

Today

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Tradition 2

“For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.”

I love that I get to write on this Tradition this month because I have been gifted with two beautiful examples to use. (Thanks, God.) The first example relates to meetings while the second has to do with how this tradition works in my personal life.

At the last Board of Trustees (BOT) meeting, a group brought forward a question about an idea they had for a Super Saturday session. Some members of the group were concerned that, since the idea was a little unusual, it might violate some of the traditions. The BOT considered the proposal and decided to recommend against the idea based on the information they had at the time. This was brought back to the group. After careful consideration, the majority of the group still felt it was a good idea and decided to keep it in the program. While this was a difficult situation, many involved learned an important lesson. The BOT is *not* the tradition police. We are simply members of OA giving service to the group. Just like any other members of the group, we rely on God to guide and protect the fellowship so that we can continue to carry the message to the still suffering compulsive overeater.

The more personal application of Tradition 2 happened this week. I had a job interview for a promotion at work. The day before the interview I was getting very stressed out trying to pick just the right outfit from my limited wardrobe. My sponsor called in response to the outreach calls I had made to her. With a few simple words, she was able to remind me that a loving God is the ultimate authority in my life. That shift in my thinking was enough to carry me through my prayer and meditation time and through the interview itself. I have to admit, God and I had a fantastic interview. I don’t know what the results will be. The results are not up to me. They are in God’s hands.

Ultimately, that is the message of Tradition 2: the results of all our efforts are in God’s hands. All we can do is our best. Then we relax and take it easy knowing God will handle whatever faces our groups or our lives.

~In OA service,
Ethel M.

“Corrected Outreach Reminder”

If you have any changes to the Outreach List, they are due by February 29, 2004.

Send changes to Linda at (email) eglesorl@charter.net

~Linda L.
Outreach Committee Chair

Step 2

Do you know the definition of insanity? It's doing the same thing over and over again, hoping to get a different result. Step Two is meant to restore us to sanity. But I first need to recognize my repetitive behaviors, which have created imbalance, and thereby insanity. Prior to OA, I bargained with myself to continue my compulsive overeating. My reasoning and my behavior appeared to me to be like the average overweight American. "I eat to live and live to eat," I would say proudly. While my body grew heavier, I was preoccupied with food and moderation was a foreign concept. I felt overwhelmed and defeated in the number of ways I have tried to be a "normal" eater. In others words, I kept eating and eating, hoping to get a different result.

"Came to believe," means to start thinking differently. I have started paying attention to what I have been telling myself about food and repeating the acronym, HALT. Asking myself before, during or after eating, "Are you hungry?" "Are you angry?" "Are you lonely?" "Are you tired?" No matter what my answer may be, I have begun to be aware of triggers for eating. I am starting to think differently about my relationship to food. I am beginning to believe that I can change my destructive compulsive eating by thinking about my actions and asking myself questions. The answers stem from journal writing, reading, talking at meetings or calling my sponsor.

"A power greater than myself" has been easier to grasp when the OA big book describes that power as being anything I want it to be. Many times that power has been an OA meeting. I feel comforted by the ritual of each meeting. I know I will hear the twelve steps read aloud,

that someone will say at least one thing which is personal and meaningful to me. I will reflect on that meeting many times until I attend the next one. I can rely on the power of personal touch as I hold hands with others during the closing prayer and hear, "Keep coming back. It works when you work it, and you're worth it!" Those words have become a favorite mantra, which centers me before I leave the meeting. The sum of the meeting components is certainly a power far greater than myself.

There is an immense satisfaction in thinking about the meaning of Step Two. And more importantly, to do something different so I might have a better way of living and thinking. To believe and feel sane. What comfort I find in the Twelve Steps and becoming a member of OA.

~Respectfully,
Lee R.

Step 2

"Came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity."

Step Two, Came To Believe

This is an easy step at first glance. I remember my sponsor asked me to write a description of everything I wanted my HP to be. I realized he is all that desire and more.

This step has become increasingly difficult as I try and turn every single thing in my life over to God. When I worry, make up stories or listen to the committee in my head, compulsively plan my day, my food, or my calories, my ego doesn't want to give it over and I am scared to let go. If I am scared, then I need to revisit Step Two. When I remind myself of all the miracles that HP has given me, it is easier to believe that returning me to sanity **IS** possible. He created the universe; am I so dynamic and complicated that he can't help me stop obsessing over whether or not there will be something there at the party that's on my food plan? No, I am not that special, at least not in that way. Yes, God can bring my physical, mental, and spiritual life to a higher plane, but I just can't sit here and read the words. I have to take action. My sponsor also suggested that I read *Came To Believe* during Step Two. I did. I cried and felt like HP was sitting next to me, telling me that it was going to be okay, that He is there and always will be. On page 13 in *Came To Believe* an alcoholic is describing sobriety, "Each new morning, there is a faith in sobriety -- sobriety not as mere abstinence from alcohol, but as progressive recovery in every facet of life." Today, I believe HP will give me the gift of abstinence -- I thank him in the morning, before all three meals, and at night for it; it is a gift that I don't have to accept, but though his grace, I do; one day at a time. Today, HP will give me the gift of serenity, joy, and peace. The only way I can accept those gifts is by working the Twelve Steps, today and everyday. If I miss a day, I miss out on wonderful gifts.

Yes, I came to believe, but I still need to work that step, otherwise, I forget.

~Lisa B

LIVE Auction). I'll

FAQ's About OA Conventions

1. Why should I stay at the Hotel?
2. Why should I pay all that money for a banquet ticket?

By now I hope you have already received a registration form for the annual St. Louis Bi-State Area Intergroup Convention, *Recovery Fair 2004*. (You should find one in this newsletter - feel free to make copies for friends). If you are a bargain-hunter like me, you probably look at the cost of the hotel room and the banquet ticket and say to yourself, "It would be a lot cheaper to sleep in my own bed at night and go somewhere else for dinner." And you would be right. But did you know this? By having a banquet and making a commitment to fill a certain amount of overnight room reservations, the OA Convention can save anywhere from \$2,300 to \$3,500 dollars? Without a banquet, the charge for having the convention at the hotel would be \$2,000. This does not include the rental charge for the meeting rooms. That charge is waived, if we get at least 60 people to stay overnight on Friday and/or Saturday. If we don't meet that goal, we can end up paying anywhere from \$300 to \$1,500 for room rental. The farther away we get from the targeted 60 rooms the more we pay for the room rental.

When I consider all of this, I realize that the cost of my room reservation and my banquet ticket include not only a bed and a meal, but also a significant financial contribution to the OA office. So, again this year, I will be finding 3 OA friends to share a hotel room (and the expense) with me and I'll be purchasing a banquet ticket (which includes a \$5.00 coupon for the

consider this as an opportunity to practice the 7th Tradition. I sincerely hope you will consider doing the same. In this way we can do our part to support the financial health of our OA Intergroup Office and the many services it provides to support each of us in our recovery.

P.S. - Please make your room registration by February 24 and make sure you specify that it is for Overeaters Anonymous. If you miss the 2/24 date, you may still reserve rooms. Again, make sure that the hotel knows you are attending the OA Convention so that it counts toward our total room nights.

In OA service,
Bridget Rolens, Convention Chair

**Wanted for the 2004
Convention**

Ways and Means Items: Clothing
Exchange – Cup Raffle – Silent Auction
– Small Bazaar Items.

Items can be brought to the Convention.

URGENT:
**ENTERTAINMENT MEETING
FOR THE CONVENTION HAS
BEEN RESCHEDULED DUE TO
INCLIMATE WEATHER**
Meeting will be Sunday, February 15
1:30PM at the OA office.

**LIVE (Lots of Interesting
Valuables for Everyone)
Auction**

One of the ways that we do service is to help at the convention and one of the ways that we raise money to help meet the expenses of the Bi-State Area OA is the LIVE auction help. We need your help.

First we need items/baskets to be auctioned off. If each meeting put together a basket we would have 57 baskets to auction off. I know that often a group of people or a single person put together a basket, a vacation spot to visit, books and other wonderful things. Let's overflow those display tables. Please take this opportunity to help support Bi-State Area OA.

And remember, after we make these wonderful baskets we need people to come and bid on them. Let's make this LIVE auction the best ever.

There is a form included in the newsletter for donations. Please fill it out and return to me by no later than Monday March 22, 2004.

~Judith W.

HELP WANTED

THANK GOD AND OA!!

Since before Thanksgiving, almost 2 months now, I have been having stomach pains, and even with medical help and following the directions EXACTLY, I have been off work the last 7 days. I hope to go back to work Wednesday (tomorrow), but I am still in pain. That is NOT what I wanted to write about. With these pains, I have felt WORSE after eating. So, even a compulsive overeater finally decides that it is easier to not eat than to suffer so much pain.

First point I am thankful for is that several persons who have been in OA for years have shared with me that they used to be overweight most of their lives and that then IN OA flipped and became anorexic. Therefore the idea of not eating scared me enough to call my sponsor and ask for help.

Second point I am thankful for-my sponsor has been with me for 13 years in fellowship-she KNOWS me. Therefore she suggested that I call in my food, exactly how much I was eating. I only did it for several days, but it showed me that WHEN I needed to eat was not the time that I needed to decide WHAT to eat. I was too sick to make a rational decision then. So, I started planning ahead again, and it worked out fine.

Friday I went to the doctor and he says it is just a matter of time, and also that I have lost 6 lbs in the last month. Without the realization that weight loss is NOT the BE ALL AND END ALL that I used to think it was, I can appreciate that it is just a number and that my worth is NOT connected to my weight. What a Blessing!!

The doctor also told me that I need to "push myself" to get back to work. Because my sponsor knows me so

well, when I told her that, she said-"no way, I know you better than he does, and you need to listen to your body". What a concept, but I am learning.

I managed to get to my meeting on Saturday and receive from my sponsor my 13 year coin for abstinence, which I actually celebrated on the 19th of December. However, if others had not shared with me the possibility of the disease flipping on me, I might not have noticed, and could have gone the other way.

There was a time in my life when I truly believed that you could NEVER be TOO THIN or TOO RICH. I know now that you definitely CAN be TOO THIN, and I don't want to go there. Now, any day God wants to let me see about the TOO RICH, I'll be glad to try it. I guess what I am trying to say with all of this, is that ONE MORE TIME, I am Nancy, a grateful recovering compulsive overeater, abstinent today by the grace of GOD!! Thanks to all of you too!!

From the Editor

For March's newsletter, I invite everyone to share a quote, poem, or article on Step 3 and/or Tradition 3.

Because of some new requirements from the BOT and printer, please send in your contributions by the 2nd of March to have them included in March's newsletter.

If you would like a reminder note one week before the due date, send an email to me at: StlouisOAtoday@hotmail.com

~In service, Dawn S.

Part-time positions available. If you have the desire to improve your recovery and a willingness to serve, we need you. The benefits are tremendous. Connection with others who share our disease, satisfaction from helping others, a sense of belonging to something greater than ones self, these are only a partial list of what you will receive from doing service above the group level.

The only requirement is attendance at the intergroup meetings held on the second Sunday of each month at Saint Alexius Hospital, 3933 South Broadway, St. Louis. Everyone is invited to attend. None of these positions have an abstinence requirement, only that you want to do service as a way of giving back what you have been given. Even if you don't think you are qualified for a job, ask your H.P. for direction. There are many others who can give you guidance and support to get the job done.

SECRETARY

- Prepares minutes of all Intergroup meetings and forwards them to the Chair two weeks in advance of the next meeting for printing and mailing
- Serves as a resource for the Board Secretary in preparing minutes of the annual local conference.

INTERGROUP REPRESENTATIVE

- Represents the group in tasks undertaken jointly with other groups in the area and tries to keep the group well-informed about the jobs the local intergroup and local office is doing.
- Shares experiences with other IRs to enhance the body of knowledge for each group as well as Intergroup.

(Continued on Page 5)

Final Selections Are Being Made For Entertainment (Letting Go Again)

HELP WANTED (continued)

- Exercises voting privileges for the group in determining the direction of Intergroup.
- Returns to the group with information gained at Intergroup for discussion at a group conscience when necessary for Intergroup business.
- Reports to the group decisions and activities of Intergroup.
- Informs the Intergroup and/or office of any changes in meeting information for inclusion in the Where & When.
- Coordinate borrowing of Intergroup tapes by group members.
- PICKS UP NEWSLETTERS AND HANDOUTS.

RETREAT CHAIR

- Coordinates annual Fall Retreat.
- Maintains separate Bank Account for activity, responsible for collections and expenditures.
- Solicits and Chooses Retreat Site.
- Prepares agenda with Retreat committee.

SOCIAL BUTTERFLY CHAIR

- Coordinates special events for members other than Super Saturdays. These have included holiday house parties, dances, talent shows, theater outings, picnics, and concerts.

~Cyndy L
Intergroup President

Sometimes I wonder what HP could be thinking.... On Sunday, January 25th, we were supposed to meet to decide on assignments and discuss the plans for the upcoming convention entertainment. As most of you know, that day happened to be the worst driving day of the year to date. I went to the office just in case someone might show up for the meeting, but no one did. (I was glad, as I was not sure I wasn't going to hydroplane into the cars in front of me a few times on the way. Guess what? My husband's car has a light on it that says "Low Traction" which I didn't know until Sunday.) Anyway, what was HP thinking? It was the only meeting we were going to have before the dress rehearsals and once again HP just sat by and laughed as my plans went awry once again.

So, we have just over a month before convention and we haven't had an entertainment meeting. At first, I was very discouraged and had old tapes playing loudly in my head about...well, you know...how stupid I am to think we could have a meeting on the last Sunday in January...how disorganized I am not to have gotten contact information when I talked to everyone about the entertainment...on and on. I was regretting the fact that I ever agreed to be in charge of entertainment... again.

Of course, the big message my HP was telling me was...Cindy, guess what? You are not in charge. I am. It is not about you. It is about doing my will and being willing to do my will and about being willing to be willing to do my will. "But, I'm trying to do Your will!" I whine. "I'm trying and failing... again." Fortunately, I have some dear friends in program who helped me have hope again. One dear friend was willing to help me call every single meeting contact on the where and when and reschedule a meeting. Instead, I am writing this article and setting up another meeting.

And...Letting go.

Why is it SO HARD to let go?

Especially when it involves the part of me who likes to get up on stage and perform. Perhaps because it is so risky...so personal...so intimate. Whatever it is, I am going to try to turn this one over... (Not that I have much choice.)

I realize the emphasis is on Step 2 this month but perhaps you wouldn't mind if we could say the 3rd Step Prayer together particularly about the entertainment for the convention. "God, I offer myself (and the entertainment for the convention) to Thee to build with me and do with me as Thou wilt. Relieve me of the bondage of self (like fear of failure and self-pride) that I may better do Thy will. Take away my difficulties that victory over them may bear witness to those I would help (like myself, the other performers and the audience) of Thy Power, Thy Love and Thy Way of Life. May I do Thy will always. (Especially at the convention and in my daily life in my recovery.)

So here is the plan. We will have a meeting at the office on, Sunday, February 15 at 1:30PM. Before that time, I will try to decide on assignments for the show and let you know what they are. If you have an opinion about what topic you would like your skit/song/etc. to be about you need to call me ASAP. That gives us a little over a month to work on the individual parts of the program. There will be a dress rehearsal on Saturday, March 20 at a location to be announced in the March newsletter. There will also be a rehearsal at the convention on Saturday with sound checks, etc.

That is the plan this moment... God can change it at will... and His Will is really the only one that counts.

~Cindy Henley

Service Vacancies

- 2 Trustees
- 2 Region Reps
- 2 World Service Delegates
- Retreat Chair & Treasurer
- Social Butterfly
- Intergroup Secretary
- Twelve Step Within

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.

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!

New Meetings

No New Meetings

Upcoming Events & Business Info

February 28

Unity Day 9:30 am – 4:00 pm
(Sponsored by Newcomers Group)

Trivia Night 6:30 – 9:00 pm
(Sponsored by Bi-State DRAC)
St. Joseph's Hospital
Kirkwood, MO

March 26-28

OA Convention
(See registration form)

April – Date/Time TBA
Edwardsville, IL

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).

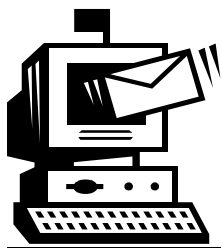
Editorial Policy

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.

Articles must be received by the Newsletter Chairperson by the end of the month for publication in the following month's newsletter.



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WSO Website: www.overeatersanonymous.org

Region IV website: www.oaregion4.org