

# **OVEREATERS ANONYMOUS®**

## **Welcome, Newcomers, to OA**

This document is intended to provide you with some helpful materials to supplement those provided by the World Service Organization (WSO) of OA. Some prayers are included here because OA emphasizes a spiritual (not religious) approach for overcoming all types of eating problems. This is an important way in which OA differs from other weight-control solutions you may have tried or read about. OA proposes a 3-pronged approach – physical, emotional and spiritual. We share our knowledge and experience with each other unselfishly.



Regarding the concept of “spiritual” vs. “religious,” OA basic tenets and literature use the terms “God” and “Higher Power” interchangeably and they are usually capitalized, even though they do not refer to any specific religious deity. When “God” is used, it is always understood as “God as we (you) understand God,” and every member is invited to define a higher power in whatever way they choose - religious, agnostic, atheistic or something entirely personal. If you do hear religious references at any OA meeting, please know that this is not in keeping with OA policy as a whole. We hope you will find these materials helpful in your own journey in OA.

Sincerely,

The Trusted Servants of OA Foot Steps VIG #09670

## Overeaters Anonymous 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.

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# Welcome to OA – 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 OA; welcome home!

Have you sometimes felt out of step with the world, like a homeless orphan without a place where you really belong? Welcome to OA; welcome home!

Have you ever wished your family would get to work or school so that you could get busy eating? Welcome to OA; welcome home!

Have you ever awakened first thing in the morning and felt happy because you remembered that your favorite goodie was waiting for you in the fridge or in the cupboard? Welcome to OA; welcome home!

Have you ever looked up at the stars and wondered what an insignificant person like you was doing in the world anyway? Welcome to OA; welcome home!

Have you ever cooked, bought or baked for your family and then eaten everything yourself so that you wouldn't have to share? We know you in OA because we are you. Welcome to OA; welcome home!

Have you ever wanted to hide in the house, without going to work, without getting cleaned up or even getting dressed, without seeing anyone or letting anyone see you? Welcome to OA; welcome home!

Have you ever hidden food under the bed, under the pillow, in the drawer, -in the bathroom, in the wastebasket, the cupboard, the clothes hamper, the closet or the car so that you could eat without anyone seeing you? Welcome to OA; welcome home!

Have you ever been angry, resentful, defiant – against God, your mate, your doctor, your mother, your father, your friends, your children, the salesperson in the store whose look spoke a thousand words as you tried on clothes – because they were thin, because they wanted you to be thin, and because you were forced to diet to please them or shut them up or make them eat their words and their looks? We welcome you to OA; welcome home!

Have you ever sobbed out your misery in the dark night because no one loved or understood you? Welcome to OA; welcome home!

Have you ever felt that God (if God existed at all) made the biggest mistake when God created you? Can you see that this is where such feelings get turned around? Welcome to OA; welcome home!

Have you ever wanted to get on a bus and just keep going, without ever once looking back? Did you do it? Welcome to OA; welcome home!

Have you ever thought the whole world was a mess and if they would just think and act like you, the world would be a lot better or. Welcome to OA; welcome home!

Have you ever thought that OA people must be a bit nuts? That they might be compulsive overeaters, but you just have a weight problem which you can take care of beginning tomorrow; they might be one bite from insane eating, but you are just a little or a lot overweight? Welcome to OA; welcome home!

Have you ever told anyone who would listen how great you are, how talented, how intelligent, how powerful – all the time knowing they would never believe it, because you didn't believe it? Welcome to OA; welcome home!

Have you ever lost all your weight and found that you were thin-unhappy instead of fat-unhappy? Welcome to OA; welcome 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? We accept you in OA. May we offer you a home?

Overeaters Anonymous extends to all of you the gift of acceptance. No matter who you are, where you come from or where you are heading, you are welcome here! No matter what you have done or failed to do, what you have felt or haven't felt, where you have slept, or with whom, who you have loved or hated – you may be sure of our acceptance. We accept you as you are, not as you would be if you could melt yourself and mold yourself and shape yourself into what other people think you should be. Only you can decide what you want to be.

But we will help you work for the goals you set, and when you are successful we will rejoice with you; and when you slip, we will tell you that we are not failures just because we sometimes fail, and we'll 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 imperfection too. Love us in return and help us in our sometimes- falling failing. That's what we are in OA – imperfect but trying. Let's rejoice together in our effort and in the assurance that we can have a home, if we want one. Welcome to OA; welcome home!

- Lifeline {September/October 1977}

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

## IS FOOD A PROBLEM FOR YOU?

- Have you been worried about the way you eat?
- Do you resolve to go on a diet tomorrow, only to fail again and again?
- Is your weight affecting the way you live your life?



**You are not alone.**

Overeaters Anonymous can help.

No dues, no fees, no weigh-ins!

## What is OA?

Overeaters Anonymous (OA) is a Twelve-Step Fellowship of people recovering from compulsive eating. OA is not a diet club. We are dedicated to helping individuals recover from compulsive eating, anorexia, bulimia, food addiction and obesity. If you are struggling, you are not alone anymore.

## Who joins OA?

OA members are men and women from around the world. Some have been obese, while others have been anorexic, bulimic or a normal weight. We have been unable to freely live our lives because we have been so obsessed with food or weight.

## Does the program really work?

Typically, OA members have tried numerous solutions to their problems with food, including (for many of us) years of diets or exercise. In OA, we have finally found a long-term answer. Many OA members have maintained a normal weight and found freedom from compulsive eating for many years. Overeaters Anonymous is patterned after the Alcoholics Anonymous program. Physical, emotional and spiritual recovery are offered through attending meetings, practicing the Twelve-Step program and helping others.



# MANY SYMPTOMS, ONE SOLUTION

The membership of OA is varied, both in its makeup and in the eating behaviors and experiences that brought each individual to OA. In OA you'll find members who are or were:

- extremely overweight, even morbidly obese
- only moderately overweight
- average weight
- underweight
- still maintaining periodic control of their eating behavior
- totally unable to control their compulsive eating

OA members have experienced many different patterns of eating. These symptoms are as varied as our membership. They include:

- obsession with body weight, size and shape
- eating binges
- grazing
- preoccupation with weight-reduction diets
- starving
- inducing vomiting after eating
- Laxative or diuretic abuse
- constant preoccupation with food
- inability to stop eating after taking the first bite
- excessive-exercising
- Chewing and spitting out food
- Use of diet pills, shots and other medical interventions to control weight
- Fantasies about food
- Vulnerability to quick-weight-loss schemes
- Using food as a reward or comfort

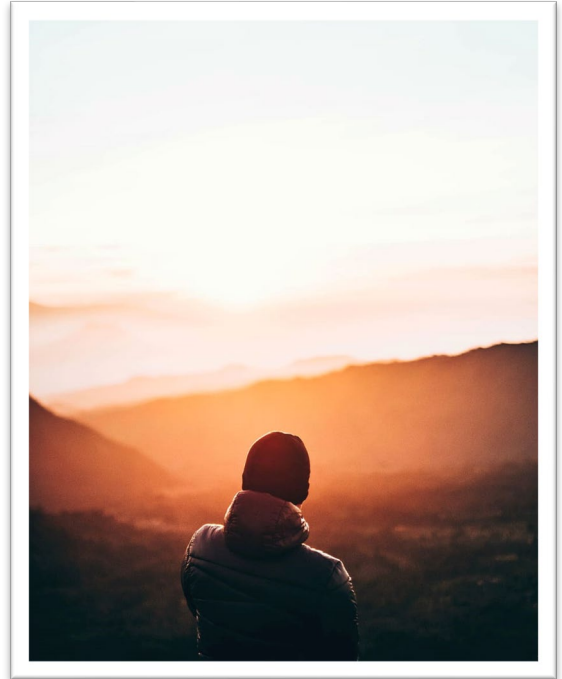


Our symptoms may vary, but we share a common bond: we are Powerless over food and our lives are Unmanageable. If you feel you are one of us, **WE WELCOME YOU WITH OPEN ARMS.**

# FIFTEEN QUESTIONS:

This series of questions may help you determine if you are a compulsive eater. Many OA members have found that they answered yes to many of these questions.

1. Do you eat when you're not hungry?
2. Do you go on eating binges for no apparent reason?
3. Do you have feelings of guilt and remorse after overeating?
4. Do you give too much time and thought to food?
5. Do you look forward with pleasure and anticipation to the time when you can eat alone?
6. Do you plan these secret binges ahead of time?
7. Do you eat sensibly before others and make up for it alone?
8. Is your weight affecting the way you live your life?
9. Have you tried to diet for a week (or longer), only to fall short of your goal?
10. Do you resent others telling you to "use a little willpower" to stop overeating?
11. Despite evidence to the contrary, have you continued to assert that you can diet "on your own" whenever you wish?
12. Do you crave to eat at a definite time, day or night, other than mealtime?
13. Do you eat to escape from worries or trouble?
14. Have you ever been treated for obesity or a food-related condition?
15. Does your eating behavior make others unhappy?



Excerpts from- "Is Food a problem for you" pamphlet. \*\* Overeaters Anonymous ® World Service Office 6075 Zenith Court NE, Rio Rancho, NM 87144-6424 USA. Mail Address: PO Box 44020, Rio Rancho, NM 87174-4020 USA Tel: 1-505-891-2664 • Fax: 1-505-891-4320; Email: [info@oa.org](mailto:info@oa.org) • [www.oa.org](http://www.oa.org); OA Board-approved. ©2008 Overeaters Anonymous, Inc. All rights reserved. 750

# DIET VS ABSTINENCE

- Diets are something you start on Monday and go off by Thursday. Abstinence is an on-going daily reprieve from the disease of compulsive overeating.
- Dieting is going through the day obsessed with eating as little as possible. Abstinence is eating nourishing meals, with life in between.
- Dieting is having a goal weight, a goal day, clenched fists and gritted teeth.

Abstinence is accepting powerlessness over food, relaxing and giving up the fight.

- Dieting is starving myself so that I look good at my high school reunion. Abstinence is accepting and liking myself as I am today, realizing that my self-worth does not hinge on the size of my body.



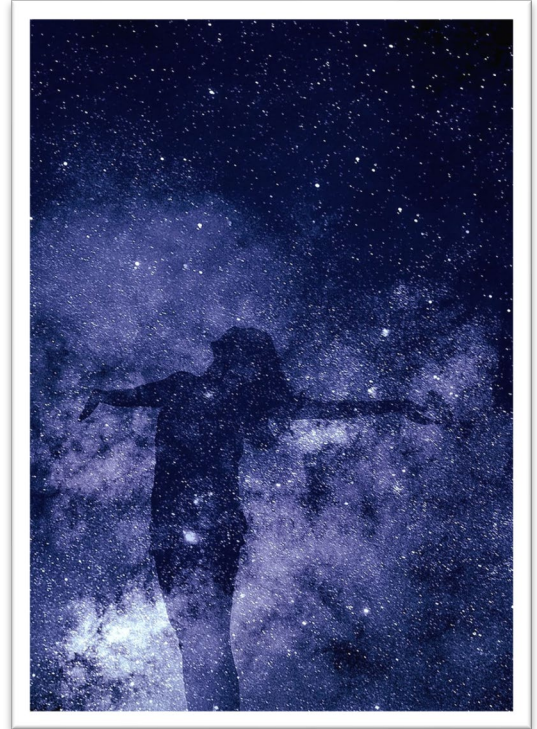
- Dieting is life-threatening. Abstinence is life-giving.
- Dieting is placing all the emphasis on the food, which must be controlled in order to solve the problem, which is believed to be fat. Abstinence is knowing that fat is not the problem, but only a symptom of an illness called compulsive overeating.
- Dieting is being obsessed with calories, carbohydrates, and charts, always jumping on the scale to monitor my weight. Abstinence is letting go and letting God, and following a simple food plan, trusting the results to a Higher Power.
- Dieting is believing that thin is well and that once I lose the weight, all my problems will go away. Abstinence is living in the here and now, realizing that recovery must be on all three levels – spiritual, emotional and physical – if I am to obtain true serenity.

- Reprinted from the LIFELINE, Nov 1966



# TO BE ABSTINENT IS ABOUT WILLINGNESS, NOT STRUGGLE

- If you are **willing** to be abstinent, this is a state of great humility. If you are **trying** to be abstinent, this is a state of great confusion.
- A **willingness** to be abstinent implies you do not know how to do it, but are willing to learn. **Trying** to be abstinent implies you should be able to do it, but are struggling with it.
- **Willingness** to be abstinent involves acceptance. **Trying** to be abstinent involves condemnation.
- If you are **willing** to be abstinent, you are open to receive. If you are **trying** to be abstinent, you are closed to guidance.
- If you are **trying** to give up the old ways and have condemned yourself for failure to do so, simply be **willing** to learn how the old ways may be replaced with ways of peace.
- If you are **trying** to be abstinent, you will fear not being able to be abstinent. You will judge yourself a failure. If you are **willing** to be abstinent, no setback becomes a problem, for you know you will be shown.
- If you are **trying**, you are attempting to be abstinent by yourself. If you are **willing** to be abstinent, you are asking for guidance.
- **Trying** to be abstinent places the responsibility on you. Being **willing** to be abstinent places the responsibility on God.
- **Willingness** to be abstinent is, in a sense, a prayer. **Trying** to be abstinent is an act of separation from your Higher Power.
- When you **try**, there is resistance. When you are **willing**, there is acceptance.
- If you are **trying** to be abstinent, everything is an interference. If you are **willing** to be abstinent, everything is of assistance.



The freely made choice to be abstinent is the most important decision you make each day because it speaks for your willingness to be abstinent each day. Without the giver of the gift (of abstinence), there would be no gift. Which is more important, the giver of the gift or the gift itself? Bear in mind, this particular gift is just for one day, or one meal at a time. - Shirley, Reprinted from the COCOON, June 2001

# THE TWELVE STEPS & TWELVE TRADITIONS OF OVEREATERS ANONYMOUS

## 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.

## 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 non-professional, 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 {anon-ima-tee} at the level of press, radio, films, television and other public media of communication.
12. Anonymity {anon-ima-tee} is the spiritual foundation of all these Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

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# LET'S GET MORE SPECIFIC

## 1. The Disease of Compulsive Eating (Physical, Emotional, Spiritual):

Please Read "[Our Invitation to you](#)", to come and join us at Overeaters Anonymous which is often read as part of an Overeaters Anonymous meeting.

- We suffer from the disease of compulsive overeating. We are not immoral, weak-willed, bad, or disgusting—and we are not alone.
- We have a progressive disease characterized by an obsession of the mind and compulsive behavior.
- Our common problem is threefold: Physical, Emotional, and Spiritual.
- The book [Alcoholics Anonymous, Fourth Edition](#) (and is also available for [purchase](#)), on which our program is based, gives many parallel insights into addiction as a disease.
- We have found that the disease of compulsive eating can be arrested, one day at a time, but cannot be cured. Once the “diagnosis” is accepted we can follow the OA “prescription” for recovery: abstinence one day at a time and the Twelve Steps.
- We are powerless over controlling compulsive eating with misdirected willpower.
- The miracle of recovery happens through working the Twelve Steps: the freedom from the food obsession, and the freedom to not want to eat foods that used to beckon to us.
- It is important to just being willing to follow the OA program rather than insisting on prior intellectual understanding of the problem.
- OA does not pretend to be a medical program or a storehouse of nutritional knowledge. Members who want information of this nature must seek it from other sources. OA does not endorse any particular food plan. The pamphlets [Dignity of Choice](#) and [A Plan of Eating: A Tool for Living—One Day at a Time](#) provide guidance (available for purchase).
- Our primary purpose is to abstain from compulsive eating and to carry the message of recovery. We need to support every OA member, instilling hope, trust, freedom, and joy, rather than feelings of guilt, fear, and hardship. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop eating compulsively, which is Tradition Three ([The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous, Second Edition](#) - available for purchase).
- OA does not weigh members, sign them up, monitor their eating habits, or keep tabs on them in any way. The important thing is to keep coming back and work the program with others.

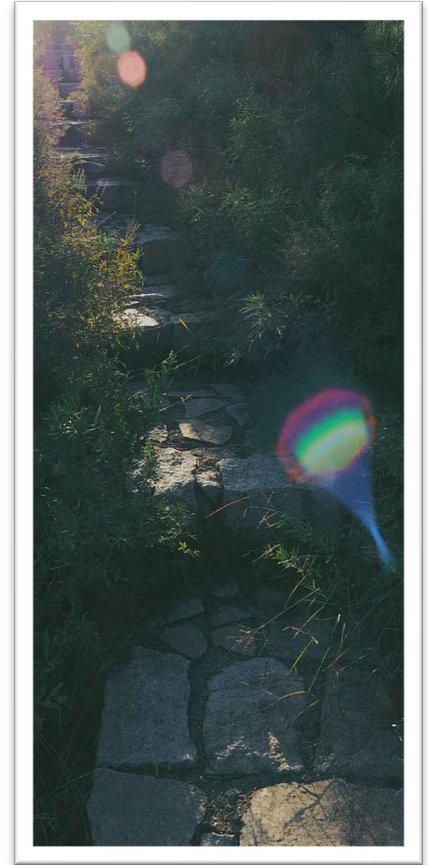


## 2. ABSTINENCE & RECOVERY {How to abstain from compulsive eating one day at a time}:

**ABSTINENCE:** is the act of refraining from compulsive eating and compulsive food behaviors while working towards or maintaining a healthy body weight.

**RECOVERY:** Recovery is the removal of the need to engage in compulsive eating behaviors. Spiritual, emotional, and physical recovery is achieved through working and living the Overeaters Anonymous Twelve Step program.

- OA members have different plans of eating. Many follow a specific food plan; others are comfortable with eating moderate meals or simply not bingeing or purging. Some OA members weigh and measure their food. Our plans vary in the number of meals and foods to include or exclude. The OA pamphlets Dignity of Choice and A Plan of Eating (available for purchase) provide suggestions on how to meet individual needs.
- Focus on “just for today”: abstain for just this 24 hours, this hour, or this minute, if necessary.
- Get a sponsor and stay in touch on a daily basis—even several times a day if necessary. Talking about food specifics can be helpful, and sharing feelings and personal problems is also important.
- Some members find that postponing compulsive eating—until this afternoon, tonight, or tomorrow—and continuing to postpone it helps them get and maintain abstinence.
- Attend as many meetings as possible.
- Call other OA members, newcomers, or people with more experience. You help the person you call as much as you help yourself.
- Look for someone else to help. Sharing how OA has been a benefit to us is how members “keep” their recovery.
- Read OA and AA literature, keeping it around the house and carrying some in your purse or pocket.
- Pray—in whatever way is meaningful for you, even if you’re “acting as if.”
- Change routines, especially at times most conducive to compulsive eating. This helps to change old patterns.
- Make a list of things to do instead when you have thoughts about food or the urge to eat compulsively, and then do one of them.
- Get together with other OA members for non-eating activities or to enjoy an abstinent meal.
- Begin working the Twelve Steps.

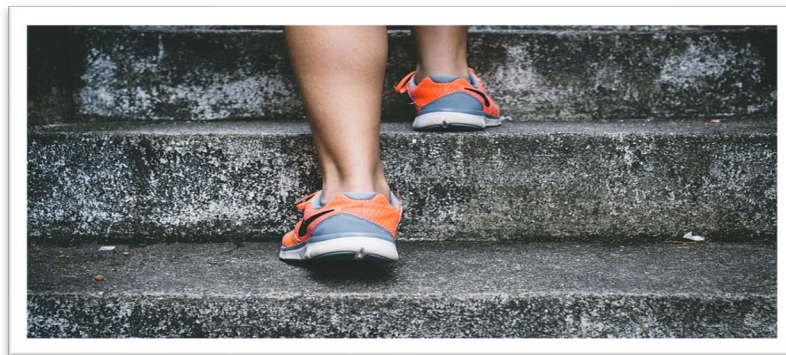




### 3. How It Works {The Twelve Steps as a suggested program of recovery}:

Please read [“How It Works”](#) from [Alcoholics Anonymous, Fourth Edition](#) (the Big Book), Chapter 5. Many of us find that we can identify more easily by substituting words such as ‘compulsive eating’ for ‘alcoholism,’ and ‘food’ or ‘binge food’ for ‘alcohol.’

- OA is a spiritual program and does not follow any religious doctrine. Members practice the spiritual principles of the program with a personal Higher Power of their own understanding.
- The Twelve Steps are the basis of our program of recovery. We try to work on them—and let them work on us—for the rest of our lives, one day at a time. There are no “musts” in OA; these Steps are simply suggested, based on the experience of recovering OA members. They evolved in AA as a result of experience in recovery.
- Newcomers are encouraged to study the Steps with their sponsor and OA friends and to apply them in their daily lives. We do not expect to be perfect at doing this, just to make progress.
- The pamphlets (available for purchase) *To the Newcomer* and *Questions and Answers* provide an introduction to our Twelve Step program of recovery. Since the source of the Twelve Steps is Alcoholics Anonymous, we encourage newcomers to read the Big Book for themselves in addition to OA literature.



### 4. The Twelve Traditions:

While OA functions with very little obvious organization, adherence to the Traditions assures the survival of the Fellowship. Applying the Traditions to our relationships in and out of OA strengthens our spirituality and helps maintain abstinence. [The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous, Second Edition](#) along with

[AA's Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions](#) (also available for [purchase](#)) and [AA Comes of Age](#) (available for [purchase](#)) are excellent sources of information on the origin and importance of the Traditions. OA's pamphlet [The Twelve Traditions](#) provides a good introduction for the newcomer.

We use the Traditions to understand key concepts within the fellowship such as anonymity; principles before personalities; group conscience; self- support; OA's non-affiliation with other organizations; and our sole membership requirement, a desire to stop eating compulsively.

It is equally important to point out what OA does not do. For example, OA does not solicit members or attempt to convince anyone to join the Fellowship. Nor does it keep membership lists, participate in research, follow up on its members, give medical or psychological advice, offer any kind of social services or counseling, accept reimbursement for its services, or accept contributions from non-OA sources.



## 5. The Nine Tools of Recovery:

The nine Tools of Recovery—a plan of eating, sponsorship, meetings, telephone, writing, literature, action plan, anonymity, service—are described in our pamphlet, [\*The Tools of Recovery\*](#). (available for purchase)

*“In working Overeaters Anonymous’ Twelve-Step program of recovery from compulsive overeating, we have found that a number of tools are available to assist us. We use these tools ... on a regular basis, to help us achieve and maintain abstinence and recover from our disease.”* – The Tools of Recovery p.1

1. **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.
2. **Sponsorship:** We ask a sponsor to help us through our program of recovery on all three levels, physical, emotional, and spiritual.
3. **Meetings:** Meetings give us an opportunity to identify our common problems, confirm our common solution through the Twelve Steps, and share the gifts we receive through this program. In addition to face-to-face meetings, OA offers telephone and online meetings.
4. **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.
5. **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.
6. **Literature:** We read OA approved books, pamphlets, and Lifeline Magazine. Reading literature daily reinforces how to live the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions.
7. **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.
8. **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. 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.
9. **Service:** Any form of service that helps a reach 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. Service is the basis of our program of recovery and the essence of spiritual growth.

## 6. PLITHY WISDOM:

### The Serenity Prayer

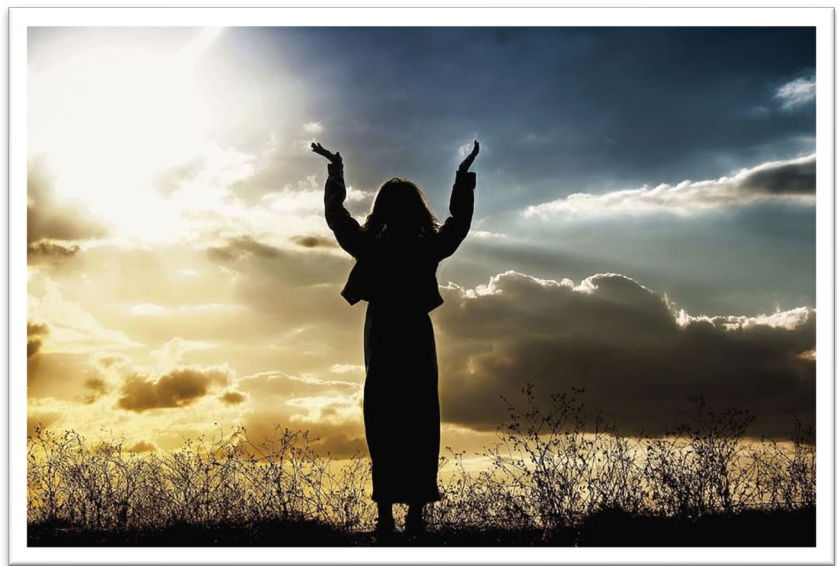
*“God grant me the Serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the Courage to change the things I can, and the Wisdom to know the difference.”*

### OA slogans, which include:

- Abstinence is the most important thing in my life without exception.
- Easy does it.
- Let go and let God.
- Live and let live.
- Keep it simple.
- One day at a time.
- Nothing tastes as good as abstinence feels.

### OA PROMISE

*“I put my hand in yours, and together we can do what we could never do alone. No longer is there a sense of hopelessness, no longer must we each depend upon our own unsteady will power. We are all together now, reaching out our hands for power and strength greater than ours, and as we join hands, we find love and understanding beyond our wildest dreams.”* – Rozanne S., Co-founder of OA



### MORNING PRAYER OF ABSTINENCE

*“Higher Power, today is a new day for me and with Your help it can be a day of abstinence. I ask for Your protection in case sometime during the day my desire to overeat is greater than my desire to abstain. I also ask for Your protection today from anyone or anything that may interfere with my abstinence. I know that I am powerless over food. I believe You will restore me to sanity. Please help me to know Your will for me today and give me the willingness to carry that out. I turn my life over to You.”* - Unknown

### Third Step Prayer

*“God, I offer myself to Thee – to build with me and to do with me as Thou wilt. Relieve me of the bondage of self, that I may better do Thy will. Take away my difficulties, that victory over them may bear witness to those I would help of Thy Power, Thy Love, and Thy Way of Life.”* - p.63, Alcoholics Anonymous (Big Book)

# DEFINITIONS FOR OA NEWCOMERS

Starred (\*) items refer to practices and organizations within OA Foot Steps VIG. Others are universal.

**Abstinence:** “Abstinence in Overeaters Anonymous is the action of refraining from compulsive eating and compulsive food behaviors while working toward or maintaining a healthy body weight. Spiritual, emotional and physical recovery is the result of living the Overeaters Anonymous Twelve-Step Program.”

**Anonymity:** Because of Anonymity, it is safe to share at meetings. This means we honor each other’s privacy by never discussing who we have seen or what has been discussed at a meeting with anyone outside of that meeting.

**Big Book:** The Big Book refers to Alcoholics Anonymous which also is used in Overeaters Anonymous. It is our basic piece of literature and is used to help us recover from compulsive eating and to stay in recovery.

\* **ESH:** This acronym stands for “Experience, Strength & Hope” and is also the name of OA Foot Steps newsletter which is currently being developed. Anyone who is participating in the OA Program can write his or her experiences, strengths and hopes and submit it to the newsletter. The deadline for each issue is set by the editor.

**Cross Talk:** *“Feedback, cross talk and advice-giving are discouraged during all Overeaters Anonymous meetings and events. Cross talk during an OA meeting is giving advice to others who have already shared, speaking directly to another person rather than to the group and questioning or interrupting the person speaking/sharing at the time.”* (From the OA website at “Suggested Meeting Formats”.)

**Group Conscience:** Group conscience is based on Tradition 2. When a group wishes to determine how best to conduct meetings, spend funds, organize special events, and deal with issues that affect the group or OA as a whole, business meetings are conducted by group conscience. Group conscience is the special way (unique to 12-Step fellowships) in which the individuals in the meetings come to agree on a decision that is best for the whole

group.

**HOW meeting:** This is a type of OA meeting designed for those who would like to have a more structured program to follow regarding such things as Food Plan, use of the Tools, etc.

**Lifeline:** The international magazine of Overeaters Anonymous is Lifeline. Paper and e-subscriptions are available. Go to OA.org to subscribe.

**Newcomer:** A person new to OA and/or the 12-Step Program is considered a newcomer. There is no time limit on when someone may be considered a newcomer.

**OAers:** Those attending and participating in Overeaters Anonymous often are called OAers, members or fellows.

\* **OA FOOT STEPS VIRTUAL INTERGROUP (OAFSVIG):** OA Foot Steps Virtual Intergroup, known simply as VIG, or OAFSVIG, is the service body that provides support for all virtual groups that are associated with us. Our service body registration number is: #09670

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

**Outreach Calls:** These are calls to other OAers between meetings just to check in, to get support, or to discuss aspects of the program. It is suggested that more intense issues be discussed with one’s sponsor.

**Sponsee/Sponsor:** A sponsee or sponsoree is a person who is being sponsored/helped through the program. Each person is encouraged to be a sponsoree and to find a sponsor who has what he or she wants.

**Twelve and Twelve:** OA uses two “Twelve and Twelve” books—The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous and Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous.

**Twelve Steps:** The OA program of recovery for individuals is based on the 12 Steps which are defined and explained in the Big Book and the “Twelve and Twelve” books.

**Twelve Traditions:** The 12 Traditions are a means by which groups remain unified in a common cause and community. They ensure

smooth functioning, survival, and growth of the meetings.

**Virtual Region:** OA has ten physical regions worldwide and one virtual region that encapsulates all of the virtual intergroups. This is the region that OA Foot Steps is affiliated to.

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We hope this gives you a good overview of the Program.  
Please do not hesitate to reach out to any of us on the Non-Real-Time Groups!  
Welcome to Overeaters Anonymous... Welcome HOME!!



PRODUCED BY OA FOOT STEPS VIRTUAL INTERGROUP (OAFSVIG) of OVEREATERS ANONYMOUS

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