

# Today

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**Overeaters Anonymous**  
 St. Louis Bi-State Area  
 Intergroup  
 9907-E Gravois Rd.  
 St. Louis, MO 63123  
 (314) 638-6070  
 Subscriptions \$8.00

### Tradition 10: “Overeaters Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the OA name ought never be drawn into public controversy.”

This tradition seems particularly appropriate as we count down to the presidential elections and continue to live in a nation at war. For the purposes of this article, I would like to share some quotes from the OA Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions.

- “As individuals we are free to believe in and work for any cause we choose. The tenth tradition asks us to leave these issues outside when we walk through the OA doors. Even the most worthy of other causes has no place in an OA meeting.”
- “Ridicule and disrespectful comments about religions, diet clubs, political beliefs, and other matters have absolutely no place in OA meetings. We don’t need to belittle others in order to carry the message of recovery OA has to offer.”
- “We find we can live happier and more effective lives when we focus our attention on doing our Higher Power’s will each day rather than on conflicts.”

Outside issues can be subtle and tricky to manage. Interpretations of this tradition run to the extremes. Reading Tradition 10 in the OA and AA Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions has helped me understand the spirit behind the tradition. Ultimately, we each have to use our inner guide, both to avoid bringing outside issues into meetings and to know when to speak up about another’s

behavior. Like all traditions, Tradition 10 is a suggestion for maintaining harmony in our groups not a rule to be broken. Let us all remember that unity is our guiding principle as none of us can recover alone.

The purpose of this tradition, like so many others, seems designed to keep us out of trouble and keep the focus on carrying the message of recovery. The discipline of keeping my opinions about outside issues out of OA meetings has done much to promote the healing of some of my defects of character, such as pride and self-righteous anger. My life story includes many trips up on the soapbox to spout off my opinions at the expense of other’s feelings. I swung an arrogant, damaging bat at those who dared to oppose me. Recovery, for me, has included stepping off the soapbox long enough to listen to others. I still have opinions, but I don’t use them to harm others nearly as frequently.

Applying this tradition to my life has looked different than it does in meetings. Rather than avoiding bringing outside issues into my work place, relationships, and other groups. Tradition 10 has helped me learn not to let my opinions interfere with my relationships with other people. When differences arise, we can agree to disagree or I can keep my opinion to myself in situations in which silence will not damage me. I’m not advocating peace at any cost. I’m talking about avoiding unnecessary controversy.

This is an area of my life in which I claim “progress not perfection” as I learn to let God reduce my ego. I’m trying to learn to ask myself before I speak, “Is this true? Is it useful? Is it timely?” Perhaps someday I will master this art. Until then, I trust my higher power to help me clean up any messes that I make.

~Ethel M.

### Step and Tradition 10

When I first walked into 12 step programs, I thought the traditions were there to take up space in the literature and I resented them for it. My recovery, in my baby years, was all about trying to figure out the steps, the loopholes, the perfect answers, the infamous easier, softer way. The traditions were just in the way of my "happiness." Little did I know that they were the guide to my spiritual, emotional and physical recovery.

Tradition 10 states *OA has no opinion on outside issues; hence the OA name ought never be drawn into public controversy.* This protects me as a member of the fellowship by guaranteeing that the only connection I get to make to others here is my compulsive eating. My commitment to abstinence IS the most important thing in my life – without EXCEPTION! Other stuff just mucks that up. There is nothing more important.

I have since found the traditions to be more spiritual when I apply them to my family. If I choose to act on this tradition with my husband and kids, I am choosing not to debate, become self-righteous, or prove anything to them. Not that we don't have the occasional "you are wrong; I am right" arguments. I choose not to engage in those battles. My usual response is to affirm

their feelings and talk about what's going on in the moment. This allows them, and me, to honor our opinions – especially when they differ.

My controversies (disputes, arguments, opinions-as per the dictionary) are mine. This is a blessing of the program. I have opinions. Not only do I have them, I do not need to share them to engage in controversy or to be validated. They are not right or wrong. They just are. They exist and can help me to define my Higher Power's dreams for me or help me to release what no longer serves me and insults my soul.

I am coming to find that many of my disputes, arguments and opinions are not based on my truths. They are other's truths I chose to accept as mine. With the help of Step 10, I get to continue to take my personal inventory and when I am wrong – promptly admit it. Tradition 10 defines this more succinctly. The opening says it all, Tradition 10 states "OA has no opinion." What a gift of simplicity.

~Anonymous

**Step 10**  
"Continued to take personal inventory, and when we were wrong, promptly admitted it."

### Just for Today

Dear "Today" Newsletter,

I recently started going to an OA meeting in my area. I was so moved by my first meeting that I wrote a poem to express my feelings about what I had experienced. Here it is:

Just for today...  
I will remember I am worthy of love.

Just for today...  
I will allow myself to be me.

Just for today...  
I will have my ego put away its whip.

Just for today...  
I will remember my body is sacred.

Just for today...  
I will allow myself to be led by my spirit.

Just for today...  
I will practice moderation in my eating.

Just for today...  
I will allow myself to feel what I feel.

Just for today...  
I will acknowledge my humanness.

Just for today...  
I will lay claim to my weaknesses.

Just for today...  
I will cry if I need to and it will be OK.

Just for today...  
I will be gentle with myself.

Just for today...

Thank you for your time.  
~Juanita P.

### Heard At A Meeting

"I'm here because my reality check bounced."

~Cecilia

The person chairing the meeting called on a newcomer to share. The newcomer said, "Oh, I have had a terrible day. I wasn't centered. I felt alienated. My child within was deprived. I wasn't self-actualized at all!" An old-timer leaned over and whispered to her sponsee, "What did she say?" The sponsee replied, "She says she's hungry, angry, lonely, tired."

~Dale

#### Help Wanted From the OA Fellowship

Inspired to look for a new space for the OA office. Doesn't cost anything to look. Looking for people who have experience, ideas and know how. If you can help, please contact Pat S. at (314) 984-0414.

### Super Saturday

Hello fellow OA'ers we are having a Super Saturday on Oct 16, 2004. The Central Illinois IG is coming to St. Louis for a Traveling Super Saturday. It will be at The Inn which used to be the Ramada Inn @ 3551 Pennridge Drive just off of St. Charles Rock Road and 270 (phone 291-5100). We are also having a banquet that night starting at 6pm for \$20 a person. Please register for the banquet by Oct 12. You may call Jana to register (314) 972-0871. The Super Saturday is called "A Day of Promise" this will give you an opportunity to hear new people you probably haven't heard before. Come Join us for the Super Saturday which is only \$5.00. Thanks. In O.A. Love and Service

~Jana

### Literature Corner

The new literature forms have been printed. If you did not receive copies with the September Newsletters, please contact the office at 314-638-6070 or it can be printed from the St. Louis Bi-State Area Intergroup website at [www.stlouisoa.org](http://www.stlouisoa.org).

For ordering literature to pick up at a Super Saturday or Intergroup, please place your orders 10 days in advance. This 10 day advance allows the literature chair enough time to order items if they are out of stock. Please fill out a literature form and include payment and mail it to:

**Overeaters Anonymous  
Attn: Literature Chair  
9907 E Gravois  
St. Louis, MO 63123**

**Make checks payable to:  
St. Louis Bi-State Area  
Intergroup**

**You can fax your request to the  
OA Office at 314-638-6071.**

Deadlines for ordering literature for upcoming events:

- Intergroup meeting on Nov. 14  
November 3<sup>d</sup>*
- Super Saturday on Nov. 20  
November 10<sup>th</sup>*
- Super Saturday on Dec. 4  
November 24<sup>th</sup>*
- Intergroup meeting on Dec. 12  
December 1<sup>st</sup>*

*This letter was submitted to the Intergroup and it was recommended that it be printed in the newsletter.*  
~Dawn

### From Our Fellowship

Twice in the past few months, when I have felt especially weak and in need of extra meetings, I drove to a meeting listed in the current OA "Where and When" to discover nobody there. Considering my vulnerability at these times, it felt devastating. We're often told at meetings to use the group as a Higher Power. When the group is not there, that becomes a serious problem.

One meeting, now canceled, was the Tuesday noon meeting at St. Mary's Hospital. After attending that meeting for a couple of weeks, I was surprised to find nobody there the following week.

The second meeting, which I sought a few weeks ago, was the Monday 11:00 meeting at Trinity Episcopal Church. Before going, I phoned the contact person's number. No answer, no answering machine. I called the OA office between 9:35 and 9:55 to see if the meeting was still on. Nobody answered, although office hours were given as 9:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m., M/W/F.

These experiences were problem enough for me, with 24 years in 12-step programs, but imagine if I'd been a newcomer looking for my first meeting or someone who'd just been introduced to OA recently, wanting to plunge into the program.

I'm not sure wherein the problem lies, but this situation needs to be addressed.

S.S.

**Service Vacancies**

- 2 Trustees
- 2 Region Reps
- 2 World Service Delegates
- Cassette
- Public Information
- Twelve Step Within

**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**

**October 16:** 9:00-4:00  
**"A Day of Promise"**

Ramada Inn  
3551 Penridge Drive  
Hosted by Central Illinois Intergroup  
(See Flyer)

**November 20:** 9:30-12:30  
**IDEA Day**

Registration at 9:00  
First Unity Church  
4753 Butler Hill Road  
Sponsored by New Me

**December 4:** 9:30-3:30  
**Holiday Booster**

Immanuel United Methodist Church  
2105 McCausland  
Sponsored by St. Mary's  
Sunday Morning Meeting

To schedule a Super Saturday or other event, contact the OA office at (314) 638-6070. 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