

Today

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Tradition Three: The only desire for OA membership is a desire to stop eating compulsively.

All the traditions are powerful in how they support the unity and membership of our fellowship. But tradition 3 for me is one of the most compelling because I point to its message as what kept me coming back to OA, week after week, year after year. When I was a newcomer, I would think, "I don't look like other members at the meeting; maybe I don't belong here." In relapse, I would think, "This isn't working for me. Maybe I don't belong here." When I was confused about a personal plan for abstinence, I would think, "If I eat like others in the program who are abstinent, I stay sick in my disease. Maybe I don't belong here." Every time these thoughts came up, Tradition 3 became 'the bottom line' for whether I belonged in OA: "I do desire to stop eating compulsively; I'm a member."

An incident stands out in my childhood as an example of the opposite of Tradition 3. I went to a new school in third grade. One of the fun activities for summer was to play on a softball team. I had made some new friends who were excited about me joining their winning team, even though I had little experience and below average abilities as a ball player. On registration and tryout day, the coaches made it known that they did not want to add any other kids to the team, especially after they saw me throw and bat. I was hurt when they said they couldn't add another player.

Can you imagine coming to an OA meeting and being rejected? Without tradition 3, I might have heard the following at my first OA meeting: 'We have enough people here. You really don't belong; you don't look like you're a compulsive overeater. You need to weigh _____ number of pounds be accepted here. And if you aren't continuously abstinent, adios.' In my disease there were days when I wished for an excuse to leave. But tradition 3 was an affirmation by a Higher Power: stay in OA--you have the desire to stop eating compulsively.

Our OA 12 & 12 goes even further to explain tradition 3's welcome: desire to stop eating compulsively is the membership requirement, not success. Having abused myself physically and emotionally, I sought to be rejected from OA, too. Every time I abused food, I sank further into despair and isolation. Yet when I had the courage to share these truths at meetings, the shame and fear retreated. Because of tradition 3, I could say, "I belong here. I need to be here. Here I am with all my warts." What a powerful experience to feel accepted when I spoke of relapse.

It never ceases to amaze me how the traditions continue to support a healthy, unified organization. The simplicity of our membership requirement in tradition 3 reinforces the principle that acceptance is indeed the answer to all of our problems today. After twenty-five years in the program, and many years of abstinence, I continue to tell myself, "I have the desire to stop eating compulsively; I belong here."

~Anonymous in St. Louis

OA Convention 2005 Ways and Means

The OA Convention is right around the corner (Fri-Sun April 8-10)! Please think about the 4 ways that the Ways & Means Committee raises money.

1)**Live Auction (items/baskets valued at \$50 or more)**. Has your OA home group designated someone to coordinate the Live Auction basket? This person would be responsible for (he/she could delegate): 1) Reminding everyone about the upcoming convention; 2) Soliciting ideas for a basket and helping the group come to consensus; 3) Collecting funds for the basket and purchasing/acquiring the items; 4) Completing the form with details about the basket and their group and submitting to the Ways & Means Committee by mid March 2005; 5) Getting the basket to the Convention by Friday evening (4/8/05).

Some ideas: Think of massage certificates, bath and body works lotions and shower gels, and candles for a "Pamper Yourself" basket. You could also do a sports basket with a nice jersey or game tickets. What about a basket for the gardener? And speaking of pampering ourselves, a gift certificate to a relaxing bed and breakfast would be awesome!

2)**Silent Auction (items valued from \$10-\$49)**. We are looking for nice donations, from craft items to practical items to whatever you want to give. These items are not expensive enough to put on the live auction, but they are still very lovely. These are the types of items that are just too cute to pass up. You've got to have them!

3)**Clothing**. We are looking for clothes that are clean and in good condition. So please consider donating as well as buying! Everyone can benefit from our clothing sale. We usually have some very nice stylish outfits.

4)**Cup Raffle (items valued at less than \$10)**. We are looking for buyers and donators, just as we are for the other three fundraisers. Please make sure that the items donated are **clean and in good repair and condition**. We will not have the time to clean items, only sort and label them.

*Thank you,
~Angie*

WHY ARE WE HERE?

If there was a chance in the world the AA/OA method could stop yo-yo-me from being an overeater, I wanted to know about it. I could not stick to a diet, and was ashamed of myself. I didn't know what AA was, but I knew I needed a program so powerful it could keep an alcoholic from drinking. I was desperate to know how this program works.

I went to my first meeting because I kept regaining my weight; had a chronic problem with unhealthy eating. My desire to overeat was still there and I needed whatever could keep me from sabotaging myself with food again. Newcomers may be confused about many things, but they pretty much understand the problem is overeating and they have come looking for a way to get over it.

I still go to meetings to hear about the method and the miracle. It worries me whenever newcomers are there, that they may hear less about program and more about the members' careers or jobs or

degrees or outside interests. I'm so glad it was a couple of months before I figured out that a couple of psychiatrists and teachers were at my first meeting. It would have scared me to know a nun or minister--or worse yet, parents of a student, might hear me say something bad or stupid. I needed to be anonymous if I was going to come back and dare to be the real me.

What a relief at my first meetings to hear only first names. Everyone was put on the same level. It kind of felt like grade school where no one cared about status or wealth or position. We had a new chance to start over. What mattered was finding out how this program can help us get over our common problem.

I wish we would abstain from mentioning our jobs during the meetings. Though I now know most of the people and am interested in what's going on at home or work or school, that discussion is for socializing before, after, or between meetings. During meetings, it distracts from the purpose of why people came. If we humbly remain anonymous, it is easier to stay focused on what we have in common--the need to deal with our compulsive eating by using and carrying the message of the 12-step program of OA.

Hearing what we do for a living is not the reason I go to a meeting. It doesn't say much for Humility and Anonymity, either. I need to hear about the common solution and keep the focus on why we came to these meetings in the first place--to recover from compulsive overeating and to carry the AA/OA message of recovery.

~Anonymous

Flower Power Super Saturday

May 21, 2005 – 9:30-12:00 and 1:00-3:00

\$5 Donation – “Lunch on Your Own”

Esic University Baptist Church, 1000 University Drive, Edwardsville, IL 62025
(64/70/55/70 to 255N to 270E to IL 157N)

Sponsored By: Edwardsville Sunshine Group (Cary F. 618.465.3308, Janet H. 618.520.9119)

BUNCO Games Follow at 3:30

\$5 Donation

Supports DRAC Attendance at Region and World Service Business Conference

LIVE* AUCTION

(*Lots of Interesting Valuables for Everyone)

Name of Items/Basket _____ Number (TBA) _____

Description of Items _____

_____ Donor _____ Value _____

Please retain this portion and bring with your item to convention.

✂ _____

Detach and mail this portion by April 3 to:

Judith Wells
3412 Oxford
Maplewood, MO 63143
(314) 645-6593

LIVE* AUCTION

(*Lots of Interesting Valuables for Everyone)

Name of Items/Basket _____ Number (TBA) _____

Description of Items _____

_____ Donor _____ Value _____

Want to help out at the Live Auction?

- _____ I am interested in helping on Friday/Saturday to set up the display.
- _____ I am interested in helping on Saturday to carry baskets to the auctioneer.
- _____ I am interested in being a spotter during the auction (taking basket to bidder and taking their bid to the cashier).
- _____ I am interested in being a cashier during the auction.

Name and Phone # _____

Service Vacancies

- 1 Trustee
- 2 Region Reps
- 2 World Service Delegates
- Cassette
- Public Information
- Twelve Step Within
- 2005 Retreat

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.

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

April: Convention
April 8-10, 2005

May 21: 9:30-3:00
Esic Baptist Church
1000 Esic Dr., Edwardsville
Sponsored by Sunshine Group
Edwardsville

June: Open

July: Open

August: Open

September: Open

Oct 14-16

The Big Book Comes Alives for OA
Madison, WI

Contact: leslie63@tds.net
Sponsored by Madison Intergroup

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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WSO Website: www.overeatersanonymous.org

Region IV website: www.oaregion4.org