

# May 2025 OA TODAY NEWSLETTER

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## STEP FIVE

**Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.**

## **We Are Only As Sick as Our Secrets**

The **AA Big Book** tells us on page 73 that “More than most people, the alcoholic leads a double life. He is very much the actor. To the outer world he presents his stage character. This is the one he likes his fellows to see. He wants to enjoy a certain reputation but knows in his heart he doesn’t deserve it.”

I was very much like this when I came into OA in 2010. I had a wide variety of personas that I would put on depending on the situation in which I found myself. I was not consciously aware of this, not until OA, but I played a part in every area of my life. I acted like what I thought a wife / sister / daughter / friend / employee / mom / lady in a minivan / person at a fair / mom out shopping SHOULD be. I was never just me – anywhere in my life.  
*(continued on page two)*

## **NEWCOMER'S CORNER**

### **Do You Binge Eat in Your Car? You Are Not Alone.**

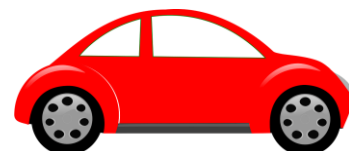
Leaving work early tonight, I took notice of the familiar “I’m free!” attitude in my heart—but with very different thoughts and emotions this time.

Five months ago, before joining OA, I would have turned into two or more fast food drive-thrus and begun my “freedom binge” while driving the long way home. The compulsion to turn into those places and grab sugary and fat-laden items used to be unbearable: I felt I had no choice but to succumb to my desires, which I did. I felt guilt afterwards and shame, plus utter despair that I would be forever locked into these binge cycles which would pop up anywhere.

But tonight as I drove past the drive-thrus, I thanked my Higher Power (whom I call God) and the OA program for giving me the freedom to not feel the terrible tug of my old compulsion and to be able to look back on a day of healthy and abstinent eating, with thankfulness and a feeling of hope that my road to recovery is truly underway.

Abstinence to me is extremely important! Not taking the first compulsive bite is paramount to my journey forward.

A longer version is at [THIS LINK](#)  
Find Newcomers Meetings [HERE](#)



**(continued from page one)**

I had no idea who I was. I felt constant tension: Would my worlds collide? Would someone catch me being some way they had never seen me before?

My behavior out in the world consisted of being who I thought other people wanted me to be, so I made sure all encounters would be over quickly. Then I could isolate and eat. Because of this compartmentalization, I always had too much to do (more pressure), impossible deadlines (loved the drama and the victim story), and was never, ever able to focus on myself (justification). And I ate.

Step Two in the **OA Twelve & Twelve** addresses this on page 11: "Too much of the time we had lived in fear and anxiety. More comfortable with food than with people, we sometimes limited our social lives. We closed the curtains, stopped answering the phone, and hid in the house."

I found a sponsor and began working the Steps. It took me a couple of times before I found someone with whom I was comfortable. Once I started, I did fine right up to Step 4. Then the real procrastination began. I couldn't answer all those questions! What would she think of me??! I wallowed in fear and anxiety.

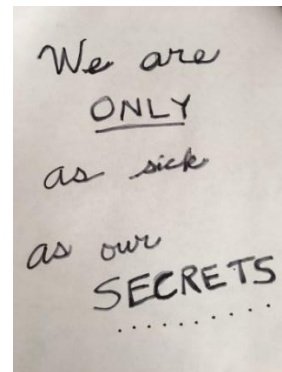
Then we set a date to meet for the 5<sup>th</sup> Step. OMG. I would actually have to do the 4<sup>th</sup> Step! I had put it off and put it off, lying to my sponsor that I was doing it. She knew. She had to know, and, with hindsight, I can now see that her gentle encouragement to find a date, get my train ticket, make hotel reservations, and make other travel arrangements was exactly what I needed.

I took the number of days until my trip, counted the questions, divided them up by the days left minus one, and finally set to work. For three solid weeks, all I did was

answer questions and cry. I HAD to save face. My reputation was on the line!

On the day we were to meet in Kansas City, I went to the Kirkwood Train station and boarded the train. I was sick with anxiety. What had I gotten myself into? Was I really going to read all my secrets, shame, guilt, trauma to another human being? Yes, I was. In this moment I found my fledgling integrity.

The **Oxford Dictionary** says integrity has two definitions: 1. The quality of being honest and having strong moral principles; moral uprightness; and 2. The state of being whole and undivided. For once, I had finally made a commitment and kept it. Nothing was left unanswered; nothing was left unfinished. I had been honest. Searching. Fearless. Well, probably I still had fear, but I did it with courage that I truly didn't know I had.



Over the many hours that I gave away that first 5<sup>th</sup> Step, my sponsor was unfailingly kind, exceedingly fair, and very gentle. She would suggest that in one area perhaps I was being too hard on myself and give me examples from her experience. In another area she would ask questions, thereby helping me see things in a different light. Giving away my secrets to another human and having that human reflect love, acceptance, and hope to me was life changing. I learned to separate what was my responsibility (my own actions only) from what was not (anyone else's behaviors, problems, drama, life).

**(continued on page three)**

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Just recently, I had the honor of hearing a sponsee's 5<sup>th</sup> Step. Because I had been accepted, I was accepting. Because I had been shown kindness and understanding, I could be kind and understanding. Because I had been guided to see what was on my side of the street, I was able to guide another to do so as well.


When we give away our secrets, we lose more than weight. We gain a clearer understanding of who we are. From this point we learn to make better choices, no longer weighed down with all our secrets.

Anonymous – St Louis



## TRADITION FIVE

**Each group has but one primary purpose — to carry its message to the compulsive overeater who still suffers.**



Tradition Five is clearly stated. It's the follow-up question that's important: how are we supposed to do that?

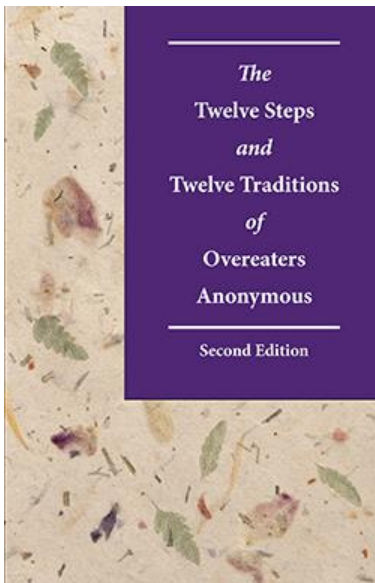
Here are some suggestions:

- Attend meetings regularly and participate by sharing and helping out when you can.
- Read OA literature and the **AA Big Book** regularly.
- Obtain a sponsor or sharing partner as soon as possible.
- Identify your trigger foods and develop a plan of eating that includes foods you're supposed to eat in the right portions.

- Abstain from those trigger foods. This means keep away from your trigger foods, one day at a time.
- Pray often during the day and on a regular basis while developing a personal relationship with your Higher Power.
- Work the Twelve Steps in order and with the help of your sponsor as quickly as you can.
- Reinforce awareness of Steps One, Two, and Three regularly.
- Be aware of your gifts from your HP and express gratitude regularly.
- Make several outreach calls weekly, sharing your progress and showing concern for other members.
- When you and your sponsor agree, share your progress with a newcomer seeking help by offering to sponsor someone.
- Continue to apply the [Steps](#), [Traditions](#), and [Principles](#) of the program to your life and relationships, discussing your progress with your sponsor regularly.
- Realize and accept the fact that your body's allergy to your trigger foods will be with you for your lifetime, but the obsession of the mind will be quieted if you "keep in fit spiritual condition" ([Alcoholics Anonymous](#), 4th ed., p. 85).

The word "regularly" recurs throughout this list of suggestions. It appears that new habits are necessary to foster recovery and grow in it! The bottom line is that we "don't simply carry the message, we are the message" ([The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous, Second Edition](#), pp. 86–87). Enjoy the promises of each Step and smile as you get better.

Edited and reprinted from **The Butterfly** newsletter  
Chicago Western Intergroup, July 2017  
Find it at [THIS LIFELINE LINK](#)



## Experience, Strength, and Hope With Our OA Literature – THE OA 12 & 12

I love our literature! All of it. I started my recovery journey first reading the **AA Big Book** and the **OA Twelve and Twelve**. Next it was the **Brown Book (Overeaters Anonymous)** and the little, but powerful **For Today** meditations. Although my bookshelf is stacked with these and many other OA, AA, and other recovery literature, after 15 years in these rooms, it is the **OA Twelve and Twelve** that I return to most often.

It's far more than a guidebook. It's been a lifeline in my recovery journey. Having read and referenced it multiple times, I can honestly say that each time I return to its pages, I uncover something new. Whether it's a turn of phrase, a piece of wisdom that resonates differently, or a concept that suddenly clicks in a deeper way, this book continues to evolve with me.

In times of clarity and in moments of relapse, this book has been a steady companion. It doesn't judge, doesn't preach. Instead, it offers gentle but honest insight into the

challenges of compulsive eating and the spiritual tools that can help us recover.

During a particularly difficult relapse, it was this book that helped me reconnect with the foundation of my recovery and begin to rebuild from a place of honesty and hope. The Steps provide a path back not just to abstinence, but to sanity, peace, and self-acceptance.

One of the things I appreciate most is how accessible and compassionate the language is. The writing is clear and relatable, even when it's confronting uncomfortable truths. It offers a spiritual (not religious) framework that welcomes people of all backgrounds. The book doesn't try to "fix" you; it invites you to explore your inner world with curiosity and kindness.

The Traditions, too, offer a model for healthy relationships and group functioning that go far beyond food or recovery meetings. I practice the Traditions in my daily life to the best of my ability.

This isn't a book you read once and shelve. It's one you live with, wrestle with, grow with. It invites ongoing reflection, and in return, it offers ongoing transformation. It's not dramatic or flashy; its power lies in its humility and truth. For anyone walking the path of recovery from compulsive eating, especially those who might be struggling with relapse or feeling disconnected, I highly recommend returning to this text. You may find, as I have, that the words meet you where you are .... and gently guide you toward where you want to be.

Martha P.





## April 27 Super Sunday Held With Journeys to Abstinence Theme

What a profound sense of belonging I received by attending the Super Sunday on April 27 which had the theme “**Journeys of Abstinence.**” There were many common threads throughout as the speakers shared their various paths, beginning with how we all struggle.

Someone suggested that sitting with that feeling of being uncomfortable can ultimately strengthen your resolve. It is a fight not to be taken in isolation, though. Call someone. Call your sponsor even if it's the last thing you want to do. There is no judgment, only support and love.

Literature was a strong tool used by so many on the journey. One person even left a pamphlet in the refrigerator. Do what you need to do. Any lengths. Brilliant!

I heard cautionary tales to avoid the idea that long term abstinence allows you to tell yourself that “you've got this.” Relapse can happen to anyone at any time if you embrace this kind of thinking. There is no cure for our disease.

On the other hand, this doesn't mean that all the work you did to achieve abstinence is negated with a relapse. Being honest and humble are key to returning to the road of recovery that we trudge one minute, one hour, one day at a time.

I was encouraged to hear that food plans give us the freedom to change them as we grow in spirit and work the program at deeper levels. For many, as recovery became stronger, food became more neutral. What fellow traveler doesn't want that?

Someone mentioned how she would reach out to God (Higher Power) to help her with her abstinence by saying the words “God

stay with me.” A lightbulb came on when she realized that HP was asking the same thing of her: “Stay with me.”

Thanks to all who made this recovery event possible. Perhaps your home meeting could join with one or more others to host a recovery event before the end of 2025.

Chris A.



## OA Keeps Going and Growing: A Share from Our IG Chair

Since our regular Intergroup (IG) representative wasn't available, I was the person making an IG announcement in a meeting recently. This included the reading of this year's Annual Appeal Letter from our World Service Office. It's a fairly long piece and I was feeling a bit uncomfortable about taking up meeting time, even thinking maybe I could just self-edit to shorten it.

But as I read aloud the amazing things going on in our Fellowship it hit me how vitally important that information is for me – and hopefully all of us – to appreciate. Things like:

- We now make it easier to find a meeting *anywhere in the world.*
- We have a more robust social media presence.
- We once had to depend solely on AA literature (and don't get me wrong, I love those books) and some OA pamphlets. Today there's a wealth of literature by us, for us, most recently including the beautiful book ***Diverse Voices: A Common Solution.***
- Our WSO fellows have worked hard to increase the availability of translated introductory literature and the oa.org and Lifeline websites in up to 48 languages!

***(continued on page six)***

*(continued from page five)*

I won't go on and on; however, you can check out all the specifics in that letter (see page ten). I hope all of us will take a brief pause, consider what this Fellowship means to us, and give according to our ability.

Our next Intergroup meeting will be on May 4 at 1:30 p.m. (See login information on page eight.) All are welcome!

In grateful service,  
Eileen, IG Chair



## **Region 5 Convention May 23-25 In Milwaukee, WI; “Be Alive in ’25”**

Hooray, the convention is coming! The Region 5 convention in Milwaukee, WI, May 23-25, that is. There is still time to register. Join the several people from our bi-state area who are going!

Come for excitement about recovery, for enthusiastic speakers and workshops, for fun and fellowship! I am going back for my second Region 5 convention, because I had such a good time at the first one.

Here is a link to the registration form, which also gives the schedule:  
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1RN1kCZXSWr0Y-oDW5spkTu3anN1x7KPd/view>

I hope to see you there!

Elizabeth C.

## **Insanity: Can I Get a Little Whiskey in This Milk Please?**

Overeaters Anonymous (OA) includes a lot of people who gladly embrace the label “Big Book Thumper.” These are folks who may consider the **Big Book** of Alcoholics Anonymous to be the most important of the OA-approved literature and who turn to it often, sometimes daily, for guidance. I, on the other hand, love some parts of the **Big Book**, but struggle mightily with its outdated language, especially where sexism is glaringly obvious.

One of the **Big Book** stories that has generated some resistance in me in the past is the “whiskey in the milk” story on page 36. It’s not that the story is sexist – although the man in question does have a cocky attitude, noting how irritated he felt to be “a salesman for a concern I once owned.” It seems to me that sexism harms people of all genders by telling those who are men that they especially must dominate or bully their way to success.

But my real resistance has been to this guy claiming he had no idea of drinking when he went into the “roadside place” for a sandwich. Why would an alcoholic choose to get in this vulnerable position? Why have two sandwiches and two glasses of milk and then decide it’s okay to put a shot of whiskey in your milk because you have a full stomach? From there, it was all downhill, and the man in the story wound up in an asylum again.

A recent experience on a trip out of town humbled me about this story though. Like the man in the story, I was away from my usual surroundings. I was tired and feeling rather bruised from a hard day in which things were not going my way. It was dinner time, so I went to a restaurant right next door to my motel. What could go wrong, aye?

*(continued on page seven)*

**(continued from page six)**

I chose a healthy meal from the menu that fit my food plan, noting its ingredients, how that worked with other meals I had consumed that day, and even the calorie content which was listed on the menu. I texted my food to my sponsor and enjoyed a dish that had been prepared well. The check came, and I began to gather my belongings to leave.

That's when I noticed the shiny trifold advertisement on the table for a type of sweet item that I normally do not eat. Truthfully, it had not been hard to give up this particular type of sweet pastry because I don't actually like them, even though I ate dozens of them during the worst days of my eating disorder. Still, there were four varieties pictured on the glossy and colorful table tent. One of them contained an ingredient that is definitely on my alcoholic foods list. I had never seen one of these particular pastries with that ingredient as a component. The ad also said "for a limited time only."

Suddenly I was obsessed with the thought that I'd best try this item because it was a unicorn food – something I had not seen before and might never find again, given the "limited time" label. I ordered one and ate it. It was not nearly as good as the photo looked, and it did taste vaguely like the cardboard the advertisement was printed on. I was aware of feeling shame, but also of wanting to get in my car and drive up the street to a place that had a dessert item I like better. I was swirling in the drain that could pull me back into my compulsive eating nightmare.

Thankfully I did not do that. I got myself to my motel room and went to bed fairly quickly, recognizing that I'd been a victim of **HALT** – becoming too hungry, angry, lonely, and tired in combination. So, I escaped the asylum and found the courage to tell my sponsor about

my slip – although it did take me a couple of weeks to summon the courage.

The alcoholic on page 36 and I have more in common than I wanted to admit. Both of us, despite knowing the risks, deceived ourselves into thinking we could try an experiment by consuming an item to which we are allergic. Since that close call, I have renewed my commitment to Step Work, to total (and prompt) honesty with my sponsor, and to preparing more meals at home. I am thankful the **Big Book** helped me recognize my behavior as a kind of insanity and to appreciate the danger of putting whiskey in my milk.

Anonymous



**ARTICLES FOR THE NEXT NEWSLETTER ARE DUE BY May 20, 2025.** Please send your submissions to the **OA TODAY** Editor c/o [info@stlouisoa.org](mailto: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.

## Members' Experience, Strength, And Hope Around Motherhood

**Story One:** We had been married five years when we decided to have a baby. After several months of trying, medication and surgery, I did not become pregnant. In those years, in vitro fertilization (IVF) didn't exist.

We had a strong marriage and financial security, and I thought pregnancy and motherhood were supposed to be on my timeline. My HP had other plans.

We adopted a baby boy in November 1981. Within a year, we had another baby boy.

Son #2 was an active, rambunctious toddler. Serious behavioral issues were first noticed in middle school. Although he didn't have an official bipolar diagnosis, a psychiatrist prescribed lithium to which he responded favorably.

By the time he was a teenager, his behavior became a safety issue in our home and our entire family was affected. When he was 16, we realized we could no longer cope with his behavior, and we sent him to a wilderness program in Idaho, followed by years of emotional growth boarding schools.

The never-ending stress of this situation threw our family into chaos. I asked my Higher Power: "Why did this baby come to our family, and not another one? Why are you testing us emotionally and financially?"

Then I stopped asking why and realized that G-d works in mysterious ways. I needed to accept on faith that there are reasons for everything, but sometimes it's not for me to know the reason. This child must be special or he would not have become part of our family.

Even today I hold onto that belief. He's 42, and his life has been a series of ups and downs. He's an alcoholic and has not hit bottom. He knows I think he's made bad choices but love him unconditionally. Program has taught me how to detach with love. I am powerless over his behavior. The overwhelming feeling is sadness – sad that he has so much talent and potential that is wasted.

I know my son has his own Higher Power guiding his life. I can only hope that it's G-d's will for him to find peace and recovery.

Anonymous

**Story Two:** ....I worked a Fourth and Fifth Step about my mother with my sponsor. I soon realized how resentful I had become about her and how her treatment had affected me. I had been reenacting all of my family struggles in every aspect of my life, including my jobs and social groups. I'd made unhealthy life decisions based on perceiving bossy people in the same way as I did my mother. I carried these resentments for fifty years.....

My wise sponsor invited me to write about [my mother's] good qualities, so I did. I wrote all the wonderful things she gave me: safety and security; exposure to the arts, the world, and nature; and encouragement to rise above prejudices and have friends from other cultures. She protected me from alcoholic relatives. She emphasized education and going to college and de-emphasized beauty and sexual attractiveness.

Writing about the things that I expected from her and then writing the truth about what she was capable of giving me—and what she did give me—enabled me to let go of all of the resentments I had carried around .... Now, I was completely ready to have them removed.....

For the full article, go to [THIS LINK](#) at *Lifeline*





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

**May 23, 24, and 25** – Region 5 Convention, Milwaukee, WI (see page six)

**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 graphic on this page)

**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 11)

**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](#).





W O R L D   S E R V I C E   O F F I C E

## 2025 Annual Appeal Letter from Your World Service Office

To: Groups, Service Bodies, and Members of Overeaters Anonymous:

If you are a group, please read this appeal letter at three consecutive meetings. If an intergroup, service board, or region, please consider an annual contribution for this appeal.

Your contributions continue to make a difference for Overeaters Anonymous. Thank you! Here are some of the wonderful new ways we've been able to put them to work. In 2024, OA began a redesign of the Find-a-Meeting tool to make it faster and easier to use. In 2024, OA's social media followers increased by 35 percent to 24,950. In this same period, our social media content was viewed by 256,000 members of the public, an 880-percent increase over 2023. Also, we funded five requests from the Professional Exhibits fund across a variety of healthcare verticals and geographies.

Your support allowed us to make literature and other media available to members in their native languages. Translations of *Where Do I Start?* increased to 48 languages, up from 27 last year at this time. The One-on-One Professional Outreach: Demonstration Video and Talking Points was subtitled in 23 languages, which accounts for more than 99 percent of all non-English OA meetings, and the "Talking Points" section of the document is available in 46 languages via oa.org's translation feature. In fact, our websites, oa.org and lifeline.oa.org, now have built-in translation in 48 languages.

New publications enabled by your funding included production of *Diverse Voices* and *The OA Handbook for Members, Groups, and Service Bodies*. Also, the Worksheets in the *Twelve Steps Workshop and Study Guide* are now available in the OA bookstore as a PDF download. Finally, your contributions enabled OA to manage over 150 infringements to our copyrighted and trademarked materials since 2022.

As technology and costs accelerate, we will need your support in 2025 to continue our outreach to diverse populations and to offer innovative ways for you to connect with others who suffer from compulsive food behaviors. Here are ways you can show your support in addition to your regular Seventh Tradition contribution:

- Donate directly, individually or as a group, online at [oa.org/contribute](https://oa.org/contribute) (remember to include your meeting or service body number). That page also offers a QR code for Paypal, connection to the OA portal and more.
- Cut out the form below and mail your check to the World Service Office
- Consider contributing automatically through the Automatic Recurring Contributions link at [oa.org/contribute](https://oa.org/contribute)

Any amount would be appreciated and, if you cannot contribute now, we know that you support OA in other ways.

In loving service and gratitude,  
Board of Trustees Treasurer

Please forward the collective contribution, including your group number, to:

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Overeaters Anonymous World Service Office/Appeal to Groups  
PO Box 44727

Rio Rancho NM, 87174-4727 USA      Group/Service Body # \_\_\_\_\_ Enclosing US\$ \_\_\_\_\_

# **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, May 8, 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](mailto:cynthiahenley5@gmail.com)  
Amy G at 314 302 0802, [gauthieramy@gmail.com](mailto:gauthieramy@gmail.com)**