

When leading the meeting,
please read the format exactly as it is written.

ONLINE BIG BOOK STUDY MEETING
Friday 1:00pm (EST)
MEETING FORMAT

[Click here for Leader and Tech Host Instructions](#)

[Leader: Before starting the meeting, check the Reading Log to see if there is a Leader and a Tech Host signed up for next month. If the Leader or Tech Host positions are open for next month, please solicit volunteers by reading the text after the OA Announcements.]

[Click here for Friday Reading Log](#)

The format for this meeting, a link to the AA Big Book, and a copy of the 12 steps and traditions are available at the link posted in the chat section.

[Leader to Tech Host]: Please copy/paste this website in the chat section

<https://bigbookrecovery.blogspot.com/>

Hello and welcome to the Overeaters Anonymous Online Big Book Personal Stories Meeting. My name is _____ and I am a [compulsive eater/food addict] and your leader for this meeting. In order to keep this meeting free from distraction, we ask that all in attendance please mute yourselves unless you are speaking. We also ask that everyone at this meeting be mindful of protecting the anonymity of all in attendance here. If possible we suggest using headphones and finding a private

location from which you may participate. We also suggest keeping the video mode turned off if you are doing anything other than sitting and participating in this meeting so that we can minimize distraction.

After a moment of silence, will those of you who wish, **please remain muted** and join me in the Serenity Prayer.

“God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.”

If you are a newcomer, we are so glad you are here. We hope you find what you are looking for. You will find hope and encouragement in Overeaters Anonymous. We suggest attending at least six different meetings to learn the many ways OA can help you.

OA PREAMBLE: Overeaters Anonymous is a fellowship of individuals who, through shared experience, strength, and hope, are recovering from compulsive eating. 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 compulsive food behaviors and to carry the message of recovery through the Twelve Steps of OA to those who still suffer.

Are there any OA announcements?

[Leader: Read only if next month needs volunteers for the Leader and Tech Host positions]: We need volunteers for the Leader and Tech Host positions for next month. Who would like to volunteer for either of those service positions? *[Ask Tech Host to add volunteer's names to the Reading Log.]*

In addition to today's meeting, there are two other weekly meetings that share this same Zoom link. For more information, click on the meeting info link that was posted earlier in the chat section.

<https://bigbookrecovery.blogspot.com/>

Today's meeting focuses on the Personal Stories that are found in the back of the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous. We find great value as Compulsive Overeaters in listening to and identifying with others who have suffered in a similar way and are now recovering.

Introductions will be made in the chat section. You may click on "participants" and then "chat" to share your first name, where you are from, and how long you have been in the program. We especially want to welcome newcomers. We hope you join us again!

You can access our Member Contact List and add yourself by clicking on the Meeting Info link that was posted earlier in the chat section.

Would someone please read the Twelve Steps of Overeaters Anonymous?

Would someone please read the Tradition of the month?

12 Steps and 12 Traditions

We will be reading and discussing pages 171-558 of the Big Book. These pages contain the Personal Stories of many of the first recovered alcoholics from the AA program upon which our program is based. The leader or a volunteer will begin by reading two paragraphs before opening the discussion. We will read from the Big Book exactly as it's written. There is no abstinence requirement to read or share. We ask that you share on topic and talk about what the reading means to you. Once everyone has had an opportunity to share, the reading will continue. Please limit your sharing to 4 minutes. This meeting uses a timer. Would someone please volunteer to be the timer? *[Pause and wait for a volunteer:]* The timer will click on "Participants" and then "Chat" and after 3 minutes, they will type in "One minute remaining" and after 4 minutes are up, the timer will type "Thanks for sharing," addressing the speaker by name.

Please turn to page ____, paragraph beginning ____.

[LEADER OR A VOLUNTEER READS TWO PARAGRAPHS]

[AFTER THE READING]: The meeting is now open for sharing on what was just read. If you would like to share, please click on "raise hand" and a little hand will appear. The leader will announce the shares one at a time in the order that they appear in the participant section.

[WHEN EVERYBODY HAS HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO SHARE, THE LEADER ASKS FOR A VOLUNTEER TO READ THE NEXT TWO PARAGRAPHS.]

[1:55pm ET (NOTE TO LEADER: End meeting promptly at 1:55pm regardless of remaining raised hands):

This concludes our meeting for today. We will have business/group conscience meetings quarterly. Business matters concerning all three meetings sharing this link will be discussed on the last **Friday** of January, April, July, and October at the end of our regular meeting. Matters concerning this Friday meeting in particular will also be discussed at that quarterly business meeting. Please bring your concerns and ideas to these business meetings.

Our 7th tradition states that every OA group ought to be fully self supporting, declining outside contributions. Expenses for this group will include access to this video conferencing platform and donations to World Service. You can make a donation using Venmo or PayPal posting funds to our OA Treasurer, Shalece. All the information you need to make a donation have been posted in the chat section. *(NOTE TO LEADER: Check to be sure that it was posted by the Tech Host.)*

*TEXT FOR TECH HOST TO COPY/PASTE IN
CHAT SECTION:*

[Our 7th tradition states that every OA group ought to be fully self supporting, declining outside contributions. Expenses for this group will include access to this video conferencing platform and donations to World Service. You can make a donation using Venmo posting funds to @Shalece-Fiack or PayPal posting funds to @shalecefiack1. Please reach out to Shalece

via WhatsApp at 801-503-2249 if you need assistance making a donation.]

If you are available to sponsor, please leave your contact information in the chat section. For additional sponsor resources, click on the meeting info link that was posted earlier in the chat section.

Would the Tech Host [\[address by name\]](#) please note in the reading log where we left off. The link to the reading log is located in the format.

[Click here for Friday Reading Log](#)

We will conclude this meeting for today with a reading from the Big Book on page 164, if you care to read along. “Our book is meant to be suggestive only. We realize we know only a little. God will constantly disclose more to you and to us. Ask Him in your morning meditation what you can do each day for the man who is still sick. The answers will come, if your own house is in order. But obviously you cannot transmit something you haven’t got. See to it that your relationship with Him is right, and great events will come to pass for you and countless others. This is the Great Fact for us. Abandon yourself to God as you understand God. Admit your faults to Him and to your fellows. Clear away the wreckage of your past. Give freely of what you find and join us. We shall be with you in the Fellowship of the Spirit, and you will surely meet some of us as you trudge the Road of Happy Destiny. May God bless you and keep you until then.

After a moment of silence, will those of you who wish, **please remain muted** and join me in the Serenity Prayer.

“God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.”

Are there any non OA announcements?

12 STEPS OF OVEREATERS ANONYMOUS

1. We admitted we were powerless over food — that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong, promptly admitted it.
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these Steps, we tried to carry this message to compulsive overeaters and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

12 TRADITIONS OF OVEREATERS ANONYMOUS

TRADITION ONE

Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon OA unity. This is the first tradition: unity. The reason for this tradition is clear enough when you consider the consequences of OA fragmentation. If we split up into little argumentative groups, where is the strength we need? Growth depends on strength - both personal growth and group effectiveness. Our recovery usually is not something we can do by ourselves. We need the loving support of our peers. We cannot afford to let disagreements deprive us of our unity. But does this mean that we must always be in sheeplike agreement? That is not possible, even if it were desirable. What it does mean is that discussion and differences of opinion must be resolved, in the end, by consideration of the welfare of the group as a whole. Not all groups follow the same eating plan or use the same format in their meetings. Some of our members must follow special diets for medical reasons. These differences are not important. Our common ground and our one source of unity is that we are all working the twelve steps of recovery.

TRADITION TWO

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. The newcomer may ask, "Who is the head of OA?" and be puzzled by the answer in tradition two: a loving God. No organization in the world, except other twelve-step groups, is run quite this way. It may seem thoroughly impractical, but it works! We ask God's guidance and then vote on concerns, and the group decision is our authority. Not all group decisions will be wise and practical. We do make mistakes. Then we must look for better answers to the problem. In time we are likely to see that we have learned and grown from our mistakes. No one person has all the answers in OA. It is only natural for the founders of a group to feel that they must always guide and direct the group. But this is not so. The counsel of elder members can continue to be invaluable, but it is not good for the group or the individual for one person to hold authority long. A vital part of personal growth is learning humility by yielding our self-will. As a group we may think it is easier to follow a strong leader than to join in making our own decisions at a steering committee meeting. But group conscience must be our guide in making all decisions for the group. There is more strength in working out solutions together.

TRADITION THREE

The only requirement for OA membership is a desire to stop eating compulsively. Most organizations have rules for membership. We have only one: a desire to stop eating compulsively. A person cannot be banned from OA because he differs from others in race, political views, religion, economic status, interpretation of the program, or food plan. Weight is not a criterion for membership. A person is a member if he has the desire to overcome his compulsion. There is a place in OA for each of us. Here we are free to be ourselves and be accepted. Some groups have been troubled by members who were emotionally disturbed and tended to disrupt the harmony of the meetings. Yet they were not ousted from the group and were not denied the chance of recovery. They had the one requirement for membership: the desire to stop overeating. Troublesome personal problems can be dealt with on a one-to-one basis through sponsorship. In time these groups were seen to survive, stronger than ever. Note, too, that desire is required, not success. Many people keep coming back even though they feel they have failed. The door never closes. As long as they keep coming back, they have a chance.

TRADITION FOUR

Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or OA as a whole. Tradition four defines our freedom. Our groups are free to find what works for them. They can make their own mistakes and learn from them. There are only two limits to this freedom: we may not do anything which will injure OA as a whole, and we must remain free from outside influence. Our decisions must be by group conscience. Let us see how this works. Suppose a group decides to have no format, to eliminate the twelve steps. Of course it is free to do so, but it is no longer an OA group and should not identify itself as such. It is simply a diet club. If members make a habit of going out after meetings and overeating together, they should not speak of themselves as OA members, lest they harm the reputation of OA as a whole. On the other hand, if a group votes to regulate smoking areas or to institute abstinence requirements for officers it is exercising group autonomy. If a meeting is held in a church or school, it must, of course, conform to rules about smoking, noise, tidiness, etc. But its membership is not to be confined to members of the church or residents of the area. It must be open to all who wish to abstain from compulsive overeating. Nor is its freedom of expression to be limited by nonmembers. Group conscience is always our guide.

TRADITION FIVE

Each group has but one primary purpose - to carry its message to the compulsive overeater who still suffers. The practicing compulsive overeater is more likely to listen to a recovered overeater than to doctors, family, or friends. If their advice were sufficient, very few would be obese. But we can and do listen to one another. We share our feelings and experiences with others. When we are traveling the road to recovery, we are uniquely equipped to help others, because they will let us. This is our prime purpose. An OA group is not a social club, though we make wonderful friends. If a group has stopped getting newcomers, it is time to examine its actions. Are efforts being made to let OA be known by public notice and personal witness? Is the newcomer neglected, while friends are absorbed in conversation? Or is the newcomer warmly welcomed and made to feel at home? Our group purpose is to carry the message. Specific causes, religions, unrelated philosophies, no matter how worthwhile, are not promoted at OA meetings.

TRADITION SIX

An OA group ought never to endorse, finance, or lend the OA name to any facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property, and prestige divert us from our primary purpose. It may sometimes occur to some among us that we could carry the message most effectively through health camps, packaged meals, or restaurants. Why not? It seems very promising at first glance. But the experience of AA has shown us the pitfalls. If the OA name is used for one outside enterprise, no matter how very well-meaning, it may then be applied to many others. Inevitably, some would not be to our credit. Then, too, we might lose sight of our primary purpose, carrying the message, in building up our profits and power. Personal power drives and desire to prestige would appear, and our ego demands would cause dissention. We find it necessary to keep the profit motive firmly separated from our twelfth-step work at all times. Freely it is given to us and freely we give it away.

TRADITION SEVEN

Every OA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions. Our OA program is our lifeline, our escape from our compulsion. It is very precious to us. Money is needed to keep it alive. Each group has expenses - the meeting room, the books and literature, the coffee and tea. When groups become numerous and strong enough, there is the need to support an intergroup office, as well as the World Service Office. How are we to finance our needs? They must be met by our own contributions. We may not accept donations from non-members; in fact there is a limit of \$1,000 on the amount that may be given by one member in a year to our World Service Office. The reasons for this are clear. If we accept "free" gifts from outsiders, or too much from one member, we become less than free ourselves. If someone is paying our way, he will naturally come to expect to have a voice in our decisions. The heavy contributor in a group might develop a desire to dominate the group. This we cannot allow, for our ultimate authority is "a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience." Our groups are urged not to hoard large sums of money, but to keep only a small reserve above running expenses. We are not profit-making, and money is not our goal. As long as we pay our own way from our own pockets, we will have public respect, and our own. We will be free.

TRADITION EIGHT

Overeaters Anonymous should forever remain non-professional, but our service centers may employ special workers. Our World Service Office and intergroup offices require workers to take care of the business of OA. Phones must be answered, bills paid and accounts kept, supplies ordered, business correspondence attended to, and records maintained. When the work becomes too heavy for volunteers to handle, we need to hire special workers who may or may not be OA members. But sponsoring, leading, speaking, explaining OA to newcomers - "carrying the message" - is our twelfth-step work and it must always be free from the dollar motive. Compulsive overeaters will listen to those of us who give freely from our own experience. Special workers are paid for office services, which makes the twelfth-step work by volunteers possible.

TRADITION NINE

OA, as such, ought never be organized, but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve. At first glance, Overeaters Anonymous may seem to be organized. There are many tasks and functions in our groups and their activities. These services are delegated to special committees and service boards. Intergroup offices are formed when enough groups in an area realize the need and provide the support to maintain them. Our World Service Business Conference is composed of delegates chosen by local intergroups. The members of the World Service Board of Trustees are elected by and are directly responsible to the Conference which represents the collective conscience of OA as a whole. Yet, Overeaters Anonymous as a whole is not organized. We have no president or vice-president, no one with governing power in OA. No groups of members can be expelled from OA. If traditions are broken, we can call it to the attention of the persons or groups involved, but do not demand compliance. We can suggest, but not order. It is not necessary that we give orders, even if it were possible. The group that does not follow traditions is soon struggling with serious problems. Through trial and error, groups and service boards come to accept direction from those they serve.

TRADITION TEN

Overeaters Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the OA name ought never be drawn into public controversy. Since our members come from many different areas and many backgrounds, we naturally have many shades of opinion represented. This could cause dissent and controversy. But we find that we can maintain unity without sacrificing personal freedom of thought. We are free to believe in and work for any cause we choose - outside OA. Within OA we are concerned only with the message of recovery. Other issues, however worthy, have no place in an OA meeting. Nor will OA as a whole endorse any party, religion, therapy, nutritional reform, or other cause. Our sole business is to carry the twelve-step message to the compulsive overeater who still suffers. We cannot afford to let anything interfere with this objective.

TRADITION ELEVEN

Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, films, television, and other public means of communication. In OA we have found hope at last, a way out of our dilemma. It is only natural that we are filled with enthusiasm and feel we cannot wait to tell everyone who is overeating the good news! But if we are too excited and eager to use restraint in our approach, we may very likely find the one we wanted to help turned away instead. How are we to handle this problem? If prospective members give you an opening, you may, of course, be able to tell about OA, and invite them to visit a meeting. Sometimes it is better to wait until they can see a change in you and ask, "What are you doing for yourself?" When they see that you have found something they want, attraction draws them to OA. On a broader scale, how are we to help OA become more widely known? It is well within the realm of our traditions to use TV ads or radio spots, newspaper articles, "attraction cards" on bulletin boards, and anonymous panel presentations before professional groups to publicize OA. We must be careful of our methods. It is OA we wish to publicize, not individual members. When we have an opportunity to give interviews or personal stories, we do not use our names, or show our faces. We focus the spotlight on OA, never on our own persons. Within the Fellowship many of us feel free to reveal our full names. None of us can afford to glorify himself or others. No one can afford to be a star. Personal pride makes the star fall and results in harm to the member and to OA as a whole. Whatever we may be in our lives elsewhere, in OA each of us is just one of the members.

TRADITION TWELVE

Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all these traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities. Anonymity means a great deal more to us than just not using our last names. It means being able to talk freely about feelings and experiences, without fear of gossip, so that we need not repress feelings with food. In meetings we share in a general way. More intimate problems are best discussed with a sponsor or another OA member. This is a life or death problem: there is no room for pettiness. We cannot afford to let out antagonism to some member's personality distract us from practicing the twelve steps of our program. We must strive to put our program first, admitting when we are wrong, and trying always to find peaceful ways of working together. Anonymity also means that each of our members is just that - a member of the group. We place spiritual principles before personalities. Neither can we build our program about any one person. No one is safe on a pedestal. No one is infallible. We are only compulsive overeaters, working toward our recovery. Anonymity has one more significance. It means that we serve OA in whatever way we can, without expecting glory, prestige, or power. It allows us to practice the spiritual principle of humility.