

March 2025 OA TODAY NEWSLETTER

St. Louis Bi-State Intergroup of OA
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STEP THREE

Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.

I've always professed having a deep faith in God. Before joining OA, I already had a personal relationship with God in my daily life. Then, my disease progressed and dieting no longer worked for me to manage my weight. I had obviously become powerless over food, and my life was clearly unmanageable. Why then, when I cried out to God for help, did he flat out refuse to give it? I was shocked.

It was only later in OA, through studying the AA and OA literature for Steps 2 and 3, that I realized I had never actually turned my will and life over to God. Because of three family deaths in my early childhood, I had developed a deep disappointment with God. I became defiant against him. While definitely believing in him, instead of trusting him with

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Newcomer's Corner The Power of NOT Part 12

Editor's Note: This is the final installment of a set of 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 12 – Service. Do **Not** Neglect Others. Addicts are so caught up in their wants, perceived needs, and the illusion of control. It takes a lot of work to try to bend the world to our will on a daily basis. When we stop focusing on ourselves, and instead focus on how we can help others, a beautiful thing happens. That constant striving noise in our heads quiet. As we connect with each other, as we hold out our hand and say “I will walk with you,” we get out of our own way. And we find serenity.

It takes work to **NOT** do things, especially with food – because we have to confront our addiction on a daily basis. We all must eat. No one has to take heroin or drink alcohol to live. We have to NOT eat unhealthily until we learn how good eating healthy feels. We have to walk through the **NOTS** before we find our path.

I didn't do any of this in a straight line. I stumbled, had to back up, do things again, re-learn. I tried to do it all at once, and that was a mistake! But when we practice NOT doing a thing, one at a time, farther down the road, we find that we have practiced ourselves right into **Doing the Thing**, living the principles in all our affairs.

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my life, I maintained control of my life while relating to him as my helper.

With food, my goal was to continue to eat like I wanted while managing my weight. Aiming to maintain independence and self-reliance, I certainly didn't want healing through community. God would have it no other way.

I'm so grateful today that when I cried out to God for help, he refused to go along with my way of doing things. I'm also grateful, throughout all the decades of my life, he was willing to have a relationship with me, as screwed up as I was, until my addiction caused me to turn over my life and will.

For me, I believe my willpower is only strong enough to make one of two choices:

I can use my limited willpower to make the decision to be the god of my own life with me being the director. When I do this:

- I am powerless over my addiction and my character defects;
- I am in bondage to self;
- My relationships with others are a disaster;
- I live in emotional imbalance and spiritual bankruptcy; and
- My life is miserable.

I can use my limited willpower to make the decision to turn my will and life over to God as I understand him, thus allowing Him to be the director of my life. When I do this:

- His power flows through me;
- His guidance shows me the way to live each day; and
- He literally changes me into the person I've always dreamed of being.

Today, I choose the latter.

Anonymous



TRADITION THREE

The only requirement for OA membership is a desire to stop eating compulsively.



Desire and Beyond

Many a member has said that if the requirements for membership in OA were more stringent than “a desire to stop eating compulsively,” they probably wouldn't have felt qualified to be at a meeting.

Unfortunately, this unique requirement—the only requirement in our entire Fellowship—is often used to avoid being “made” to do anything else that makes somebody uncomfortable, like having a food plan, being accountable to a sponsor, working the Steps, or realizing that abstinence comes from continuous action, not just a desire.

A desire is the beginning of a process, but a desire alone will not accomplish very much in OA. The Third Tradition ensures that anyone who wants to can attend an OA meeting, but I don't believe it was intended to be the standard to which one aspires to attain abstinence, or to effectively fulfill our primary purpose, or to insure the continuing wellness of our beloved Fellowship.

For six years, I slipped and slid. I'd get some abstinence, then become complacent and

backslide. I'd “tighten my food up,” only to renege on my new commitments. I was alternately attracted to people with solid abstinence and repelled by them as rigid perfectionists who sang the shrill song, “I don't eat no matter what.” They must have been cheating or lying, I thought, since

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nobody could possibly get and stay abstinent. Such was the state of my willingness to act upon my feeble desire.

My desire stopped being the answer once I realized that recovery was about taking suggestions, commitment, principles, and personal integrity. Until I understood at a deep personal level that I was different from people who ate what they wanted without hating themselves, my problem continued unabated. When I accepted the spiritual consequences of my eating, and the totality of my absorption in it, I found the willingness to convert desire into action and began to make progress. Today, after more than ten years of continuous abstinence, I sing the praises of physical recovery and service as a formula for keeping a willing OA member moving forward in recovery.

OA became an international entity because people sublimated their egos, undertook tasks that forced them outside their comfort zones, and endured extreme emotional challenges. Without diligent, daily effort, our recovery and OA's credibility will suffer. Undertaking a difficult action to attain or maintain abstinence is a desire to be a living example of the best that this program has to offer.

Neil R.

Baltimore, Maryland USA

[Reprinted from Lifeline, March 10, 2016](#)



Guidance from the Big Book On Solving Problems

What are the steps the **Big Book** says to take when we have a problem?

1. Pause.
2. If it's something like selfishness, dishonesty, resentments, fear (or other "dis-ease" feelings), ask God to IMMEDIATELY remove it.
3. If it's not one of those, ask for the right thought or action (an inspiration, intuitive thought or decision).
4. Relax and take it easy. Don't struggle.
5. Remind yourself you are no longer running the show.
6. Pray "Thy will, not mine, be done."
7. If given the right thought or action in #3, do that.
8. If not, "Let Go and Let God" (the Serenity Prayer) and go directly into doing the next right action.
9. Say often to yourself, "Acceptance is the answer to all my problems today."

(Summarized from the **Big Book**, the bottom of page 87 to the top of 88, the second full paragraph on page 84, the bottom of page 86, and page 417.)

My added comments:

- These steps assure that God's will is being applied to situations.
- If the problem persists, just keep repeating the steps, waiting for #3 and #7 which will be God's answer to the problem.

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- Often, problems naturally get solved (just go away) with absolutely no action whatsoever on my part.
- I'd rather live with unsolved problems then force my self-will on them which often results in more problems and havoc in my life.
- I used to take great pride in being a problem-solver. I no longer bask in that inflated pride.
- I used to have a fear of unsolved problems. Today, it really is okay for me to live with unsolved problems. Now, I wait patiently in peace for God to work out his will in them.

Anonymous



Intergroup Chair's Column

The World Service Office (WSO) Business Conference is May 4-10, and there are several motions and proposed amendments to our Bylaws that WSO has asked Intergroups (IGs) worldwide to discuss and weigh in on. A link to a survey of these changes was sent to IG reps in the week prior to our February Intergroup meeting. Members were asked to respond to this poll and make their views known.

These possible changes address a wide range of topics. Some are "housekeeping" changes, such as formally updating the number of regions in OA from 11 to 10, since Region 4 was disbanded, and updating the geographic make-up of regions that now house former Region 4 intergroups. Others address possible adjustments to qualifications for World Service Trustees, the scheduling and format of the annual WSBC conference, and several policy and language adjustments. If you'd like details on these potential new business motions and

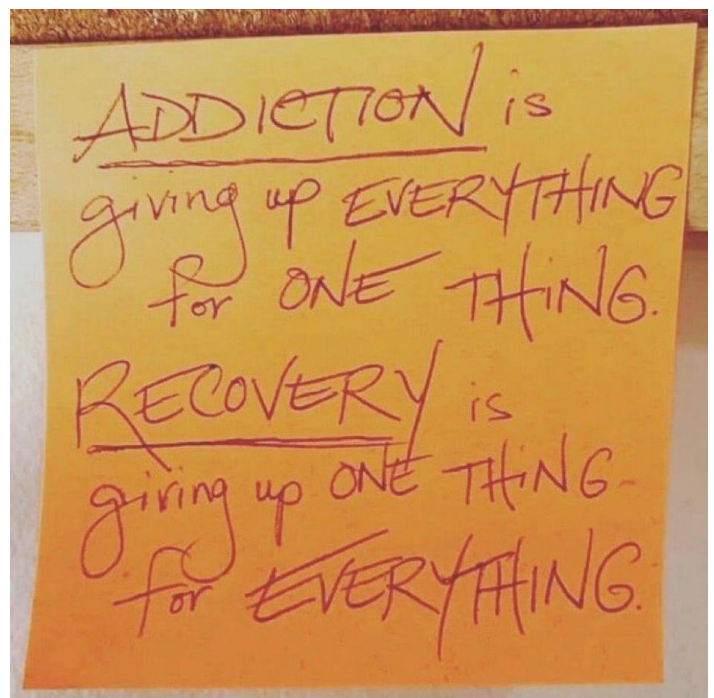
Bylaws changes, check with your IG rep or feel free to reach out to me directly.

The results of the World Service [Recovery: What Works for You?](#) survey are in! Hear from 3,428 OA members about how they use the Tools and Principles of the Twelve Steps to support their recovery.

Please remember the World Service Convention is August 21-23 in Orlando, FL. The theme is ***Walking in the Sunlight Together.*** Find all the details [HERE](#) on our OA.org website.

The next St. Louis Bi-State Area Intergroup meeting is on Sunday, March 9 at 1:30 p.m. Find the login information in the calendar section of this newsletter. Please join us!

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





Beach Body Blues

I was out on a walk with my dogs on a chilly February morning, and we saw a few small fields of crocuses flowering with their tiny blue and purple petals. It was a sign that Spring is coming, and Summer will be fast on its heels.

That took me back to the darkest days of my addictive and compulsive relationship with food when the coming of warmer days filled me with dread. Summer meant I would have to shed the outer layers of clothing that I depended on to conceal my body from others and from myself. I used clothing to avoid my body the way that an ostrich uses sand to avoid danger.

In summer, my choices were reduced to wearing weather appropriate clothing that made me feel naked and exposed to the world or ignoring the heat and continuing to wear coats and sweaters and long pants in a desperate attempt to feel normal. Yet these made me visibly sweaty and always prompted strangers to ask me “Aren’t you hot in that?”

I hated my body. I looked at the bulging flesh of my belly and arms and neck and legs as a parasite. My body was an enemy to which I was chained. My body was my own shame manifested in flesh. And summer was when my shame would be on display for all to see. So, I

hated summer. I hated the feeling of air on my skin. I didn’t want others to see me, nor did I want to see myself.

I did not know yet a truth I’ve discovered in working a program. Shame is much heavier than flesh. And self-loathing is more visible to others than the shape of one’s body.

One of the miracles of recovery is that my abstinence includes a healthy self-image. The disease of addiction is always bigger than the substance we abuse. It’s a spiritual disease as much as a physical one. And my spiritual disease was self-hatred. I didn’t want to be in my body. Once I experienced the miracle of recovery — in this case a non-negotiable love of my own body no matter what shape it’s in today — I got hungry for more miracles. I may feed my body with food, but my spirit is nourished by courage and radical self-acceptance.

I used to hate exercise of any kind because I didn’t want to be stared at or laughed at. I didn’t want people to say “good for you” in that syrupy condescending voice.

But the truth is I’m an athlete. My spirit is pleased by physical exertion. I discovered a love of cycling prior to getting into OA. Back then, I started cycling before the sun came up because it was the only time I could count on being able to do it without people looking at me. I loved fog and darkness and cold temperatures so I could hide my 330+ pound body and the sweat that came with it. Summer was a time to be endured and feared.

Over the course of my time in OA, my body has changed for the better, and I’m no longer pursuing weight loss as much as I am spiritual gain. I still have a belly that’s bigger than many other cyclists, but I’m also fast and powerful. I love being on display because I work a program every day that demands, first and

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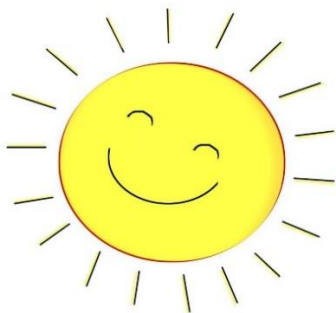
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foremost, that I love the body I have today — not the body I hated yesterday or the body I might have tomorrow, but the only body I'll ever really know — the one I am in right now.

So, yeah, Summer is coming. I don't have the beach body they show in commercials. I have something better. I have a body I love exactly as it is. When people see me on the road with my warrior legs and powerful, large shape, they see my spirit alive with pleasure.

Bring on the warmth. I'm ready to strip down to comfy gear, feel the sun and heat on my skin as God intended, get on my bicycle and let 'er rip. And that is a miracle for me.

Kevin B.



Summer Bodies and Program

As the days get longer and the season's temperature rises, so does my anxiety. I understand very well that bikini season is right around the corner and that I will be walking into it with a very different body than I have in past years.

This terrifies me deeply. It makes me uneasy and makes my chest feel heavy. It fuels my disease in all the worst ways and tempts me to return to old behavior. I am scared, but there is one thing that calms me as I face the upcoming year — the knowledge that I will not be facing it alone.

This is my first summer with a real connection to my higher power. Sure, I was in program last year, but HP and I weren't exactly on talking terms. You see, I wasn't fully committed to my recovery. I had no sponsor and wasn't working the steps, and, because of that, I felt very lost and alone.

Today, I'm on Step Two. It took me a while to get there, but I'm grateful for that. I needed the process to be arduous because it was in that work that I learned to actually listen to and follow the guidance of my higher power, not just ask for the guidance that I wanted.

This summer, I am asking my higher power to guide my choices and to protect me from myself and from my disease. I am asking for the ability and willingness to approach things with an open mind and to focus somewhere other than on me, my body, and my appearance. Program has shown me that life is more than just food and that my worth comes from more than just my body. I too deserve to be happy and to enjoy all the many aspects of my days and I want to lean into that.

So, this year, I am going to practice what I preach. Rather than running myself ragged in the gym, I will focus on strengthening my spirit. Rather than fixating on the shorts, t-shirts, and swimsuits to come, I will focus on my fellows. And rather than dedicating my days to food, I will implore the help of my higher power to show me what all else there is.

I make a vow, today and every day, to be here and present in the moment. I owe it to myself and to everyone around me and most importantly to God to live life to the fullest because my life matters too much to hand it over to my disease. Today, I choose me over my disease.

Arezu T., Michigan to California



STL Bi-State Intergroup Unity Day 2025

What does a group of people from six states and two countries have in common? That would be the St. Louis OA Bi-state Area Intergroup's 2025 Unity Day!

About 35 people showed up from around the country and the world to share in a program about our unity through diversity. There were nine speakers who assembled in panels of three about abstinence, sponsorship and community in OA. Although each speaker focused on their own recovery, the underlying message was that OA welcomes and celebrates everyone and our unique, diverse gifts.

Here are a few memorable takeaways heard during the program:

- Life is changed, not taken away, when we are abstinent.
- The party is not on the plate.
- Keep your GOAT.
- Abstinence keeps me present.
- Sponsorship is a spiritual discipline.
- A sponsor is someone who listens deeply rather than telling someone what to do.
- I am not a good fit for everyone.
- Sponsorship is a mutual relationship.

- Sponsorship teaches us how to have healthy relationships.
- Abstinence teaches us God sufficiency versus control.
- Admitting a feeling takes the feeling out of you and sets you free.
- I will know how much I love myself by the commitments I make to myself and keep.
- A new meeting starts with a resentment and a coffee pot.
- We all have a "food print" just like we have unique fingerprints.
- We are all in the lifeboat together.
- OA is the place I wanted to be but also wanted to run away from.
- We are not meant to recover alone.
- There's no right or wrong way, just moving forward.
- Don't put recovery into your life; put life into your recovery.
- Our disease is a life and death issue, and we need unity to recover.

Anonymous



ARTICLES FOR THE NEXT NEWSLETTER ARE DUE BY MARCH 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,

The OA 12 & 12: What a Powerful Tool!

Recently someone asked me “What do you do during those periods when you simply do not feel like working the 12 Steps?” I was sort of surprised by the question because, fourteen years in, I have not yet had a period like that. For me, one key is reading OA-approved literature daily.

The Twelve Steps and the Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous (OA 12 & 12) is a book that I come back to repeatedly. The Steps section of the book is a Swiss knife as far as recovery tools go, because I can use it as so many things – for example, a mirror, a microscope, and a map.

The Mirror — In reading Steps 1-3, I see clearly that I have a progressive and deadly illness. Identifying with the weird stuff that others have done with food helps me know that the OA program is right for me.

The Microscope — I put my life under the microscope in Steps 4-5, starting with a searching and fearless moral inventory. My resentments, my fears, my sexual behaviors, harms that I had done to others – I zoom in on all of them so that I can see the nucleus of each cell. My sponsor reminds me to give equal scrutiny to my assets, and I take her suggestion.

The Map — Finding my way seems too hard at times, especially as I get into Steps 6-9, but as I read each Step, I find answers to the “Yeah, but’s” that I throw up to rationalize why I can’t do something. For example, if I owe an

amends to someone who has died, the writers share some ways others have handled this, like donating to that person’s favorite charity or reading a letter at their graveside.

The chapters on Steps 10-12 give me a sense of how to live the OA program with my family, on the job, in other organizations, and more. I continue to take inventory, I pray and meditate so that I can completely turn my life and will over to the care of my Higher Power, and I find myself practicing the principles of the program “in all my affairs.”

Then there’s the Traditions section of the book. It has been said that the Traditions are to our groups what the Twelve Steps are to individuals. The Traditions and their associated principles help ensure the survival and growth of our OA meetings.

I am especially drawn to Traditions 1, 3, 5, and 7:

- I take a deep breath before I create controversy or chaos at any level in OA, because Tradition 1 calls me to remember that **my** recovery depends on OA unity. When I destroy that unity, I am risking **my** recovery.
- Every time we read “The only requirement for OA membership is a desire to stop eating compulsively,” I want to pump my fist in the air and yell, “I’m in!”
- Sometimes I catch myself drifting over into Tradition Police territory, wanting to judge others about violating the Traditions. But Tradition 5 calls me to evaluate whether my desire to lecture

about “violations” truly helps carry the message to still suffering compulsive eaters. Finger-wagging is seldom seen as a loving gesture.

- We mention Tradition 7 at every meeting when we pass the basket for money to cover our expenses. I’ve increased what I give over the years because I see how valuable to program is to my life. I also have increased my service because I recognize that it takes more than money for OA to survive and thrive.

If you want to start building a library of OA literature, I hope you’ll consider the OA 12 & 12 as your first investment. It is an essential support as we do the footwork of each Step, and it increases the health of our home meetings. Thank you to all the OA fellows who did the work of bringing this approved literature to our lives.

Anonymous



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 (see Save-the-Date flyer on page 10)

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](#).



SAVE THE DATE!!

FALL RETREAT 2025

OCTOBER 24-26, 2025

TODDHALL RETREAT CENTER

COLUMBIA, ILLINOIS

THE TREASURE CHEST: THE PROMISES

Join St. Louis Area Bi-State Intergroup of Overeaters
Anonymous in exploring the Promises in more depth!



We are diving deep for Ship Mates who are: Willing,
Creative and Enthusiastic from across the St. Louis Bi-
State Intergroup and BEYOND—in other words—YOU!
Next planning meeting: Thursday, March 13, 2025, 6:30 pm
Zoom info ID: 940 5580 8391
Password: Serenity

For more info or to help please call/text/email:
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Amy G at 314 302 0802, gauthieramy@gmail.com