



4 Thought

Volume 15, Issue 3—Fall 2017

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.

FROM OUR CHAIR

August 13, 2017

Hello All You Awesome Region 4 People!

My goodness, the summer is flying by. I moved July 29 which made the month preceding that particularly busy. Fortunately, the move is done, so that I can now refocus my energy on my commitment to all of you as Region Chair. And I look forward to a busy, but satisfying and fun, next few months - including my daughter's October wedding!

Right now, I am gearing up for the upcoming Fall Assembly in Valley City, North Dakota (Oct. 6-7, 2017) - hosted by Red River Valley Intergroup at their annual retreat. In addition to completing our region business, we will be helping the retreat attendees to look at sponsorship.

I look forward to leading this event and sharing recovery with the folks from Red River Valley!

Going forward, Greater Omaha Intergroup will be hosting our Spring 2018 Assembly, but we are still looking for an intergroup/intergroups to volunteer for fall of 2018. Please consider hosting this event. Smaller intergroups can work together to host so that neither IG is overtaxed. Working together on a project of this type can boost recovery for all members. Look for an article on this topic in the fall issue of *4 Thought*. It is written by a member of Mid Continent IG who hosted our Spring 2017 Assembly.

Convention 2018 Update – This awesome recovery event takes place June 22-24, 2018 at the Sheraton Westport Plaza Hotel in St. Louis, MO. Our theme is ‘Show-Me Recovery, Together We Get Better’. The committee has been meeting via phone every 3 weeks allowing us to keep our business going. The flyer/registration form is nearing completion and will be ready by our Assembly (Oct 6-7, 2018).

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I received an email from Bonnie L, the treasurer of our OA Board of Trustees regarding the method in which donations to World Service are received. She explained that receiving donations via US Mail is labor and cost intensive and that receiving them online is significantly less so. We are asked to consider doing them on-line where possible.

I am super excited to see the debut (at Fall Assembly) of two new items our region will be selling: jewelry with ‘Hope’ on it and sets of collapsible measuring cups labeled with the word ‘Honesty’. Be sure to ask your Intergroup reps about them after assembly.

Our Winter issue of *4 Thought* is being sponsored by Quad Cities IG. Even though this intergroup is committed to providing articles, everyone is welcome to write. We love to have articles describing things going on in the intergroups in our region so that we can all get ideas. There is so much talent and so many great things going on in Region 4; let’s share the joy! Send articles to 4thought@oaregion4.org. Also, please consider asking your intergroup to sponsor one of our 2018 issues. We will be looking for volunteers at Fall Assembly.

I am excited to be doing workshops on abstinence for 2 of our intergroups – Northern Serenity in September, and St. Louis Bi-State in November. Please contact me if your intergroup has an upcoming event or would like me to host a workshop on a specific topic such as abstinence, working the steps, using the tools, or any other topic your IG would like or needs to hear about. To discuss this possibility, email me at chair@oaregion4.org. Leave a phone number and a good time to reach you.

-Annette P-R - Region 4 Chair



Keep it Simple!

OA Phone Meeting: Midwest Step and Tradition Study

Using the OA “12x12” Book

Get connected with other OA's from the Midwest and around the world!

All are welcome to join us! Great way to start or end your week!

Contact Name & Phone Number: Bob 763-229-6196 CST

Meeting # 55338. See oa.org “Find a Meeting” feature for more info.

- Sunday evenings
- 7 PM – 8 PM US Central Standard Time
- Phone Number: 605-562-3130
- Access code: 290492#



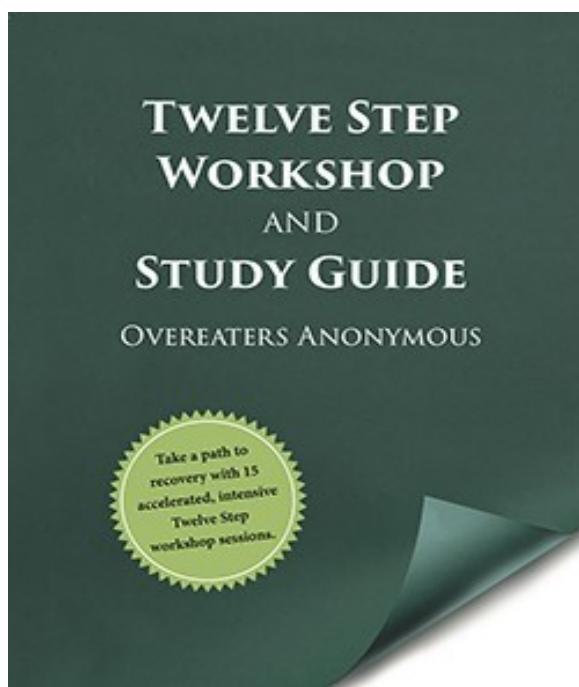
The Benefits of Hosting a Step Workshop

The Saturday afternoon meeting in Wichita decided to host a step workshop using the new *Twelve Step Workshop and Study Guide*. We held the workshop outside of our normal meeting time because each of the 15 sessions takes 1.5-2 hours each. We advertised the workshop at our meeting and at the Intergroup's annual "Sharathon". The workshop had approximately 10 participants, 3 of whom called in each week using a conference telephone number (2 of these participants were out of state). Participants took turns leading the sessions, and we had 2 co-leaders per session.

The *Twelve Step Workshop and Study Guide* tells you exactly what to do and say during each session. Our group has really grown stronger from this experience. Attendance at the regular meeting has picked up, and people are volunteering to give more service. I've been amazed at how much recovery is shared during the regular meeting. It's very inspirational to see myself and others grow. I feel closer to everyone in the group. If you have any questions about hosting a step workshop using this guide, please feel free to contact me.

Ginny, secretary@oaregion4.org

Twelve Step Workshop and Study Guide



Step Workshop Jump-Starts Recovery

When I saw the advertisement for the 12 step workshop, I jumped on it. Mainly because I had tried doing it alone and failed miserably. I had temporary results which never lasted. I had tried dieting on my own and would do ok at first but then things would always fall apart. My willpower only kept me going for short periods of time...I was a sprint horse. I joined the workshop because I had tried on my own which didn't work and just going to OA meetings wasn't working. I needed the accelerated working of the steps in a structured environment which is what the workshop gave me along with fellowship, camaraderie, and mutual support for the difficult parts. I tried my hardest to work the steps to the best of my ability. My food plan included eating healthy and giving up refined sugar. I made progress with weight loss along with the spiritual aspects of the program. My physical recovery was evidenced by weight loss which helped my diabetes, hypertension, cholesterol and chronic kidney disease. The doctor started lowering my insulin dose every time I checked in with her which was often since I was losing weight. After a while, I had really low blood pressure and they had to cut two of my blood pressure meds in half of which I am on 5. My cholesterol numbers improved as well. As far as my kidney disease goes, I have gone from a gfr of 50 (30 requires dialysis) to one of 77. This has taken me from stage 3 kidney disease back up to stage 2! It is a combination of tight blood sugar control and blood pressure control. My plan of eating and my weight loss have directly effected this. All of this occurred over the summer during the workshop. I have lost about 30 pounds so far and need to lose 90 more to get to

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Region 4 Trustee Report

Hey R4,

Where did the past three months go? I've been traveling both for OA and on a vacation and all that challenged my serenity in ways I didn't expect. However, I survived abstinent and stronger for it.

My first OA trip was to Sioux Falls, SD where they held the Day of OA. The workshop focused on abstinence and the root cause of our disease. There were committed members from across the state who drove for hours to be there. Any lengths is what it takes sometimes. I appreciate all the effort the Hills and Plains of South Dakota Intergroup went through to provide this annual event for their state. My husband and I then took a mini-vacation across the state and saw all the sights. In Rapid City, an OA member took us under her wing for the day and showed us the local attractions. I'm grateful that she so generously gave of her time, what great friendships are available in this fellowship.

A couple of weeks later we were off to North Carolina and spent two weeks with one of my son's family. I should know by now that two weeks is too long, but I forget since I only see them once a year. It wasn't perfect, but it was so much better than it would have been without the tools the program has taught me over the years. I can love them and stay out of their business and a good time was had by all.

The weekend after that I was in Iowa City, IA with the Promises of Eastern Iowa Intergroup, for another workshop, where we discussed the Principles of the Twelve Steps. Old friends and new ones attended the event and I enjoyed my time with everyone. There were members from the Quad Cities IG there as well. While there I had some new insights into my personal journey that will help me in the future.

Next week I travel to Florida to spend a couple of days with other OA friends before heading to Albuquerque for the August BOT meeting. Then I will be going to Kansas for their annual Kansas Day event. I am honored to be sharing my recovery experience with another great group of friends. My schedule is busy, and my heart is full, beyond my wildest dreams.

I know the travelogue may seem a bit much, but the point is that being in the program has taught me so much about myself and life and I navigate it much better when I'm abstinent. There have been other new experiences in the last three months that have taught me I can do anything with the help of my Higher Power and the support of my fellows. I look forward to the challenges yet to come with an open mind and a dream that all of you receive the gifts of the program and that they will enrich your lives. The Twelve Steps give us a way of life that make abstinence possible. The OA fellowship is one of the side benefits that fill my life.

Here are a couple of items of interest from oa.org that you can use to help carry the message, or enhance your own recovery.

Listen to "Sponsorship Success": a nine-part podcast series by members from various regions sharing their experience, strength, and hope with using the Tool of sponsorship. On the podcast page of oa.org

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Write an article for Lifeline – Give something back.

My OA Birthday January 20, 2018, marks the celebration of OA's 58th birthday.

Share a story about your OA birthday, how it was celebrated and its meaning for you.

How OA Changed My Life Describe your life before and after being in OA, including your physical state. How is life better in recovery?

Watch the new presentations on OA's Twelve Traditions. The brief videos are on the podcast page of oa.org. A really easy way to raise your understanding of this important part of our program.

-Cyndy
R4 Trustee

Living Simply

Perhaps the greatest lesson I learned in OA was the concept of prudent reserve. I came into the Program heavily in debt, with 2 bankruptcies, and I could not rub two nickels together to make a dime! I had learned my concepts of spending from an alcoholic father who would blow all his earnings and live two paychecks ahead of his earnings. It was either feast or famine in our home. I remember if one bank “overcharged” him for bad checks, he would go to the other bank in town, and start all over.

So, I took that same attitude with me when I left home. It did not pan out all that well. I remember trying to raise my son on little to nothing. For the last two weeks of each month, we had to decide between peanut butter and jelly sandwiches and soup or potatoes, carrots, and onions in a very meat lean stew and crackers. My son only had one pair of shoes each school year. Am I proud of this? Of course not. It took a heart wrenching amends to him that I had placed him in harm’s way and did not provide as best I could. I do believe what Maya Angelou said, “You only know what you know. When you learn better, you can do better”. That sounds a whole lot nicer than self-blame or shame.

My sponsor taught me to set aside a little bit each week, for a slush fund for emergencies, much like we do in our meetings. At first, I thought \$300.00 was substantial, until I started experiencing the relief of having a great deal more tucked aside. I got rid of all credit cards, paid only in cash, and stopped ordering stuff via mail/online. I still look through the ads, but I set the sale brochures and pictures on the table. If at the end of the month, I still feel I **need** something, I give myself permission to buy it locally, thereby saving on shipping. If I do not have the cash, I do not need it. If I do buy one thing, I take two things out of my house. The life of being clutter free and cash only, and living within my means is a symbol of living simply so that others can simply live.

-Home in Iowa

Keeping an Open Mind

I am writing this article to tell of my experience doing the 12 steps using the OA book “Twelve Step Workshop and Study Guide.” I did the step with the Mid Continent Intergroup by phone. We met every Friday from 5:30-7:30 PM for 15 weeks.

I decided to participate in the workshop for a couple reasons. First, I wanted to see if doing this virtually would work. Second, I was at the World Service Business Conference when the workshop was presented to the delegates to vote whether it should be added to the OA literature. Each delegate got a draft of the book to review before the vote and I didn’t get past page 2 in the Introduction where it states that it is a 15 week 2 hour workshop. My thought was it would never work, who would commit to 15 weeks of a workshop for 2 hours each meeting. I voted against publishing the workbook.

I am glad I kept an open mind and the willingness to give it a try. I thought if Mid-Continent can pull the workshop off on a Friday night, during the summer for 15 weeks, the workshop might have some merit. I have to say, I feel it was a wonderful experience for me and I believe everybody involved felt the same about the 12 step workshop. A couple of things stood out for me while participating in the Workshop. First, I was concerned about the 2 hour time slot. I really felt it was going to be a problem staying focused, but to my surprise it was a non-issue. The 2 hours went by way faster than I could imagine. In fact, sometimes it went faster than I wanted it to.

The other thing that impressed me was the 4th step inventory sheets. My thought, after going through all the sheets is that if you didn’t feel it was a thorough inventory you didn’t do it! If you did the worksheets as you went through the workshop you would definitely had done complete inventory. I thought the format and worksheets were wonderful. Also, I had the same feeling for how Step 10 was set up. The worksheets were very thorough and made you think about your day and how it went.

I have to say that I definitely changed my mind about the 12 Step Workshop. I thought it was formatted well. I loved the worksheets and I did feel like it was a good session of the 12 steps for myself. Doing it as a group was great! I feel closer to the people that participated and I felt the excitement that the workshop created.

-Bob S.



Honesty, Open-mindedness, and Willingness



Happy, Joyous, Free!

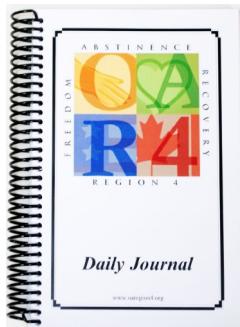
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my ideal weight which is hopefully a healthy weight for true abstinence.

During the workshop, I utilized two sponsors. I picked sponsors who were abstinent and working the program and having visible progress in their programs. I also went on the advice of those with abstinence about which people were abstinent and would be good sponsors. Run with the winners as the slogan goes. I took all my sponsors' suggestions to heart and followed through with them. My action plan included daily prayer to my higher power (God), utilizing the For Today book and workbook so that I not only read daily meditations but I wrote on them as well. I recorded my food daily. I emailed my sponsor daily to report my food diary for the day, my writing in the For Today workbook, and anything I needed to tell or ask my sponsor about working the steps. I attended 4 meetings a week including the workshop and now that the workshop has ended I will probably attend more meetings. Meetings keep me motivated and focused on my recovery. I am going to add physical exercise to my action plan along with more reading and writing from the literature of OA and AA. I am doing service at and above the group level and have been doing twelfth step work. The workshop has turned my life around in a relatively short period of time and I highly recommend it to all no matter where you are in your recovery process.

-Spence M.

Region 4 Daily Journals—Available For Purchase!



Enjoy Region 4's
Daily Journal

A place to write down your...

- Food
- Intent for the day
- Gratiudes
- 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.

When was the last time you checked out your meeting information at oa.org? Please make sure it is current and if not, have your group secretary make the updates.

How Hosting Region 4 Assembly helped our Intergroup

I think hosting Region 4 Assembly helped create a spirit of unity in our intergroup. There is teamwork happening. We have all our service positions filled including two new positions that were created a year ago. With extra positions more people are being reached in new ways.

Service is happening. People are reaching out. Step meetings have started, calls are being made, email and text groups are going, and meetings are getting larger. Newcomers are coming. We have people calling in to meetings they are not able to attend.

We also have three people involved in Region 4 instead of just one. God is providing the means for traveling.

Is this all because of hosting Regions 4 Assembly? Probably not...but I believe it helps. There is an awareness of Region 4 that takes place and there is willingness to serve. Lots of people stepped up to make it happen, so it did not fall on just a few—so, lots of people received the blessing.

There is also a lot of experience, strength and hope available when you host the Assembly. Out of town or even out of state guests come in. More of our own groups are driving in for the Assembly. There are new stories to be heard. And friendships are started and grow on a deeper level.

There is a lot that goes into hosting Region 4 Assembly, but I would have to say it is well worth it. I personally heard only positive comments on how well it went and how much they enjoyed it.

Thank you, Higher Power!

Diane N., Wichita, Kansas

OA Phone Meetings

12 Step Recovery

Thu 9 pm, Wed 5 & 10 pm, Tue 3 pm

[712-432-5200](#)

code 4285115

Hour of Power

Fri noon, 9 am ET

[816-695-8171](#)

code [712 432 5200](#)

PIN 956 915

Our Calendar

September 15-17-Prayers, Principles and Promises at Griswold, Iowa. Info: jholoubek@cox.net or call/text 402-578-9967.

October 6-7-Region 4 Fall Assembly, Valley City, North Dakota

November 13-Newsletter articles due to 4thought@oaregion4.org

June 22-24, 2018-Region 4 Convention hosted by St. Louis Bi-State at the Sheraton Westport Plaza Hotel.

Please submit your events for publication in the **December 2017** issue.

Please contact the R4 Chair (chair@oaregion4.org) or consult the web calendar to determine schedule conflicts and to register your events.

The opinions expressed here do not necessarily represent
R4 or OA as a whole.

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