

OA PREAMBLE:

Overeaters Anonymous is a Fellowship of individuals who, through shared experience, strength and hope, are recovering from compulsive overeating.

We welcome everyone who wants to stop eating compulsively. There are no dues or fees for members; we are self-supporting through our own contributions, neither soliciting nor accepting outside donations. OA is not affiliated with any public or private organization, political movement, ideology or religious doctrine; we take no position on outside issues.

Our primary purpose is to abstain from compulsive eating and to carry the message of recovery through the Twelve Steps of OA to those who still suffer.

Our Invitation to You

We of Overeaters Anonymous have made a discovery. At the very first meeting we attended, we learned that we were in the clutches of a dangerous illness, and that willpower, emotional health and self-confidence, which some of us had once possessed, were no defense against it.

We have learned that the reasons for the illness are unimportant. What deserves the attention of the still-suffering compulsive overeater is this: there is a proven, workable method by which we can arrest our illness.

The OA recovery program is patterned after that of Alcoholics Anonymous. As our personal stories attest, the Twelve-Step program of recovery works as well for compulsive overeaters as it does for alcoholics.

Can we guarantee you this recovery? The answer is up to you. If you will honestly face the truth about yourself and the illness; if you will keep coming back to meetings to talk and listen to other recovering compulsive overeaters; if you will read our literature and that of Alcoholics Anonymous with an open mind; and, most important, if you are willing to rely on a power greater than yourself for direction in your life, and to take the Twelve Steps to the best of your ability, we believe you can indeed join the ranks of those who recover.

To remedy the emotional, physical and spiritual illness of compulsive eating we offer several suggestions, but keep in mind that the basis of the program is spiritual, as evidenced by the Twelve Steps.

We are not a “diet” club. We do not endorse any particular plan of eating. In OA, abstinence is the act of refraining from compulsive eating and compulsive food behaviors while working towards or maintaining a healthy body weight. Once we become abstinent, the preoccupation with food diminishes and in many cases leaves us entirely. We then find that, to deal with our inner turmoil, we have to have a new way of thinking, of acting on life rather than reacting to it — in essence, a new way of living.

From this vantage point, we begin the Twelve Step program of recovery, moving beyond the food and the emotional havoc to a fuller living experience. As a result of practicing the Steps, the symptom of compulsive eating and compulsive food behaviors are removed on a daily basis, achieved through the process of surrendering to something greater than ourselves; the more total our surrender, the more fully realized our freedom from food obsession.



The Twelve Steps of Overeaters Anonymous

1. We admitted we were powerless over food—that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God *as we understood Him*.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong, promptly admitted it.
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God *as we understood Him*, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these Steps, we tried to carry this message to compulsive overeaters and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

Permission to use the Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous for adaptation granted by AA World Services, Inc.

Overeaters Anonymous®, Inc.
World Service Office
6075 Zenith Ct. NE, Rio Rancho, NM 87144-6424 USA
Mail Address: P.O. Box 44020, Rio Rancho, NM 87174-4020 USA
Tel: 1-505-891-2664 • Fax: 1-505-891-4320
info@oa.org • www.oa.org



The Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon OA unity.
2. For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.
3. The only requirement for OA membership is a desire to stop eating compulsively.
4. Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or OA as a whole.
5. Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry its message to the compulsive overeater who still suffers.
6. An OA group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the OA name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property, and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.
7. Every OA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
8. Overeaters Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers.
9. OA, as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.
10. Overeaters Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the OA name ought never be drawn into public controversy.
11. Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, films, television, and other public media of communication.
12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all these Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

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WELCOME HOME:

Have you ever wished you could lose ten pounds, twenty, forty, or a hundred or more? Have you ever wished that once you got it off, you could keep it off? Welcome to O.A., welcome home.

Have you ever felt out of step with the world? Have you sometimes felt like a homeless orphan without a place to really belong? Welcome to O.A., welcome home.

Have you ever wished your family would get to work or school so that you could get busy eating? Welcome to O.A., welcome home.

Have you ever awakened first thing in the morning and felt happy because you remembered that your favorite goodies were waiting for you in the fridge or in the cupboard? Again, welcome to O.A., welcome home.

Have you ever wanted to hide in the house without getting cleaned up or getting dressed, without seeing anyone, and without letting anyone see you? Have you ever hidden food under the bed, under the pillow, in a drawer, in the bathroom, the wastebasket or in the car, so that you could eat without anyone seeing you?

Have you ever sobbed out your misery in the dark just because no one loved or understood you? Have you ever felt that God (if he existed at all) made his biggest mistake when he created you? If you say yes, you belong to O.A., this is your home.

Did you ever want to get on a bus and just keep going, without ever once looking back? Did you do it? Welcome to O.A., this is your home.

Have you ever lied to yourself or to another about what you ate or how much you ate of it? Have you ever lied to your sponsor or another O.A. member about how you were doing on your program? Do you belong here? Is this your home?

Have you ever worn a mask, or hundreds of masks, because you were sure that if you shared the person you really were, no one could ever love or accept you? Welcome to O.A., welcome home.

No matter who you are, where you are coming from or are heading, you are welcome and accepted here. No matter what you have done. No matter what you have felt or haven't felt. No matter where you have slept, or who you have slept with, or loved or hated – we extend acceptance. We accept you as you are today, not as you may be tomorrow. Only you can decide what you want to be. But we will rejoice with you, and when you slip, we will tell you that we are not failures, just because we sometimes fail. We will hold out our arms in love, and stand beside you, as you pull yourself back up and walk on again to where you are heading. You'll never have to cry alone again, unless you choose to.

Sometimes we fail to be all that we should be, and sometimes we aren't there to give you all you need from us. Accept our imperfections. Love and accept us in return, and help our sometimes failings. That's what we are in OA – imperfect. Let's rejoice together in our efforts, and the assurance that we can have a home if we want one. An O.A. home. Welcome to it.

JUST FOR TODAY

I will try to live through this day only and not tackle my whole life problem at once.

I can do something for twelve hours that would appall me if I felt that I had to keep it up for a lifetime.

JUST FOR TODAY

I will be happy. This assumes to be true what Abraham Lincoln said, that, “most folks are as happy as they make up their minds to be”.

JUST FOR TODAY

I will adjust myself to what is, and not try to adjust everything to my own desires. I will take my “luck” as it comes and fit myself to it.

JUST FOR TODAY

I will try to strengthen my mind. I will study. I will not be a mental loafer. I will read something that requires mental effort and concentration.

JUST FOR TODAY

I will exercise my soul in three ways. I will do somebody a good turn and not get found out. If anybody knows of it, it will not count. I will do at least two things I do not want to do – just for exercise. I will not show anyone that my feelings are hurt; they may be hurt, but today I will not show it.

JUST FOR TODAY

I will be agreeable, will look as well as I can, dress becomingly, talk low, act courteously, criticize not one bit, not find fault with anything and not try to improve or regulate anybody except myself.

JUST FOR TODAY

I will have a program – I may not be able to follow it exactly, but I will have it. I will save myself from two pests: hurry and indecision.

JUST FOR TODAY

I will have a quiet half hour all to myself and relax. During this half hour, sometime, I will try to get a better perspective of my life.

JUST FOR TODAY

I will be unafraid,
especially I will not be afraid
to enjoy what is beautiful,
and to believe that as I give to the world,
so the world gives to me.

A PLAN OF EATING:

A plan of eating helps us abstain from compulsive eating. (See the pamphlet *Dignity of Choice*.) **This tool helps us deal with the physical aspects of our disease and achieve physical recovery.**

MEETINGS:

Meetings give us an opportunity to identify our common problem, confirm our common solution through the Twelve Steps and share the gifts we receive through this program. While we meet remotely, OA offers telephone and online meetings. Visit SuffolkOA.org or OA.org for a list of meetings.

TELEPHONE:

Many members call, text or email their sponsors and other OA members daily. Telephone or electronic contact also provides an immediate outlet for those hard-to-handle highs and lows we may experience.

We are using the Chat Box as our "We Care" Book where members can leave their phone numbers.

WRITING:

Putting our thoughts and feelings down on paper helps us to better understand our actions and reactions in a way that is often not revealed to us by simply thinking or talking about them.

LITERATURE:

We read OA-approved books, pamphlets and Lifeline magazine. Reading literature daily reinforces how to live the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. Literature can be purchased on Bookstore.OA.org

ACTION PLAN:

An action plan is the process of identifying and implementing attainable actions that are necessary to support our individual abstinence. Just like our plan of eating, it may vary widely among members and may need to be adjusted to bring structure, balance and manageability into our lives.

ANONYMITY:

Anonymity guarantees we will place principles before personalities and assures us that only we have the right to make our membership known within our community. Anonymity at the level of press, radio, films, television and other public media of communication means that we never allow our faces or last names to be used once we identify ourselves as OA members. Members can practice anonymity by removing their last name on Zoom. Within the Fellowship, anonymity means that whatever we share with another OA member will be held in respect and confidence. What we hear at meetings should remain there.

SPONSORSHIP:

Sponsorship is one of our keys to success. Sponsors are OA members committed to abstinence and to living the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions to the best of their ability. Sponsors share their program up to the level of their experience and strengthen their recovery through this service to others. We ask a sponsor to help us through our program of recovery on all three levels: physical, emotional and spiritual. To find a sponsor, look for someone who has what you want, and ask how he or she is achieving it.

SERVICE:

Any form of service that helps reach a fellow sufferer adds to the quality of our own recovery. Members can give service by getting to meetings, putting away chairs, putting out literature and talking to newcomers.

Beyond the group level, a member can serve as intergroup representative, committee chair, region representative or Conference delegate.

As OA's responsibility pledge states: "Always to extend the hand and heart of OA to all who share my compulsion; for this, I am responsible."