

# Today

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### Tradition 1

## Our common welfare should come first, personal recovery depends upon OA unity.

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For me, the essential aspects of Tradition One are: ending isolation and unity.

As with many other compulsive overeaters, I isolated myself. I identify with the slogan "Isolation is a dark place where we develop our negativity."

Coming to meetings was the first step (both literally and figuratively) I took to end that isolation. There were other compulsive overeaters and bulimics. I wasn't alone. I had come home. I was accepted for who I was - a compulsive overeater.

The bottom line is none of us are alone. Our secrets and insane thoughts are much more commonplace than we at first imagine. We are all in very good company!

To ensure that there is a place for us and other compulsive overeaters to come home to, there needs to be unity within our meetings.

At times I have been guilty of falling into the trap of concentrating on differences rather than what we have in common. There are few men in OA and in my early days in program I allowed myself to feel isolated because of my gender. Similarly, on other issues such as what is abstinence, I was quick to take a position rather than think of the need for unity.

The need for unity is very simple and selfish. I need all of you to help me with my recovery. Without unity within the program there is no program and I have less chance of recovery.

The fact that some people have food plans, food sponsors, abstain from different food types, are left handed, red haired or whatever, does not detract from the fact that we have a common disease.

That I have this disease in common with many others was a crucial step in ending my isolation. That I have differences from others who also have this disease is not a reason for me to devalue the need for unity.

*~Anonymous*

**Step One**

***We admitted we were powerless over food—that our lives had become unmanageable.***

The only requirement for membership in Overeaters Anonymous is a desire to stop eating compulsively. But I'm NOT a compulsive eater, I said to myself. I just enjoy food...and after all, isn't food a gift from God? I would never want to insult God by refusing his gifts!

In high school the teachers always urged us to become docile—teachable. It was an act of humility to face the truth about ourselves as well as what we learned in the various subjects. The teachers also advised us not to take ourselves too seriously, to have a sense of humor about our foibles and failings. All this came back to me over three years ago when I finally admitted—at least struggled to admit—I was powerless over food. This admission assured my admission as a member of OA.

I always like to have the "upper hand." If I was powerless OVER food, then I

must be UNDER food, under the power of food. How humiliating! Food had the upper hand over me. Food, instead of God, was my comforter. I finally saw the necessity to admit my compulsion.

"Life had become unmanageable." This was crazy, I thought. I'd been practicing self-control for many decades in many different ways...but I came to recognize my inability to exert control over food. Some time later I realized I actually have control over very little in life. A friend had always said, when we were stuck in traffic, or when we saw people littering a park with food wrappings, "There's nothing we can do about it." I always considered that a defeatist attitude. Only recently have I come to believe that life usually has its own way: no matter how much I fuss and complain, the seasons still change, the dust still collects on furniture, the computer can crash at any time...and I either have to live with it or choose the alternative. I choose at this moment to accept life on its own terms, to give my life and my will over to God as I understand him. Just for the record...I have to do this surrendering every single day.

*~Angie D.*

**RETREAT WEEKEND  
October 1-3, 2004**

The weekend was a wonderful experience to get closer to H.P. We enjoyed the intimacy together. I took a look at the Promises made and which ones I have attained—Promises Kept. I am a much better person physically, mentally and spiritually. This is a "we" program so we fellowshiped together, saying the Step Seven Prayer, the Step Three Prayer, the Serenity Prayer and the Promises. I am more rejuvenated and calmer because of the meditation sessions. My faith is renewed. It was a pleasure to eat abstinent meals with others. Thanks to each person for your participation and hugs that helped make a wonderful weekend.

*~Mary F.*

**January's newsletter will include articles on Step 2 and Tradition 2. Thanks to all of you 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)**

## SERVICE

I have always heard in regards to service, that I get more out of it than what I put into it. When I give service without needing any response, recognition or having an aim, I learn to build my self-respect. This whole 12-step program has given me a sense of self that I never had before. I believe I am beginning on the road to self-esteem as a result of giving in service.

I do service because it has been done for me and because I am passing that recovery on. I want OA to be there for me in my (and my family's) future. But mostly, I do service because this program has helped me find and connect with a Higher Power. The peace and good feelings that come through our connection in Step Eleven seem to naturally overflow into doing whatever it is in my power to do. And I find it hard to work Step Three, say the Third Step prayer in the morning and then say NO to the requests that come to me. Service helps me learn the steps and traditions through action. I have not been able to think my way through this program or to abstinence. I must use action to achieve the process the steps are leading me through.

We become more of a part of OA when we are taking any of the actions of service. As in most other aspects of this program, my service is measured by my striving to do my best, not in being perfect. When I am

working the steps, especially Step

Twelve and I find the spiritual part of me is awakening, I need to give service. Not for the recognition or out of submission but as one of the privileges that goes along with my new life. I can measure the benefits I have received from OA by my willingness to share. And I've learned, we don't just carry the message, we live the message of recovery through our actions of service.

~CH

**WANTED FOR THE APRIL CONVENTION:  
ENTERTAINERS**

This year's convention theme is 'We Are Not a Glum Lot.' What better way to illustrate that than by being part of the entertainment committee? As always, **no talent is required.** You don't need to memorize anything. The only requirement for membership is the desire to let go your inhibitions and perform for the best audience anywhere. We love you no matter what!

There will be two opportunities for entertainment, one musical, one non-musical. Talk your group into preparing a recovery-themed song and rehearse it (or not) on your own. The song could be original or someone else's, or put your recovery minded words to a song you like. We'll put the songs all together right before convention. The non-musical skit is still being created, but volunteers are needed to participate in that. The more the merrier!

Please contact Kathy M. (314-865-0650) if you are interested in participating in the entertainment committee. We always have a great time.

## HEARD AT FALL RETREAT

Following are words of wisdom heard at our fall retreat. I'm grateful to whoever compiled this list, because it wasn't me. Since I am an imperfect person, I'm only now getting around to submitting it! I hope something strikes a chord with you.

The promises work for us if we do the work.

This disease is not your fault but it is your responsibility.

If I put food between me and God, I put food between me and anyone I would help.

Abstinence today does not guarantee abstinence tomorrow.

Step Three is a decision to do the rest of the steps.

Sanity is acceptance of a larger reality including spirituality.

Decisions alone don't get results. You need actions.

We need to move from simply following our sponsor's directions to seeking God's will in our lives.

God lets us know what foods are not ours any more.

Relief is not the same as release.

Even if you're not perfect, you can help someone else.

~Kathy M

### Service Vacancies

- 1 Trustee
- 2 Region Reps
- 2 World Service Delegates
- Cassette
- Public Information
- 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



### Contacting OA Electronically

**Bi-State Fax number:**

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**St. Louis Bi-State Website:** [www.stlouisoa.org](http://www.stlouisoa.org)

**WSO Website:** [www.overeatersanonymous.org](http://www.overeatersanonymous.org)

**Region IV website:** [www.oaregion4.org](http://www.oaregion4.org)

## Upcoming Events & Business Info

### February 26: Unity Day

9:30-3:30

St. Joseph Hospital – Kirkwood  
(Carondelet Room-West Entrance)  
525 Couch Avenue

Sponsored by St. Louis Bi-State Intergroup

### March: Open

### April: Convention

April 8-10, 2005

### May 21: 9:30-3:00

Esic Baptist Church

1000 Esic Dr., Edwardsville

Sponsored by Sunshine Group Edwardsville

To schedule a Super Saturday or other event, contact Ginnie H at (636) 723-0658. 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.