

Today

July 2005
Volume 11, Issue 7

Inside this Issue

- 1** Tradition 7
- 2** Step 7
We Need The Shirt Off
Your Back
- 3** Fall Retreat
World Service Business
Conference Report
- 4** Business
Announcements

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 Subscriptions \$8.00

Seventh Tradition: Every OA group ought to be fully self-supporting declining outside contributions.

I've always tagged this tradition, "the one about money." For years, it was the only tradition I ever heard about, as it was usually repeated before passing the basket at meetings. When the basket was passed at my first OA meeting, I remember the leader saying, "Newcomers do not need to give a donation."

I had a lot of feelings about Tradition 7 then, and I have a lot of feelings about it today, over twenty-five years later. My thoughts and feelings as a newcomer when the basket was passed were mixed. "I need to put something in there because I don't want to owe these people anything," was one thought. The other was, "Yahoo, a bargain!"

Today, I have a better understanding of why the seventh tradition helps us attain a healthy balance about a controversial issue like money. When I'm confused about how to find sanity around a topic, I look to my experience with finding sanity around food for guidelines. We need food to sustain us--not too much and not too little. In OA, we need money to sustain us--not too much and not too little. No one person can define our plan of eating--each individual honestly seeks what works for her or him. Likewise, each member decides what amount to place in the basket at a meeting. Choices about food and choices about money are spiritual decisions about setting healthy boundaries.

How can we take care of ourselves with food today? How can OA take care of itself with its money resources today?

Additional study of this tradition reveals that being self-supporting extends beyond monetary contributions. We need to be responsible service providers within our meetings, intergroups and World Service bodies as well. In a previous home group, I functioned as a leader, treasurer, literature provider and meeting room liaison. Meeting attendance eventually dwindled down to--you guessed it--me. Although it was painful for me to admit, my level of service was excessive. It reflected compulsivity and impulsiveness, the hallmarks of this disease. Service jobs are meant to be shouldered collaboratively, just as expenses are a group's collective responsibility.

Tradition 7 challenges me to be honest and responsible when the basket or service notebook circles our tables. An extra dollar or two when I can afford it and pitching in for service jobs when it balances well with other responsibilities are two actions that help me continue to recover. I remain free from guilt and resentment when I have healthy boundaries like these. Likewise, OA remains free from outside influences as it upholds Tradition 7.

--Anonymous in St. Louis

**Step 7:
Humbly asked Him
to remove
our shortcomings.**

What a simple statement. My word processor says it's fragmented and I should consider revising. I don't think it could be any more direct or correct. The truth about step 7 is that it looks so easy; we tend to overlook the significance of what it entails.

We've worked our way through our 4th, 5th and 6th steps, so we now know what our character defects are and of course we want to be rid of them. Who wants to carry around the burden that's been keeping us stuck in the disease for so long? This should be a cinch, right? But wait, what will happen when I let go? How will I fill my time if I stop practicing activities that are harmful? Who will be my friends if I change the way I interact with others? How will I be safe if I don't keep my self centered attitude that makes sure I'm protected?

Maybe I'll just ask HP to remove the most uncomfortable ones. I'm willing to stop being a compulsive eater; can't he just change that about me? Actually, I just don't want to be fat, but I still want the satisfaction I get from the foods I love. Can't he just make that happen?

What just happened was going from being open to HP's will, humility, to self will run riot. Step 7 is all about humility: admitting that our way doesn't work and seeking a new way of living that brings us peace and fulfillment. This doesn't

happen the first time we say the Step 7 prayer, or even the 100th time. It happens in small increments in ways we are not even aware of, but we do have to ask and then be willing to change.

A part of the process for me was to let go of my need for validation from others. I always needed someone else to tell me what I had done was okay. If others didn't notice, I was dissatisfied with the work myself. It must not have been good enough or "right" if everyone didn't fawn over me. I'm sure this came from being one of many as a child and to get that attention even for a moment was to stand out in the crowd. I liked the attention – self seeking/pride – and learned ways of getting it. As an adult I spent a great deal of time and energy, working long hours to the detriment of my family, seeking that approval from my boss. I was rewarded with higher salaries and more responsibility – self-importance/status, which fed into the cycle of longer hours and more stress. When it got to the point that my eating was out of control because I used food to cope with the stress, I ended up in OA. Eventually I became willing to ask HP to remove my shortcomings and gradually I was able to see how my need for validation and recognition had me trapped. When the time came to ask to be relieved of these defects, other opportunities opened. I came to understand that a big salary and all the responsibilities didn't bring me the satisfaction I was seeking. I came to realize that my happiness wasn't dependant on things, but on who I am, and that I have value and worth even if I don't have a big job. I eventually changed careers and am now working part time doing something I love. My need for validation isn't completely

gone, but it's at a balanced level, and if someone doesn't care for what I produce, it's okay. I'm still me, a good, loving human being, doing the best I can. This has freed me to be even more creative and I'm finding satisfaction in my work that was never there in my job. It all started with saying the 7th step prayer and being willing to let go of those defects of character that stood in the way of my usefulness to God and to my fellows. HP gave me the strength I needed to follow his/her bidding. For this I am truly grateful.

--Cyndy L.

**WE WANT THE SHIRT
OFF YOUR BACK!**

Hey old timers! Do you have a convention shirt from our 1987 convention? If so we would love to add it to our wall of memories in the office.



We have shirts displayed from every year from 1985 through 2005 EXCEPT for 1987 and we would love to complete our collection. The convention theme was "LIVING IN RECOVERY" and the logo was a heart with "O.A." written inside the heart and a rainbow cascading down into a pot of gold that says "LIVING IN RECOVERY" on the pot of gold. If you still have this shirt and would be willing to add it to our collection we would love to display it. Please call Linda W. at the OA office at 314-638-6070, bring or mail it to the office or bring it to Intergroup. It would sure make your happy dappy little office manager VERY happy dappy to have the complete set. Thank you!

In Love & Service, Linda W.



The Fall Retreat will be October 7-9, 2005. More information is available on the flyer sent out with last month's newsletters.

Please sign up early so that we will know how many will be attending. Even better – get a discount if you register early. This year supper will be provided on Friday night at 6:15 pm. For more information contact Jana G, 314-972-0871.

2005 World Service Business Conference Report

I was again allowed to be your representative at the World Service Business Conference in April in Albuquerque, New Mexico. It is quite an experience. About 2/3 of the persons attending were "green dots" - persons who had not ever attended a WSBC meeting before.

Tuesday - I attended the evening workshop on "Carrying the Message though Intergroup Activities". I was impressed with the idea of doing Holiday Marathons on Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Years. Some of the most difficult times of the year for us, - people sign up to run a meeting for each hour of the day. The information for the Marathons is put on bookmarks. Another great idea was an Intergroup Open House, so that people can come and see what Intergroup is all about. Another idea is "Re-gifting"- collecting new things that you were given and not using and auction them off, which could be used at the convention or any Super Saturday.

Wednesday Morning - "Carrying the Message through the Internet" was this year's forum, and they showed us how to get into and navigate the OA website.

Wednesday Afternoon - I am on the 12th Step Within Committee, and our statement of purpose is:

- 1. To carry the same message of recovery to those who still suffer WITHIN the OA fellowship.
2. To deal with relapse and issues of membership retention, offering the message of hope.
3. To encourage maintaining recovery and preventing relapse among our members.

We came up with 23 goals, and divided them between 4 Sub Committees. My subcommittee is the Recovery & Relapse Prevention, and we have 4 goals for the next 12 months. I am chair of the sub-sub committee on Emotional, Spiritual, & Physical Recovery and Relapse Prevention. So I have much to do this year. If anyone has any input for my sub-sub committee, please e-mail it to me at gammanancy@netzero.net or hard copy it to the office in my name as soon as you can, all input will be appreciated, but I do need it by the end of July.

Thursday - The business session opened the conference officially, and all the reports and usual business was done. The reports were in the binder, and the person who filed the report could be questioned about the content. There were 190 voting members present. We approved the revision of the "OA Handbook for Members, Groups and Intergroups," and the new pamphlet "OA Members Come in All Sizes, Welcome, Whatever Your Problem with Food" (which is a great new pamphlet that contains stories from Anorexics and Bulimics).

The 2007 Convention Committee reported that it will be August 29-September 1, 2007 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (Labor Day Weekend) - Ring In Recovery.

Friday - Elections for Region Trustees and General Service Trustees- Region 1, Region 4 & Region 7 ran unopposed and were all elected. Of special note -

Today

Connie is our Region IV Trustee. Region 2 had two Nominees- Angela Jenkins is their new Trustee, and Robert Fisher and Kayla Weingarten are the new General Service Trustees. I was going to tell you all the motions and by-law amendments and if they passed or failed, but it got so lengthy that I will just say, that I have a copy of the 13 page summary report of the conference if you would like to read it.

Saturday evening we had a banquet, and there was an OA meeting at the same time as the dance. I chose to go to the meeting, and we had been told that there might be a newcomer, as some of the men had 12th stepped a 450 lb. man at dinner on Friday evening. It STILL gives me goose bumps to talk about it. He did come in, and there was also a lady who was local who came to visit her friend from New York for the banquet, who attended the meeting for her first time. It really amazed me that people from all over the country stood up when the leader asked if anyone would be willing to talk on the phone to these people.

When the meeting was over, I went to speak to the man who had been in relapse, and asked if he would please come back. He said "Sure if I can find a meeting," and I looked at one of the guys who had 12th stepped him and said, "I'm sure someone can find a meeting for you," and the guy said, "Come on, lets go find a computer." THIS IS WHAT WE ARE ALL ABOUT. HELPING THE SUFFERING COMPULSIVE EATER!!

This was my second year at Conference, and although it was not as awesome to me this year, it was certainly very fulfilling and rewarding, and I am very grateful that you have allowed me to serve you as your WSBC Delegate. It is a lot of work through out the year, but it definitely is rewarding and has enriched my program.

Yours in Service, Nancy H.

Service Vacancies

- 2 BOT Trustees
- 2 Region Reps
- 2 World Service Delegates
- Cassettes
- Newsletter
- Outreach
- Young People
- Twelfth Step Within

WANTED

Guest Newsletter Editors

If you are interested in being a guest newsletter editor, please send an email to the newsletter address.

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

Reminder

Where & Whens will be published monthly. 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

SL 385 - Tuesdays, 7:00 PM
Holy Cross Lutheran Church,
Creve Coeur MO

SL 386 - Tuesdays, 5:30 PM
St. Andrews Lutheran Church,
Columbia, MO

SL 387 - Tuesdays 7:00 PM
Prince Hall Family Support Cntr.,
St. Louis, MO

SL 384 - Thursdays, 8:30 AM
Zion United Church of Christ,
Union, MO

Upcoming Events & Business Info

July 16: 9:30-3:30
St. Joseph Hospital
St. Charles

Sponsored by "Steps to Recovery"
Thursday Night Big Book Mtg.

August 27: 9 am-Noon
Beautiful Savior Lutheran Church
Bridgeton, MO

Sponsored by the "Lit Up With Literature" Tuesday Night Mtg.

September:
Sponsored by Sunday morning
St. Mary's, date and location tba

October: Open

November: Open

December: Open

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.



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