

## Mark Your Calendar

Telephone Workshops: 3-4 EDT, 1-424-203-8405 925619#  
4/6 "Literature: Heart & Soul of OA"  
4/13 "Abstinence Workshop"

**April 6-13** Region 7 Cruise "Waves of Recovery"  
More info at <http://oaregion7.org/event/region-7-cruise>

**May 16-18** Glenwood Springs, Colorado  
"Acceptance—Come as You Are" Retreat  
More info at [oadenver.org](http://oadenver.org)

**June 13-15** San Antonio & Austin Intergroups  
13<sup>th</sup> Annual Slumber Falls Retreat  
More info at [oaregion3.org](http://oaregion3.org)

**August 8-10:** Arizona Serenity in the Desert  
Intergroup Region Three Convention and Assembly,  
Tori email: [victoria@azwoods.com](mailto:victoria@azwoods.com); Web site: [oaphoenix.org](http://oaphoenix.org)

**October 3-5** HMI 2014 OA Convention in Galveston, TX  
"Happy, Joyous and Beachy"  
More info at [oagalveston.org](http://oagalveston.org) Contact Victor 281-489-0817

OA is a fellowship of individuals who, through shared experience, strength, hope, and the 12 steps of this program 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 to carry the message of recovery through the Twelve Steps of OA to those who still suffer.

**NOTE:** If you would like to have a monthly copy of Serenity Times emailed to you, please send your email address to: [serenitytimes@hotmail.com](mailto:serenitytimes@hotmail.com)

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**Tradition 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.

### Making Peace

I heard someone refer to a loving God as expressed in the Second Tradition. I realized that whatever I wanted my God to be was all right as long as that power was loving. I came to OA almost eight years ago at 247 pounds (112 kg) and just wanted to get thin. I did not come intending to have a loving Higher Power lead me. I now know that to inhabit a thin body, I must surrender every day to my loving HP. Yesterday I read in some program literature that if I was having trouble with the concept of surrender, how about thinking of it as "making peace." Loving words of God come through the literature. Making peace with my food plan, emotions, others and God seems just about as loving as it gets. My disease is hateful and vengeful; recovery is loving and kind. The power of love heals each of us. Together we recover. Together we get better. Use all the tools, work all the Steps, live all the Traditions and Concepts. Miracles happen.

— Edited and reprinted from The Northern Light newsletter,  
Anchorage Area Intergroup, March/April 20



## The Traffic Light Approach to Recovery



Having 'hit bottom' in my disease – that is, binging on my 'drug of choice' (chocolate) several times a day, grazing on everything else in sight when that was not available, gaining weight and not able to get on another diet, approaching my old high weight and knowing I would not stop there- I finally surrendered and came to OA.

Doing what was suggested – I attended meetings regularly, got a sponsor, worked the Steps, got into service – leaning into my recovery with all of the willingness I could muster.

A speaker at our most recent Region III Convention in Dallas addressed some questions given to her by the Program Committee for the Convention in her speech. I would like to share them with you here, because they affected me so profoundly. I find that I am constantly searching out, finding and utilizing new tools in my quest for permanent recovery – one day at a time. So, I am intrigued by the "traffic light approach." I believe it will aid my journaling efforts for months if not years to com. Here are the questions:

### Red means **STOP:**

- What foods did you have to stop eating?
- What behaviors did you have to stop in order to move forward in your recovery?
- What character defects did you have to stop living?
- What friends did you have to stop hanging around because they just weren't healthy for you?
- What lies did you have to stop telling yourself?
- When do you get HALT (hungry, angry, lonely, tired) & what do you do?

### Yellow means **CAUTION:**

- What foods are part okay, part not?
- Do they confuse you?
- Do you know you are close to "slipping and sliding" \* with them? \*(@ oa.org under Members/Groups, then 12<sup>th</sup> Step Within, scroll down to find a file entitled "Been Slipping and Sliding – A reading & Writing Tool" for more inspiration and support)
- Have you had to shift more foods and behaviors to the NOT OKAY list?
- What behaviors are like that (slippy/slidy) for you?
- What events – family get-togethers, work events, life challenges – can trigger you?
- How have you recovered/bounced back from them in the past and what actions do you take to avoid them now?

### Green means **GO:**

- How has program enriched your life?
- How have the Steps helped you live a fuller life?
- What role does Service play?
- How have the Tools, Traditions, & Slogans helped you?
- Did you get a Green Light every day?
- How have your relationships been improved?
- How have you become more effective in the world?

What an awesome set of questions to help us all get and stay focused on the road ahead in our recovery! Safe driving everyone! And keep coming back.

Neva S. – Tucson, AZ (w/thanks to Neva L. from Dallas and Judy K. from Jacksonville, FL for creating much of the material and inspiring this article)

**Baby Steps** I am approaching one year of recovery in OA. I can't say I am approaching one year of abstinence, and for that reason I still feel like a newcomer. But with the help of a caring sponsor and the friendship of fellow OA members, I believe I am on a solid road of abstinence, one day at a time.

Walking in the door of my first meeting was scary, but acceptance and encouragement were waiting to meet me. I grabbed the free literature and started reading, especially the pamphlet *Dignity of Choice*. I went to meetings and made a few tentative telephone calls. My food plan was simple: three meals plus two to three nutritious snacks a day. I worked the first three Steps after reading from *The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous*.

Then I got my first sponsor. She had rules: attend two meetings a week, make two outreach calls per day, make a food plan and report daily, and call her if I deviated from that plan by one iota. I was also to telephone her at an appointed time every day. After eight weeks, that relationship ended by mutual agreement because she said she could never tell whether I'd been abstinent.

I came to hate the word "abstinence" in all its forms. It seemed like an ill-defined, impossible achievement, especially considering that a food plan is not the definition of abstinence (even though some members equate the two). Unfortunately, it was not easy to work this program without a sponsor to guide me. I kept going to meetings, but I was lost.

My current sponsor takes gentle baby steps, and that has made all the difference. She always asks me if I am willing to do something, such as call her if I think I've overeaten. Over a period of weeks, she asked me if I'd be willing to add more fruits and vegetables to my meals. Then she asked if I'd be willing to tell her what I ate each day for one week. Ultimately my food plan is the same as it was when I started going to OA, but my abstinence is defined by whether I'm working the program: asking for help when I feel like I'm ready to go off the rails, listening for guidance from my HP, and taking time to pray and meditate. When I feel scared that I will fail, she reminds me lovingly to think of freedom.

I have a whopping 10 days of abstinence as of this writing, but I've been released from 16 pounds (7 kg) since starting with OA. I have worked Steps Four and Five with my sponsor and look forward to the rest of the journey with her. Now that I have a definition of abstinence I understand, everything else, including my food plan, is simple.

Abstinence feels like freedom from the bondage of self-will run riot for too many years. That is a wonderful thing to live with each day.

— J.B.M., Omaha, Nebraska USA

*Dear Newcomer,*

**The thing is, you are not a physically normal eater. Normal eaters eat all kinds of foods. They lose interest after appropriate amounts, whereas we compulsive eaters experience insatiable cravings that propel us into binge eating.**

Each of us has specific binge foods that make us crave more, just like a drug addict or alcoholic is always chasing that next hit, the elusive high. No matter how much you eat, you will never get that wonderful feeling. It is a contradiction in terms. For many but not all of us, the binge culprits are foods containing sugar and flour. "Clearly, if we are to live free of the bondage of compulsive eating, we must abstain from all foods and eating behaviors which cause us problems" (*The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous*, pp. 2-3).

We are not a diet club. Many of us have thrown away the bathroom scale. First and foremost we offer fellowship. We suggest a program of spiritual, emotional and physical recovery, importance being in that order. We use our tools of recovery to recover from our devastating disease: an individualized plan of eating, literature, writing, meetings, outreach calls, sponsorship, service, anonymity and plan of action.

Our compulsive eating has led to our inability to manage almost every aspect of our lives. It is important to contemplate this in order to understand that you have reached your bottom when it comes to your eating habits. Think about the obsessive thinking, anxiety, depression and guilt that surround your eating. If you do not see that you have reached a bottom, you will not have the desperation required to fully embrace the Twelve-Step recovery program of OA.

Welcome to OA; welcome home.

— Mary V., New York City, New York USA

## "Top 10" Things I heard at the 2013 World Service Convention that impressed me most:

1. "Secrets get in the way of contact with HP." I need a spiritual action plan that includes rigorous honesty.
2. "Like a sponge, I can only absorb so much recovery before I have to be 'wring out'—carry the message to someone else—so I can absorb more."
3. "I've always had God's grace, but I didn't know how to respond to it." The Twelve Steps and the OA Fellowship teach me how to respond.
4. "Complaints are baby resentments. And gratitude is the antidote to complaining."
5. "Service is gratitude put into action." What can I do to serve today?
6. "When I focused on God, the weight went away. If I focus on the weight, God goes away." I've heard this so many times, but it bears repeating, particularly since it is the biggest lesson I learned from my recent relapse.
7. "Someone needs to love the newcomers." I can be that someone.
8. "People say they are abstinent 'God willing,' but God is always willing. Abstinence is God's will for me. The question is, am I willing?"
9. "Don't settle for 'better than it used to be.'" I deserve the best recovery possible, and I can have it if I work for it.
10. "Keep coming back. It works!" This was the insight I heard most often, which I saw demonstrated around me every minute of every day at the Convention.

- -Anonymous

### Serenity Times Publication of the Galveston Bay Area Intergroup Meeting List 2014

#### **MONDAY**

Deer Park (51567)

Open Meeting, Literature 11:30 a.m.

In His Presence Fellowship Church

1202 East P Street (Fellowship Hall)

Deer Park TX 77536

Contact: Bekki S. 409-454-5720

**Intergroup Business Meeting**

Jan., April, July, Oct.

3<sup>rd</sup> Monday, 5:30 p.m.

Bay Area Community of Christ Church

Travis @ Austin Street

Contact: Kay H. 281-557-3881

#### **TUESDAY**

Santa Fe (52400)

Topic/Discussion 6 p.m.

Rosa May Catching Annex Bldg.

12045 15<sup>th</sup> (on corner of Hwy 6 and Ave K)

Guest Speaker on 5<sup>th</sup> week of a month

Contact: Linda 409-457-9517, Laura 281-507-4968/409-925-8353

#### **WEDNESDAY**

Clear Lake (13244)

Literature (Big Book/12&12), 10 am

Clear Lake United Methodist Church

16335 El Camino Real Rm. 311

Contact: Kay 281-557-3881

#### **THURSDAY**

Webster (30093)

Discussion Meeting 6:30 p.m. Up the Street Club

508 W. NASA Parkway, Rm #2

Contact: Chuck B. 281-770-7539

#### **FRIDAY**

Webster (53219)

Literature 12 p.m. Up the Street Club

508 West NASA Pkwy Rm #2

Contact: Vonda (512) 565-4000

#### **SATURDAY**

Clear Lake (12635)

For Today/Discussion, 10:30 am

House of Prayer Lutheran

14045 Space Center Blvd.

Contact: Marcia 281-488-7684

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