

## Monday Night 7 pm Columbia City OA Meeting Format

1. Welcome to the Monday Night Columbia City meeting of Overeater Anonymous. My name is \_\_\_\_\_. I am a compulsive eater/bulimic/anorexic and the leader for this meeting.

2. Will those who wish, join me in the Serenity Prayer followed by 3 minutes of meditation. **Who will volunteer to keep time for the meditation and rest of the meeting?**

“God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and wisdom to know the difference.”

We will now have 3 minutes of meditation.

3. Are there any other compulsive eaters here other than myself?

4. Are there any newcomers, visitors from out of town, or guests from outside of OA here for the first time? Please tell us your first name only so we can get to know you better (pause).

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*Note: Read if there is a newcomer:*

We encourage you to:

- Get a sponsor to help guide your recovery
- Develop a plan of eating, and if you wish, write it down and report daily to your sponsor
- Read OA approved literature to develop a working knowledge of the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions

*If not the 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of the month (speakers meeting):*

Would someone like to share their 1<sup>st</sup> step experience with newcomer(s) for 3 minutes?

5. There is a **sign-in sheet** being passed around. Please keep it circulating and feel free to take names and numbers to call people for help or support between meetings. Please take a moment to make sure your **cell phone is off**.

6. PREAMBLE: Overeaters anonymous is a fellowship of individuals who, through 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.

7. Will someone read **Our Invitation to You**?

8. Will someone read the **12 Steps of Overeaters Anonymous**?

9. Will someone read the **Tradition of the month**?

10. **ABSTINENCE**: In OA abstinence is the action of refraining from compulsive eating and compulsive food behaviors while working towards or maintaining a healthy body weight.

11. **TOOLS**: The OA tools of recovery help us work the Steps and refrain from compulsive overeating. The nine Tools are: a plan of eating, sponsorship, meetings, telephone, writing, literature, an action plan, anonymity, and service. For more information, read the Tools of Recovery pamphlet.

12. **SPONSORS**: 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. To find a sponsor, look for someone who has what you want and ask how he or she is achieving it.

13. Would all sponsors in the room please raise their hands? (Pause) Would all available sponsors please keep their hands raised? Thank you.

14. Now we would like to go around the room and ask those who wish to please introduce themselves? (Pause)

15. The focus of this meeting:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Monday: Read OA's 12 step story for the corresponding month. Please read a few paragraphs if you wish, before passing the book along. Who would like to start?
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday: We conduct our Business Meeting at 8 pm. We read AA's Big Book for 10 minutes from the preface to the end of book, starting where we last left off on page \_\_\_\_\_. Please read a few paragraphs if you wish, before passing the book along. Timer, please set time for 10 min. Who would like to start?
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday: Speaker Meeting to share personal recovery. Our speaker, \_\_\_\_\_, will share his/her story for 20 minutes. How would you like your time? Ensure Timer is ready. Speaker chooses the topic for the meeting.
- 4<sup>th</sup> Monday: Read OA's Brown Book. We read an entire story, starting where we last left off on page \_\_\_\_\_. Please read a few paragraphs if you wish, before passing the book along. Who would like to start?
- 5<sup>th</sup> Monday: Leader's Choice (Lifeline/OA Tradition story/any approved OA literature). Please read a few paragraphs if you wish, before passing the book along. Who would like to start?

16. According to our **7<sup>th</sup> Tradition**, we are self-supporting through our own contributions. We pay rent, purchase literature and make contributions to our intergroup and World Service Office. As you give, remember the cost of your last binge. The OA World Service office suggests a \$5 donation, but we encourage OA members to give as much as they are able to help our group be self-supporting. Newcomers are asked not to give, but to purchase literature instead. (Pass basket around)

17. On the **2<sup>nd</sup> Monday** of the month, we hold our business meeting at 8 pm and all are welcome to attend. Are there any **service positions** available or becoming available soon? Are there any **OA related announcements**?

18. The remaining time of the meeting is open to anyone who wishes to pitch. A pitch is the sharing of an experience that has helped us grow or has given us a new level of awareness. Remember that we do not cross talk at this meeting. Cross talk is interrupting, reacting, or responding to what another person says, or having side conversations during the meeting. If you wish to respond to someone, please do so after the meeting.

19. Your pitch is limited to 3 minutes. The floor is now open for sharing.

**At 7:45 pm**

20. Now is the time we set aside for newcomers to share, if they would like to. (If time remains, reopen for anyone who wants to pitch.)

**At 7:55 pm**

21. Does anyone have a burning desire to pitch in order to keep from bingeing or restricting?

22. I wish to thank all of those who shared. If you didn't get a chance to share, please talk to someone after the meeting and be sure to use the phone numbers from the sign-in sheet for outreach calls.

23. If you arrived after the **7<sup>th</sup> tradition was collected**, please consider contributing now in the basket, rent for this meeting is \$75 a month.

24. The opinions expressed here today by those of us who shared are our own and <sup>not</sup> necessarily those of OA as a whole. Please remember our **cherished tradition of anonymity**. **Who you see here, what you hear here, when you leave here, let it stay here.**

25. Would someone read the **9<sup>th</sup> Step Promises** on page 83 in the Big Book?

26. Can I please have a volunteer to lead next week's meeting?

27. After the meeting closes, would you please put chairs back where you found them and help put literature away? Will 2 people please volunteer to talk with the newcomer(s) after the meeting?

28. Thank you for the opportunity to be your leader for this meeting. After a moment of silence, will those of you who wish to please join me in the (**Leader chooses the prayer**). Serenity prayer/3<sup>rd</sup> Step prayer/The OA Promise.



## 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 found 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. We use AA's Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, changing only the words "alcohol" and "alcoholic" to "food" and "compulsive overeater."

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 simple. 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 overeating 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 and calories" club. We do not endorse any particular plan of eating. We practice abstinence by staying away from eating between planned meals and from all individual binge foods. 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 overeating is 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.

# 12 STEPS

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 any more. Welcome to Overeaters Anonymous. Welcome home!

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

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## The Twelve Traditions

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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## The Tools of Recovery (abridged)

We use Tools—a plan of eating, sponsorship, meetings, the telephone, writing, literature, action plan, anonymity and service—to help us achieve and maintain abstinence and recover from our disease. Many of us have found we cannot abstain from compulsive eating unless we use some or all of OA's nine Tools of recovery to help us practice the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions.

### **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.

### **Sponsorship**

We ask a sponsor to help us through our program of recovery on all three levels: physical, emotional, and spiritual. Find a sponsor who has what you want and ask that person how he or she is achieving it.

### **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. In addition to face-to-face meetings, OA offers telephone and online 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.

### **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.

### **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.



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.

## **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."

See the full *Tools of Recovery* pamphlet for more information.

## **Serenity Prayer**

God grant me the serenity to  
Accept the things I cannot change;  
Courage to change the things I can;  
And the Wisdom to know the difference.

## 3rd 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. May I do Thy will always.

## **The 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 willpower. 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.

# The Promises

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.

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