

OA PREAMBLE (revised)

Overeaters Anonymous is a Fellowship of individuals who, through shared experience, strength, and hope 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 compulsive food behaviors and to carry the message of recovery through the Twelve Steps of OA to those who still suffer.

THE TWELVE STEPS

- 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.**

THE TWELVE TRADITIONS

- 1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon OA unity.**
- 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.**
- 3. The only requirement for OA membership is a desire to stop eating compulsively.**
- 4. Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or OA as a whole.**
- 5. Each group has but one primary purpose--to carry its message to the compulsive overeater who still suffers.**
- 6. An OA group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the OA name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property, and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.**
- 7. Every OA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.**
- 8. Overeaters Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers.**
- 9. OA, as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.**
- 10. Overeaters Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the OA name ought never be drawn into public controversy.**
- 11. 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 media of communication.**
- 12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all these traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.**



Welcome Home (abridged)

Have you ever wished you could lose ten pounds (5 kg)? Twenty (9 kg)? Forty (18kg)? A hundred (45kg) or more? Have you ever wished that once you got it off you could keep it off? Welcome to OA; welcome home!

Have you sometimes felt out of step with the world, like a homeless orphan without a place where you really belonged? Welcome to OA; welcome home!

Have you ever wished your family would get to work or school so you could get busy eating? Welcome to OA; welcome home!

Have you ever awakened first thing in the morning and felt happy because you remembered that your favorite goodie was waiting for you in the fridge or in the cupboard? Welcome to OA; welcome home!

Have you ever looked up at the stars and wondered what an insignificant person like you is doing in the world anyway? Welcome to OA; welcome home!

Have you ever cooked, bought, or baked for your family and then eaten everything yourself so you wouldn't have to share? We know you in OA because we are you. Welcome to OA; welcome home!

Have you ever wanted to hide in the house, without going to work, without getting cleaned up or even getting dressed, without seeing anyone or letting anyone see you? Welcome to OA; welcome home!

Have you ever hidden food under the bed, under the pillow, in the drawer, in the bathroom, in the wastebasket, the cupboard, the clothes hamper, the closet, or the car so that you could eat without anyone seeing you? Welcome to OA; welcome home!

Have you ever been angry, resentful, defiant—toward God, your mate, your doctor, your mother, your father, your friends, your children, the salespeople in stores whose looks spoke a thousand words as you tried on clothes—because they were thin, because they wanted you to be thin, and because you were forced to diet to please them or shut them up or make them eat their words and their looks? We welcome you to OA; welcome home!

Have you ever sobbed out your misery in the dark night because no one loved or understood you? Welcome to OA; welcome home!

—*A Taste of Lifeline*, pp. xiii–xvi

OA Board-approved.
Overeaters Anonymous®, Inc.
Mail Address: P.O. Box 44727, Rio Rancho, NM 87174-4727 USA
Tel: 1-505-891-2664 • Fax: 1-505-891-4320
info@oa.org • www.oa.org

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Our Invitation to You

We of Overeaters Anonymous have made a discovery. At the very first meeting we attended, we learned that we were in the clutches of a dangerous illness, and that willpower, emotional health and self-confidence, which some of us had once possessed, were no defense against it.

We have learned that the reasons for the illness are unimportant. What deserves the attention of the still-suffering compulsive overeater is this: there is a proven, workable method by which we can arrest our illness.

The OA recovery program is patterned after that of Alcoholics Anonymous. As our personal stories attest, the Twelve-Step program of recovery works as well for compulsive overeaters as it does for alcoholics.

Can we guarantee you this recovery? The answer is up to you. If you will honestly face the truth about yourself and the illness; if you will keep coming back to meetings to talk and listen to other recovering compulsive overeaters; if you will read our literature and that of Alcoholics Anonymous with an open mind; and, most important, if you are willing to rely on a power greater than yourself for direction in your life, and to take the Twelve Steps to the best of your ability, we believe you can indeed join the ranks of those who recover.

To remedy the emotional, physical and spiritual illness of compulsive eating we offer several suggestions, but keep in mind that the basis of the program is spiritual, as evidenced by the Twelve Steps.

We are not a "diet" club. We do not endorse any particular plan of eating. In OA, abstinence is the action of refraining from compulsive eating and compulsive food behaviors while working towards or maintaining a healthy body weight. Once we become abstinent, the preoccupation with food diminishes and in many cases leaves us entirely. We then find that, to deal with our inner turmoil, we have to have a new way of thinking, of acting on life rather than reacting to it — in essence, a new way of living.

From this vantage point, we begin the Twelve Step program of recovery, moving beyond the food and the emotional havoc to a fuller living experience. As a result of practicing the Steps, the symptoms of compulsive eating and compulsive food behaviors are removed on a daily basis, achieved through the process of surrendering to something greater than ourselves; the more total our surrender, the more fully realized our freedom from food obsession.

PROMISES

BIG BOOK, PAGES 83 & 84

- 1:** We are going to know a new freedom and a new happiness.
- 2:** We will not regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it.
- 3:** We will comprehend the word serenity.
- 4:** We will know peace.
- 5:** No matter how far down the scale we have gone, we will see how our experience can benefit others.
- 6:** The feeling of uselessness and self-pity will disappear.
- 7:** We will lose interest in selfish things and gain interest in our fellows.
- 8:** Self-seeking will slip away.
- 9:** Our whole attitude and outlook upon life will change.
- 10:** Fear of people and economic insecurity will leave us.
- 11:** We will intuitively know how to handle situations which used to baffle us.
- 12:** We will suddenly realize that God is doing for us what we could not do for ourselves.