

# Today

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 St. Louis Bi-State Area  
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**Tradition 8: “Overeaters Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers.”**

The first time I heard this tradition, I did not understand. The traditions were pretty far above my head, and I thought they were quite boring. Now, after serving some time as the Board of Trustees Chair, I understand why this tradition is so important.

The Board of Trustees (BOT) is the legal, corporate body of the St. Louis Bi-State Area Intergroup non-profit organization. Some people seem to think the BOT is the OA police. Actually, the BOT members are responsible for business and personnel issues, freeing the Intergroup to focus on group conscience for things affecting all the groups in the area. Occasionally, the BOT offers opinions or interpretations regarding traditions, but mostly it deals with business matters, such as the annual budget and personnel issues.

Speaking of personnel brings us back around to Tradition 8. We have the great fortune to have a fantastic office manager and a wonderful literature person on staff. Both are OA members, which works really well for all of us because it greatly enhances their ability to do their jobs. (Being a member of OA is not a requirement.) Though we have many wonderful volunteers, we have more work than volunteers alone can handle. The office could not function without the volunteers or the employees.

The distinction made in Tradition 8 between OA being nonprofessional and employing special workers refers to the type of work involved. While we have an office manager who handles our financial transactions, legal paperwork, and a host of other things, neither she nor any other OA member is paid for 12<sup>th</sup> step work.

You may be wondering how I’m going to tie this tradition in with life outside of OA. (I’m wondering that at this very moment but trusting HP will show me the way.) Looking back at the phrase, “life outside of OA,” I see the key. I have many daily activities that are, outside of OA. However, I always carry OA with me. The gifts I’ve received in this program touch the lives of everyone I meet, whether they are compulsive overeaters or not. Membership in OA has made me a much better employee, partner, and friend than I once was because I work the steps. Yet, no one pays me to go to meetings, work with my sponsor, or live the 12 steps to the best of my ability everyday.

I (and thousand of people like me) work with other compulsive overeaters, helping others break free of the bonds of this disease, with no thought of compensation other than the daily reprieve from the disease. My sponsees sometimes show their appreciation for my time and energy with small gifts. Last week, one even brought me flowers. But, I receive the greatest gift of all watching them grow and bloom through working the 12 steps. Accepting money for 12<sup>th</sup> step work would destroy the magic. So, OA remains nonprofessional while having fantastic professionals on staff.

~Ethel

### Region IV Fall Assembly

Region IV is having its Fall Assembly here in St. Louis again this year. We are inviting anyone in the Bi-State area to come to the Intergroup sharing Friday night, Oct. 15, 2004, from 7-9 pm at the Ramada Inn at I-270& St. Charles Rock Road. (The actual address is 3551 Pennridge Drive.) In addition, please attend the all-day and night event put on by the Illinois group beginning with "A Day of Promise" from 9-4 on Saturday Oct. 16, 2004. We will then have time for conversation before our banquet and speaker start at 6 pm. The banquet is a buffet for \$20.00 a person. After our speaker and dinner we will have open sharing.

Please pick up a flyer and fill out the form and mail to Jana Gerwert, 3040 Kingsley Drive, Florissant, MO 63033.

Hope to see lots of you there! You will get to meet some of the people who work so hard in your Region IV. You get more from Region IV when you participate.

*In O.A. Love and Service.  
~Jana*

#### Have I been a procrastinator?

**I can't believe the book just doesn't go ahead and answer that one for all of us.**

**Of course I procrastinate.**

*~Submitted by Connie H.*

### Literature Corner

#### New Items

##### **Dignity of Choice: Sample Plans of Eating**

Four years in the making, this new pamphlet provides guidance to both new and longtime OA members in devising their own plans of eating. It covers topics such as:

- The difference between a plan of eating and abstinence
- Having a choice of plans
- Reviewing our eating patterns
- "Trigger" or "binge" foods
- Eating behaviors
- Dealing with quantity
- Structure and tolerance

The pamphlet also provides six sample plans of eating (reviewed and approved by a licensed dietitian) with which some OA members have had success.

Cost .83 cents a piece

##### Price Changes for the AA Big Book.

The AA Office is increasing the price of the big book by \$1.00.

Current prices

- Large Print AA Big Book \$8.50
- Hard Cover AA Big Book \$7.00
- Soft Cover AA Big Book \$6.75
- First 164 pages \$6.00

*~Thanks,  
Ellen*

### A Journey

We experience the reactions and responses of people in our everyday worlds to our being overweight or struggling with anorexia and/or bulimia. People stare, make faces, make comments, pull away, treat us as if we are of lower intelligence or sensitivity. Family and friends don't understand when we try to share with them what we feel and think. And worse, still, is the internal dialogue that we inflict on ourselves - the continual morning to night (rising to sleeping) swirl of negative that permeates almost all moments of each day and all that we do. The result is, often, that we isolate, stay alone, and don't talk about our struggles. What "blew me away" at the first OA meeting I attended (over a year ago), and what kept me coming back even though I wasn't working any kind of program, is the acceptance, caring, and love I see and receive on Monday nights. AND, there is no requirement that we need to achieve to receive this acceptance, caring, support and love. We just need to get ourselves into that room and say "Yes, please". And when we are feeling supported and stronger and connected to God, it is at least as important to be at any meeting and to give from our abundance to those who struggle to make it through that door. For what we have been given is a wonderful gift that grows when we share it.

*~Susan*

**STEP EIGHT: Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.**

So. This Step comes in two parts -- (1) make a list (easy enough, right?) -- and (2) becoming willing (a breeze, right?). Since we get the courage to work each Step from working the ones before it, it might help to remember that no actual amends need be made yet!! Step Eight is preparation.

Most of us come to Steps Eight & Nine filled with emotions that range from uneasiness to terror. We also believe that one or more of the things we did was so awful and horrendous that making amends would be impossible. The beauty of Step Eight is that it gets us ready for Step Nine (the actual amends). And in that getting ready, we work with a wise sponsor who helps us figure out not only what amends need to be made, but also the most appropriate way to make them. In some cases, that won't be a direct amends because that would cause more harm. But there is always a way to make our amends.

I, too, had some stuff I didn't want anyone to know about, but I knew I could trust my sponsor. She had earned that trust by working with me through the first seven Steps. Most of the stuff had already been discussed in Step Five. If there was anything I left out of my first Fourth Step, I now knew I could take it to her, because she hadn't vomited all over me when she heard the earlier stuff -- and that was bad enough!! She still loved me and honored me in her life.

I have since listened to many Fifth Steps--some of which included deep dark secrets that were even deeper and darker than my own. My love and deep respect for each of these people did not falter one iota when they entrusted me with that information from their past. I cannot begin to describe the sense of awe and responsibility that comes with such trust.

Sometimes making our list is easy. For example, the first names on my list were family members and long-term friends. Adding other names in some cases was not so easy to see. For some, I was certain the other person had harmed me more so why did their name have to go on my list? My sponsor helped me see that it was my responsibility to focus on my side of the street only, even if the other person never noticed they had stuff on their side.

A few names didn't get on the list until years later. It never occurred to me when I was still so newly abstinent and so toxic that I even owed amends to some. For example, because my ex-husband became involved with another woman while we were married, it never occurred to me that I needed to examine how I might have harmed him. I think I had about four years of abstinence and further recovery before it dawned on me just how much I had!!

Some of us make our list in 3 columns. (1) Amends I'm ready to make (2) Maybe Someday (3) Never! Over the years, many of us have seen "maybes" move left and even some "nevers" move left. This is about trusting God to do for us what we cannot do for ourselves.

Again, Step Eight is just the list. We don't need more courage than this right now.

Once we have our list, now comes the becoming willing part. In some cases I could hardly wait to make those amends. I wanted that healing to begin immediately. Many amends like this have been made way too soon -- and thus end up being either incomplete or for the "wrong" things -- causing further harm. We get a far different view and are far less likely to inflict more pain if we wait until Step Nine and our sponsor's assistance in seeing where and what and how amends are due.

If we pray for the willingness and do the footwork, staying abstinent one day at a time, no matter what happens, the willingness comes. Right now, we don't need to think about HOW the amends will be made --that's God's job. Right now, all we need to do is muster up enough willingness to start with one name on the list and work with our sponsor on the amends that need to be made and the best way to make them.

One way to get willingness to go to any length for recovery is to ask ourselves: Am I willing to keep hurting? Am I willing to keep repeating patterns that harm myself and others? Am I willing to continue relapsing? Am I willing to spend the rest of my life in fear, anxiety, paranoia, resentment, depression, terror, bewilderment, frustration, and despair? If we can get UNWILLING to stay stuck, the willingness to move forward comes more readily.

It takes so little willingness to accomplish the huge miracles of recovery. A mustard seed's worth of willingness is all we need to contact our sponsor and say, "Okay. I'm ready and willing to share this list with you and talk about moving on to Step Nine with at least one of these people. How do I begin?" And the miracles will start pouring in.

*~Anonymous*

**September's newsletter will include articles on Step 9 and Tradition 9. Thanks for continuing to share your experience strength and hope with our BiState. Send your contributions via e-mail to [StlouisOAtoday@hotmail.com](mailto:StlouisOAtoday@hotmail.com)**

### Step 8

“Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.”

On starting with step 8, I need to use HOW the program works, with honesty, open-mindedness and willingness. I need to look at what I have done, setting aside the rationalization of why I did what I did (I will always have what I consider very good reasons). The honesty gets to the core of myself, and starts me on the learning path to who I really am. It helps me begin to know and understand myself and starts the process of liking myself. Open-mindedness allows me to look at the situation from others points of view, and helps me to stop hiding from myself. Willingness opens the door to looking at life and acting on life differently. It is my attitudes that keep me stuck, and the daily reprieve that allows me to open to a spiritual condition that allows me a daily reprieve. My spiritual condition is moving me to follow these steps daily (sometimes quickly, sometimes slowly).

I write down the person harmed and what connection they have to me, what I did, why I need to make amends, and how willing I am to make this amends. Then I need to talk this list over with a sponsor. I think this is why I need to have regular contact

with this sponsor, because I have to learn to trust this person and know that they are helping to guide me for my own best interest. My perceptions have become a little (or a lot) distorted, and I need to talk to someone with some detachment from my problems that I can feel has sound judgment. I have given amends without checking with sponsors, and have found that it works better, smoother and easier when I check in with a trusting person before I jump in and have both feet in my mouth. I have had to make numerous amends instead of just the one, and have made amends that were really not mine to make when I have not gotten an outside (at least outside my head) opinion.

“A Guide to the Twelve Steps for You and Your Sponsor” says we become “willing to release the resentments, fear, hate, self-pity, and a host of other negative emotions.” What a relief to not have to carry these heavy burdens around for the work we are doing with these steps.

~CH

### Things I learned from group conscience meetings:

- to have respectful disagreements
- to present my ideas unemotionally
- to be adult
- to accept the will of the group and to see my higher power in action
- to respect others even if I disagree with them

~Frank

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### Answer Service

**I love receiving calls from people who would like help finding meetings!**

**Do you like getting telephone calls? If you would be willing to consider having your name and number on the answering machine recording at our office, please call me at (314) 878-7488. The recording will specify to call up to 9:30 pm. I'd like 2 volunteers from both Missouri and Illinois.**

**Thanks for your support.**

**~Ruth E.  
Answering Service Chair**

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### Heard Round The Program

*We can measure our value of the gifts we have found in the program by the amount of sharing we do with them.*

~Submitted by Connie H

### SLIP – Sudden Lapse In Priorities

~Submitted by Kathy M.

### ACT-

Put **GRATITUDE** into  
**-ION**

*Overeaters Anonymous, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition: In Rozanne's updated story, she relates how difficult the slogan, "Act as if," was for her until someone explained, "Just take the action and the feelings will follow."*

## Sponsorship

Sponsorship is teaching me so much. HP sent me a great sponsor. She is gentle and loving, but tells it like it is! I am learning so much from this relationship.

I take what I learn and try to pass it on to my sponsees. The funny thing is, they are the ones teaching me about myself, program, spirituality, and recovery. Lately, I have seen my character defects flare up while working with sponsees. Of course, I let them fly when I am with my sponsor so I can work on them. However, somewhere in my black and white thinking, I thought I had to be "Perfect" when working with my sponsees or else they might not want what I have. That's not real; it's just another lie the disease tells me. Through working the steps with my sponsees, I see that I don't have to be anything other than another recovering compulsive eater reaching for recovery. That is enough.

I realize that by denying any of my defects, I am not being humble, nor true to myself. I am who I am today. I can do the footwork, and when HP is ready, they will be removed. Sometimes I get down on myself when I see that one has reappeared - today, I don't have to that. Acceptance is the key to all of my problems. For today, I can accept that I still have work to do. I also can gratefully recognize that my life is so much better than it was just a few years, months, days, weeks, minutes ago. Each day I recover, the closer I come to my HP. I am working with a loving, ACCEPTING, fellowship -- **Thanks HP!**

~Lisa B

## ATTENTION OA MEMBERS

Do you have *a subscription to Lifeline Magazine*?

Have you ever thought about *a subscription to Lifeline Magazine*?

What is Lifeline Magazine?

(notice the subliminal message "subscription to Lifeline Magazine")

As your Lifeline Rep I'm here to give you the good news about A **SUBSCRIPTION TO LIFELINE MAGAZINE** or as it is sometimes referred to as "a meeting on the go".

It is the International Monthly Magazine of Overeaters Anonymous. The magazine is delivered monthly to your door and brings with it articles from other OA members of hope, inspiration, truth, recovery and sanity. It fits easily in your pocket or purse and can be a comfort in times of stress or just relaxation.

Think of Lifeline when celebrating an OA anniversary or other OA occasion as a reward to yourself. I would also encourage each meeting to subscribe to the Lifeline Magazine to have available for members to borrow.

You can also subscribe on line at: [oa.org/subscribe\\_online.html](http://oa.org/subscribe_online.html)

The August issue is a real keeper.

~Sue E.

## Where Does Your Money Go?

After regular group expenses are met (rent, supplies, literature), remaining amounts are distributed as follows:  
--60% to Intergroup  
--30% to World Service  
--10% to Region

The pamphlet titled "Self-supporting the 60/30/10 Way" gives details on how that money is used.

You're welcome to attend Intergroup or Board Meetings for more information about how money is spent locally.

Intergroup meets at St. Alexius Hospital – Peterson Auditorium beginning at 1:30 pm. The dates for the rest of this calendar year are:

- September 12
- October 10
- November 14
- December 12

Thanks for helping OA to stay fully self-supporting.

~Submitted by Mary Ellen

### Service Vacancies

- 2 Trustees
- 3 Region Reps
- 2 World Service Delegates
- Intergroup Secretary
- Retreat Treasurer
- Twelve Step Within
- Cassette

### WANTED

#### Guest Newsletter Editors

The newsletter chair is looking for a committee.

If you are interested in being a guest newsletter editor, please contact Dawn S (see back of Where & When for trusted servant phone numbers) or send an email to the newsletter address.

Writing experience not necessary. Access to a computer is a must!

### Reminder

Where & Whens will be published quarterly. Each meeting is responsible for making sure there are enough copies at the meetings. If you need a copy, stop by the office or email the office, & we'll send you one.

### New Meetings

No New Meetings

### Upcoming Events & Business Info

**August 28:** 9:30-3:30  
Spirit of the Fellowship  
Meeting Rooms 1 & 2  
St. Joseph's Hospital  
525 Couch, Kirkwood, MO  
Contact: Cyndy (636) 397-3711

**September 25:** 9:00-1:00  
St. Joseph's Health Center  
St. Charles, MO  
Sponsored by St. Peter's  
Monday Night Meeting

**October 1-3**  
**13<sup>th</sup> Annual OA Retreat**  
**"Promises Made, Promises Kept"**  
Friday 7:30 – Sunday 12:00  
Pallotine Renewal Center  
15270 Old Halls Ferry Rd.  
Florissant, MO  
[NO ON-SITE REGISTRATION]

**November 20**  
**IDEA Day**  
Sponsored by New Me

**December:**  
Tentatively sponsored by St. Mary's  
Sunday AM Meeting

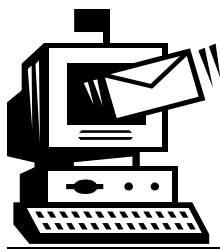
To schedule a Super Saturday or other event, contact Lisa M. Any flyers for OA events submitted for dissemination to meetings or for publication in the newsletter must have received approval by the St. Louis Bi-State Area BOT (ask any BOT member).

#### Editorial Policy

As suggested by WSO guidelines, newsletters are to be a forum for experience, strength and hope. We encourage and give top priority to original material written by members of this Intergroup.

We reserve the right to edit any and all articles submitted for publication. Submission of article or flyers does not necessarily guarantee publication.

Opinions expressed are those of the writer and not necessarily that of the St. Louis Bi-State Area Intergroup or OA as a whole.



### Contacting OA Electronically

**Bi-State Fax number:**

(314) 638-6071

**Intergroup Newsletter E-mail:**

StlouisOAtoday@hotmail.com

**St. Louis Bi-State Website:** www.stlouisoa.org

**WSO Website:** www.overeatersanonymous.org

**Region IV website:** www.oaregion4.org