

# April 2026 OA TODAY NEWSLETTER

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## Courage



### STEP FOUR

**Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.**



Perhaps nothing in OA's program of action inspires more dread than writing a fourth step inventory. We've been eating over all the hurts we've accumulated, trying to avoid them. Now OA tells us that we have to allow them out of the cage inside that barely keeps them under control.

Well, we're fooling ourselves, of course. We don't control our fears, resentments, bad memories, and feelings. They control us! Truth is that until we look at them, all of them, they own us. Every time we feel any kind of feeling, we are driven back to the food because every feeling we have reminds us of the ones we are covering up with food. Yes, even happy feelings, because they remind us of how awful we generally feel.

When we write an honest and thorough inventory of ourselves, however, we discover that we have not been victims of others so much as victims of our own thinking. Our disease has taken control of our thoughts and used them as a weapon against our better judgment. We see through an inventory that  
*(continued on page two)*

## **NEWCOMER'S CORNER**

### **Meetings Help: Keep Coming Back!**

[As food addicts] we can do zero to doomsday in six seconds or less. *What do I wear to work today* can utterly paralyze us, and so we turn to food for relief.

The 12 Steps, 12 Traditions, and OA's nine tools help us learn a simpler way to live. From our food to how we conduct ourselves, we find a way to walk through each day with clarity and purpose, even if our mind tries to make things complicated.

The great thing about [going to a] meeting is that we have nothing to do except sit and listen. Nothing more is required of us. But that seemingly small action makes a big difference. When things are complicated, our mind is a committee of people who talk over themselves constantly. It's hard to even make sense of the chatter sometimes.

But when we sit in a meeting and simply focus on what another person is saying, the committee adjourns. In meetings, one person talks. Then another person talks. Then another. No one is interrupted; no one talks over anyone else. Compared to the bustle in the world and the tussle in our minds, it's downright idyllic. This may be part of the reason why many members report they usually feel better after a meeting than when they arrived.

Adapted from "Five Ways to Keep It Simple"  
[Seacoast OA, February 18, 2018](#)

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we are human beings being human with all the same flaws that everyone else has. That we take personally what is not ours to take. That we have little ability to distinguish feelings from facts. That we have precious little accuracy in our self-reflections...if we've bothered to be self-reflective.

In some cases, we learn that we have been victimized by someone at one time, but that, even though it is not our fault, we have to claim what's ours: we carried around that victim mentality for years; we are the ones replaying the past over and over again and using it as a reason to eat.

Anyone who has done a thorough fourth step will tell you a few things:

1. It is simple, but not easy
2. It is life changing
3. It is utterly necessary for recovery.

The third point is the one that we must all pay attention to in OA. If we don't do the work, we will not get the results our program promises. It's like staring at the aspirin bottle in hopes a headache will go away. We've got to take our medicine. Hanging around in meetings and waiting for the "right" time to do an inventory just prolongs our agony. It gives our disease time to reassert itself inside our minds. Our window of willingness is only open for so long.

We may be afraid of digging too deep, of reliving past episodes we'd rather forget, and of seeing the worst of ourselves. But we aren't writing to be published in *The New York Times*. Our inventory is ours and will only be shared with one other person (in our fifth step). We make it objective. We don't lard every resentment with the whys and whatfors. We keep our writing concise so that our disease doesn't have room to turn us toward excuse making. We only want to record those things that our illness uses against us. That way inA

a Steps 6 and 7, we know exactly what it is we are asking God to remove from us.

The Big Book has very specific suggestions for structuring an inventory. They have proven over 80 years to be immensely powerful and helpful. There are other means as well. In the end, however, the most important things are honesty, fearlessness, and thoroughness.

**Honesty:** We must be willing to be completely and utterly honest about our part in what we write about. No excuses, no stories, no bullshit.

**Fearlessness:** We must not shrink at writing about the most difficult aspects of our lives. For example, many, many survivors of physical, sexual, and mental abuse have written fourth steps about them and found the inventory transformative as a result.

**Thoroughness:** We must get it all out—everything that keeps our true selves at bay and allows our illness to run the show. If we hold onto something we may not recover. Like one rotten apple spoiling the whole barrel.

This is our course then. In Step 3, we've told our Higher Power that we'll go to any length for recovery. Now we put pen to paper to start the process of getting rid of what separates us from God's love. Then we'll have it removed so we finally have the slate cleared and into the business of living a useful and productive life.

KEEP WRITING!

Reprinted from [Seacoast OA](#)  
[April 10, 2016](#)



## **A Member's Experience, Strength, And Hope with Step Four: *How My Thinking Had Me Fooled***

I've always considered myself smart. That said, the most disturbing realization I got out of my Fourth Step was that my thinking had me fooled! Every single decision and action I have ever taken has been a result of my thinking. It's now easy to see and admit that, because I'm an addict, I'm powerless over food, my life is unmanageable, and I need to be restored to sanity. It also should come as no surprise that there's something seriously wrong with the way I've been thinking in other areas of my life over all these decades.

Let me share some ways I've been so horribly fooled:

- I used to believe food was supposed to comfort me; I now know food is to assure my body's health and repair.
- I used to think I was a victim; I found out I am responsible for my part.
- I used to think I was supposed to live my life outside of myself in reaction to what was going on; I found out that I am to live within myself, on equal footing with other human beings and in harmony with God.
- I used to think I was responsible to fix, manage, and control everything; I found out I am responsible to turn my will and life over to the care of God, with GOD as the Director of my life.
- I used to think I needed to put my focus on mistakes I made in the past and on the future so I didn't repeat them; I found out I am to live in the present.
- I used to think to protect myself I needed to remember everything about others, especially everything bad others had done to me; I found out others are sick just like me, and my purpose is to be of maximum service to them and to God.

- I used to believe I could change myself and others if I tried really hard; I found out only God can remove my character defects, and I'm powerless over people, places, and things.
- I used to believe I set boundaries on others; I now know I set boundaries on myself.
- I used to believe I had to push hard to get my piece of the pie; I now desire serenity which is achieved through acceptance and gratitude.
- I used to believe I had to be right no matter what; I now value kindness and relationship.
- I used to believe I had to be loved by you; I now know that lasting love is found in God.

I could go on and on endlessly about how my thinking has been so wrong. I somehow got everything backwards and upside down. I no longer want to be fooled by the lies in my head. Instead, I want them to be replaced with truth. I believe the more this happens, the better my life is going to become.

Anonymous



### **TRADITION FOUR**

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



What does this mean? Basically, our groups have no other affiliation other than OA. We don't do anything that will harm other OA Groups or OA as a whole.

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

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

Just like your fellow travelers, 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 some things unique to that particular group.

All groups are open to anyone who wants to stop eating compulsively. All groups also remain free of any affiliation with outside issues or institutions. For example, we don't require a specific religion even if we meet in a space with a religious affiliation. Our practices are OA's, not that of any other organization.

We can, and do, encourage special interest groups, should members choose to form these. We have groups focused on younger members, people in maintenance, in relapse, LGBTQ groups, men's groups, and women's, those with more than 100 lbs. to lose, and those who need to gain weight too. We are unique in these identities together; yet we are the same in our dis-ease.

OA allows each group to find our own way and learn from our experience. That is an excellent life skill to learn and practice in the safe space of meetings before trying it in our own lives 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 to accept responsibility for our actions and their consequences. The rooms are such a safe place to practice that skill. We learn that all of us must walk the path our Higher Power (HP) puts in front of us. As a sponsor, I must 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 their path. 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 our 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.

MelanieT



## **My Viewpoint on the OA Fall Retreat**

I have been helping to plan the Fall Retreat for the St. Louis Bi-State Intergroup Fall Retreat. We have decided that attendees may come to all, some, or none of the planned program while enjoying the beauty of the retreat center and community with their OA fellows.

Why are we allowing this diversity in participation? My soul is particularly nourished from participation in group activities. However, there have been times when I have needed one-on-one time with my sponsor or with another OA member to discuss specific Steps, Traditions, and/or food issues that I was currently going through. There also have been times when I needed quiet time for rest and renewal.

All of these are perfectly acceptable reasons to come to a retreat. Our OA fellows are encouraged to seek the gift that they most need that is offered by retreat.

Many retreats are designed to offer reconnection or deeper connection with Higher Power. Each retreat I've attended has

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given me either a new viewpoint or a refreshed way to look at my recovery. I've been attending annually since I was a newcomer. The annual retreat is my most favorite OA-sponsored event in the St. Louis Bi-State Area! The dates for 2026 are September 25-27.

Anonymous



## **Unity Day Attracts International Participation**

The St. Louis Bi-State Intergroup is thankful to the St. Louis Early Bird Meetings for hosting an online Unity Day event on Saturday, February 28, 2026. About thirty OA members attended the two-and-one-half-hour recovery event, and some were from outside Missouri and Illinois. At least two attended from outside the U.S. (Canada and Jordan).

The format for the 2026 Unity Day was three panels with two diverse speakers. Each spoke for 15-20 minutes; then a 10-15 minute period was allowed for sharing by participants.

The topics and speakers were:

### Community/fellowship

J-MO  
Jeremy C.

### Using the Tools to work the Steps

Melanie T.  
Marc S.

### Spirituality

Lev G.  
Grace B.

Many of the individual shares focused on the topics highlighted by the speakers.

Additionally, there were rich and honest truths revealed about ways to cope with cravings, times when sponsors offered suggestions that pulled us back from very bad decisions, body image, identities we wish were more present in our home meetings, the power of “acting as if,” and more.

For anyone who attended who forgot to make a donation, [HERE](#) is the link for making a Tradition Seven contribution. Please remember that we welcome all, whether funds can be offered or not. Never let lack of funds keep you away from an OA event!

The following Step Ten journal resources were shared:

Region One -

<https://www.oaregion1.org/journals.html>

Ocean & Bay Intergroup -

<https://oceanandbay.org/ocean-bay-journal/>

Stephanie B. from Canada sent this written reflection after the event: At Unity Day, we ate our fill of a rich smorgasbord of personal reflections from OAer's filled with experience, strength and hope! With the sharing, I was challenged to focus more on my program. Speakers shared various reflections that caused me to think about the OA program in a new light. I could identify as well with various aspects of the disease as an OAer spoke. Thanks to everyone who made this meeting possible.

Editor



## My Abstinence Journey

Given the last few days, the first thing that comes to mind about abstinence is how easily I can lose it. On Thanksgiving Day, I ate liberally of foods that have been on my alcoholic foods list. That continued into the next day. I was shaken by this experience.

Thankfully an OA friend texted me the words: "Abstinence can start any time of the day." So, just as easily as I lost it, I can get it back immediately.

But abstinence is not just sticking to a food plan. OA teachings go beyond the mere act of eating sensibly. In the rooms I learn over and over that my disease runs the gamut of life-giving or life-stealing actions. It is a spiritual, physical and emotional illness that requires thought and discipline and trust in a power greater than me. On Thanksgiving I chose to ignore the power of my daily plan and simply gave in to the cravings.

It was an old reaction to not feeling like I really belonged. I was among friends and strangers – and all of them belonged to a family system. As much as I was welcomed into the home where we stayed, I felt like an outsider. So, I fell into the trap of finding comfort in foods that I knew were not good for me. It was a quick over-reaction to a situation that made me a little uncomfortable.

Something else about true abstinence. Like an alcoholic who cannot sample any alcoholic beverage without the risk of relapse, I now realize the meaning of the term "alcoholic foods." These are not foods I can experiment with. They are absolutely as damaging to me as that first drink is to the alcoholic. If I really want to be abstinent, I need to get over my rogue thoughts that I can take even one bite of a forbidden food. I wrote a list once of my red, yellow and green foods. I need to revise that list and commit that the red foods are

simply off my menu in any form. Plus, I know there are foods on my yellow list that belong on the red side of the page.

I need to look at my list again. I need to decide if abstinence is more important than a momentary taste pleasure. I need to make this commitment in order to keep my abstinence seriously in place.

Abstinence is also a quality-of-life issue. It's not just about avoiding certain foods; it's about making a commitment to take care of myself. It's about using the tools that will help me advance in my spiritual life, tools that can detract from the cravings that have accompanied me most of my life. It's about being honest about what I'm doing.

I heard something in a meeting. The speaker was very clear about the ways in which she was lying to herself and others. As I listened to her I took every word as gospel, because she was saying things that applied directly to me.

I am very aware that honesty is not always a part of my makeup. Here are some ways that I can tell myself I am being abstinent, when it's only a half-truth that I'm depending on. The only good news is that these behaviors do not necessarily include any of my old binge foods.

1. Using exercise as an excuse to eat more – not especially alcoholic foods, but more about quantity. I see the calories "burned" and tell myself I can eat bigger portions.
  2. Sneaking small amounts of food – again, not red-light foods – more like two or three almonds, or a tiny spoonful of jelly, or one or two crackers. The dishonesty is that I do not report those bites on my food plan.
  3. Disguising my compulsive bites is dishonest. If I've had my lunch and
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grab something not on my plan later, I add it to my lunch report rather than say I compulsively ate something between meals. If I grab something after I've sent my food plan off, I don't always report it.

4. I struggle with the fact that I weigh myself every day. I tell myself that I am working towards a healthy body weight and want to keep track of how I'm doing. At least, I am gentle if I haven't lost or if I've gained a pound. I don't beat myself up over it.
5. As much attention as I pay to my food intake, I need to do the same with my compulsive behaviors. Recently at a friend's house, I reached into the bag of mini candies and ate two or three bars really quickly when no one was observing me. I have found myself at the pantry door looking for something I can grab a bite of. So far, I've been able to close the pantry door without taking anything out, but the behavior is troublesome.

As I read stories about fellow OA's and their understanding of "Abstinence," I am getting closer to defining what it means to me. The first thing I think of is freedom – freedom from obsessive thoughts and behaviors, from shame and guilt, from the compulsion to be soothed by the cunning, baffling and powerful influence of food.

Every day I get a little clearer about what the next right thing is that I should be doing. I ask my Higher Power for the serenity, courage and wisdom to make each day an abstinent one.

Lynn M.



## **Find A Meeting Improvement Campaign Continues**

As OA continues to strengthen its online tools for carrying the message, improvements to the "Find a Meeting" tool will launch alongside a website update in April. The updated search tool will connect to a new OA meeting database and offer enhanced search options, clearer meeting details, and easier updates for group secretaries.

This work is part of the [Find a Meeting Improvements Campaign](#), supported by member contributions. Members who would like to help can make a designated contribution at [oa.org/contribute](http://oa.org/contribute) by selecting "Find a Meeting Improvements." See an update on funds raised thus far on page 10.

From the **WSO News Bulletin**, March, 2026

## **Being a World Service Delegate Helped Me Grow in Self-Acceptance**

I began my recovery journey in OA more than 10 years ago, learning ever so painfully to be honest, accountable and accepting from this fine community of OA fellows. It was slow going!

However, as I became better at living with myself and listening and learning, I understood myself to be ready for service – with some prompting from my sponsor and mentors. I began at the Intergroup and Regional levels. These were rewarding in their own ways and prepared me to continue in a larger forum.

Finally, I became brave enough to serve at the World Service Business Conference as a delegate. World Service allowed me to interface with the world of OA. Meeting online and in person with others in different countries was both incredibly uplifting and

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humbling. The experience of working with hundreds in a room to come to group conscience on important policies and programs was an experience I will never forget.

I learned to lead differently – by contribution of my thoughts after careful consideration and deep acceptance of others' thoughts in an environment of deep listening. I had always "carried the weight" of my committees in my business life – as if a badge of honor. Now I practiced being one among many. The intelligence, recovery, differences and, therefore more startling, the relatability of this worldwide community was exciting and interesting.

I participated in committees by online video tools and learned to think outside my box (a good lesson) and contribute with confidence. I became right-sized in a large community. It was a great learning experience and, I believe, significantly contributed to my recovery.

It was not a study in perfection. It was an experience of growth and loving acceptance in service to something greater than myself. I highly recommend this role for those wishing both interesting service work and a personally rewarding recovery opportunity!

Christina D.



**April 20-25** – World Service Business Conference; in-person attendance only; see details at [THIS LINK](#)

**April 25** – Body Image Recovery Event – see flyer on page 9

**May 3** – 1:30 p.m. – Intergroup meeting\*\*

**June 7** – 1:30 p.m. – Intergroup meeting\*\*

**July 12** – 1:30 p.m. – Intergroup meeting\*\*

**September 13** – 1:30 p.m. – Intergroup meeting\*\*

**September 25-27** – Fall Retreat – “**Rooted in Spiritual Principles**” – located at Toddhall Retreat Center, Columbia, IL

**October 11** – 1:30 p.m. – Intergroup meeting\*\*

**November 8** – 1:30 p.m. – Intergroup meeting and Annual Business Conference\*\*

**\*\*Note:** Each Intergroup Meeting is 1:30-3:00 p.m. via Zoom. **The meeting number is 940 5580 8391. The password is: Serenity.** It's also possible to join by telephone: Dial-in: 312-626-6799, meeting ID 940 5580 8391, and password 75183374. Those in elected service positions and 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, 2026.** 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.

# ***Overeaters Anonymous***

## **Body Image Workshop**

*Featuring recordings from the 2026 Overeaters  
Anonymous Birthday Party in Los Angeles*

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**Hosted by the “Welcome Home” Group**

**When: Saturday, April 25, 2026**

**Time: 12:30 pm – 3:30 pm**

**Where: 602 Rockwood Arbor Drive, St. Louis, Missouri 63025**

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**Suggested Donation: \$7, however, please do not stay away for financial reasons.**

**Everyone is welcome! 😊**



**Please bring a notebook or paper and a writing utensil.**

**Questions, please contact Jennifer 314-458-9560**

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*We hope you join us for an afternoon of connection, recovery, and hope as we  
explore healing our relationship with body image together.*

# FIND A MEETING - PHASE TWO IS UNDERWAY

**January 2026:** We're making great progress on improving the Find a Meeting search, with major enhancements expected to release in mid-March. In the meantime, please make sure your meeting information is up to date to help ensure a smooth transition. As of the end of 2025 we have collected **\$22,566** toward our \$75,000 goal. We hope you will be as excited as we are about the changes your support is making toward our outreach to those who are seeking a solution to our common problem.



## With Your Help, We Can Provide:



### More meeting details:

- Accessibility information
- Location specifics
- Group name
- Duration - how long
- Frequency - how often



### Improved speed & reliability



### Easier meeting updates



### Enhanced search capabilities



### Better smartphone display

## Together we can reach \$75K- Every Contribution Matters!

- Go to [oa.org/contribute](https://oa.org/contribute)
- Specify "Find a Meeting Improvements"
- Contributions by mail are welcome

**CONTRIBUTE** ❤️



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