



**Step 1:** We admitted we were powerless over food—that our lives had become unmanageable.

• Spiritual Principle: Honesty

**Tradition 1:** Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon OA unity.

• Spiritual Principle: Unity

**Concept 1:** The ultimate responsibility and authority for OA world services reside in the collective conscience of our whole Fellowship.

• Spiritual Principle: Unity

**Promise 1:** We are going to know a new freedom and a new happiness.

## Sponsorship

The idea of sponsors was not explicitly mentioned in the first 164 pages of the *Big Book*, which occasioned a member to question its importance. I point you to the *Pioneers of AA* section of stories, Chapter 5, entitled **The Vicious Cycle**. The sponsor, Jackie, is described as, "...he was happy, relaxed, confident, and laughing." Our recovery serves as a source of inspiration to newcomers and fellow members.

It is vital to note **the importance of continuing the work**, for though Jackie was available for someone hitting bottom, he was unable to maintain his own recovery: "All of us in A.A. know the tremendous happiness that is in our sobriety, but there are also tragedies. My sponsor, Jackie, was one of these. He brought in many of our original members, yet he himself could not make it and died of alcoholism."

Here is an excerpt from <https://oa.org/working-the-program/sponsorship/>

There is no prescription on sponsorship (as a sponsor or sponsee), but here are some tips from another member to guide you:

As a sponsee, I do these things:

- Am honest with myself, my sponsor, and my Higher Power
- Call my sponsor on time daily
- Cultivate awareness of my Higher Power
- Ask for assistance from other OA members to temporarily sponsor me when my sponsor is unavailable
- Listen to and reflect on my sponsor's feedback
- Practice being a responsible OA member in fellowship with others, by using all the Tools, having a home meeting, doing service, being kind and honest with others, and welcoming newcomers
- Sponsor another member or members as I'm sponsored
- Willingly do Step and Tradition studies to learn
- Celebrate recovery milestones
- Honor anonymity as to the sponsor's identity – if that is requested by the sponsor.

As a sponsor, I do these things:

- Welcome my sponsee's daily calls and emails Listen to my sponsee's food plan and program work daily

(continued next page)



- Gently reflect on OA Tools and spiritual Principles with my sponsee
- Share honestly, and willingly about my experience, learning, stumbles, growth, and gratitude in recovery
- Highlight areas of growth I notice in my sponsee’s physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual recovery
- Encourage my sponsee to be open and willing with me and seek assistance from other OA members and trustworthy professionals as needed
- Listen for yellow and red flags in my sponsee’s recovery and talk about these openly, honestly, and willingly
- Let go and let God when I can’t be helpful to a sponsee
- Celebrate recovery
- Help the sponsee work through the Twelve Steps
- Honor the sponsee’s anonymity if that is what the sponsee requests

## **Step 1: The Journey Begins**    **Step 1:** We admitted we were powerless over food—that our lives had become unmanageable.

Step One is where we begin our journey of healing through the twelve steps. We do not have to take any action. We must simply make an admission.

Powerless is a strong word. Most of us cringe at the thought of admitting that we do not have power. Why, look at all the powerful things we have done in our families, at our jobs, in our communities? Of course, we have power! BUT do we have power over food? Are we able to eat in a sane and healthy way? Do we exhibit power during a binge as we cry out, “why can’t I stop!?” Where was our power after the last diet when we gained back all the weight we lost and more? Our sponsors may ask us if we are done yet? Do we have any ideas about controlling our food that we haven’t tried yet? Are we wondering about a new medication or a trendy new diet that might just be the answer? Do we want to continue experimenting, risking the demoralization of yet another round of our most destructive food behaviors?

The second part of the step, “that our lives were unmanageable,” is also difficult for the active compulsive eater to admit. Perhaps we make our bed every morning and organize our finances effectively and keep our car maintained. Maybe we feel we manage people and places well too....perhaps we feel we can manage many things in our life. But how do we manage food in our lives? Do we purchase healthy foods at the grocery store, bring them home, put them in the fridge, cook healthy meals and eat them? Or do we binge on the way home in the car and throw all the rotten vegetables away at the end of the week? Do we find ourselves turning into a drive through even though the healthy lunch we packed this morning is on the car seat next to us? Do we manage our food life well? Does the unmanageability and chaos we experience with food ever overflow into the rest of our lives? Is it possible that we manage in a way that is not always considerate of others? Or do we now identify with the words of Dr. Silkworth, “They are restless, irritable and discontented unless they can again experience the sense of ease and comfort which comes at once by taking a few drinks....after they have succumbed to the desire again, as so many do, and the phenomenon of craving develops, they pass through the well-known stages of a spree, emerging remorseful, with a firm resolution not to drink again. This is repeated over and over, and unless this person can experience an entire psychic change there is very little hope of his recovery.”(*Alcoholics Anonymous, The Doctor’s Opinion*)

In Step One we admit – we let in the idea – that we do not have control over our food and we are not good at managing our lives. The spiritual principle of Step One is HONESTY. If we can honestly say our actions demonstrate a total lack of control over food and the management of our lives, perhaps we have hit bottom and are ready to take Step One.

— Lucy



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# More on Step 1

In the OA 12&12 it says, “some of us have difficulty with this admission because we’ve had so much experience in trying to control our eating.”

What are some of the ways we are powerless over food?

First, we cannot control calories in food. The calories in food are a scientific fact. Lying about what we ate, wishing them away, making believe that we will eat only one serving when we buy a package of a regular binge food, all are proofs of our powerlessness.

We’re also powerless over food related behaviors, like eating while reading, watching TV or using the computer or phone, or going through drive-throughs or to buffets, or overeating out of sadness, despair, boredom, being too busy or too happy.

And we are powerless over food related thinking: this time I’ll eat one, or this time I’ll be in control, or one won’t hurt, or I’m cured!

When you prove to yourself once again that you are powerless over food, congratulate yourself. **That’s Step One.** I had to do it about a million times before I got abstinent but I am still here 35 years later. I had to let go of my food and work the steps. I also stopped bringing some foods into the house, which became a matter of growing honesty, which ones were not my foods. I also had to tell myself, not today. I might have it tomorrow, but not today. That can lead to a long string of abstinent days.

I had to stop controlling and dieting and work these steps. I knew that working the steps was what mattered because they had changed my life in another program while I was eating compulsively. *The steps work if you work the steps.*

It took me four years to get abstinent for more than a week. Every time I slipped, I called my sponsor crying and she’d say to me, “Gee P., did it ever occur to you that you might be a compulsive overeater?” and we’d laugh! No shaming, no blaming, no firing because she would only spend time on “winners” who would follow someone else’s food plan.

One of the reasons why I think so many people drop out of OA is the focus on instant abstinence. Newcomers are often given a diet (plan of eating) and have trouble following it and drop out because they slip and slip and/or get shamed or dropped by a food focused sponsor. Don’t shame yourself when you slip. Perhaps you are also a compulsive overeater.

Learning how to be honest about problem foods is a process with many ups and downs, but if you develop a self-initiated, self-actualizing plan of eating based on honesty about your own problem foods, it is more likely to stick. It is slower. So what? Losing weight is not a requirement for membership. “The only requirement for OA membership is the desire to stop eating compulsively.” Tradition 3. It’s not the desire to be thin, although working these steps will help with weight problems.

So if you try and fail, keep coming back. The steps are the answer, not a plan of eating. Take as much time as you need to become abstinent but start on the steps right away. When you slip write, “I am still powerless over food and this is how it happened today...” Eventually it goes away and food is no longer the center of life. It is really nice.

— P.M.

## All Twelve: My Journey Through the Steps

*Patience, a long-time member, frequently wrote about the Steps in 2023, and this is a wrap-up she shared with us. Her service to the fellowship and to our newsletter is much appreciated.*

1. I thought I was honest as the day was long because I never really stole anything and I gave correct change. I lied all the time about not minding or not liking things or not wanting to do things or even not wanting you to want things. I’d say,



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“You don’t want that,” instead of “I don’t want you to want that,” which is kind of a vivid illustration of selfish motives, but of course I also thought I wasn’t selfish. So I began to see a divide between what I’d say and what I’d do: a guideline for honesty: say what you mean, mean what you say, but don’t day it mean. That was hard for me since shaming and blaming were part of my armor. My opinions were facts to me! Becoming able to see that my opinion of something or someone didn’t make it true kept me from saying a lot of mean things.

2. I had no hope when I first got into my other 12 step program, but working the steps in that program transformed my relationships, so when I heard about OA, honesty led me to say maybe I am a compulsive overeater too since food was calling my name out of the refrigerator and I was saying to myself every day I am going to eat less today while I ate more every day. Well I knew the steps worked, so I started OA as soon as I could.

3. Faith kept me coming, faith in the Twelve Steps, because I knew the steps worked. At the time most people were weighing and measuring, food planning, and giving up sugar and white flour. I was binging on cholesterol and fat: cheese, animal fats, nuts, crunchy crap. I was never able to diet, so I picked a plan of eating 3-2-1 which I thought I might be able to manage. I couldn’t stay abstinent for the first four years, slipping almost every week. I’d call my sponsor crying and she’d say, “Gee Patience, did it ever occur to you that you might be a compulsive overeater?” I’d crack up and we’d laugh together and start again. I never gave up because I knew the answer was in the steps not on my plate.

4. I loved writing down my resentments in the 4th step but the courage came in the last column in the *Big Book’s* way. Was I really selfish, self-seeking, dishonest and frightened? Well yes. I always did a lot for others but they had to like me for it...that’s selfish. I thought everything that happened was about me. Funny look on your face? Must be about me. Also I wanted my own way and people should just listen and do what I wanted (which was for their own good). This was also self-seeking while pretending to be kind. And dishonest because it was what I wanted and I had no idea if it was right for them. I often lied out of fear of annoying others because I wanted approval, so dishonest due to fear applied. I was also afraid to try things, to have fun, to make changes, etc. I had all four human characteristics!

5. Integrity means honesty but a second meaning in the dictionary is “the state of being whole and undivided.” Sharing my fourth step helped me develop integrity and honesty. I wasn’t suddenly magically perfect, but I was grasping and developing the capacity to be honest, as it says in the *Big Book*. I couldn’t change what I couldn’t see.

6. Willingness is very different from wanting to do things, a distinction which helped me move along in the steps when I didn’t want to, but by this time I was really willing to try to let go of my defects of character. I really love the prayer, “Bless them, change me,” which has helped me when anything disturbs my serenity. That’s the essence of this program: actual acceptance and tolerance and willingness to change. Willingness is a sweet calm feeling for me.

7. Humility and humiliation seemed to be synonymous to me when I got into program, but the idea of trying to be right-sized struck this compulsive overeater! Oh, not bigger or smaller than everyone else! Another way of putting it that also struck this know-it-all was being teachable. I am able to learn the characteristics I’d like to have, but the little joke in the 7<sup>th</sup> Step Prayer taught me not to expect perfection: it asks to have removed “every single defect of character that stands in the way of my usefulness to you and my fellows.” This says to me, I am not going to be perfect because no one likes perfect people. You have to be human to be useful.

8. Self-discipline meant writing my list of people I had harmed. I got an awful shock there because the thing that harmed me the most as a kid were mother’s unending lectures. Our step book says if you can’t think of harm, think what hurt you. What did I do to my family and friends? Lecture! I found it easy to make the list after that. and I keep an eye on my tendency to go on and on...

9. Love is the principle of step 9. Am I willing to make amends, starting with the hardest? Living amends are the hardest and most necessary and take loving my imperfect self and a lot of practice. Can I stop my formerly automatic behaviors? Practice makes progress. By the time I got to step 9 I was basically very aware of how pleased I was to have been changed by working the previous steps to the point I was happy to do my amends. I had spent my whole life being miserable and right all the time. Now I was happy to say I’d been wrong. People had noticed and were kind.



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10. Perseverance is such a great word. In order to keep what I have learned, I have to practice it. A written 10th step keeps me on track. I have never done the one where you check off a list of character defects/survival skills. I used to write out the serenity prayer with blanks for what I could not change, i.e. what was bothering me that day, and for what I could change which was basically my own attitudes and actions. Then I wrote out old patterns, that came up followed by new recovering actions I took instead. This helped me see my progress. I followed this with a list of what I was grateful for and then some things I had done well, even if it was only “got up, got dressed, and went to the bathroom.”

11. Having a spiritual connection is a big part of my program. I connect with the spiritual in my own way, adapt prayers to fit my own way of connecting to the natural world and the universe by trying to be in harmony with what is. I am an atheist with a spiritual life, but I have none of that expected objection to you believing in God. That is none of my business.

12. Service is very important to me and mostly I do the one service I can do regularly, which is to show up at meetings each week and help keep them going. I also text people and welcome new people, and lead meetings. At one time I went to intergroup, but I don't anymore for personal reasons. I practice the principles to the best of my limited ability and I also practice them to get better at them. Each step is part of the whole and makes me more whole.

– Patience M., Gainesville FL

## Tradition 1: One vs. Three

**Tradition 1:** Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon OA unity.

### **What can we do when members display disruptive behavior and upset the group?**



Unfortunately, this sort of situation crops up on occasion. Members don't get well instantly.

Although having a sponsor is very helpful in these situations, having a sponsor is not required for membership in OA. Tradition Three tells us, “Nobody is expelled from OA for not working the Steps, not getting a sponsor, not respecting the Traditions, or not adopting the Tools and practices many of us employ” (*The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous*, Second Edition, p. 108).

It appears that two Traditions (One and Three) contradict each other here. In some cases, we may need to choose which has priority. Ideally, we might be able to find some way we can honor both Traditions at the same time. **Tradition One tells us that the survival of the group has to come first**, because without the meeting other members will lose the opportunity to recover. Tradition Three tells us to welcome everyone who wants to stop eating compulsively. All members can work the program as they choose—but this does not come at the expense of the OA group.

The first consideration is the good of the Fellowship and its survival. While each member has the freedom to work the program as he or she chooses, that freedom may not come at the expense of the OA group. If a member's actions are disruptive or dangerous, the OA group needs to protect itself. If it doesn't, the meeting may fold, and everyone will lose the opportunity for recovery.

Groups and members may always refer to the “Guidelines” at [oa.org/guidelines-meetings](http://oa.org/guidelines-meetings) to read or download OA's Guidelines for Addressing Disruptive Behavior Affecting Overeaters Anonymous Meetings.



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## Promises: New Happiness

**Promise 1:** We are going to know a new freedom and a new happiness.

The 12 promises are located on pages 83-84 of chapter six “Into Action” of *Alcoholics Anonymous*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed., also known as the *Big Book*. While not appearing there as a specific list, these promises are included as text after Step 9. Consequently, these are many times referred to as the Step 9 promises.

The *Big Book* instructs us, “If we are painstaking about this phase of our development, we will be amazed before we are halfway through.” Halfway through what you may ask? Halfway through your amends list.

The first of these promises assures us we are going to know a new freedom and a new happiness. While practicing our addictions we may have experienced happiness and freedom – but these feelings were usually short-lived or artificial. Before entering the OA fellowship, and before engaging in the spiritual process of working 12 steps of the OA program, our happiness and freedom may have been associated with our “alcoholic” eating behaviors.

Who remembers the empty happiness and that fleeting feeling of freedom once they were able to indulge in their bingeing and/or purging? The *Big Book* reminds me that that I suffer under the illusion that someday, if I try hard enough, I can eat like other normal eaters. And, the persistence of this illusion is astonishing, and many food addicts pursue it into the gates of insanity or death.

But there is hope. Or, in my opinion, a spiritual awakening associated with this promise.

As we progress through the steps, particularly Step 9, we begin to change. For me, my heart began to soften to the will of my Higher Power. And, as I progressed through my amends, I began to realize that happiness and freedom were inside jobs. As I progressed through the spiritual work of making amends to those I harmed, regardless of the outcomes, I began to feel the love of my Higher Power enter my life in a more powerful and meaningful way.

I began to feel a new freedom. Freedom from not just my compulsive eating and compulsive food behaviors – but a new freedom to be and do what I want without fear. Previously I engaged the world through my individual prison of, “how and when could I eat what I want, when I want?” As I break free from this prison of my own making, I begin to truly experience freedom. To be sure, this is a new freedom.

I began to feel a new happiness. My previous happiness, many times, was selfish and involved getting what I want and keeping what I have. I used to relish the synthetic “happiness” associated with feeding my disease in secret. Today I can derive happiness from serving others. I feel a sense of happiness and well-being knowing that I’ve cleaned my side of the street, and I have no “unfinished business” with those I harmed during my addiction.

As we progress through Step 9, we begin to see the program actually working in our life. Healing old relationships, or at least clearing away the wreckage of the past, is extremely hard work. I pray everyone reading this has the willingness to commit to this work so they too can experience a new freedom and a new happiness.

— John K.

## And More Promises

As John indicated above, the Step 9 promises get a lot of press. What many *Big Book* readers can tell you is that there are many other promises in the text. Not that those of us who have noted them always agree on what’s a true promise, or how many there are. At the Tybee retreat, a table was set up for program materials (not all conference approved) that people were passing on to others at no charge. Included was a set of CDs which included a whole presentation on the promises, buried among hours of sessions. I have not tried to verify the speaker’s count on the overall number (which I don’t remember, offhand), but there are so many!



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As the year goes on, I will attempt to present some of the *other* promises in *Big Book* order with a few comments. The biggest consideration is that the promises are generally conditional. **One needs to do the work of the program for the promises to come true in our lives.**

### Foreword to the First Edition

... who have “recovered from a seemingly hopeless state of mind and body.” The promise that we have a program that will lead to recovery (I’m not entering the recovering vs. recovered debate) has been on offer since at least 1939.

### Foreword to the Second Edition

...the broker (Bill W.) had been “relieved of his drink obsession” by a sudden spiritual experience. We are promised that it is possible for our obsession with food and food-related behaviors to be lifted/relieved.

“...A.A.’s message could be transmitted in the mail as well as by word of mouth.” OA and AA and many other 12-step groups have published materials that have brought healing and a path to wellness. And this literature is often used in meetings as a source of meaning and discussion. The “word of mouth” part has stretched quite a bit with the advent of online meetings, and some telephone meetings persist. The idea that one can find a meeting in any time zone can relieve the problem of a dark night of temptation, but the promise of the power of the printed word remains important to me. The one-on-one method of securing the confidence of another drinker (or compulsive eater) grew to the point that AA was growing at 20% a year by the Second Edition.

### Foreword to the Third Edition

“The basic principles of the A.A. program, it appears, hold good for individuals with many different lifestyles, just as the program has brought recovery to those of many different nationalities.” In a time of fragmentation in our society and world, I find **OA’s Unity with Diversity Policy** which (hopefully) gets read at our meetings offers the promise of recovery to everyone. “Whatever problem you may have with food, you are welcome at this meeting, regardless of race, creed, nationality, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, or any other attribute.”

— Mark W.

**NFI MEETING IN THE SPOTLIGHT**

This is an intensive study of the Overeaters Anonymous and the Alcoholics Anonymous Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. We may use the appropriate workbook to complement our discussion.

**WEDNESDAYS 5:30 PM**

**FACE-TO-FACE**

**“The OA Promise” Meeting**  
Unity Church  
8801 NW 39th Avenue  
YOU Room  
Gainesville, FL 32606  
Meeting #57568

Come join us! We are  
“reaching out our hands for  
power and strength greater  
than ours.”



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# Trusted Servants and Committee Chairs (New emails)

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Ways and Means	<b>VACANT—Consider doing service</b>	wandmnfi@gmail.com

## Highlights of the December NFI Business Meeting:

(Note: These are NOT the official minutes; they are only a recap of what was discussed. Official minutes are released after changes and approval in the next month's business meeting.)

New Freedom Intergroup business meeting was held December 9. Each meeting is welcome and encouraged to send two voting members, and as many observers as desire to attend. The meeting is always the second Saturday of the month (unless otherwise decided) and runs for one and a half hours. Thus, the next business meeting is Saturday, January 13 from 10:00 am to 11:30 am by Zoom. (Meeting ID: 872 7218 1719, Password: 883350).

Highlights of what was covered at the December business meeting:

### Service Opportunities:

- We need to fill the following service positions: Delegate, Parliamentarian, Young Persons subcommittee chair, and Ways and Means chair. Other committees also need volunteers to provide service.
- In 2024 (aiming for early November), we'll be hosting a Big Book Convention at Marywood. There will be many opportunities to give service as we plan for this event and at the event itself. If you are interested in being a part of the planning committee, please reach out to Nancy K. Expect more details soon! And please continue to be on the lookout for more announcements and information about this!
- In August of 2025, the World Service Convention will be held in Orlando, FL. While NFI is not officially sponsoring or hosting this event, ANYONE is welcome to give service for it! If you are interested in helping with planning or otherwise volunteering, please contact Susan B. by email at [chair@oaregion8.org](mailto:chair@oaregion8.org)

### Other Items of Note:

- All meetings are to let Chair know about changes in format. Thank you to those who sent us updates this month! They should be reflected on the website and meeting list.
- Final reports were given for the Region 8 Business Assembly and Recovery Convention that was held in Tybee Island, GA in October. We had a very successful event, with over 100 attendees and lots of great recovery! We've also inspired other intergroups to host this event going forward, and have been asked for advice by several of them. Thank you to everyone who attended and provided service at this event!
- Elections were held for Chair and Treasurer. Echo G. was elected for a second term as Chair. Augusta L. was elected for her first term as Treasurer. Note: We will be updating our PO Box address to be more accessible for our newly elected Treasurer. As soon as we have it settled, we will share the information and make sure everyone is up to date!
- Twelfth Step Within committee is looking for groups who are willing to host a workshop in 2024 on Sponsorship. If you are interested, please reach out to Georgette P.
- Discussed the latest tactics from Zoom intruders and bad actors (see the article from Barb in this edition of the *Inner Voice* for the latest tips and suggestions for Zoom). If you are a point of contact for a meeting and would like to have your contact information removed from the websites, please reach out to Barb C. or Echo G. and we will work with you to accomplish this.



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# Zoom Intruders Have Changed Tactics!

Zoom intruders are back and they have some new ways to harass us. In addition to crashing our meetings, they are also launching personal attacks. We believe they are getting our contact information from the [OA.org](http://OA.org) meeting website. A person from Wisconsin (262-477-6018) has contacted several of us by text -- asking to talk about OA. Wanting to carry the message to the maximum extent possible, each one of us responded, stating when we were available. This person then asked us to Zoom, and this is where it got creepy. The person wanted us to show our photo on Zoom, but did not show theirs, nor did they give a real name ("o o" was the name on the screen). I started thinking, "this doesn't feel right." I told the person I was uncomfortable with the way this was proceeding and I left the Zoom room. **IF YOU FEEL UNCOMFORTABLE, STOP.** HP works in our lives. Yes, we want to carry the message, but we must also be safe ourselves. If you receive a phone call and it is NOT from a phone number you recognize, let it go to voice mail.

To prevent personal harassment:

- If you do not recognize a number, let it go to voice mail. You can decide whether or not to call back.
- DO NOT put your last name and phone number on your Zoom photo box when in a meeting. Hackers are copying our names and numbers to pretend they are a regular member and be allowed in.
- If you are uncomfortable with any conversation, shut it down.
- If you want us to **remove your personal contact information** from the NFI Meeting list or the WSO meeting lists, contact the vice-chair ([vicechair@oanfig.org](mailto:vicechair@oanfig.org)).

The next new tactic Zoom intruders are using is jumping around the Zoom screen or constantly changing their name so you cannot eject them easily. Participants enter and turn their camera off and on, or raise and lower their electronic hand to make their box move around rapidly onscreen, taking advantage of Zoom's automatic ordering in the gallery view. **Restrict the ability to start their video.** Unfortunately, we do not (yet) have a tool to prevent hand raising and lowering. Once they get into the room, it is impossible to eject them if you cannot PIN THEM DOWN. Thank goodness we have a tool for this -- it is called PIN. **PIN people you do not recognize.** As soon as their box appears, go to the three dots in the right top of their box and hit PIN. This feature freezes them and prevents them from jumping around. If you must eject them later, they are exactly where you pinned them.

Remember, the most important thing to do is not to let Zoom intruders into the meeting room at all (if you can help it). There must be a meeting leader and at least a security host (who knows what they are doing) for every meeting. Assign one or two other people you trust to be co-hosts so that they can look for weird videos and mute audio as required. The host and co-hosts who are handling room security should **not** be the meeting leader -- there is too much to do.

1. Someone from the group must get into the meeting early (10-15 minutes early) and take control as **HOST** by entering the host code (given separately) at the bottom of the **PARTICIPANTS** box. This should allow you to see the **SECURITY** parameters box. This controls the actions over all members of the meeting, including the intruders! **Immediately ENABLE WAITING ROOM AND SEND EVERYONE THERE.** Admit people one-by-one.
2. Check the meeting SECURITY. You may find that the following permissions are turned ON (have a check mark next to **them**) and allow participants to do the following:
  - a. Share screen
  - b. **Chat**
  - c. Rename themselves
  - d. Unmute themselves
  - e. **Start video**
  - f. Share whiteboards
  - g. (There are more below this. **They should be turned OFF (unchecked).**)
3. I SUGGEST YOU TURN OFF ALL OF THESE (uncheck) until the meeting is started. Once you are confident of the participants, allow them to share their video (not screen -- this is how they share pornography) and chat.
4. If you don't recognize someone in the waiting room, ask them for information about their OA experience so far. What is your home group? How long have you been in OA? What is your food problem? You may be able to find intruders just by questioning them; they know we are prescreening entry and go away. San Diego disagrees and suggests: **Don't bother to "vet" people in the Waiting Room.** It doesn't work. Let everyone in unless they have an obvious disruptive name. You can't tell anything from names or by chatting with people in the waiting room. Disruptors will fool you, and newcomers seeking to recovery will be discouraged or intimidated.



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5. Ask your meeting for a group conscience on letting “lurkers” into the room. These are people who attend, but leave their camera off and often do NOT share/participate. You can make it a part of the format for your meeting to ask people to turn on their cameras to be fully present during the meeting (you may still have some people who have no camera.) If we were in a face-to-face meeting, they could not hide outside of the room.
6. PIN people you do not recognize. As soon as their box appears, go to the three dots in the right top of their box and hit PIN. This prevents them from jumping around. If you must eject them later, they are exactly where you pinned them.
7. **Remove disruptors and report to Zoom.** Click "report later" and fill out the report that comes to your email. Do not put them in the waiting room.
8. **Don't panic and end your meeting.** If multiple disruptors are present and you need to quiet things down quickly, use **Suspend Participant Activities** and then unmute yourself and calmly explain what happened. Unlock the room and resume the meeting.

My meeting does the following: as soon as the host signs in, the host enables the waiting room immediately. Anyone who wants to join the meeting has to be admitted by the host. If you do **NOT** recognize the name (and they are getting sneaky, even posting names such as “Jane F OA”) **DO NOT** let them in the room until you chat with them (only the people in the waiting room) and get their response. We ask questions such as, “what is your home group?”, “what is your food plan?”, etc. to get a reply that shows they know the program. Many hackers leave at this point – they don’t want us to question them. Be wary of people who will not turn on their video or introduce themselves when asked.

Five to ten minutes after the meeting has started, we LOCK MEETING – no one else can request admittance. This seems harsh, but many intruders seem to come into the meetings late. OAers know that we start our meetings on time and end on time. This frees the hosts/cohosts from having to maintain tight vigilance and lets them enjoy their own recovery meeting. You may want to include a mention of this in your meeting format, as well. Again, San Diego disagrees and says this makes your meeting room unwelcome.

Some meetings have had people hijack the screen or post derogatory/inflammatory comments in the chat room. This can be resolved in the SECURITY box by NOT allowing participants to share their screen or chat, and by turning off annotation. The host/cohosts can mute everyone else (thus preventing background noise and feedback). Check the other parameters in security – we enabled many of them (such as requiring a password, when we set up the original meeting, without crippling who can share. If you want tighter controls, you may turn them on or off.

If you follow all the best practices in this guide, you should never find yourself in a meeting with an unwanted guest. But if you do need to remove an attendee from the meeting at any point, Zoom makes it easy to kick an unwanted participant out of the meeting. For additional security, you can also choose to not allow participants to rejoin once they’ve been removed.

- **Remove Participants** – Once you’ve admitted an attendee into your meeting, you can easily push them back to the Waiting Room or remove them from the meeting all together, and can even prevent their return.
- **Suspend participant activities** – Use this as a quick means to get rid of the intruders! No one in the meeting can take any action and the intruders get bored, should leave the meeting. The participant numbers should decrease – put anyone you don’t recognize into the waiting room.

**Remember: when we have control over our meetings, the intruders do not.**

Additional information:

1. A guide entitled “OA FOOT STEPS VIRTUAL INTERGROUP -- EMERGENCY ZOOM PROTOCOLS” which discussed actions we can take to keep our meetings safe. We posted it on the NFI website next to the Zoom meetings: <https://img1.wsimg.com/blobby/go/5da998b5-e4ee-4a7d-8e91-770f8a9e6f75/downloads/emergency-zoom-protocolsUPDATE1.pdf?ver=1702136124706>. If you cannot download this and need an additional copy, please contact the vice-chair.
2. A pdf on “Best Practices for Securing Your Zoom Meetings” <https://explore.zoom.us/docs/doc/Securing%20Your%20Zoom%20Meetings.pdf>
3. OA San Diego (<https://oasandiego.org/zoom/>) offers monthly Zoom training. Zoom training is open to all giving service in Zoom meetings in Overeaters Anonymous and other 12-step programs. Registration is required (8-9 PM EST). Their 1-hour class in Zoom Security will cover best practices and Zoom settings to minimize disruption, intruders how to remove individual disruptors, and what to do if your meeting is targeted for a coordinated attack (aka Zoom intruders). Please join them to make yourself feel more comfortable.



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# Events from All Over

## Meet the Virtual Region Chair



12 PM ET (4 PM UTC) & 8:30 PM ET (12:30 PM UTC)  
The Fourth Friday of Every Month

Bring your **QUESTIONS** and **IDEAS**  
Join the **DISCUSSION**  
Learn about **UPCOMING EVENTS**



Zoom Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87080400598?pwd=TnhOQm1EN1R1WWQ0N2xVbEJQQtmtuQT09>

Meeting ID: 870 8040 0598. Passcode: 120912



### Responsibility Pledge

Always to extend the hand and heart of OA to all  
who share my compulsion; for this I am responsible.



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THE LOS ANGELES INTERGROUP PROUDLY PRESENTS

# THE 64<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL OA BIRTHDAY PARTY

## Together We Get Better

JANUARY 12<sup>TH</sup> – 14<sup>TH</sup>, 2024

AT THE LAX HILTON  
5711 W. CENTURY BLVD.  
LOS ANGELES, CA

COME MEET YOUR FELLOWS FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD.  
WORKSHOPS, PANELS, SPECIAL FOCUS MEETINGS, MARATHONS, OPENING  
CEREMONY ON FRIDAY NIGHT, DANCE PARTY ON SATURDAY NIGHT, YOGA,  
MEDITATION, AND MORE.

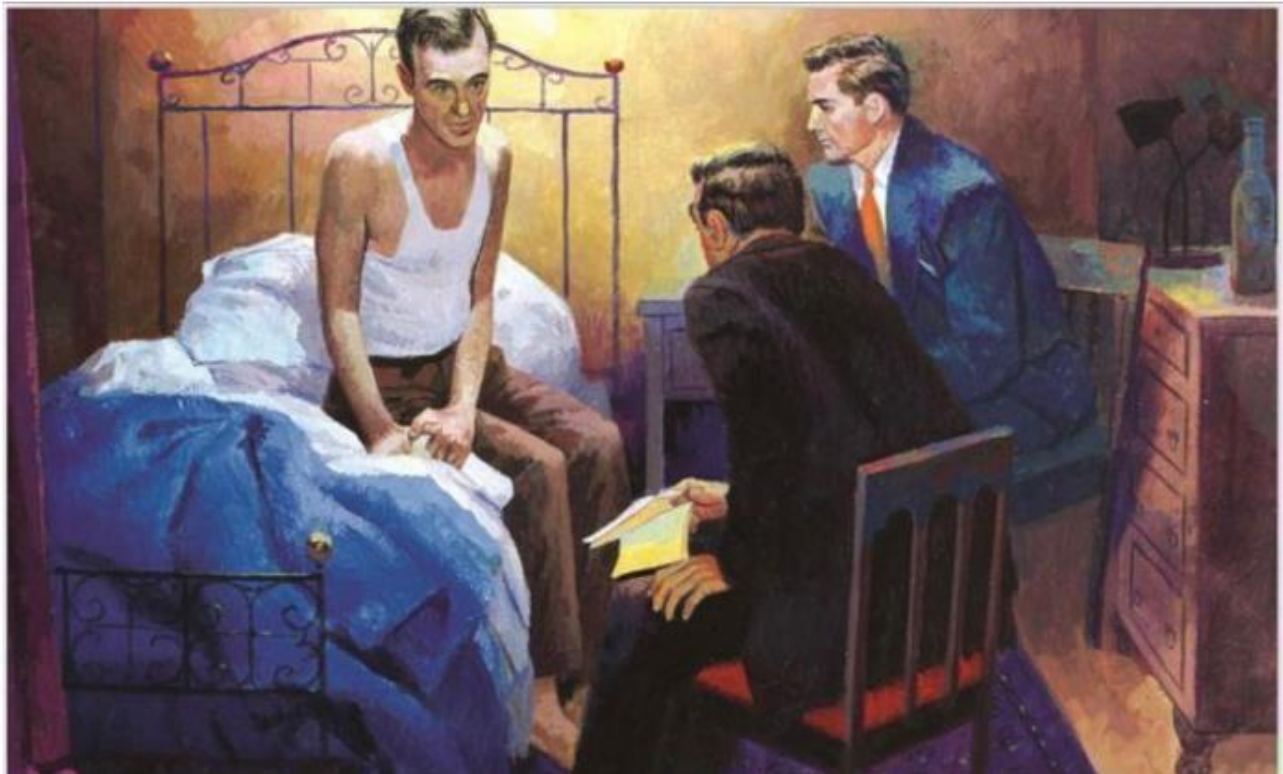
 EARLY BIRD REGISTRATION: \$45 (THROUGH NOV. 30)  
GENERAL REGISTRATION: \$55 (THROUGH JAN. 7)  
FINAL REGISTRATION: \$65 (THROUGH JAN. 14)

Registration  
opens Oct. 15th  
[oabirthday.com](http://oabirthday.com)

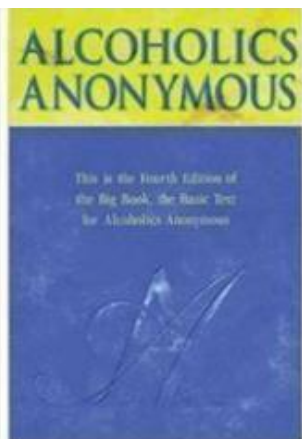


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*Using scripts based on the beginners meetings  
in the 1940s: a focused introduction to the 12  
step program in 4 weekly sessions.*



**OVEREATERS ANONYMOUS  
BACK TO BASICS  
EVERY SUNDAY  
7:30-9pm UK  
2:30-4pm EST  
11:30am - 1PM PST**

**ZOOM ID: 853 4685 2850  
PASSWORD:121212**



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Week 1: OA 12 and 12 Step of the month  
Week 2: OA Principle of the month  
Week 3: AA Big Book Step of the month  
Week 4: Lead/Speaker Meeting  
Week 5: Topic Meeting

# Sunday Morning Coffee and Recovery Meeting

*Online Zoom Meeting - Every Sunday*  
9:00 AM to 10:00 AM (Eastern)

Zoom Meeting ID: 842 2999 2560 883975      Link: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84229992560>  
Dial In: +1 929 205 6099



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## More from Region 8

### *A new way to carry the message!*

Region 8 announces an excellent resource page with links to valuable OA information to benefit newcomers, returning and current members. Maybe even the "old timers." 😊

Have you read the appendices to *Overeaters Anonymous, Third Edition*? They include writings on The Role of a Plan of Eating, A Disease of the Mind, A Disease of the Mind, A Disease of the Body, A Disease of the Spirit and more.

People may scan this QR code (point your smart phone's camera at the QR code and it will pop up a link) and connect to the Region 8 resources page. Please feel free to print this information and pass around in face-to-face meetings or insert into a visual format for virtual meetings.

Check it out — Pass it on!



OVEREATERS  
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Region 8



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## Where are your donations going?

According to our Seventh Tradition, we are self-supporting through our own contributions. To donate directly to Intergroup, write a check made payable to 'NFI' and mail to: OA NFI, PO Box 550842, Jacksonville, FL 32255; or log onto oanfig.org and scroll down to the 'donate' button. You may pay by PayPal or credit card.

When you contribute your 7th Tradition donations, if you indicate your group number, the donation will be recorded for that specific group. When we do not have a group number to work with, we may include the donations as unspecified.

Each 9, NFI tallies the group donations and sends 10% of the total to Region 8, with an additional 30% to the World Service Office.

Donations sent directly to World Service Office do not reflect in our group donations total.

DONATIONS REPORT 2023		Dec	YTD TOTAL
General Fund / no meeting # specified		\$131.56	\$1,069.07
<b>Jacksonville Groups</b>		<b>Grp#</b>	
Mon: Shepherd of the Woods Church	00774		\$0.00
Tue: Lakewood United Meth Church	36763		\$0.00
Tue: 7pm Jacksonville (virtual)	800028		
Wed: Step Study Mandarin	51223	\$44.08	\$681.61
Wed: JAX Beach-Wisdom at the Beaches	54507		\$230.00
Thur: Jacksonville 9am - Our redeemer	57370		
Thur: Newcomer, Lakeview Health	47756		\$0.00
Fri: Orange Park - 10am	03654		\$200.00
Sat: Saturday Steppers-Ponte Vedra Bch	51693		\$850.00
Sat: Super Saturday Lakeview	20025		\$0.00
Sat: Believe in Recovery First, Mandarin	32773	\$52.43	\$1,374.08
<b>Gainesville Groups</b>			
Mon: Big Book Study (Alachua)	51137	\$25.00	\$283.00
Thu: Unity Church(Acceptance)	50421	\$9.22	\$218.64
Wed: Gainesville Unity Church	57568		
Sat: 9:30 AM Welcome Home	48324		\$200.00
<b>Other Florida Groups</b>			
Mon: Palm Coast-St Mark by the Sea	38320	\$20.19	\$73.19
Tues: Lifesaver - Palatka	38464		\$0.00
Wed: Palm Coast - 10am	56604	\$22.00	\$246.00
Thu: Fernandina Beach	49101		\$0.00
Thu: Flagler Beach	15171	\$21.00	\$154.00
Sat: St. Augustine Serenity	00235	\$23.79	\$525.48
Sun: Palm Coast/Flagler Beach	56072		\$108.00
<b>Southern Georgia Groups</b>			
Tue: Jesup	54175	\$25.00	\$275.00
Wed: Douglas, GA	57445		
Wed: Savannah - 5:30 pm	50301		\$0.00
Thur: Brunswick	51988		\$0.00
Sun: Savannah - 5pm	54362	\$28.64	\$343.68
<b>Totals</b>		<b>\$402.91</b>	<b>\$7,031.75</b>
<b>Don to WSO</b>		<b>\$120.87</b>	
<b>Don to SOAR8</b>		<b>\$40.29</b>	

Articles printed in this newsletter reflect the opinion of each individual OA member and do not represent OA as a whole. Intergroup meets on the 2nd Saturday of each month. The deadline to submit articles is the 20th of the month before the Intergroup meeting. Articles may be edited. When submitting articles, please include your name and phone number and whether or not you would like your name printed. This newsletter may be reproduced and enjoyed by other 12-steppers without written permission. If you would like to submit articles and/or comments, or if you would like to receive the Inner Voice in color as a pdf, send your email address to the Newsletter Chair at [innervoicenf@gmail.com](mailto:innervoicenf@gmail.com).



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