



4 Thought

Volume 12, Issue 3—Fall 2014

Covering: Illinois [except the Chicagoland area], Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Minnesota, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Manitoba, Northwest Ontario, and Nunavut Territory, Canada.

The mission of Region 4 is to make OA known throughout the Region so that anyone with the desire to stop eating compulsively may find an OA group, and to provide support so that any OA member can have recovery from compulsive eating through the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous.

The Principles – My Guides - by Region 4 Chair

The step principles are such good guides for me when living a sane, happy and useful life. In working the steps, I can see how adding new behaviors helps me maintain my serenity and abstinence. Here are some examples of practicing these values.

1. Honest

I am more open and honest with my feelings when tired, frustrated or unsure. Shame plays less of a role because I know and accept I am imperfect. When I want and need to say 'no', I do so with kindness and respect rather than invite resentment in with a begrudging 'yes'. I used to cave in to pleading and whining. That occurred when my 'no' was feeble and timid. Now I'm able to be more assertive and reassured while being kind. I thank the person for thinking of me and say 'not at this time' or 'if I change my mind or my priorities shift, I will let you know.'

2. Hope

I have more hope in my life that things will work out and get better when I feel fearful and anxious. When I was unemployed it was so much easier to stay focused on looking for work. Because of productive planning; I had money in the bank, some canned goods to spend down in my cupboard and I relied on my fellows for helping me keep my head on straight.

3. Faith

I continually relearn and revamp my view on what and who my Higher Power is. Even as I change, and my vision of that entity changes, I know I will continue to recover. For the past month I've been writing a note on my mirror in my

bathroom. I write "I love myself unconditionally as I am right now." This is to help me accept myself for who I am so that I in turn can better accept others for who they are. I have witnessed positive changes in my past. I have faith that wonderful enlightenment will grace me in the future.

4. Courage

Throughout my recovery I see how I've gotten more healthy because I no longer go for jobs that greatly underutilize my skills. I also don't worry about what types of tasks I do in relation to my job. My ego is better able to take a nap during the day. Therefore, I am able to view what I'm thankful for much more often instead of worrying about what others think of me. I feel more free when I make a mistake and courageously learn from it, change something if needed and move on instead of berating myself for weeks.

5. Integrity

Rather than overpromising to please people or push myself beyond my limits, I stop and listen more. I have also literally closed my mouth, which means no gossiping. I don't talk as much or use bravado to show off. I'm just quieter. At first it was awkward, but now it feels more natural.

6. Willingness

I am much more willing to try new foods and meals to add variety to my abstinent food plan. Eating with abstaining fellows is awesome. We talk about food rather than obsessed obsess about it in. As a result of practicing this new behavior in

many scenarios, I'm better able to let people do things their way.

7. Humility

The more I see my shortcomings on a deeper level, the more I work to offer myself more compassion rather than disgust. I'm learning to see how posh my life is compared to the rest of the world. I have plenty of food, shelter, friends, support and money. What I get to do is share rather than hoard, by looking at how I share my time and my dime.

8. Self-discipline

For me this looks like keeping my home, my money and my food in order. For the last 10 years I've been going grocery shopping on a regular basis and eating all the food that I buy. I have plenty of tools at home to measure and weigh my meals. I have backup plans for my food – some at work, some I take with me when I travel or dine out. I incorporate healthy activities into my life, reading, writing, meditating and walking. This provides a level of security so that I can dare to do something different in other areas of my life.

9. Love for others

This is always easy when it's easy. When it's challenging I always think it's time to look within and ask myself to accept others as they are right at that time rather than how I want them to be. This is for family, friends, acquaintances, coworkers and those people with whom I interact when out and about. My reward: I get to learn new things.

Principles

(Continued on page 4)

Why Do Service Beyond The Group Level?

Here's What Some Of Our Region 4 Reps Said

- Reinforces my program
- Brings in and newcomers
- New experiences/learning
- See results of recovery
- Enjoy the hubbub of being involved
- Pay back those who have come before me and all of their hard work
- Like to be in the 'club'
- Because I love my life in recovery. I'm so grateful and I want to carry the message to hope to all who share my disease. That is my responsibility and privilege. I don't want anyone to die of this disease because they didn't know OA exists or that there is a solution.
- To become part of rather than apart from
- To keep the doors open
- Because it is in giving that we receive
- To pay it forward



- It gets me out of self and into others; and it's fun
 - To pay back program and sponsor
 - To keep OA alive for me and others
 - To keep in in OA (coming back)
 - To keep me abstinent
 - Ensures that I continue to be abstinent when I am connected to fellows through doing service: I stay calmer and on my food plan.
 - I love to see people lose lots of weight (or gain – some) and become a sane, happy person
 - I meet and work with dedicated enthusiastic recovering OAers.
 - It is good for my abstinence
 - It is fun
 - I can be with other recovering OAs
 - Get more recovering ideas, inspiration, motivation
 - I get more friends
 - OA means having support to live a spiritual and principle based life, connected to a Higher Power; surrounded by friends who support this way of life. It gives me health and freedom from bingeing and food obsession. I love OA.
 - Things I can do in recovery that I couldn't do before:
 - Roller blade
 - Eat 3 meals and 1 snack a day
 - Don't eat refined sugar
 - Climb Angel's Landing in Zion National Park
 - So OA can continue. I need OA to keep me abstinent and sane
 - To keep myself on track with my recovery
 - To encourage others in their recovery, in doing service and being active beyond the group level
 - It's a pleasure
- And finally...
- It's free



IF YOU'RE DOING SERVICE BEYOND THE GROUP LEVEL, THINK OF HOW IT BENEFITS YOU AND OTHERS.

IF YOU ARE NOT YET DOING SERVICE BEYOND THE GROUP LEVEL, WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR?



Does Your Intergroup Have Reps Elected To Attend The.....

Region 4 2014 Fall Assembly?

The Greater Omaha Intergroup
Is Hosting The Assembly At Their Weekend
Recovery Retreat
The Assembly is October 3—4
at the beautiful

Creighton University Retreat Center

SPEAKING OF THE REGION 4 FALL ASSEMBLY...

Coming To Believe

The Fall Retreat Brought To You By
The Greater Omaha Intergroup

Friday through Sunday • October 3 - 5, 2014

Creighton University Retreat Center
16493 Contrail Avenue • Griswold, Iowa

The speaker for the 2014 retreat will focus on Step 2 (Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity) and Step 3 (Became willing to turn our life and our will over to the care of God *as we understood him*). The speaker is from the east coast area and has more than 10 years in recovery. She has spoken at the 2013 WSO convention in Cleveland.

The Creighton Retreat Center is a comfortable facility set in 157 acres of wooded area along the Nishnabotna River. It is teeming with wildlife, songbirds, hiking trails and an awesome night sky.

Reservations will be filled on a first-come, first-served basis; therefore, all registrations **MUST BE MAILED** to the address provided on the registration form because the postmark will determine the order of assignments.

The registration fee covers lodging (including bed & bath linens), all meals, all extra beverages available throughout the retreat, and use of the conference facilities.

**\$140 Late Registration Must be postmarked by
September 10, 2014**

**All of the details and the registration form at
www.omahaoa.org!**

10. Persevere

I practice my program by integrating it into my life, not as a series of quick fixes. I am aware I have this disease, therefore, I'm faster in making necessary amends. I've been going to my same meeting for over 10 years. At the beginning I wondered if I could be doing this for the long run. By focusing on one meeting at a time, I've found I love the people in my meeting. They are a joy and a great way to start my week.

11. Spiritual awareness

As of late, I'm journaling first thing in the morning, then meditating daily – which I done now for the last 2+ years. Also when I walk I spend more time in a walking meditation rather than listening to music. At one time I had a spiritual sponsor who helped me build up my meditation practice.

12. Service

I've been blessed because I've been able to provide service on all levels of OA. I love meeting new people, learning new ways to enhance my program and being with people

who eat abstinently. This is truly a gift. As I've heard many say - I could never get back all that I've been given, but I'm giving it my best shot and having a grand time.

Bottom Line: I'm selfish, I want OA to be here well past my lifetime; so I will do whatever it takes to make sure this wonderful organization remains.

-Meg M., Region 4 Chair

How **FREE** Do You Want To Be?

Overeaters Anonymous

MINNESOTA CONVENTION

November 7, 8, 9, 2014 • Sponsored by Unity Intergroup

Online or Mail-In Registration Deadline: October 24, 2014

On-Site Registration:

Friday—5:00 PM

Saturday—8:00 AM

Program Times:

Friday 7:00 PM-9:00 PM

Saturday 9:00AM-9:00 PM

Sunday 9:00 AM-Noon

HIGHLIGHTS

- Hotel room drawing for the first 100 to register
- National keynote speaker
- How to get started & how to keep it going
- Special session for friends & family
- Workshops, panels, and personal stories
- OA meetings
- Sponsorship workshop
- Meditation room
- Entertainment from your fellows
- Fellowship and community

HOSPITALITY SUITE

Fantastic hospitality and fellowship by the Monday night Rochester meeting – beverages, microwaves and refrigerators

Partial scholarships available. Contact Jason at 612-703-7316 or rimm0004@comcast.net

All of the details, a printable registration form, and online registration at www.overeaters.org!



Beginning Saturday, August 23, 2014, 10AM – 11AM

And Continuing Each Saturday Until Done With:

EXPLORING THE BIG BOOK

AN OA WORKSHOP

Christ United Methodist Church
4530 A Street (at 46th), Conference Room A
Lincoln, Nebraska

More Info at www.omahaoa.org

A Few Words From The Region 4 Trustee

Hey Region 4,

I am excited to be back working with Region 4 and all the great members of OA that I have met over the years. I saw many familiar faces at our recent convention in Bloomington, as well as meeting many new members who have found the miracle of recovery in the rooms of R4. We had approximately 178 members join in on the fun and recovery of the convention. The fact that there were members from every state and our Canadian contingent shows me how much work our Region 4 Chair and BOT have been doing to get the word out about the importance of Region and working together to carry the message within our boundaries.

I hope those of you who joined in went away with a new sense of the fellowship offered by Region 4 and that you share what you heard with others back home so they also get a sense of the recovery connection. In October the Convention Committee will reflect on the success of this convention and then immediately begin the planning of the 2016 event. If you start now, maybe you can make it too.

One of the duties of a Trustee is to review the Intergroup Bylaws for the IGs that make up Region 4. I've already had the opportunity to review five Intergroups. There are several more that have not been updated for many years, so you can expect to hear from me in the next couple of months to encourage a review. Bylaws are how we know how the Intergroup is structured and the decisions made by previous members of Intergroup on how the business is to be done. When new Intergroup Reps and Officers attend Intergroup it gives them a guideline on how the local body of members wants the organization run. I promise to make it as easy as possible for everyone to get up to date. I'm just asking for your cooperation in advance.

On a personal note, I've redecorated three bedrooms this summer. While doing some of the

more tedious tasks I got to thinking about how recovery works in a similar way. I started off with a big plan that included what colors I wanted to use and a lot of enthusiasm. We begin working our program the same way. We know we need to do something different and we know we want the results to be lovely.

Steps One, Two and Three give us that same feeling of excitement and take us to the point of making the decision to live our lives according to HP's plan rather than our own. After the excitement of shopping for the paint and paper I wanted to use, I started to realize all the prep work involved.



The preparation can make all the difference in how the project will go. I have to work those first three Steps until I really believe I'm powerless. I have to get rid of the old concept of God and build relationship with a new Higher Power and then I have to turn everything over to that Power.

Then comes the heavy lifting. Stripping off the old wall paper, prepping the walls for the new. Painting the ceilings and walls. Touching up all the spots I missed.

That represents my Fourth and Fifth Steps. Taking the time to really clean house, down to the bare walls of my being. Then sharing that information so I can see it in a different light.

Hanging the new paper, getting the edges lined up and the ends trimmed takes a commitment. Steps Six and Seven, looking at new behaviors to replace the ones that no longer worked for me.

I moved the ladder at least a hundred times each day, not to mention all the furniture from one side of the room to the other. Searching for items that matched the new décor to replace that which was

(Continued on page 8)

An OA Daily Meditation Book Helps This Member Start Her Day

I love Voices of Recovery and usually start my morning meditation with the reading of the day. I was especially gratified to have a great reading on my birthday date. It was about relapse. "...just driving past the restaurant or grocery store and heading for a safe place took every ounce of willingness I could muster....all the power of the universe is behind every prayer." Having definitely experienced relapse, I can easily identify with this reading. It does take willingness,

willingness, and willingness. But in praying for willingness, so it is granted. And then, it's easy and the food thoughts leave.

The words about heading for a safe place help remind me that there are actions that I can take that I have learned about through OA, and which place me back on solid, sane ground. "Even if I'm taking baby steps in the direction of my dreams, I will get there."

-Barb B., Unity Intergroup, Twin Cities, MN

On Relapse—Keep Coming Back!

I came to OA in 2012 having been completely defeated by food. I sat in the back of my first meeting—by myself—and cried because I had finally found a group of people that had problems with food as I did. They shared their experience, strength and hope, which in turn gave me hope for recovery. I immediately found a sponsor and started to work the program. I began learning a lot from my fellows and gaining new program friends.

Things seemed to be going along swimmingly until the voice of my disease started to get really loud in my head. Suddenly, I wasn't feeling that iron dedication to program anymore – I began to believe that I had this abstinence thing licked and didn't need the support of the group. Slowly I started to drop out of OA: first I stopped going to meetings regularly, then stopped calling my sponsor and talking to my program friends. My disease became more persistent, telling me I did so well with abstinence before that I was now ready to eat whatever I

wanted and I could handle it. Thus began the start of my relapse or, as I've heard it called in the rooms, "further research."

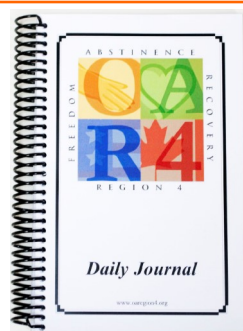
In a short time I ended up right back in the misery that brought me to OA in the first place. I humbly walked back into my meeting with my head hung low and started over. My Higher Power gave me the courage to come back to the meeting even though it was humiliating to admit my relapse. I was welcomed with open arms and loving support.

Even though my road to recovery has been bumpy, OA has taught me so much about my disease. I know without a shadow of a doubt that I am a compulsive overeater and I know by working the program and using the tools that I will know peace and serenity unlike anything I'd ever imagined because I've experienced it and for that I am eternally grateful.

-Nicole S, Unity Intergroup, St Paul, MN

It Works If You Work It....And You're Worth It!

Region 4 Daily Journals—Available For Purchase!



Enjoy Region 4's
Daily Journal

A place to write down your...

- Food
- Intent for the day
- Gratitudes
- Step 10 never looked so easy...

Ease of Use

- They are lightweight and great for travel
 - All of your writing can be in one location
 - Lays flat when opened
 - Coil binding keeps pages intact
 - Affordable—@\$12 —includes postage
- Go to www.oaregion4.org to order.

**Do You Have Something You'd Like To Share With Your Fellow OAs?
Please Submit Articles or Information About Your Local OA Events!**

**4 Thought is a Quarterly Newsletter That Comes Out in March, June,
September, and December.
Please Send Submissions To:
4thought@oaregion4.org**

(Continued from page 6)

worn out or that I was just tired of looking at. That's very much a part of Steps Eight and Nine. Working my way through the list of people I've harmed, getting honest with myself on what it will take to make amends and then going around seeking out those I've harmed. Forgiving others and myself for the past so I can enjoy the future.

The work is almost finished. A few pictures to hang, some final clean up and putting the tools away. Then the satisfaction of a job well done. Steps Ten, Eleven and Twelve. I've cleared away the wreckage and can now enjoy the new life I've build in recovery. Keeping

the room clean and tidy are all that's required for many years to come. Keeping myself in fit spiritual condition on a daily basis so I can now enjoy the results of the work.

What a blessing, and the best part was I didn't have to eat over any of the delays or difficult spots, like when I spilled half a quart of paint all over the floor. What could have been a huge crisis was handled with calm acceptance. My husband helped me clean it up and we both expressed gratitude that the floor wasn't carpeted. That just shows me how well recovery is working in my life. Hope each of you are able to find peace and beauty in whatever you are doing today.

-Cyndy L., Region 4 Trustee

As our trustee, Cyndy would like us to know about the important items WSO wants us to be aware of:

- In memory of our Founder, Rozanne S., the bookstore is running a special on a couple of items: Reflections: A Visit with OA's Founder & And Now a Word from Our Founder. These usually run \$10.00 each but you can get both for \$15.00. Add in Beyond Our Wildest Dreams, which usually costs \$13.50 and get all three for \$25.00. US shipping will be an additional \$5.00.
- New literature that you may not be aware of is the Voices of Recovery workbook in hard copy - \$11.00. It is also available as a PDF download for \$7.50 and is available for e-readers.
- A new edition of Overeaters Anonymous was approved at the WSBC and will be available for purchase soon. It contains all new stories so it will be a great addition to your OA literature collection. If you do not already have the second edition, you will want to consider ordering one before they are all gone.
- Subscribe or renew Lifeline and be entered into a drawing for a free, one-year subscription. We really need members to support our "meeting on the run".
- A new issue of A Step Ahead is available at www.oa.org/membersgroups/a-step-ahead-newsletter Download a copy and take it to your group. (Service Opportunity)
- Looking for a topic for your next workshop or event? Check on <http://www.oa.org/pdfs/StrongAbstinenceChecklist.pdf> for the Strong Abstinence Checklist and Writing Exercise. It can be used individually as well. There is a new Abstinence PowerPoint presentation that helps discussions on abstinence; www.oa.org/membersgroups/service-body-support.
- Virtual Workshop Podcasts are available at www.oa.org/oapodcasts/#workshops. These are focused on the OA program and can be used in place of a speaker at a meeting. She's helped edit these and highly recommends them for recovery tools.
- If you are a member of a virtual group and have trouble remembering to contribute to the Seventh Tradition you are now able to set up a recurring contribution on oa.org. There is a Contribute button that leads the way to this convenient method of ensuring you are doing your part to support our fellowship. Of course contributions are gladly accepted through this method from any member, but it is a goal to encourage our virtual members to become more visible on our financial reports by connecting their contributions directly to the virtual meeting they are attending.