve and grow, and the recovery of all is supported.

I find it sad that many members are unwilling to take the time to give service beyond the group

level. There is such a need for participation at the Intergroup and Region levels. More participation widens our pool of resources, and from that pool comes great knowledge and strength.

Rotation of service is stressed in OA. It reminds me to accept that I do not get to hold any position for too long. I must give others the opportunity to serve as well. When we each give a little, a lot can be accomplished.

Tradition Two reminds us that God is in charge and that our fellowship is based on the trust that we are guided by God, not our human self-will. Each of us has a responsibility to participate and share our voice. We cannot fail when we practice Tradition Two.

Anonymous



Your Service Needed To Plan Our Fall Retreat

A theme, date, and location are in place for our Intergroup's 2025 Fall Retreat:

The Treasure Chest: The Promises
October 24-26, 2025
Toddhall Retreat Center
Columbia IL

Our first planning meeting for the fall retreat will be Thursday, February 13, from 6:30-7:30 p.m. We will meet by Zoom. The meeting number is 940 5580 8391. The password is Serenity. Please join us as there are many roles to fill. One may be just right for you.

For more information, contact Amy G at 314-302-0802, gauthieramy@gmail.com, or Cindy H at 314-435-6745, cynthiahenley5@gmail.com.

Amy G. & Cindy H.

Literature Highlight: *Abstinence*

When I came into OA, I had enough knowledge about 12 step groups to know that the core of the OA program was working the Steps. In order to effectively work them, I would need to not be under the influence, but what was abstinence?

After several meetings and knowing OA was a good fit for me, I went to the bookstore link at our website at OA.org to buy some literature. I was surprised to see a book called **Abstinence**, and I knew it was exactly what I needed.

Prior to OA, I had six months of weight-loss success working with a nutritional specialist, but then I went into relapse for six months, and I couldn't pull myself out of it. As soon as I entered OA, I immediately returned to following my nutritional specialist's menus, and I made that my abstinence.

Only 1 ½ months into the program, after having thoroughly digesting **Abstinence** twice, I attended a family wedding which involved four days of driving and two days at the event. **Abstinence** told me over and over again that abstinence was the most important thing in the life of a compulsive overeater without exception, so I was determined, no matter what else happened on this trip, that I was going to remain abstinent. With the use of a cooler, I had every meal planned, weighed, measured, packaged, with some items easily purchased along the way. I was elated to arrive back home abstinent. I learned that abstinence was indeed possible away from the safety of my home.

Just one month later, I attended my granddaughter's school play, this time flying to the event. My luggage was mostly full of my abstinent food for this quick three-day trip. Again, I returned home abstinent. By now, I

was totally convinced abstinence was possible in every situation!

I'm now five months into the program, and I absolutely love abstinence. Do I believe I would have the abstinence I have today if it weren't for the massive impact **Abstinence** had on my thinking early on in my recovery? I doubt it. Keeping abstinence my daily top priority is making it possible for me to effectively work the steps now. I never want to, and by the grace of God, nor do I intend to, ever give my abstinence away for anything or anyone.

My favorite quotes about abstinence from **Abstinence** follow:

p. 10 – Abstinence is a state of grace by which I am balanced physically, emotionally, and spiritually.

p. 11 – My abstinence became, as I've heard other OA members describe it, three meals a day with *life* in between.

p.13 – ... I am abstinent when I eat to feed my body and not my disease.

p. 19 – So what do I gain when I say yes to abstinence? I gain clarity of mind to work the Twelve Steps and get on with my life. I can face the problems that sent me to food for comfort, and change what I can and accept the rest.

p. 23 – Abstinence is the foundation of our program.

p. 24 – Experience has taught me I have no hope of recovering unless I'm abstinent and no hope of staying abstinent unless I'm recovering by working the Twelve Steps.

p. 33 – It taught me that, if I want to get well, I can't use the pain of my childhood as an excuse to overeat. Food doesn't help the pain

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– it buries it. To recover, I must feel all of my feelings; to do that, I must be abstinent.

p. 36 – As much as I may want to eat a particular something, it isn't worth it; my abstinence is much too valuable to me to break so carelessly.

p. 48 – When I put my head on the pillow at night, as long as I've had an abstinent day, I've had a good day.

p. 51 – In my heart, I know my goal of abstinence was one of self-will. I wanted it, felt I should have it and felt others expected it of me. But it was not in my power because I was relying solely on my willpower. I still wanted to call the shots and control everything. I wanted program *my way*.

p. 51 – I am powerless over my abstinence. The moment I gave up my fight for it was the moment when God stepped in and took over my food addiction.

p. 65 – I have to take my abstinence seriously. Everything else in my life must revolve around it. There's no other road to recovery for me but the one paved with abstinence, and there's no other guidance on that road but my spirituality. The two go hand in hand. I can't have one without the other.

p. 69 – I now want to be abstinent more than I want to overeat. This is truly a miracle from my loving Higher Power ...

p. 72 – She reminded me that abstinence is an action, and mood has nothing to do with it.

p. 72 – It means being abstinent even when the world is falling apart; even when it is the only thing that goes right that day; even when your HP isn't answering your prayers, and you need comfort somewhere.

p. 81 – I now know that no matter what does – or doesn't – happen, today will be a success if I

remain abstinent. I can say that because I realize more than ever that only when I am abstinent and free from my overwhelming obsession with food am I able to put other things in my life in perspective.

p. 81 – Now I realize that unless I am abstinent, I can't put God first. When I'm overeating, food becomes my god. I worship it and trust it to make things better. When I am abstinent, I put my trust in God and I'm free to live the rich, full life God has in mind for me.

p. 91 – A big part of my recovery involves finding a way to lead a full life without compromising my abstinence.

p. 122 – Occasionally I don't feel particularly hungry at mealtimes, but I eat anyway, because that's the best way I can maintain my three-meals-a-day abstinence.

p. 136 – First, my abstinence had to be livable. To me, that meant I could continue it for a lifetime. Secondly, I had to be able to eat out and still maintain my abstinence. Thirdly, I had to be able to eat abstinely anywhere in the world.

p. 137 – "My disease doesn't take a vacation from me, so I can't take a vacation from abstinence."

p. 138 – For me, it is much easier to stay abstinent than to get abstinent.

p. 140 - ... abstinence is "the easier, softer way."

p. 176 – Abstinence is an act of surrender, not control.

Anonymous





Learning To Love Myself

There's an OA slogan "Let us love you until you can love yourself." After many years this is coming true for me. Both parts of it were hard for me, though.

It was very hard to let you love me. Before OA it seemed hardly anyone even liked me. Kids at school wouldn't play with me at recess. I was, in reality, an outcast. When I grew up, I still felt always on the outside looking in. Then at my first OA meeting I was met with love and acceptance! I wanted in! When I first did a small service for the group, I felt I belonged. I was on the inside for the first time in my life! It took many years, though, to relax enough to let the love all the way in. Eventually I did come to believe that you really loved me.

It was still very hard to learn to love myself. First, I started paying attention to myself, noticing my thoughts and my actions. I asked, "Right now am I loving myself, valuing myself, respecting myself?" Often, I found underlying negative thoughts about myself such as "I am paralyzed by my fears," "I am not worthy," "I don't matter," "I mustn't bother people," and "I have to be useful to be liked."

Eventually I came to love myself by taking actions to challenge those thoughts. Here is one example:

I challenged "I am paralyzed by my fears" by taking action in spite of fear. I am terrified of merging onto highways with what I call "disappearing entrance ramps" where I could be trapped by coming to the end of the ramp and being unable to get onto the highway because of all the cars on my left and unable to stop because of the cars behind me. I challenged this fear one day when I really wanted to get to a recovery event some distance away. There would be highways with disappearing entrance ramps. There were places where my lane would turn into an exit lane, and I would be forced to move over in spite of traffic. I didn't know the way in advance, so I might not be in the correct lane ahead of time. Worst of all, it was raining so hard that I could barely see the road. I was very afraid to drive in those conditions, but I didn't want to miss the event. I couldn't get a ride with someone else for several reasons. It was up to me. I prayed about it. I called my sponsor. I wavered. Was I going to give up and stay home? How would I feel then? In the end I chose not to be ruled by fear. I got in my car and drove there. I was terrified the whole way. But afterward I felt amazingly good about myself! I knew I had courage, and I loved myself for it.

I took many such actions. The most powerful ones challenged thoughts of shame like "This or that part of my body is ugly," "My whole body looks awful," "I'm so fat I have to hide behind loose clothes," "I look too old," "Everyone will look at me and judge me." In spite of that self-judgement and shame I took one self-affirming action after another. Eventually the day came when I could look at my nude body in the mirror and say, "I love you!"

Elizabeth C.



Love. Grow. Serve.



Trust: The Spiritual Principle of Tradition Two



Requesting Printed Copies Of *OA Today* Newsletter

Do you know of anyone looking for a printed copy of the monthly **OA Today** newsletter? Well, look no further. Your search is over.

Individuals without access to electronic versions of the newsletter may request a printed version by texting or calling Kelley G. at: 314-591-4696. She'll mail them the newsletter monthly.

Thanks, Kelley, for your service!

The Newsletter Team



Intergroup Chair's Column For February 2025

At the January Intergroup meeting our operating budget for the year was presented and approved. We continue to maintain a balanced budget, this year at \$21,195.

As part of the budget discussion, we examined the request from our World Service Office to adjust both group and individual 7th Tradition donations to 50% for Intergroup, 40% for WSO and 10% for Region 5. At this time, the Intergroup Board believes that this change will not have a major negative impact on our income and is supporting this change. We will closely monitor donations and determine by midyear whether an adjustment may need to be made.

A number of service positions were elected or re-elected:

- Amy G. continues as IG Vice Chair.
- J-MO continues as Newsletter Chair.
- Cindy H. and Amy G. will be Co-Chairs for the Fall Retreat.
- Bonnie G. is our new 12th Step Within Chair, a position that was open for several years. We are grateful to have Bonnie taking on this service.

As always, all are invited to our Intergroup meetings. Please join us on Sunday, February 9 at 1:30 p.m. See the meeting number and passcode in the Calendar of Events column on page eight of this newsletter.

In grateful service
Eileen M., 314-570-9333



Want to Strengthen Your Program? Sixteen Week Workshop Starts Feb. 2

An OA 12-Step Workshop starts February 2, 2025. It will continue for 16 weeks on Sundays from 2:30-4:30 p.m. at Gethsemane Church, 3600 Hampton Avenue, St. Louis, MO 63139.

If interested, please call contact person Bonnie G. at 314-601-3692. A list of the books that you will need can be provided. The workshop will be closed to new members after the February 2 start date.

Bonnie G.



February 2 – Sixteen-week OA 12-Step Workshop Begins – see article above

February 9 – 1:30 p.m. – Intergroup meeting**

February 22 – Illinois Unity Day – 1 p.m. – find details at Region 5 website Events [HERE](#)

February 23 – St. Louis-Bistate Intergroup Unity Day – 9:30 a.m. – see page nine

March 9 – 1:30 p.m. – Intergroup meeting**

March 7-9 – Region 5 Spring Assembly, Hilton Garden Inn, Chesterton, IN

May 4 – 1:30 p.m. – Intergroup meeting**

May 23, 24, and 25 – Region 5 Convention, Milwaukee, WI

June 8 – 1:30 p.m. – Intergroup meeting**

July 13 – 1:30 p.m. – Intergroup meeting**

July 19 – Region 5 Summer Online Conference

August 21-23 – World Service Convention, Orlando, FL

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

October 12 – 1:30 p.m. – Intergroup meeting**

October 24-26 – Fall Retreat, Toddhall Retreat Center, Columbia, IL

November 9 – 1:30 p.m. – Intergroup meeting**

****Note:** Each Intergroup Meeting is 1:30-3:00 p.m. via Zoom. **The meeting ID number is 940 5580 8391. The password is Serenity.** It's also possible to join by telephone: Dial-in: 312-626-6799. The meeting ID is 940 5580 8391, and the password is 75183374. Those in elected service positions and Intergroup Representatives are expected to attend. All are welcome.

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

ARTICLES FOR THE NEXT NEWSLETTER ARE DUE BY FEBRUARY 20, 2025. Please send your submissions to the **OA TODAY** editor and Newsletter Team at info@stlouisoa.org or mail them 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.



**Abstinence
OA Community
Sponsorship**

LET'S CELEBRATE

Overeaters Anonymous

UNITY DAY

DIVERSE VOICES: TOGETHER WE CAN

FEBRUARY 23, 2025

9:30 AM - 12:00 PM CST

ZOOM 538 040 418

PASSWORD 002478



**Contact Rita W
618-920-6728**

We hope to see you there!



Suggested 7th Tradition \$7
No one should stay away for financial reasons

**St. Louis Area Bi-State Intergroup
sponsored by the early bird meetings**