

Overeaters Anonymous Friday 5:30 Literature Study

[NOTE: text in [courier font] and in brackets is a note for the meeting leader and is not intended to be read out loud]

Welcome to the Friday, 5:30pm meeting of Overeaters Anonymous. My name is _____. I am a [describe eating disorder or abstain] and your leader for this meeting.

Will those who wish, please unmute yourselves and join me in a moment of silence followed by 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.

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 compulsive food behaviors and to carry the message of recovery through the Twelve Steps of OA to those who still suffer.

Let's go around and introduce ourselves by our first names

- **Please make sure to do this as an internet safety step.**
- If someone does not introduce themselves:
 - "For the safety of the group, would you identify yourself?"
 - If they refuse, the host can move them back into the waiting room.
- If someone arrives late, also ask them to introduce themselves
 - "Hi. Welcome to the meeting. Could you please introduce yourself?"

This meeting has opted to be open to the public on the first week of the month.

Please refrain from using your cell phones unless you are using them for Zoom. For everyone, please mute yourself (*6 for phone folks) if you are not speaking. This will help improve sound quality for everyone.

The tools of the program assist us as we work and live the twelve steps. The nine tools are a plan of eating, sponsorship, meetings, telephone, literature, writing, anonymity, service, and an action plan. The tools are discussed in further detail in the pamphlet "Tools of Recovery."

You're welcome to type your name and number in the chat space and copy other member's names and phone numbers if you wish. Seventh Tradition self-supporting contributions can be sent to Madison Area Intergroup at P.O. Box 294, Madison, WI 53701 and/or to Region 5 or World Service via their respective web pages. All meetings are free to attend, give as the spirit moves you.

A Group Conscience will generally take place the last week of the month at 6:20 if there are topics for consideration.

[If the meeting that week is larger or has newcomers, the group can decide whether to:

- Hold the group conscience meeting at 6:20 as planned
- Delay the group conscience meeting to 6:30 to allow more time for sharing
- Postpone the group conscience meeting to the following (or another) week to allow more time for sharing

If there are newcomers on a business meeting week and the meeting is not delayed to another week, ask whether anyone would be willing to provide service by being available to contact the newcomer after the meeting (direct newcomer to that person).]

This meeting recognizes lengths of abstinence from compulsive eating and/or food behaviors. Is there anyone celebrating an annual or monthly anniversary this week?

We also want to recognize those persevering through the beginning of their new lives. Does anyone want to share their day count?

One of the tools of recovery is seeking out a sponsor. Would all available sponsors raise their hand?

Are there any OA-related announcements?

Are there any newcomers or members coming back from a relapse here tonight? [if yes, proceed to newcomer text (in blue) otherwise continue to no newcomers text (in orange)]

If there ARE newcomers / relapse

If NO newcomers / relapse

We recommend that newcomers attend at least six meetings before deciding whether OA is for you . We also suggest attending several different OA meetings to get a feel for the program, since OA meetings vary in structure and focus.

Would someone please read "Our Invitation to You?" [including the Twelve Steps; Appendix

Would someone read the Twelve Steps?

Would someone read "The Twelve Traditions?"



LITERATURE STUDY:

We will now begin the literature study portion of the meeting. Read two paragraphs and [**meeting leader pick one:** "whoever feels moved to read next will go ('ping-pong' style)" OR "we will move to the next person I designate"]. Please feel empowered to pass. Today, we will be reading:

1st week: Story from the Brown Book.

2nd Week: Step of the Month

3rd Week: Conference-Approved Literature (leader's choice).

4th Week: Tradition of the Month

5th week: Story from the Brown Book.

MEDITATION:

We will now have our five minute quiet session. This time may be used for journaling, meditation, or any activity that is silent, on today's reading. I will let you know when to begin and end.

SHARING:

Now is the time for sharing your experience, strength and hope on the reading. In this meeting, we refrain from cross talk. That is each person is given a chance to speak and no one interrupts or comments on what the person has said. Nor do we speak directly to another person or use another's name in our share. We avoid mentioning specific foods since this can trigger the obsession of the mind in some members. In honor of the Sixth and Tenth Traditions, please refrain from mentioning specific religions, weight loss groups, other 12 step groups by name, diets and / or political ideology, etc. to keep the focus on OA recovery. In honor of the First Tradition, this meeting has a spiritual timekeeper to limit shares to [2-4 minutes, according to time remaining and number of people]. When the timekeeper raises their index finger, you have one minute remaining. When the palm is out, you're done. Who would like to volunteer to do this?

We will now have a member start our shares. Once finished, [**meeting leader pick one:** "whoever feels moved to share next will go ('ping-pong' style)" OR "we will move to the next person I designate"]. This meeting respects your desire to abstain from sharing. Who would like to start?

CLOSING:

The opinions expressed here are those of the individual OA members and do not represent those of OA as a whole. We encourage you to keep coming back. Many of us at one time were unsure if OA was for us. If you are a Newcomer, if you are struggling, or if you have yet to find the recovery you seek, please don't leave before the miracle happens. Let us all reach out to newcomers, returning members and each other. This, like all service, is an important part of our recovery from compulsive eating. Please also remember that we practice anonymity. What you hear here, whom you see here, let it stay here. HEAR HEAR!

Would someone read the closing? [Last two paragraphs of Step Twelve (pages 86-87 of The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous 2nd Edition; or see Appendix B below) or read "The Promises" starting on page 83 of the Big Book (skips some of the text in the book) (or see Appendix C below)]

Will those of you who wish, please unmute yourselves and join me in a moment of silence, followed by 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.

APPENDIX A – OUR INVITATION TO YOU

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.

Here are the Steps as adapted for 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.

“But I’m too weak. I’ll never make it!” Don’t worry, we have all thought and said the same thing. The amazing secret to the success of this program is just that: weakness. It is weakness, not strength, that binds us to each other and to a Higher Power and somehow gives us the ability to do what we cannot do alone. If you decide you are one of us, we welcome you with open arms.

Whatever your circumstances, we offer you the gift of acceptance. You are not alone anymore. Welcome to Overeaters Anonymous. Welcome home!

The Promises

The spiritual life is not a theory. *We have to live it.* We should be sensible, tactful, considerate and humble without being servile or scraping. As God's people we stand on our feet; we don't crawl before anyone.

If we are painstaking about this phase of our development, we will be amazed before we are half way through. We are going to know a new freedom and a new happiness. We will not regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it. We will comprehend the word serenity and we will know peace. No matter how far down the scale we have gone, we will see how our experience can benefit others. That feeling of uselessness and self-pity will disappear. We will lose interest in selfish things and gain interest in our fellows. Self-seeking will slip away. Our whole attitude and outlook upon life will change. Fear of people and of economic insecurity will leave us. We will intuitively know how to handle situations which used to baffle us. We will suddenly realize that God is doing for us what we could not do for ourselves.

Are these extravagant promises? We think not. They are being fulfilled among us – sometimes quickly, sometimes slowly. They will always materialize if we work for them.

And we have ceased fighting anything or anyone – even food. For by this time sanity will have returned. We will seldom be interested in food. If tempted, we recoil from it as from a hot flame. We react sanely and normally, and we will find that this has happened automatically. We will see that our new attitude towards food has been given us without any thought or effort on our part. It just comes! That is the miracle of it. We are not fighting it, neither are we avoiding temptation. We feel as though we had been placed in a position of neutrality – safe and protected. We have not even sworn off. It does not exist for us. We are neither cocky nor are we afraid. That is our experience. That is how we react so long as we keep in fit spiritual condition.

It is easy to let up on the spiritual program of action and rest on our laurels. We are headed for trouble if we do for food is a subtle foe. We are not cured of compulsive eating. What we really have is a daily reprieve contingent on the maintenance of our spiritual condition.

Step 12 Closing

We who began working the Steps in order to recover from compulsive eating now find that, through them, we have embarked on a lifelong journey of spiritual growth. From the isolation of food obsession, we have emerged into a new world. Walking hand in hand with fellow OA members and our Higher Power, we are now exploring this world, using the great spiritual Principles embodied in the Twelve Steps as a map to guide our way. We gratefully follow in the footsteps of many others who have walked this way before us, and we're gratified to be making footprints of our own for others to follow.

Those of us who live this program don't simply carry the message, *we are the message*. Each day that we live well, we *are* well, and we embody the joy of recovery, which attracts others who want what we've found in OA. We're always happy to share our secret: the Twelve Steps of Overeaters Anonymous, which empower each of us to live well and be well, one day at a time.