

## Mark Your Calendar

**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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## Top-10 List of Things That Help My Recovery Most

10 Service (is slimming): When I don't want to share in a meeting or even go to a meeting or make phone calls, I remind myself that it's all service and that service is slimming. If I want to lose weight, I have to give service.

9 Writing (face your stuff or stuff your face): If I can pick up a pencil instead of a fork when I feel like compulsively overeating, I can find out what's really "eating me" and save myself the misery of overeating.

8 Literature (just for today): I don't have to read any whole book ever. I can read one Lifeline article, one For Today page, one daily meditation and one section in the Big Book. Every few paragraphs contain some nugget of nourishment for my soul.

7 Meetings (carry the message to those who still suffer): When I don't feel like attending my meeting or think I don't have to because I don't need it, I remind myself of the purpose of every meeting to bring the message to the still suffering and of how I'd feel as a newcomer to walk into an empty room.

6 Ninth Step (the promises): I worked through early steps with the faith that the promises would be fulfilled once I completed Step Nine. I found so many fulfilled before Step Nine, I figured nothing further would happen when I got to Nine. I'm only halfway through Nine, have blown past a weight that would have satisfied me and am quickly approaching my lowest weight in 25 years.

5 Fifth Step ("and to another human being"): God and I already knew what a wretched creature I was. Telling someone else made it both so much more real and less serious. Now that I don't hold all those secrets alone, they seem far less powerful.

4 My Sponsors (someone who has what you want): I "designed" my sponsor before I ever went to a meeting. I wanted an active, fit woman of my faith with more than 10 years of abstinence and who had an active and fit sponsor with more than 15 years of abstinence. At the meeting there were only two sponsors to choose from, and only one was taking new people. She did not fit my bill exactly, and after working with her for three years, I've added a second sponsor who has the rest of the characteristics I was seeking.

3 Humility (I can't. God can. I think I'll let him.): Having been unsuccessful on my own, I decided to let a bunch of compulsive overeaters help me recover, and the first thing they told me is that God's going to take care of this for me.

2 Willingness (go to any lengths): Whatever the program says, I do it. Whatever the Steps are, I work them. Whatever the tools are, I use them. Whatever my sponsor suggests, I do it. I have hated a lot of these ideas, but again, I wasn't successful using my techniques, and I decided the only way to give this program a fair try was to follow it as thoroughly as I can.

1 God (turn it over): All I have to do is work the Steps and use the tools; God is taking care of my weight. I stay off the scale in between monthly weigh-ins and trust that if my weight goes up or down drastically, I'll notice.

## Top 10 . . . Ways to be an effective sponsor...

1. Live our program completely.
2. Listen to sponsees and don't preach or give advice.
3. Have a sponsor to consult.
4. Keep sponsoring real with honesty.
5. Care always about sponsees.
6. Keep growing and learning.
7. Share my personal story.
8. Have mutual respect.
9. Maintain a healthy weight, which can make sponsoring easier.
10. Be available by phone, email or text.

## Strong Abstinence Checklist and Writing Exercise

Use this valuable tool every day to support you in keeping your abstinence strong and intact. You may also use it as the focus for meetings and workshops.

### CHECKLIST

- 1) Have I been abstinent today?
- 2) Did I pray and meditate today?
- 3) Am I maintaining or working towards a healthy body weight?
- 4) Did I rely on my Higher Power to get or stay abstinent today?
- 5) Is what I am currently doing working for me to remain abstinent?
- 6) If I am having problems have I asked someone else what they are doing?
- 7) Have I made an OA call today?
- 8) Did I have an attitude of gratitude today?
- 9) Did I plan my food today?
- 10) Have I helped someone else today?
- 11) Did I have an action plan in place to stay abstinent today?
- 12) Do I have a sponsor and am I working the Steps with that person?

### WRITING EXERCISE

- 1) What is compulsive eating for me?
- 2) What are the foods and food behaviors that trigger me to eat compulsively?
- 3) Am I afraid to get abstinent and if yes, why?
- 4) Why do I think abstinence is important?
- 5) What do I do to stop eating compulsively?
- 6) What Steps do I take to remain abstinent in all circumstances?
- 7) What is the difference between abstinence and a plan of eating?
- 8) What actions do I take to maintain my abstinence and achieve or maintain a healthy body weight?
- 9) How do I begin my day in order to abstain from compulsive eating and compulsive food behaviors?
- 10) What tools do I regularly use?
- 11) How does remaining abstinent improve the quality of my life?
- 12) What place does food have in my life today?

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## Turning It Over

The concept of being dependent to gain independence is quirky business for me. I can understand it in my head but have difficulty with it on an unconscious level. Applied to my food addiction, it means that the more dependent I am on my Higher Power to handle my food, the more free I am from the power of food.

But I think the concept goes beyond food and applies to all aspects of life. It means that as I turn over my problems to my HP, I gain independence because the problems will work out in God's time. And when I turn the problems over, they are with God and no longer mine. I gain quite a bit of independence when I remember that.

To be successful in working Step Three, I must find tangible ways to turn my will and life over to my HP. One of the most tangible ways to surrender to HP's will is to depend on a plan of eating to offer healthy eating. I turn over control of the food and eat according to plan; then the food is rarely a problem. As it says in OA's Step Three, "As we become aware of what our eating guidelines should be, we ask God for the willingness and the ability to live within them each day. We ask and we receive, first the willingness, and then the ability. We can count on this without fail" (The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous, p. 23). In this situation, I am dependent on a food plan, yet I gain independence from unhealthy eating patterns.

Another tangible way to turn my will over to my HP is to work with a sponsor. I turn over control of my program's direction to my sponsor, who guides me down OA's recovery path. In this situation, I am dependent, yet I gain independence from unhealthy living patterns.

I've heard some professionals say that working a Twelve-Step program is trading one addiction for another. It is substituting an unhealthy dependence for a healthy dependence on my HP, thus gaining independence. Nothing is wrong with that.

— Anonymous

## Our Literature

The tool of literature is a gift from the compulsive overeaters who have gone before us. The more I read and reread the OA books, the more I realize how my disease has led me to block out information I needed to hear. Thanks to my Higher Power, I kept coming back.

When I was ready for the truth, I was in the right place to receive it . . . at an OA meeting. I'm a person who reads only when forced, so OA meetings have been my exposure to OA writings.

Attending a literature study group helped me to identify and understand just how powerless I am over my disease and to accept help. That help comes from a Higher Power that speaks through both the group and the literature. When I hear another's interpretation of these writings, I'm given an opportunity to learn a different viewpoint. Practice at understanding another's viewpoint is something I avoided in my illness. When I accept the gift of humility from my Higher Power, I learn and understand the changes I need to implement in my life that will help me abstain from that first compulsive bite today.

— Edited and reprinted from Novations newsletter  
Northern Virginia Intergroup, June 2007

## 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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