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Step 3

Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him. Spiritual Principle: Faith

As expected, many people in recovery initially have trouble with this step. Understandably, it can be difficult if someone doesn't believe in God or they have conflicting feelings about religion. However, Step 3 isn't meant to make us feel obligated to follow any God or a specific set of religious beliefs. Instead, it helps us learn how to rely on our higher power (whatever that may be) to be the best version of ourselves that we can be.

This third step is less about believing in God and more about admitting we can't control our addiction on our own and embracing spirituality in the process. It requires that we put the thoughts and words we speak during Steps 1 and 2 into action by placing our faith in a higher power and courageously surrendering our life to someone or something else (fellowship, family, sponsor, etc.) who is genuinely invested in our recovery and healing.

In short, Step 3 opens the door to the actions found in Steps 4 through 12. It invites us to begin changing our behavior so it aligns with our outward commitment to an abstinent life.

(Edited from Step 3 of the 12 Steps: Tips, How to Do It, and Printable Worksheets; briarwooddetox.com)

Tradition 3

The only requirement for OA membership is a desire to stop eating compulsively. Spiritual Principle: Identity

As Tradition Three implies, a desire to abstain, to refrain from eating compulsively, is at the heart of OA membership. There are many opinions among us, about what it means exactly, to stop eating compulsively. Nobody is excluded from OA Membership because of his or her personal opinion of how to achieve abstinence. Note, too, that while the desire to stop eating compulsively is required, a person doesn't have to be abstinent to be welcome at OA meetings. We encourage one another to keep coming back, no matter what. *(OA 12&12, pp.129-135)*

Concept 3

The right of decision, based on trust, makes effective leadership possible. Spiritual Principle: Trust

Tool of the month

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

Carrying the message to the compulsive overeater who still suffers is the basic purpose of our Fellowship; therefore, it is the most fundamental form of service. Any form of service—no matter how small—that helps reach a fellow sufferer adds to the quality of our own recovery. — *Tools of Recovery*, p.7

When I first joined OA, I shied away from service opportunities. I told myself several things: "I'm too new," "I don't know enough about program to perform that particular service," "It will take too much time from my work or family," and, best of all, "In the past, I have given too much of myself and my time to other organizations. Since I don't know how to give in a healthy way, I'm going to be very cautious now."

In order for me to reap the benefits of service, I had to get over the hurdles I set up to sabotage my own attempts at recovery. I had to blindly volunteer to perform service even though I did not feel experienced enough or recovered enough or healthy enough to set appropriate limits around my service. Even though I thought I was making it easier for myself by not doing service, I was actually making it harder on myself by denying myself the tool that so effectively enhances my recovery. — *Voices of Recovery*, p. 90

Service



“Acting as if” leads to willingness

I am so used to trying to control every aspect of my unmanageable life that turning my will over to my higher power day-to-day is not instinctual.

“Act as if you’re willing.” That’s what one of our fellows shared in a meeting. I was returning to program after a many-years absence. A fellow spoke about how—sometimes—there were days when getting on their knees to pray for willingness was tough. They might be feeling defiant, lost in the food, or not present. Willful. But knowing that surrendering their will was the key to freedom, this fellow decided to “act as if” they were willing. They said the Third Step Prayer daily with an attitude that they could “act as if” until giving up their will was instinct.

“That’s interesting,” I thought. Coincidentally and miraculously, I must have known this could be true for me too. Even though I had not been attending meetings, nor serving for several years, I still got on my knees before bed and said the Third Step Prayer nightly. Without even knowing it, I was “acting as if” and it led me back into the rooms, to seek sponsorship, turn my food over daily, and serve my fellows in various volunteer activities.

Even when my abstinence isn’t perfect, and even if I am just going through the motions on any given day, I am anchored in program when I end the day with the Third Step Prayer. —Anonymous, North Carolina



Step 3: Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood him.

Everything is placed in God’s hands. If my food, weight and body issues, which were once out of control, insisting that I binge at least once per week, whether I wanted to or not, can be transformed by placing them in God’s hands, what can’t God do? What can’t God help me to do? The sky is the limit. It took a lot of prayer and a lot of study and a lot of guidance and conversation, but praying over situations in life and turning them over to Higher Power makes them a lot easier and better. It streamlines problems and challenges and turns them into blessings. It maximizes and optimizes joys and potential where I least expected it.

*The opinions expressed in the articles are those of OA members and not of Overeaters Anonymous as a whole.
For more information about OA, please visit Triangle OA’s website or www.OA.org.*

I honestly feel that taking Step 3 has led to the miracle of freedom from food obsession. Along with the other steps and tools and the gifts of the program and the fellowship of the program, I am blessed to say that I am in food neutrality. Just the other day, I prayed to put another matter in God's hands. It had nothing to do with food, weight and body issues, but I did what was requested of me to address the situation and then I prayed over it and put it in God's hands. I felt much better and I feel the situation will be addressed and seen to appropriately. I was able to rest and relax and sleep and take good care of myself in the morning and go on about my day with a good, in the moment attitude.

Higher Power can help me with my will and my life, but it can and does care and helps me with all the little things that I put in its hands as well. Each bite, each step, each breath, each decision, each action, Higher Power loves me and sees my will to do good in the world. If Higher Power can see to little things like every forkful of food that goes in my mouth and large things like building buildings, I see that there is nothing HP cannot guide me to accomplish. Thank you for being a part of my life. I am praying that each and every one of you reading this comes to the fullness of life that a good relationship with Higher Power, as you understand him, can bring. —Molly



Step Three: Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God *as we understood him*.

My home meeting recently had a visiting college student who was there to observe as part of a school project. Afterward, she texted to ask if she could ask me some follow-up questions. One of them was what step spoke to me most deeply. I immediately thought, “Step Three, for sure.”

Step Three is the cornerstone of my program: it matters not if I do all the other steps, if I do not surrender my will to my Higher Power, I am just going through the motions. This act of surrender is so profound that I make sure to do it every day without fail, and sometimes more often! No matter how pressed for time I am in the morning, I find time to pray “I turn my will and my life over to your use and care today and I commit to abstinence.” I’ve done it while brushing my teeth or getting dressed, but I always, always do it. Most days, I have a longer morning ritual—a longer prayer, reading the daily readers and another non-program daybook I’ve chosen for the year, writing, sending my food plan for the day to my sponsor, but even when I cannot do those, I make sure to take that crucial moment to surrender my will.

There is, of course, much more to my program than that, but I find a daily Step Three to be the foundation of all of it. I’m grateful that I finally got so desperate that I was willing to surrender my self-will run riot: it has changed and continues to change my life, one day at a time. —Anne L., Chapel Hill



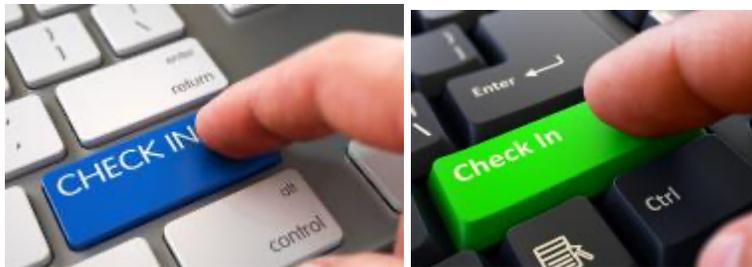
The Motivators of Membership: Weight Loss Isn't One

Here's a club I can be a proud and honest member of: no dues or fees, no oaths or pledges, no special credentials. "The only requirement for OA membership is a desire to stop eating compulsively." Thank goodness this group will have me.

In this club, I am encouraged to surrender the foods that don't work for me; seek a relationship with my higher power; and offered the experience, strength, and hope of other members who have been in the throes of their disease and found freedom in the Promises.

My membership in OA is about seeking acceptance of who I am and where I am, both within my body comfort and in relation to my food obsession—acceptance that I'm human, valuable, and loved. My weight obsession is always in the back of my head, but I keep coming back because membership in program eases my obsession and then gives so much more. I have faith that I am progressing, even when things aren't going perfectly. I'm open to whatever crops up as a result of OA. That's the miracle that keeps showing up for me, whatever I weigh.

I joined dozens of groups and shelled out hundreds of dollars, hoping for relief from what I thought was my singular problem: my weight. None was as valuable, required more work, or gave me back as much as OA. —Carrboro, NC



Thank you to the
Sunday Carrboro Meeting
and other contributors to this edition!

Tradition 3....The only requirement is a desire to stop eating compulsively.....

Question: how does a restrictor, binger/purger, and compulsive over-exerciser qualify for membership in Overeaters Anonymous? To someone who doesn't understand the nature of the "anonymous overeater", it makes no sense. How could anyone with eating disorders ranging from anorexia, bulimia, and on up through the scale(I dub that the "Eating Disorders Spectrum") qualify as a member of "Overeaters Anonymous"?

Possible Answers....

It is years of refined behavior(s) and the mental obsessions that have driven my disease. Simplified, in order NOT to overeat, I tend to restrict or binge and purge. This vicious cycle has plagued me as long as I can remember. By the age of 6 my "body" made me miserable. I knew nothing about having a distorted body image. I just knew FAT and hated it.

Fast forward a few score years and see the damages... Physically this disease has taken a huge toll. Not to mention exercise-induced injuries, I have been physically "assaulted" with osteopenia/porosis, worn out joints, and periodontal disease. My digestive tract is far from "normal". This disease is real and yes, it really brought me to my knees when I had to stop teaching exercise classes! It didn't stop when I quit using laxatives or quit throwing up. The game changer for me came from a friend in another 12-step fellowship. She looked so much healthier, was happier and seemingly much better off than I. She didn't over exercise but she understood the 12 steps! I asked her what was making a difference and she introduced me to OA. Plain and simple, I had to understand that OA is not for people who "just overeat" all the time; it's far more than that misconception, my thinking was errant.. She referred me to some groups she attended virtually in the Triangle Area. Soon thereafter, I followed her lead and realized how SAD my situation was. I wanted help and still do! I work at it every day!!

Being that I live in a small rural town in southern Virginia, Zoom meetings have been a lifesaver! Not only do I attend virtual meetings in the Triangle Area, I have branched out to AB meetings and special OA meetings related to body image, people over 50, meditation, art, and 2-way prayer. It has warmed my heart to be of service in small ways to some of the virtual groups. Thank goodness I am not "left out".... The third tradition doesn't state the only requirement for membership is a desire to stop overeating; it's about compulsive eating and food behaviors as well as striving for a healthy lifestyle. Therein is the difference. What a vast umbrella! The third tradition is inclusive, thank goodness! —Margaret C. Halifax, VA

Announcements

The Triangle OA website has a NEW Look!

The new website is LIVE! Come visit us and celebrate our recovery and the offering of love from within @ Triangleoa.org!

Thank you to the wonderful people that worked to bring this finished product to us all.

SOAR8 Business Assembly – Spring 2023

Virtual Event: March 17th – 19th

Deadline for registration is March 11, 2023.

Newsletter Deadlines

The newsletter is published early in the month. The submission deadline is always the 15th of the previous month (so for the May newsletter, April 15). The theme is always the step, tradition, or concept of the month (so, Step/Tradition/Concept 1 in Jan, and so on etc.) and associated spiritual principles, but you can always share whatever is on your heart regardless of the theme! Remember, without you, we have no content! Please send your ideas, original writings, artwork, or puzzles to newsletter@triangleoa.org.

Upcoming dates:

Mar 15: deadline for April newsletter- Tuesday 6pm Raleigh Meeting

Apr 15: deadline for May newsletter-Durham T/Th 12:30 Meeting

May 15: deadline for June newsletter

Jun 15: deadline for July newsletter

Jul 15: deadline for August newsletter

Aug 15: deadline for September newsletter

Sep 15: deadline for October newsletter

Oct 15: deadline for November newsletter

Nov 15: deadline for December newsletter

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(updated Feb 2021)

SAVE THE DATE OCT 27-29, 2023

“Welcome Home, Y’all”

New Freedom Intergroup of OA (out of Jacksonville, FL) is hosting the SOAR 8 Fall Recovery Convention and Business Assembly. It will be face-to-face on Tybee Island, GA the weekend of **October 27-29, 2023**. More details about the meals and the registration flyer will be released soon.



We will be staying on the beach, within a 10-minute walk of Tybee Island Beach and Tybee Island Marine Science Center. This beach hotel is 0.4 mi (0.7 km) from Tybee Island Fishing Pier and Pavilion and 0.6 mi (0.9 km) from Back River Beach. Tybee Island is 20 minutes from downtown Savannah.

Hotel Tybee
1401 Strand Ave
Tybee Island, GA, 31328, USA
Call for reservations: 1-912-786-7777

If you even THINK you will be attending, make your hotel reservations now! (You **must** make your own reservations before 9/26//2023.) The Hotel requires a credit card to hold your reservation. Use code **“SOAR2023”** for special rates. Any reservations made after that date will be charged at their current room rate.

RATES: \$155 /Night Two Queen (Inland view) + \$15 /day parking + \$5 /night GA hotel fee + 14% taxes per night, (Total = \$199.50 /night.) This rate is valid for up to **four** people in the room. (If you get three roommates, each person would pay only ~\$50 per night, or \$100 for the weekend.) Rates are available for three days before and after the event. Rooms have refrigerators (but no microwaves). (Must place \$50 deposit per room for incidentals during the stay.) Each room will receive four drink tickets, three beach chairs and beach towels.

Cancellations: All guests will be charged one night’s stay upon booking. Deposits are refunded or credited only if notice is received **7 (seven) days prior to arrival date (before October 19th)** and a cancellation number must be obtained by guest.

Hotel check-in is at 4:00 PM, Friday; check-out is 11:00 AM Sunday.

There is NO free parking on the island. Day trippers will need to pay a rate of \$20/day to use the hotel parking area.

