



4 Thought

Volume 9, Issue 2—Summer 2012

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

The Key to Personal Recovery by Region 4 Chair

Greetings Region 4,

Starting off with my personal recovery report; I celebrated 12 years of abstinence the end of February and am maintaining a 60 pound weight loss. I share that, not out of ego, but out of gratitude for what I have received in OA. It is so important to keep abstinence strong in our personal program and share it so newcomers and others can see it is possible to find freedom from compulsive eating. I hope each of you is qualifying whenever you share. When we don't hear about the miracles that happen in this program we forget our purpose: to refrain from compulsive overeating and to carry this message to others. That is all that's asked of me on any given day of recovery. When I remember that, I can achieve it, one day at a time.

Reading the Voices of Recovery March 9th entry (page 69) I am reminded that Abstinence is refraining from compulsive eating and working my program. I'm acting compulsively when I'm not using the steps or the tools or relying on my Higher Power. Even if I'm not abusing food, if I'm only focused on the one aspect of my illness then I'm not caring for my whole being. I have to incorporate working the steps using the tools and helping others. Giving service is such a great way to get out of myself and into doing HP's will for me. When I do service I feel better about myself because I'm contributing to something I believe in. When I feel better about myself, I have no need to turn to the food to handle my

problems. I have established relationships with my sponsor and other members of this fellowship that I can count on to help me through times when I feel uncertain. I turn to my HP at all times, even when others are not close at hand. Once I've made that contact, I have no need to use or abuse food. But I have to incorporate all 3 aspects of the program – physical, spiritual and emotional to fully recover. If you are struggling and wondering how to change that, make a phone call, help at a meeting, and volunteer to give service doing something unfamiliar. There are so many ways we can help ourselves and the fellowship of Overeaters Anonymous. We just have to be open to the idea. Change is a challenge and an opportunity, not a threat. We have to move beyond our comfort zone and seek to do HP's will. Everything you hope to achieve will involve taking a risk, but I can attest to how wonderful life can be once you take the leap of faith and practice the program. Recovery is the promised result of working this program to the very best of my ability each day. I urge each of you to accept the challenges put before you by your Higher Power and to do your best to be the message that OA works.

Now on to what's new and exciting in Region 4.

Did you know that Region 4 has a new address? We recently moved the PO Box in an effort to rotate the service of collecting and redistributing the mail. I want to thank Ethel M. for her service

over the past 3 years in managing this. Our new address PO Box 1609, St. Peters, MO 63376. Please get the word out to your local meetings. All of the forms have been updated to reflect the new location.

Did you know that Region 4 now has online forms that you can use to apply for our various financial support projects? We also now have online registration for assembly as well. No more need to pay postage. Just go to the Business link on oaregion4.org and then the Forms page and follow the link to complete the forms. They are then sent electronically to the person/s that will review and process your requests.

Did you know you can make your 7th Tradition contribution via the website? You can make your contribution with a credit card or a direct withdrawal from your checking account. This saves postage and time as well as the money is deposited directly into the R4 account, saving our treasurer a trip to the bank. You contributions are transacted in a much timelier manner this way as well.



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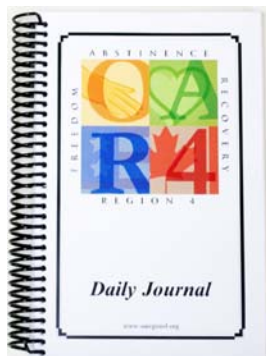
Cool Documents on www.oa.org

Check them out! And they're FREE!

Do you know about the 'Documents' page on oa.org? There are so many resources available there to help us:

- **Ask it Basket Archives** – if you're having a problem or a question about something going on in your area, check this out. There is a lot of guidance from our Board of Trustees over the years who have addressed similar questions.
- Suggested Meeting formats new as of this year:
 - ◆ Standard Meeting Format
 - ◆ Lifeline Meeting Format
 - ◆ Recovery from Relapse Format
 - ◆ Step-Study Meeting Format
 - ◆ Young People Meeting Format
 - ◆ New Comer Meeting Format
 - ◆ New index for the OA Twelve and Twelve
- Abridged version of the Tools of Recovery if your meeting doesn't want to read the entire definition in the pamphlet
- Check out the skits to add some sizzle and spice to a meeting or workshop, or consider using at a local event or convention. They address the 7th tradition and 12th step within issues
- Copyright request forms if you want to use the OA logo on local newsletters or stationary
- Secretary Materials: Forms and information on the Secretaries Responsibilities
- Guidelines for Treasurers when setting up group budgets or keeping track of donations
- Does your group have a copy of the OA Handbook for members, groups and service bodies? This pamphlet is available for \$2.25 at the oa.org bookstore and has the answer to the various service roles and responsibilities a group might need to keep performing their job of carrying the message

Region 4 Daily Journal—For Sale



Daily Journal for Sale!!

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

Get one for...

- Yourself
- Your sponsor
- Your sponsee
- A fellow member

Go to www.oaregion4.org for ordering.

The Key to Personal Recovery by Region 4 Chair

(Continued from page 1)

Did you know you can register for the R4 2012 Convention on the website? The convention flyer is available for download if you prefer to register via mail, but the option is available. Broaden your horizons, plan to attend and bring your friends along.

Did you know that each OA Group should have a secretary and that part of that person's responsibility is to keep the meeting information up to date in the WSO database? On oa.org under meetings it is important to make sure your meeting information is up to date. Time, location, meeting contact should all be checked.

Did you receive a mailing from Region 4 in January? We sent out a tent card to every group secretary. If your group did not receive the mailing it is probably because the secretary information for your group is not



current. The only way to review this is to select edit meeting information and then review what is listed under the secretary information. If the name or address is not correct, please make the update so our records are correct. If you would like me to send you the tent card, just contact me at chair@oaregion.org and I'll be happy to mail you one.

The last couple of months I have been busy working with a great group of people who believe in the work of OA. I want to thank everyone who has given service to the Region. I know we are all stronger in our personal recovery because of the commitment to living our program. I hope more of those reading this report will consider giving service beyond the group level. You never know what will give you strength until you try.

~In OA Service, Cyndy L.

WSO—WHAT DO YOU KNOW?

1. What year did OA begin?
1958 1959 1960 1961
2. What city and state did this first meeting take place?
3. What state held our first World Conference?
4. In what state is OA headquartered?
5. What does WSBC stand for?
6. When did they allow "men" into OA?
7. What was the first OA piece of literature?
8. Where was OA's first World Service Office (GSO)?
9. A delegate represents, on average, how many groups?
10. What was born in October 1965

PRIZE!! Send an email with your answers. Those who answer at least 8 correctly by June 30, win a Region 4 Lapel pin. Email: Meg at rellimgem@gmail.com.

Look for answers in the next issue of 4 Thought.
(Answers from March 2012 issue below)

Answers from Spring 2012—Region 4—What Do you Know?
1. 1968, 2. United States & Canada, 3. 10, 4. Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, 5. Minnesota, 6. 1968, 7. Minnesota, 8. Kansas, Nebraska, Missouri, Iowa, 9. 18, 10. 2

What's cool about Region 4 and why I'm attending the Region 4 Convention

What's to love about Region 4? As a Region Rep, working as the newsletter editor and chair of the Ways and Means Committee—it's the **PEOPLE!**

Meeting people from an 8 state area and from Canada reinforces the fact that this disease is found everywhere and that the experience, strength and hope is alive and well. I gather ongoing inspiration and how working my program continues to move me forward in happiness and gratitude rather than bitterness and despair.

I'm heading to Omaha this July (new locale for me) to be with recovering compulsive eaters, hearing awesome stories, laughing and adding more discovery to my life.

I'm adding to my friend base one state at a time and it's easy to collect them at a Convention!

Ask it Basket—

When can we substitute food for alcohol and compulsive overeater for “alcoholic”?
Reprinted from Lifeline, March/April

Question: Is it a “suggestion” or a “must” that we not substitute the words “food” for “alcohol” and “compulsive overeater” for “alcoholic” when our OA meeting has a Big Book Study?

Answer: OA’s group conscience has decided we should read aloud only OA approved literature at OA meetings. This includes OA conference- and board-approved literature and AA conference-approved literature. Although OA has not reviewed and approved AA literature, we deemed their group conscience approved its contents. When we read AA literature and change the words, neither OA nor AA has approved that literature.



At OA's founding, members asked permission from AA to modify its Twelve steps and Twelve traditions for use in OA. AA graciously granted that permission. Those are the only things we have authority to change. At OA’s inception, no OA literature existed, so the fellowship used AA’s Big Book, Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. To better understand how the AA concepts could apply to compulsive eating, members would often change the words and reading aloud from AA literature during meetings.

Today AA World Service asks that we respect their literature and group conscience by reading their literature, such as the Big Book, as written, without changing the words. AA also asks that we read excerpts from their literature in context, which means to read it from the actual literature as printed, not from a typed sheet of paper. Of course,

when we shared meanings about the passages we read, we are free to share our experience, strength and hope in our own terms related to compulsive eating. If we want to read only literature that uses terms related to food and compulsive eating, we have a wealth of OA literature from which to choose that doesn't require changing the words.

It is also a common practice and OA meetings to change the words of OA’s Twelve steps when reading them aloud. People replace “God” with “Higher Power” and “him” with gender neutral terms, and they add

“we” at the beginning of all the Steps. When we make those changes, we are amending the Steps. Our OA, Inc. Bylaws, Subpart B, Article X IV, Section 1 clearly spell out the amendment process. Amendments to the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions must be adopted by two-thirds of the delegates at the World Service Business Conference, and that vote must be ratified by three-fourths of the registered Overeaters Anonymous groups responding within six months of notification, provided at least 55% of the registered groups have responded. Clearly, no individual member, group or OA service body can amend the Twelve Steps or Twelve Traditions by themselves because the Steps and Traditions belong to all of us.

One could argue Tradition Four allows each group to do what it wants, as long as it doesn't affect other groups or OA as a whole. True, but we also have Tradition One: "Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon OA unity". We have Tradition Two: "For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority – 11 God's team express himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern." Concept Two

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Follow the Basics

Remembering your ABC's can help you remember how important abstinence is in your recovery.

A-Abstinence-if you have it-guard it, if you don't have it-get a sponsor and work the steps. Nothing tastes as good as abstinence feels.

B-Books-We are so lucky to have a multitude of resources. My favorites, "The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous" and "Alcoholics Anonymous", generally referred to as the Big Book. (And, I have to remind myself this is not just reading, but a plan for application.)

C-Call- your food plan to your sponsor. Call newcomers to welcome them after their first meeting. Call other OA members to support them



or have them as a support system for you. Remember we can together do what we could never do alone.

D- Daily tasks-that make it easier to keep your recovery going. My sponsor recommended reading, writing (journaling, writing my food plan, and writing a gratitude list) and making time for prayer and meditation. And, most important to continue these by "Doing the next right thing."

E=Enjoy-your freedom from food obsession. Enjoy interesting, nourishing foods that are nutrient dense. Enjoy meeting and getting to know fellow "survivors" and ENJOY RECOVERY.

~Pat B, St Louis, MO

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states, in part, "World Service Business Conference is the voice, authority and effective conscience of OA as a whole".

If I insist upon changing the wording of OA or AA literature to suit myself, I'm displaying the same selfishness and self - will that landed me in OA in the first place! As one trustee wrote, "From my vantage point and experience, there is a tendency to mold the OA program of recovery to the molds of individual members and their ways of doing things. I am reminded if my way worked, I would not be in OA or need to be. Obviously, my

way did not work. So I'm quite willing to work on changing me, which is a challenge, and not try to OA or AA to suit me. When a physician gives me a prescription for treatment of an illness, I'm well advised not to make any attempts to rewrite it.

If I believe OA's literature needs to be amended, I am encouraged to participate in our collective group conscience by serving as a delegate to the World Service Business Conference. Failing that, I am committed to respecting the group conscience of both OA and AA by reading the literature as it is written, from the original source, without any creative editing on my part.

~Yours in service, – Teresa K.,
Region 4 Trustee and Chair of
the Board of Trustees
- reprinted from Lifeline, Marcy/
April 2012

Personal response from
reading of page 120,
"Voices of Recovery".

"Trusting me by my
"self" is impossible;; my
"self" is as crooked in
thinking as my "me" is.

It's all in the Focus

I have been going to OA for 12 months and have over 9 months of abstinence, which is not anything I have or can do by myself (after all, I tried every possible way before admitting in step one that I was powerless and daily taking step three to allow my Higher Power to do for me what I could not do for myself).

Our group has a group conscious meeting the last Tuesday of every month. The last one was fairly traumatic for me, (especially I felt responsible as I was the group leader that day) but it demonstrates how a group can work through issues, and the difference recovery makes.

One of the issues brought up was how disrespectful it feels when people come to the meeting late, especially when that becomes a pattern for certain people. Then, another issue was crosstalk. One member was adamant about preventing or stopping crosstalk of any kind. The situation suddenly became very tense and I went home upset.

In the days before OA those uncomfortable feelings would automatically mean a binge. For today, I realize that I have a choice. I can hang on to those feelings. I can get resentful. I can quit coming to meetings OR, I can work through issues.

My first choice was to talk to my sponsor. She helped me let go of the feeling that it was my

responsibility to fix this. Then she asked me how I felt about it and why I was feeling so strongly. It helped me identify that if we really stringently adopted absolutely no cross talking of any kind; there were three issues that were uppermost in my mind.

1. Newcomers often don't have a clue what that means and there were hurt feelings when they were criticized.
2. That if strictly enforced, someone had to be the cross talking cop-and it was not going to be me; and
3. One of the things I enjoyed most about our meetings was the ability to be honest and open at meetings-I didn't want to lose that.

The next choice was to take my discomfort to my Higher Power. My help comes when I ask and seek the answer.

The very next day, I was drawn to read a story in the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous (4th ed., pp. 407—420) called, "Acceptance was the Answer" and I immediately felt enormous relief and said, "Thank you God!" The author talks about being in a meeting and says (p. 419), "the more I focus my mind on its defects-late start, long drunkalogues, cigarette smoke-the worse the meeting becomes. But when I try to see what I can add to the meeting, rather than what I can get out of

it, and when I focus my mind on what's good about it, rather than what's wrong with it, the meeting keeps getting better and better. When I focus on what's good today, I have a good day, and when I focus on what's bad, I have a bad day. If I focus on a problem, the problem increases if I focus on the answer, the answer increases." (page 419).

At the next meeting I shared the reading and we as a group decided that we will read this portion before our group conscious meeting to remind us that we need to keep the focus on problem solving and recovery.

What a wonderful feeling to work through a problem without becoming angry, resentful or eating over it.

My friends look at me and see my weight loss of 59 pounds, but my sponsor and my group, I think, sees my personal growth. I certainly felt the progress and am so grateful to have kept my abstinence.

I am so grateful to everyone who has loved me until I could love myself and have extended their hand in solidarity and recovery.

P.S. And, yes-we are trying to be more self compliant with our no cross talking request at meetings.

~Pat B, St. Louis, MO

How Attractive is Your Meeting?

OA, like all organizations, has a Mission Statement in our Bylaws. While most of us couldn't begin to say what that mission statement is, we all know our Primary Purpose: to abstain from compulsive overeating and to carry this message of recovery to those who still suffer. Obviously, the first and most important thing is to abstain from compulsive eating ourselves, for as the Big Book says, we cannot transmit something we haven't got. But once we ourselves are abstinent and in recovery, we must carry this message to others. The most obvious place to do that is in meetings. Very few strangers on the street will appreciate it if we walk up to them, say they look like they might be a compulsive eater, and that we have a solution to their problem! But people who come to an OA meeting are already admitting, by doing so, that they might be a compulsive eater, and they come because they hope that we indeed DO have a solution to the problem that we all share.



A warm welcome can make a huge difference for a newcomer or returning member. We probably all remember how hard it was to walk into our first meeting. Some meetings have greeters who welcome people as they arrive. We can introduce ourselves, smile, answer any questions, offer our phone numbers, and generally make people feel welcome. Many meetings ask a member to share about why they came to OA and why they keep coming back. We offer Newcomer Packets with a sampling of some basic pamphlets, or Welcome Back packets for returning members.

What else makes a meeting attractive to a newcomer? As a formerly obese person, I came to OA to learn how to lose weight and keep it off. So I look for evidence of recovery on all three levels – physical, emotional and spiritual. We share our experience, strength and hope. That is often done in the format of what I was like, what happened, and what I am like now, with the emphasis on the last 2 parts. I often hear people share



their lifelong history of compulsive eating in excruciating detail, only to run out of time. The remaining 2 parts of their story become “I came to OA and now I'm better”, but it leaves out the critical core of our message – HOW we got from where we were to where we are now.

Our message must be a clear and compelling one. We no longer want or need to eat compulsively, because we have found a Higher Power that has restored us to sanity. We found that Power by working all of the Twelve Steps of OA, in order, and we maintain our recovery through working Steps 10-12 on a daily basis.

Although we all love speaker meetings and compelling stories of recovery, they can't take the place of actually studying the Steps, Traditions and Concepts. We need to share clear-cut directions on how to work the Steps and how to practice the principles of the Program in all our affairs. The result is the miracle of recovery and the many promises of the Program made manifest in our lives today.

The meeting's structure is also important. Arriving and starting on time, sticking to a standard format, reminding members of the importance of anonymity, identifying available sponsors, displaying and using only OA-approved literature, and avoiding crosstalk are all important. Upholding the Twelve Traditions and making sure our meetings are guided by the Twelve Concepts of OA Service are the way we can guarantee that our meetings are a safe place. Finally, a periodic group inventory can make sure that we are on track. The Strong Meeting Checklist and the Group Inventory can be downloaded from OA's website (www.oa.org) under the Group Support section.

My hope is that all of our meetings are strong, full of abstinent members, and carry this message of recovery to those who still suffer!

~Teresa K, Region 4 Trustee

Overeaters Anonymous Region 4 Convention

LAST CALL!!!

July 13, 14, 15, 2012

Regency Lodge Omaha, Nebraska

www.regencylodge.com

1-402-397-8000

- Workshops
- Hospitality Room
- Literature for Sale
- Region Key Note Speakers
- Lunch and Dinner Speakers
- Saturday Night Entertainment
- Fun and Fellowship



Please join us in this celebration of recovery at the Region 4 OA Convention in Omaha, NE. Attend workshops and hear speakers from Intergroups throughout our 8 state, 2 province and 1 territory region. Come share your experience, strength and hope with other OA members, while strengthening your own commitment to recovery!

Whether you're new to the program or an old-timer, we invite you!

Reservations must be made by Friday, June 29, 2012.

When reserving your room, refer to Overeaters Anonymous.

If flying in, Omaha (OMA) is the nearest airport.

Shuttle service is available to and from the convention through

A&B Shuttle Phone: 402 403-3085 Fax: 402-331-8408

To schedule, cancel or alter reservations, please call: 402 403-3085

E-mail: ShuttleOmaha@live.com

Web Address: www.OmahaShuttle.com



Contact Marilyn D at 785.862.8213 for more information