

April 2025 OA TODAY NEWSLETTER

St. Louis Bi-State Intergroup of OA
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STEP FOUR

Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.

In October of 1985, I came into OA broken – feeling I would never be enough and weighing 250 pounds. I hated my body and myself. I knew something was very wrong, yet I could not accept that I could not control my food addiction or that I had lost the ability to distinguish between reality and fantasy.

For years I thought I could control my compulsive eating disease with anorexia and bulimia. It wasn't until I got a sponsor who helped me to work the Steps that I started realizing that I wasn't being honest with myself. I needed help to break through my insane thinking and my denial. Step 1 showed me I had a problem. My sponsor told me that the solution to the problem was in Step 2 and Step 3 which deal with the spiritual solutions of Hope and Faith. I came to believe that I had a disease that I was not able to control, and I needed help from a Higher Power.

(continued on page two)

NEWCOMER'S CORNER

Worried About Your Relationship with Food?

Have you tried repeatedly to control your eating and weight, but nothing has worked? Compulsive overeating, undereating, anorexia, bulimia, binge eating, night eating, exercise addiction....these are just a few of the ways that people suffer in relationship to food and body image.

We are here for anyone struggling with food or trying to determine if they have food issues. We believe compulsive eating is a disease like alcoholism is a disease. One way to determine whether OA might be right for you is to take the [OA QUIZ](#).

If you determine that you are one of us, please join us for [OA MEETINGS](#) and read our monthly [NEWSLETTER](#).



Try six different meetings as a newcomer to assess whether OA is right for you. **To read a first-person account of a member's first meeting, go to page 6.**

(continued from page one)

My sponsor told me it was time to take Step 4 because it was the beginning of the Action Steps. In the beginning I was hellbent on procrastinating doing the 4th Step. My first try at Step 4 was to look at how other people had hurt me. My sponsor gently let me know I was not supposed to take other people's inventories, and she gave me some suggestions: "Step 4 requires you to have Courage to take a thorough look at yourself – the positive and the negative. It is about you finally becoming intimate with yourself."

My sponsor had me answer the following questions:

1. Am I willing to look honestly at myself? (If not, what stands in the way?)
2. Have I sought help from my Higher Power, my sponsor, or other members of my OA program?
3. What suggestions have I tried to see if they might help me to do my 4th Step?
4. Do I understand the spiritual principles of an inventory?

I needed to approach the Step with self-love, kindness, honesty, and balance and to recognize that it required a fearless moral inventory. I began to realize that the first three steps had prepared me to take this inventory. While I was doing the inventory, I could go back to them and realize the help I needed so that I could become aligned with God.

When I reviewed my Step 4, I also needed to look at my part:

- Did I cause the problem?
- Have I tried to control it?
- Is it in my power to cure it?
- Did any of my actions contribute to the problem?

By doing Step 4 I have found that self-trust can come from self-knowledge by opening the door to the actions necessary for healing. My recovery is not finished once I take Step 4. I need to continue to work each step. This is a one-day-at-a-time program, and I also need to continue working the steps and saying a 4th step prayer inspired by the language on page 67 of the **Big Book** when I am dealing with resentments.

4th Step Prayer: *God, please help me show those I resent the same tolerance, pity and patience that I would cheerfully grant a sick friend. Father, please show me how I can be helpful to him and save me from being angry. Lord, help me to avoid retaliation or argument. I know I can't be helpful to all people but at least show me how to take a kindly and tolerant view of each and every one. Thy will be done. Amen.*

Marysia

Reprinted from **OA Today**, April 2022




Responsibility Pledge

Always to extend
the hand and heart of OA
to all who share my compulsion;
for this I am responsible.



TRADITION FOUR

Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or OA as a whole.



What does this Tradition mean? Basically, we try not to do anything that will harm other OA groups or OA as a whole.

All groups are open to anyone who wants to stop eating compulsively (Tradition 3), and all groups remain free of any affiliation with any outside issue or institution (Traditions 6 and 10). For instance, we don't require a specific religion – even if we meet in a space that has a religious affiliation. Our practices are OA's, not that of any other organization.

But does this mean that all groups have to be the same? No, within the guidance of this Tradition, we are free, as a group, to be guided by group conscience as to:

- meeting time,
- meeting place, and
- meeting practices/format.

Our groups can be unique and grow best when group members participate in group conscience. This ensures all voices are heard and helps the groups to both adhere to OA principles and traditions, while also addressing things unique to that particular group.

We can, and do, encourage the formation of special interest groups. We have groups focused on younger members, people in maintenance, in relapse, LGBTQIA groups, men's groups, women's groups, those with more than 100 pounds to lose, those who need to gain, and more. We value the diversity of our fellowship; yet we find so

much in common as people living with addiction.

OA allows each group to find their own way and learn from their experiences. This is an excellent life skill to learn and practice in the safe space of meetings before trying it in your own life outside the rooms. When practicing our addiction, we often don't have room for learning, only reacting and using.

Following this Tradition in meetings allows us to learn a great deal about how to accept responsibility for our actions and their consequences. The rooms are a great place to practice courage. Traditions offer us a great deal of safety in the rooms of OA, although certainly hurts happen at times. We can even learn by working together to resolve the situation when we cause each other pain.

We learn that all of us must walk the path our HP puts in front of us. As a sponsor, I have to remember that my path through the 12 Steps – while it very well may have attracted people to ask me to sponsor them – is very likely not identical to the paths of my sponsees. It is not up to me to tell someone how to walk the path of recovery but to support them while they find their own path.

Our Traditions protect the groups. It is up to us to practice them so that these spaces remain open and available to all those who still suffer from our addiction

Melanie T.



Abstinence in Illness

When I became sick two months ago, I was already abstinent and at my goal weight. My illness came on suddenly, and I unexpectedly went from being healthy to bedridden.

My husband, who is a "normie" and who was pretty much unfamiliar with my eating routine, immediately learned how to cook my abstinent food. He knew that, even in sickness, staying abstinent would be vitally important to me. He was aware of the scales and measuring cups but had to have a crash course on how to use them. There were a few days at the beginning I was so weak, my husband even actually spoon-fed me in bed.

Since I am both a restrictor and compulsive overeater, to maintain my abstinence, I not only had to only eat the healthy foods but I had to make sure I ate all of what was stated on my menus. I longed so much to eat my comfort foods, the smooth, soft, slightly sweet ones that I knew would just slide effortlessly down my throat. At the same time, I wanted to sip on nothing but warm broth.

Did I have any idea how much work it was to chew and swallow all that food? Actually, I didn't, but I found out. The first month I was sick, I was sleeping a lot during the day, and my husband would wake me up to bring me one meal after another.

I had to stop a lot of my program activities because I was just too weak to do them. I missed them, but it felt good to stay abstinent. "Abstinence is the most important thing in my life without exception."

After a month of being sick, my doctor put me on some very strong antibiotics. They enabled me to improve enough to finally be able to sit up in a chair rather than be in bed all the time. One antibiotic forbade all alcohol (no problem there), and the other forbade all

dairy. This change was hard as I liked my dairy foods. "Acceptance is the answer to all my problems today."

The medications took away my appetite. I kept up eating everything anyway. Since when does a compulsive overeater have to have a good appetite to eat?! There was a warm comfort in knowing, no matter what, I was feeding my body quality food. Abstinence truly is an act of self-love as well as surrender to my HP.

I started to lose weight which wasn't good, so I had to increase my food intake. That was another adjustment. I remembered how easily I gained weight when I was eating my red-light foods of little to no nutrition. Now, I was trying to put on some weight while eating solely healthy foods. I learned it's hard to gain weight while fighting an illness, plus, I had to eat so much of it to result in so little gain.

It was a relief to eventually feel better, to get up, and be able to get back in the kitchen a little. My husband continued to prepare my meals, but I had enough stamina to be of some help. By now, he knew my menu schedule as well as, if not better, than me. Eventually, I sometimes cooked a meal alone, but most of the time, even now, he continues to mosey to the kitchen to help.

The longer I am in the program, the more convinced I am that there is nothing that has to end my abstinence. How much did feeding my body quality food throughout all this illness help me? I don't know, but I have a pretty good idea what would have happened if I had given in to my disease.

I am still fighting whatever this is. After I get well again and have gained a few extra pounds as a safety measure, I plan to adjust my food intake back down to a maintenance amount. I'll actually be glad to stop overfilling my stomach. **(continued on page five)**

(continued from page four)

Abstinence is such a wonderful gift. As tough as this illness has been, abstinence has made it possible for me to not be overtaken by my disease. I'm so grateful I knew about abstinence before any of this began. And, of course, I am immensely grateful to my husband who made staying abstinent even possible.

Anonymous



Brief Summary of Spring 2025 Region 5 Assembly

Thank you for the opportunity to serve as a Representative from our Intergroup (IG) to the Spring 2025 Region 5 Assembly which took place March 7-9 in Chesterton, IN. Here is a summary of highlights of the meeting and resources that may benefit recovery in our IG. Please reach out to me at 314-302-0802 with any questions.

- It was pointed out that there are several workshops about the Concepts on the oa.org website at [Document Library - Overeaters Anonymous](#).
- The Finance Committee reported \$43,741.00 in checking and savings for the Region.
- Some adjustments needed to be made in the reporting of the 2025 budget, and I participated in that committee. A follow-up meeting will be held on Zoom on Sunday, April 13, from 6-7 p.m.
- I also participated on the Public Information and Professional Outreach (PIPO) committee. The committee is working to find easier, more streamlined means to get information about

OA to healthcare professionals. We are looking into an online tab or a QR code for ease in distributing the information. A follow-up meeting will be held on Zoom on Saturday, April 12, from 1-2 p.m.

- The 2026 Region 5 Convention will be held in Indianapolis, IN, with date and theme to come. 2027 still needs a home for the Convention, and our outgoing Region Trustee Barb K approached me and asked if St. Louis would consider hosting. I mentioned that we had hosted one for Region 4 about 10 years ago and that I would ask around!
- The 2025 Region 5 Convention is asking for baskets for a Region 5 fundraiser. They are also seeking out Keynotes and Workshop Panelists from those who can attend in person. Region 5 has in-depth information online about the Convention at [Events for March 2025 – Region 5 of Overeaters Anonymous](#). I also have a few paper copies of the Registration brochure for those who would like them.
- At the Fall 2025 Assembly we will elect a new Vice Chair and Secretary. Our current members have reached the end of their service due to term limits. Requirements for these offices are having attended three assemblies and having two years of abstinence.
- Finally, for 2026, the Region will have a Spring Assembly in person, a Summer Assembly on Zoom, and a Fall Assembly on Zoom. The decision was made for safety reasons for Fall travel as well as to conserve resources.

Amy G.
Region 5 Representative

My First OA Meeting

On the day I first heard of OA, my life was a mess. I couldn't stop eating. I weighed 300 pounds and rising. There were many health issues, of course, but the worst part was that I hated myself so much that words could not begin to describe it. I could see no hope. I was in total despair. I was sure that life was not worth living, and I was working on an exit plan.

What happened that day? A co-worker heard me thinking out loud. She listened. She suggested OA. I didn't know what OA was, but at that point I would try anything. She found a meeting for the next day, picked me up and drove me there, and sat with me the whole time.

When I walked into the church basement for that first meeting, I had two strong but opposite reactions.

My first reaction happened as soon as a roomful of people looked at me, smiled, and showed me instant loving welcome and acceptance. The warmth and love in that room was overwhelming. I found that many of these people used to have food histories and behaviors a lot like mine, and other bad histories too. While I was miserably trapped living in the past, they were happy and laughing now in spite of the past. I sure wanted what they had! My reaction was that these were my people. I was home at last!

But – oh no! What was I hearing? I heard two words that I was totally “allergic” to, and my immediate second and opposite reaction was that I couldn't stay after all.

The first word was “God.” I was a firm atheist. Anything I couldn't see or touch didn't exist. After the meeting, members explained to me that in OA they didn't necessarily mean “God” as traditionally used, but rather any power greater than myself that I could imagine and

relate to. They mostly just said “Higher Power.” While some people believed in the traditional “God,” lots of others didn't. I wasn't thrilled about this. I knew I wasn't the greatest power in the universe, sure, but could I tolerate any spirituality at all? Maybe not.

The second word was “acceptance.” To me that meant everything in the past and present was just fine. Well, my past had emphatically not been fine, and neither was everything happening around the world right then! Again they explained that while some people believed everything was just as it was meant to be, lots of others didn't. In OA, acceptance basically meant just acknowledging reality as true. Not me. I mostly lived in a fantasy world, because reality seemed too awful to bear, but I was intrigued by this idea. There was good around, as well as bad. Could I bear reality after all? Maybe. Maybe not.

Which reaction won out? No contest! The first one. I still feel that way today, nearly 40 years after my rather bumpy OA journey started. These are my people. I am home at last!

Elizabeth C.

Hand in Hand Directory

The Hand-in-Hand Directory Committee of volunteers will begin calling you this month.

A committee member will call and email each group contact assigned to them. They will ask each contact to poll their members to determine if they are willing to speak, sponsor, temporarily sponsor, receive calls, and/or receive texts.

Group contacts, please watch for calls and emails, and respond in a timely manner. Thank you all for helping us update this valuable recovery resource!

Melanie T.

An Intergroup Report From the IG Vice Chair

Intergroup (IG) will not be meeting in April. The next meeting will be held on Zoom Sunday, May 4, from 1:30-3 p.m. See the login information in the Calendar of Events section of this newsletter. All are welcome!

A Super Sunday recovery event is set for Sunday, April 27, 2025, 2 - 5 p.m. CST. The theme is **Journeys to Abstinence**. This is a hybrid meeting. Come in person to 1121 Olivette Executive Parkway, Olivette, MO, 63132. The location is wheelchair accessible. To join by Zoom, the Meeting ID is 879 1705 1336, and the Passcode is 924115. Check-in begins at 1:45 p.m. Questions? Contact Tami H. at 314-341-6520.

Please consider having your group sponsor or co-sponsor a recovery event in 2025. Please contact Vice Chair Amy G. at 314-302-0802 for details about how other groups have done this.

Planning continues for our Fall Retreat. The theme is The Treasure Chest: The Promises. It is being held from October 24-26, 2025 at Toddhall Retreat Center in Columbia, IL. The next planning session will be on Thursday, April 10 at 6:30 p.m. on Zoom. The Zoom Meeting ID is 940 5580 8391, and the Passcode is Serenity. We'd love to have you join us!

Our Intergroup needs a World Service Business Conference delegate. Find the application form at [THIS LINK](#) at our St. Louis Bi-State Intergroup website. It is in the Documents and Forms section of the Members and Intergroup tab.

The next World Service Business Office Conference is May 4-10, 2025, and a number of motions and proposed amendments to OA's Bylaws will be discussed. Our Chair Eileen M. wrote a great summary of what is

to be discussed, and it appeared in the [March 2025 newsletter](#). If you would like further information, please reach out to your IG Rep or any of the Intergroup Board members.

The WSO Convention will be held Thursday to Sunday, August 21-23 in Orlando, FL. The theme is **Walking in the Sunlight Together**. Registration is opening soon!

A great source for news at the WSO is **A Step Ahead News** found at [A Step Ahead News - Overeaters Anonymous](#)

Early registration is now open for the OA Region 5 Convention in Brookfield, WI, May 23-25, 2025. The theme is **Be Alive in '25**. Early registration closes May 2, and the price increases to the "Walk In Rate." PLEASE NOTE: No meals are available for those who register after the May 2 deadline. Find more information and the registration link [HERE](#).

If your group would like to participate in the Baskets Raffle as a fundraiser for Region 5, please see the Region 5 Rep report also in this newsletter on page 5.

Amy G.



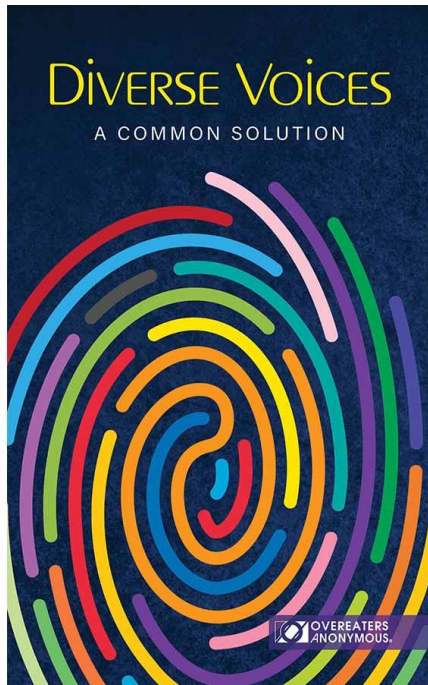
New Tool Helps Carry the Message

Overeaters Anonymous wants to get a copy of the **Where Do I Start?** newcomer pamphlet into the hands of every still-suffering compulsive eater. A new mobile-friendly and translatable format is now available in **48 languages!** It's easier to find than ever. Just go to oa.org/start.

The new format automatically opens in the reader's preferred language. Expanding and collapsing sections make the pamphlet easy to navigate on mobile devices. Finally, click or tap the "Print friendly format" option to print or save a PDF. Please help newcomers learn how to start their recovery journey!

APRIL BOOK REVIEW

Diverse Voices: A Common Solution



Diverse Voices: A Common Solution is one of the newest books available from our OA Bookstore. It provides evidence of the beautiful diversity of our membership. Through reading it, I have gained a deeper understanding of how different life experiences influence our journeys to recovery. It is encouraging to read stories of how members from very different identities overcame their initial feelings of difference to build deep relationships as sponsor- sponsees or OA friends.

In the introduction (page 1), we read “For most of OA’s history, the typical member seemed to be overweight, White, middle-aged, American (USA), Christian, heterosexual, and female.” Thankfully, our fellowship is becoming increasingly diverse, and the “diversity index,” beginning on page 186, shares that we can find stories by people who identify in the following ways:

- 100-pound (45kg) Weight Loss
- Age: Older and Younger
- Anorexia
- Bariatric/Weight Loss Surgery
- Bulimia
- Ethnicity: Asian or Pacific Islander; BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color); Mixed Race
- International Experience
- LGBTQ+
- Longtimer
- Male
- Mental Health Conditions
- Neurodivergence
- Physical Health Conditions
- Recovery from Relapse
- Specific Focus Meetings
- Spirituality: Agnostic; Atheist; Hindu or Buddhist; Jewish; Non-Traditional

Diverse Voices: A Common Solution has provided rich spiritual nourishment to me for the past month as I have used it for morning reflection and prayer time. I am thankful for members who shared their stories here because their honest stories often may help others who share a particular characteristic find welcome. I certainly feel more welcome.

As [“Our Invitation to You”](#) says, “It is weakness, not strength, that binds us to each other....” (our powerlessness over food). Our members find, in the words of the [OA Promise](#), “....together we can do what we could never do alone.”

Let us “act as if” we mean our [Unity with Diversity Policy Statements](#). Let our meetings show that all are welcome to join our meetings regardless of their race, creed, nationality, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, or any other attribute.

To order a copy of ***Diverse Voices: A Common Solution***, go to [THIS LINK](#).

Anonymous



Calendar of Events

April 27 – Super Sunday (see page 10)

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 Conference

August 21-23 – World Service Convention, Orlando, FL (see page 11)

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 12)

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 April 20, 2025. Please send your submissions to the **OA TODAY** Editor c/o info@stlouisoa.org or mail them to St. Louis Bi-State Area Intergroup, P.O. 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.



Journeys to Abstinence

Super Sunday

SUNDAY, APRIL 27, 2025 · 2PM – 5PM

The suggested donation is \$6, but give what you can when you can. Don't let lack of funds stop you from coming.

Join Us In-Person or on Zoom

1121 Olivette Executive Parkway, Olivette, Missouri 63132
(wheelchair accessible) Check-in begins at 1:45pm.

Zoom Meeting ID: 879 1705 1336 **Passcode:** 924115

Questions? Contact Tami H. at 314-341-6520.



*Hosted by the Abstinence First/Newcomer Sunday Afternoon Meeting and
the Webster Groves Step and Tradition Saturday Morning Meeting*

Overeaters Anonymous®

CONVENTION WISDOM

OA is hosting a recovery Convention for the first time since 2016. Come, join hundreds of fellow members in celebrating OA recovery at a live, face-to-face event.

- The Convention is **NOT** a business event; it **IS** a recovery-focused global gathering.
- Open to all - members, newcomers, visitors, family, and friends.
- Over 50 OA meetings, great and varied topics.
- Three keynote speakers, several workshops.
- Dedicated rooms for specific focus meetings.
- Socializing and a chance to meet your virtual friends, in person.
- A real-life hug!
- Banquet and dance Saturday night!
- OA recovery will be rocking in Orlando.

*Welcome to Overeaters Anonymous.
Welcome home!*



Save the Date!
August 21-23,
2025



To be kept up to date with the latest
convention news, email
CONVENTIONINFO@OA.ORG

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 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, April 10, 2025, 6:30 pm

Zoom info ID: 940 5580 8391

Password: Serenity

For more info or to help please call/text/email:

Cindy H at 314 435 6745, cynthiahenley5@gmail.com

Amy G at 314 302 0802, gauthieramy@gmail.com