

# Today

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### **Tradition 9: “OA, as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.”**

It never fails to bring a smile to my face to hear we “ought never be organized.” What a relief! I have always felt confident about this tradition since I’m a bit organizationally challenged. Actually, all kidding aside, the lack of an official organizational power structure is important to my recovery. Having no authority to defy has freed me to work the steps and allow a power greater than myself to discipline my life.

The lack of “organization” in OA refers to our fellowship being self-governing. The steps and traditions are suggestions—not rules. OA is a bottom-up rather than a top-down organization. Groups send representatives to their Intergroups who send representatives to the Region and World Service Organization (WSO) business meetings. The WSO Board of Trustees has no governing authority. OA does not have a rulebook or anyone with enforcement authority.

I feel deep gratitude for this structure that frees me from being responsible for other OA members. Pride and control issues could generate great harm if I had power over how groups or other members conducted themselves. I am humbly reminded that I have only the power to suggest. After that, with God’s grace, I let go of the outcome.

Comparing OA’s bottom-up approach with my current job (very much top-down), I find a dramatic difference. The power structure and management styles in my organization have created a less-than-harmonious work environment. Decisions must be approved at high levels, bringing work to a near stand still. Fear of reprisal for working independently ties the hands of many. I find that, although I desire direction from supervisors, the current environment leads me to avoid taking responsibility. In contrast, OA encourages me to take personal responsibility at every turn.

Taking these lessons into my personal life helps me let go of controlling behaviors. Many years ago, through painful experience, I learned that I could ask someone to do something for me or I could do it the way I wanted it done. However, I rarely got good results if I tried to force anyone to do things my way. (Probably because that requires control and/or manipulation.)

Today, I live in a household that lives up to the ideal that it “ought never be organized.” We don’t attempt to control each other and decisions are made together. I am not my partner’s higher power nor is she mine. Thank God, it is only at work that I must operate within organizational charts and power structures. Yet, even within that system, the traditions guide me. After all, whether the management approves or not, tradition two teaches me that my ultimate authority is a loving God.

In OA love and service,  
 Ethel

### Step 9

“Made direct amends to such people whenever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.”

As with every single one of the twelve steps, I believe it is essential to work toward this step with your sponsor. I can remember wanting to approach someone and my sponsor wanted me to wait. In hindsight, I realize that I wasn't going to make an amends, I was going to voice a resentment. Nowhere, in any of the twelve steps does it state: when we had a resentment against someone, promptly confronted them with it! My resentments are of MY making. They need to be dealt with by cleaning off my own side of the street.

Many years ago at a local OA convention, a main speaker told us this: Making amends means to CHANGE, not just to say you're sorry. Look "amend" up in the dictionary. It refers to change. We all know an amendment is a change. So why do so many people think an apology is an amends? I think it has just become common practice to believe this.

Most days, if I misstep, I apologize. Apologies keep our side of the street clean, they acknowledge our humanness, our imperfections, and create a

degree of humility. Amends are for the big things. In addition to making changes, at some point, I acknowledge that I'm working on changing. As long as I continue to change and grow and try, I'm involved in the amends process. This doesn't mean I work on these changes in a stealthy manner, however. At some point, it is important to sit down with people I have wronged and acknowledge the change process. Each situation and amends is different and each requires a different approach. This is why it is essential to work with a sponsor. If we try to start making amends before we reach Step 9, we'll probably start sounding like the Boy Who Cried Wolf.

The AA 12x12 tells us that we often begin making amends from the day we begin our OA journey. The first amends is often to ourselves. When we begin to recover from this disease by no longer injuring ourselves with excess food, we begin to make amends to ourselves. Next many of us choose the easier amends...little stuff that's been bugging us for years. As we move through this process, we confront the more and more difficult situations. We acknowledge the behaviors we're most ashamed of.

Some people have amends they believe they will never make. For now, that's okay. They're still on the Step 8 list. They don't have to be done right now. What I've learned over the years

in this program is that God continually gives me the strength to do what I could never do alone. Sometimes it takes moving through the grieving process to become ready to make amends. That is what Step 8 is for...to let God help us get ready.

I've also learned that the more I accept God's will and live my life according to new principles, the more I grow in recovery. Last weekend I got another example of just how much I've grown. One of my big character defects is control. I know how controlling I can be. I bought a new bathroom fan to replace one that had quit working. I had it for several weeks but finally decided to install it one weekend. When I got home from my errands, my boyfriend was installing it! What a nice surprise, right? Not for a control freak! How would it get done my way if I didn't do it? I started to give some input and then God grabbed a hold of me. I was directed away from the room, to another area of the house. Before I left, I offered my assistance by saying, "if you need any help, just call me," and then I let him complete the task. You know what? It got done just right and without a fight. This is the gift of Step 9, the gift of change! I said or did nothing that needed an apology! Thank God!

~Anonymous

### Support New Meetings

Hi, Everyone! I've never submitted an article to this paper before, but I felt compelled to write.

Some years ago, our St. Louis Area was a vital and thriving area full of meetings. We had a lot of meetings to choose from and it was a whole lot easier to do a 30 in 30 or a 60 in 60, etc. Well I, like many people, became swayed by outside influences promising a quick fix to my weight problem and so I left OA thinking it would always be there for me if, I should ever decide to come back. It took me many years of misery in relapse to realize that there is nothing else out there that is going to do for me what OA can. So, I came back to the program.

Much to my dismay, I discovered that the Where and When had become much shorter - there were fewer meetings to choose from and fewer people to learn experience, strength, and hope from. Don't get me wrong I'm not griping, I'm just telling you how alarmed I felt when I discovered there was less available to me. I began to think, "What if, there had been no meetings available to me? What would I have done then?" Well, I then thought to myself that, "You bet your boots I would start a meeting!"

And so, that's what I did. I started a meeting in my area. I started one because I care about OA in St. Louis and I want there to be more choices available to us. I want OA to grow in St. Louis again. I want it to thrive and for everyone to know it is the best and only solution to an age-old problem. - Compulsive Overeating. But, there is a danger; we are in danger of losing our growth if, we don't make an effort to support our new meetings in our St. Louis area.

It's okay to stay with our home groups, but sometimes we need to step outside of our comfort zones and check out a new meeting. And besides, an extra meeting never hurt anybody. It may actually help us! In fact, I know it will. So please, I strongly urge you to find out where the new meetings are in our St. Louis area and attend them. Otherwise, they may just die out and next thing you know it could be your home group that dies. God forbid! Three new meetings in our area that need our support right now are as follows:

- Tuesday 6 PM at the Beautiful Savior Lutheran Church in Bridgeton,
- Thursday 7 PM at the Community of Christ Church in O'Fallon, and
- Friday 11 AM at the Creve Coeur Government Center in Creve Coeur.

Consult your newest copy of the Where and When for exact location and contact person. Please consider making one of these meetings a part of your meeting schedule on a semi-regular basis. Thanks so much again for your support.

*~Your Pal in Recovery and on the Journey, Krista H.*

### The Little Meeting That Could

About four years ago two fellow OA's came together after recognizing a gap in our community for young people. We knew that for young people to be attracted to the program they would need a place of their own, an ideal place for their acceptance and recovery. So, two determined OA members (a Sponsor and Sponsee team) established the "Young Persons" meeting, known to group members as "The Little Meeting That Could".

For many weeks there was only two attendees, but it was an official OA

meeting that continued to move full steam ahead. Initially, speakers were recruited from other groups to share their stories of courage, strength and hope. Over time we would read from the OA literature about other members trials and tribulations, did step reading and of course, always allowed an abundant time for sharing.

As the group evolved, people who attended were young and old, overeaters, bulimics, food addicts, under eaters and anorexics. All were welcome with open arms and acceptance, as we all shared a disease that made us powerless over food. This insidious disease unifies us and allows for a place of safety and support. The "we" program mentality was infectious; we all took turns sharing in supporting the group.

The torch was passed and through tireless commitment this meeting has persevered. The Young Person's meeting was always meant to be and will continue as "The Little Meeting That Could". Regardless, if two or twenty people show up, this meeting will be there. We come together every Sunday with those who are searching for others to identify and share with. This meeting symbolized the light and hope for recovery.

Old timers and new timers alike, we are not alone anymore. Rather, we are surviving and thriving, as a result of so much recovery in this meeting. The gratitude is felt during every meeting. Especially when the meeting closes, all join hands and recite the Serenity Prayer. We then hug, share some more, then walk out into the world stronger and wiser. Taking one day at a time and allowing our Higher Power to do the rest.

*~Jill H*

### What Keeps Me Abstinent

You know what keeps me abstinent today?

Since the first of this year I have gone to 120 12-step meetings.

I begin every morning on my knees with the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> step prayers. I have today expanded my prayer life by writing on paper all the persons I can think of to pray for. This morning I wrote down the names of 75 people, and there are many more. I intend each day to run over that list, praying for each one in turn.

Some once said the first hour of the day belongs to God. With that thought in mind I begin every day in my study around 5:30 A.M. and read or write what I'm experiencing. It helps keeps me in the present. I am currently working on a 6<sup>th</sup> step so I read this morning one person's take on the 6<sup>th</sup> step. Tomorrow I intend to read that step from the A.A. 12 and 12 book. This morning I put on paper 21 defects of character. There are more. I don't have to fix them. This morning I am willing to turn them over. Only God can relieve me of these defects. Even naming them, writing them down and praying for the willingness, takes some of the power away that these defects have over me.

My wife says I spend all my time on this. Not so, now I have more time. I spend more time on an amazing cornucopia of things God has put in my life. I can't begin to name them. My life is so full now with things I never

dreamed I would be doing. The new opportunities come not from forcing or out of guilt or some other motivation. They come from a heart that has been transformed, a power not of my own doing.

Somewhere it says in the big book, 'willing to go to any lengths.' I guess it comes down to how important is recovery anyway.

I think you know. Some of you will go back and take courses. You'll go 3 or 4 nights a week to equip you to get a better job. Will we invest whatever it takes in a program that takes from us the cravings that have robbed us of the fuller life God intends? Is it worth the time and energy? I cannot do these things of my own volition, I can only pray for the willingness. If we pray for it God will give us what we ask. He will grant it if only we are willing to do the footwork.

\*I have been abstinent as of today (August 15, 2004) 541 days, not of my own doing. Thank you, God, for arresting an illness that has too long ruled my life. I ask you to grant me this gift, one day at a time, as long as I live.

~Dick S.

**October's newsletter will include articles on Step 10 and Tradition 10. Thanks 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)**

### Budding Out

You are like a closed little bud  
Waiting to come out  
Keep on working  
That's what its all about

It's happening! It's happening!  
The petals are beginning to open  
up

Oh how I want to learn  
something about myself  
For God you know there's a  
whole lot more  
To my precious little soul

This is a scary thing  
As the flower opens up  
I become a little more aware  
Of what's inside  
Watch out! Watch out! It's  
coming out  
You will see  
For there is much more to me

As my budding flower opens up  
All aspects of me will appear  
There will be joy  
And much more to fear  
And far too much to see

Fear! Fear! Go away  
Let me blossom in every way.  
I know I can do it  
For God has told me so  
All I need to do, is let go

It is so possible  
For my Flower to blossom  
Open up wide  
And let it happen

~Linda L.

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 ~Sue E.

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### Service Vacancies

- 2 Trustees
- 2 Region Reps
- 2 World Service Delegates
- Intergroup Secretary
- Twelve Step Within
- Cassette

### 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



### 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](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

**September 25:** 9:00-1:00

St. Joseph's Health Center  
St. Charles, MO

Sponsored by St. Peter's  
Monday Night Meeting

**October 1-3**

**13<sup>th</sup> Annual OA Retreat**

**"Promises Made, Promises Kept"**

Friday 7:30 – Sunday 12:00

Pallotine Renewal Center

15270 Old Halls Ferry Rd.

Florissant, MO

[NO ON-SITE REGISTRATION]

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

**IDEA Day**

Registration at 9:00

First Unity Church

4753 Butler Hill Road

Sponsored by New Me

Contact: Jane 636-938-6059

**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 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.