

Recovery News



May 2026 edition

“Nothing in us can be changed until we first accept it. Step 5, by allowing us to know and accept ourselves, makes it possible for us to change and recover.”

—*The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of OA, 2nd ed.*, p 41

	Text	Spiritual Principle	Reflection
Step 5	Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.	Integrity	“. . .we find that we haven’t really admitted the full truth to ourselves until we speak about it to someone else.” — <i>OA 12&12, 2nd ed, p 41</i>
Tradition 5	Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry its message to the compulsive over-eater who still suffers.	Purpose	“Every time we offer our experience, strength, and hope to the still-suffering compulsive eater, we give back what we have been given and thus continue the flow of healing power that fosters our own recovery.” — <i>OA 12&12, 2nd ed, p 120</i>
Concept 5	Individuals have the right of appeal and petition in order to ensure that their opinions and personal grievances will be carefully considered.	Consideration	“This Concept, which calls for consideration of others and courteous regard for a wide range of viewpoints, builds strength, unity, and cooperation.” — <i>the 12 Concepts of OA Service, p 6</i>

The opinions expressed in these articles are those of the individual OA members and do not represent OA as a whole.

Coming Out from Behind My



Mask

When I went to my first OA Meeting, it seemed to me that anyone could see that I belonged there; I had just moved across the country with my family... Food was my best comfort for loneliness and isolation.

I have struggled with my weight since I was in middle school— maybe before— and was a frequent customer of a well-known Pay and Weigh —sometimes successfully to observers —but my experience also showed that their ‘cure’ was only temporary. The magic scale number was my ticket to **Freedom**— to eat like ‘normal’ again —and that was where the magic ended.

That desperation of feeling isolated got me through the door, and I felt there my first sense of **real** connection to others who had this same “thing” about eating. They said I could actually make peace with eating and food. They seemed so sure! But I got stuck; how did making this list of ‘wrongs’ and telling someone about them work better than some magical cheerleading and motivation meetings?

I have to admit that it took many years to reach an even more powerful level of desperation; to **finally** stop trying to figure that question out. I just needed to do what I was told by someone I trusted —someone who seemed to have found peace. That person said to just make the list of resentments— start with 8 things so that I didn’t get overwhelmed—and concentrate on my own



contribution to each item on the list. This was so hard!

It was much easier to see where others were doing wrong in each circumstance listed. But I began to see flaws in my carefully constructed defense. I had come to feel safe, meeting others in meetings who would admit— out loud and in front of myself and others—that they struggled - with food —with relationships —with life — just like me. Readings and discussions taught me to look at the people and situations ‘on the outside.’ From an outside perspective, my actions and behaviors might also cause trouble, too! Yikes!

I was learning to be honest; really, truly honest with myself - that I am just like most people —not better, not worse. By making honesty my standard, instead of hiding and manipulating, I have the best foundation for going forward. I might likely still make mistakes but might also correct my course quickly and move to the next right step as it comes along.

— Anonymous in Hillsborough, NC

“Confession is good for the Soul”

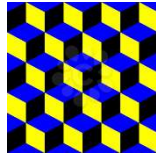
Coming from a religious tradition which would call this step “Confession,” and refer to “wrongs” as “sins”, this step, for me, is



burdened by my spiritual history and identity. But, early on in my 12-Step journey, I realized that **shame** had been a big part of my past “admitting to God, myself, and another human being the exact nature of my wrongs”

As I have gone through 3 rounds of Step 5 with 3 different sponsors, I sought a way to free myself of shame, which means believing that I AM something wrong, rather than that I DID something wrong.

Words matter to me. So, I stopped using the words "sins" or "wrongs." I found that the term "stumbling blocks" was a clearer way to name what was hindering me. Instead of a priest, as in religious Confession, I shared my history with my trusted sponsors. Admitting to "myself", however, is identical in both ways of dealing with my faults.



The 5th step, then, became a liberation for me, rather than agonizing. And, indeed, admitting to a Higher Power of my own understanding those practices which caused me to stumble on my path to *serenity*, was freeing for me.

I am grateful to the 12-Step Program and to my 3 generous sponsors for making Step 5 so crucial to my abstinence, a shaky as it sometimes it is, and so central to my recovery.

—Kathy Z. Chapel Hill Tuesday 6:00PM and Thursday 7:00PM

Receiving Step 5

Usually, when I write about a Step, I'm looking at it from the perspective of working it myself. But Step 5 is unique in that there is not just someone working it, but also someone receiving it.

I vividly remember the first 5th Step I received as a sponsor. Would I be worthy of the enormous trust my sponsoree was placing in me? What if I felt judgmental? That was definitely still a frequently

stumbling block for me at that time. So, I asked HP to guide my words.



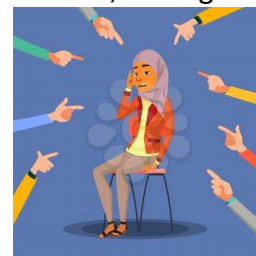
But the time came, and my sponsoree shared things completely outside my experience, yet I was filled not with judgment but with compassion and love. The words were easy.

Receiving that 5th Step was a gift that moved my own recovery forward: I found in those moments the loving, accepting part of me that was more interested in extending grace than judgment, and it was life changing.

— Anne, Thurs 7pm Chapel Hill

Identity

My recovery began 1/1/1987 when I began reading a daily reader given to me as a Christmas present. It was written by a woman whose life had been transformed by her active membership in Overeaters Anonymous. Although this book was not "OA-conference approved," the readings resonated with me deeply, and on February 28th of that year, I made a commitment to abstinence as I understood it. The key aspect of my abstinence was refraining from sugar. As a very spiritual young woman, feeling shame about my excess



weight, I had certainly prayed about my food and my weight, but there was something profoundly different in embracing and believing that a "power greater" could restore me to sanity, as I turned my life and will over in a new way.

While I have had long, amazing periods of abstinence before I first came to meetings and since then, I have also had periods of relapse and weight gain and have used other approaches to help me eat in healthy ways and take better care. But in dealing with many losses in the past several years, I had stopped going to meetings and slipped back into not healthy patterns. Earlier this year, when I was having trouble embracing other programs fully, the realization came to me fully: I belong in OA. It is in OA that I am most fully able to be honest about how I sometimes hurt myself and others and seek to make amends in ways that are needed. There is a spiritual part of this program that fits well with who I am and want to be.

Soon, I'll be 79, and I recently said to the God of my understanding, "OK, I guess I'm in the final part of my life's journey. Please help me fully embrace my IDENTITY as a compulsive eater who is actively working this program and doing all I can to change the things I can, to live out these last years in the best way possible for myself, my loved ones, and my fellows in OA!"

—Libba, Chapel Hill, Tuesday 6PM meeting

Service

I have been doing OA service work since the 80's: I began attending OA in 1979. OA was very young then in our city. The person who started it was my first sponsor. He quickly wanted our city to be within the OA structure. He began by starting an intergroup. He asked that I serve on it. And so, in the intervening years, I have been treasurer, secretary, chair, co-chair, public information, and assistant in whatever capacity that I could help.

I came into OA at the depths of despair. I was eating every chance I could. The only thing that slowed me down was that I

worked 8 to 5. Lunches and suppers were free rein—and the evenings were binges on anything and everything in every combination that was possible—looking for that magic combination that would satisfy the hole in my body. I found out that it was the hole in my soul that was empty. OA has changed me and my soul is more filled . . . still working Step Eleven. Progress, not perfection!

Service has given me so many gifts, built up so many of my abilities that I had, and opened up many opportunities to serve in so many ways:

✦ Being an accountant by trade, I was able to set up systems to track, compile and provide reports on the financial affairs of our intergroup;

✦ As chair, I learned to facilitate and lead effective committee and intergroup meetings;

✦ As a member of a committee, I learned to honor others' opinions and to state mine without conflict;



✦ My verbal communication skills improved as I learned to trust in the members; most importantly, that 'what other people think of me is none of my business' because I had learned to trust and love myself;

✦ I learned that I was capable of being supportive to OA people; that I had something to give. This ability was then possible in all my affairs— gentle support and integrity— with all people in my life,

✦ As an intergroup representative to our Region Assemblies, I was amazed at the work that was being done at that level that did not 'show' at regular meetings

but were part of the backup of the structure of OA;

- ✦ As an intergroup delegate to the World Business Service Conference, I was presented with more aspects of OA's structure and am still truly amazed.

I am so grateful that I am in this program. I have been blessed with 46 years of abstinence, have had many years of service that strengthen me, have known some amazing OA people at all levels of service, and am still here working my program one day at a time.

NO MATTER WHAT, DON'T EAT...One Day at A Time. —Ev, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada

Purpose

Ever since I retired, I've had discontented bouts of looking for purpose in my life. I really like being retired, but I also loved my job and hoped that it accomplished some good in the world. Covid hit and the world shut down before I could settle into regular volunteer work or otherwise find something that gave my life meaning. Years later, I still sometimes get into that "but what am I doing with my life?" place.



Part of the problem is that, like many addicts, I have very grandiose ideas about what my purpose should look like. I know I'm not going to find a cure

for cancer or achieve world peace, but this disease tells me that my purpose should be only a little more modest than those. After meditating on it and thinking about it, I think I'm finding that I have purpose in my life, even if it's not the flashy kind.

First, part of my purpose is OA's purpose as set out in the 5th tradition— "to carry [the OA] message to the compulsive over-eater who still suffers." Although I sometimes grumble about committee meetings, I find great joy in giving service to OA through sponsoring, sharing, and serving in various positions at the group and intergroup level. This program is the reason I have a life with enough time between meals to think about what my purpose might be. As short-term volunteer efforts come up in other areas, I consider them, but find myself unwilling to tie myself to a schedule again. Second, my scheduled and unscheduled exercise



activities at first seemed selfish to me—especially the aquatic (pool) workouts, which are the highpoints of my week. However, by

keeping myself healthier and more mobile I am able to meet my other purposes more effectively. I, also, need to rely less on help from others (though I've learned to receive help graciously when it is offered or needed).

Finally, I've come to accept an idea that I initially rejected as patronizing when I was hearing it from other people. It is my purpose to be a loving, attentive, empathetic, and helpful but non-bossy wife, mother, sister, neighbor, and friend. Like exercise, I thought that human interactions in my life were just pleasant for me.

However, I have come to accept that I play a very important part in a few people's lives and a worthwhile part in the lives of many more. I don't always live up to the adjectives above (loving, attentive, etc.) but as I try to live the OA recovery program, I am empowered to become a better

contributor to the comfort of the world immediately around me. I am open to Higher Power showing me additional purposes; but, for now, that is enough. — Mary Anne, Chapel Hill Tuesday 6:00PM and Thursday 7:00PM

Heard in a Meeting

- ★ I am not bad, trying to get good. I am sick, trying to get well.
 - ★ Getting results is about being receptive and having willingness.
 - ★ Recovery is the antidote to isolation, loneliness, and desperation.
 - ★ HP is with me to help me be sane in the moment.
 - ★ Name it, claim it, let it go.
 - ★ Recovery is not a linear upward trajectory.
- ★ The best learning comes from productive discomfort.
 - ★ Call five to stay alive.
 - ★ I can take a breath, do the next right thing, and be aware of the wisdom all around me.
 - ★ “Normal” is a setting on the dryer. —Mel, Chapel Hill Tuesday 6:00PM and Thursday 7:00PM



*To the Tuesday Night
and Thursday Night
Chapel Hill Meetings
and others for Writing
this Month*



SAVE THE DATE!

Triangle OA Intergroup
Retreat

Surrender

Date: September 18-20, 2026

Location: Christmount Conference
Center 222 Fern Way, Black Mountain,
NC 28711

Registration materials will be available
at or near the end of May

We need you to write or create art for the newsletter!

Coeditor Kathy V. continues to reach out to groups, asking them to volunteer to write for a given month; **but anybody can submit materials to the newsletter at any time.** We appreciate the nice number and variety of submissions we received this month. If you enjoy the newsletter, please consider contributing your writings or recovery-related art and encouraging other members of your group to do the same. Materials should be sent to newsletter@triangleoa.org. Check the table on the next page for suggested topics and due dates.

Writing Schedule for the Remainder of 2026

Month	Due Date	Meeting	Suggested Topics
June	June 13	Wilmington, Wed. noon	Step, Tradition, or Concept 6; Willingness, Solidarity, Responsibility, Sponsorship
July	July 11	Raleigh, Wed. 7AM	Step, Tradition, or Concept 7; Humility, Responsibility, Balance, Meetings
August	August 8		Step, Tradition, or Concept 8; Self-Discipline, Fellowship, Delegation, Telephone
September	Sept. 5		Step, Tradition, or Concept 9; Love, Structure, Ability, Writing
October	Oct. 10		Step, Tradition, or Concept 10; Perseverance, Neutrality, Clarity, Literature
November	Nov. 14		Step, Tradition, or Concept 11; Spiritual Awareness, Anonymity, Humility, Action Plan
December	Dec. 12		Step, Tradition, or Concept 12; Service, Spirituality, Selflessness, Realism, Representation, Dialogue, Compassion, Respect, Anonymity