



Expressions of Unity

January 2025



Welcome 2025

At the beginning of each year, we are inevitably bombarded by advertisements from the “self-improvement” industry to remake our lives. Who hasn’t heard of the “New Year, New Me” campaign?

The January 1 “For Today” reading reminds us: “For Today, instead of resolutions, promises and vows, I mark this day as I do all others: by surrendering my will and my life to God.”

The beauty of our 12-step program in OA is that on January 1, we do January 1st’s footwork. Abstinence’s clarity shows us that the only time we have is today, and the only time we can take action is now. One of the greatest gifts of the program is not having to face another January 1, Monday, or the first of the month to start over. If I stumble either with abstinence or my character defects, I can course correct now. I can surrender now. I can start where I am now.

The fable of the tortoise and the hare captures the lesson beautifully. Moving slowly but always moving forward will get me further along the road of recovery than dashing thither and yon, showing everyone how fast I am, burning out—or getting distracted or bored—and collapsing in a heap, unable to move for days.

At a fellowship gathering, we were invited to write affirmations to take into the new year. Below are the things that came to me:

1. Today I am in the presence of my Higher Power. Nothing can separate me from Grace when I remember this.
2. I trust that I will be guided and cared for, no matter what.
3. I am courageous enough to act in alignment with my core values
4. I am willing to step out of my comfort zone into life.

Pause, Breathe, Pray
Peace,
Jean K



News and Noteworthy
The Jan Intergroup meeting will be held on Saturday Jan. 11 AND Feb. 8 2025 from 12:30 – 2:30pm via Zoom ID 810 4426 4132 / PW 12345

Together We Can!

Buffalo Retreat News! Pg 2 & 3



Convention Speaker Recordings Have posted! pg 9



SAVE THE DATE!

OA BUFFALO RETREAT

Using the Tools to Escape the Three-Ring Circus of Compulsive Overeating!

Emotional

Physical

Spiritual

Sponsored by Unity Integroup!

April 4th-6th, 2025

Christ the King Retreat Center
\$360 - 5 Meals and 2
Nights are included.
Partial Scholarships
Available!

CLICK HERE

Go to:

[overeaters.org/
upcoming-oa-
events](https://overeaters.org/upcoming-oa-events)



Contact oabuffaloretreat2025@gmail.com

Registration

Please note: all registrations must be paid in full. Partial payments are not accepted.

Check required for mail-in registration. **Credit card payments** can be made at **overeaters.org/upcoming-oa-events**. No refunds are available. If you register but cannot attend, please consider giving or selling your space to someone who can use it. We appreciate your understanding.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Phone #: _____

Name Tag: (1st Name, Last Initial): _____

Home Meeting: _____



Room (circle): Roommate Private (+\$100)

Roommate Request (Name/Gender) _____

Service Opportunities (circle all willing to do):

Willing to do Anything / Registration / Check-In
Greeter / Small Group Leader / Speaker / Raffle Basket
Timer / Literature / Set Up Decor / Tear Down Decor
Donate \$ for Scholarships

Thanks in advance for your service!

If you need a mailing address for checks, handicapped room, partial scholarships, special accommodations for vision, hearing, mobility, meals, or other accommodations, please email

oabuffaloretreat2025@gmail.com



Seventh Tradition News

The Executive Committee of the OA Board of Trustees has approved changing the suggested Seventh Tradition contribution split for groups from 60/10/30 to 50/10/40 starting January 1, 2025. The numbers refer to the respective percentages of total contributions that groups pass on to their intergroup, their region, and the World Service Office.

For many years, our Seventh Tradition of OA pamphlet has suggested that, from the total contributions that groups receive from their meeting attendees, each group pass on 60- percent of the contribution to their intergroup or service board, 10 percent to their region, and 30 percent to the World Service Office. In 2025, these percentages will shift so that 50 percent goes to the intergroup or service board, 10 percent to the region, and 40 percent to the World Service Office.

This change was approved by OA trustees to ensure our Tradition of self-support keeps up with future budget demands at the world service level, where the OA board, World Service Business Conference, and the World Service Office have seen both an increased need for services expressed by the Fellowship and rising costs for supplies, technology, and labor.

OA will post a revised version of the Seventh Tradition of OA pamphlet that reflects the new 50/10/40 contribution split by January 1, 2025. Registered OA groups and service bodies may translate and distribute this publication without seeking permission from the World Service Office

We encourage all OA groups to address this change at their next group conscience meeting. Thank you for supporting our Seventh Tradition!

To visit the OA posting.



Spiritual Growth

Declaring Bankruptcy

I came to OA hoping for physical recovery. I found the beginnings with my group's support and by reworking the first Three Steps. Some called that "Three Stepping." Many of us stop there, but real recovery takes work!

Early on OA challenged me to own my physical, emotional and spiritual bankruptcy. That admission laid the foundation for recovery. I came to OA in its infancy (when we relied on AA literature and had little of our own).

I knew I was physically bankrupt. My weight kept going up or down. Dieting interspersed with other times when I let go because I felt good about myself or didn't care to discipline my eating. I wanted something and felt deprived without it. Couldn't I enjoy myself sometimes?

My body had to deal with excess weight, lack of exercise and snacking. Was that sane behavior? My desire for recovery began in earnest when I recognized my pattern of weight gain and dieting. This helped me declare physical bankruptcy.

Soon I realized my emotions were either up or down. Feeling "moderate" felt uncomfortable; I had little experience with it. I lived a black-and-white existence with few tools to deal with emotions. Yes, I was emotionally bankrupt.

I couldn't identify with spiritual bankruptcy. I believed in God, prayed and centered life on my church community. I knew their importance. Even my work connected with my church and faith.

After six months I found my answer in OA. I waltzed through Steps One, Two and Three to establish good abstinence before doing Step Four. But my eating was worse

after I came to OA; only then did I realize I couldn't control it! What to do?

I found myself in front of the recovering priest who had challenged me into recovery. He asked, "You haven't owned spiritual bankruptcy, have you?" I admitted I hadn't. He said, "You won't recover until you do!" I wanted recovery with my whole heart. Stunned, I left his office. That evening I looked up at the sky and prayed, "Well, God, I guess I don't know you."

My spirit became a blank page. Old beliefs left. It took time to rebuild my concepts of my Higher Power, thoughts and prayer. I had an uncomfortable feeling of spiritual emptiness. Once I wanted to fill my void with Bible study. But I received the message, "Stop. You cannot control filling your void. You must wait for your Higher Power to reveal him or herself." I let go and waited. A new spirituality grew.

Years later I realized this spirituality felt off base. Experiences conflicted with the Higher Power I wanted to believe in. I claimed bankruptcy and started over.

In my 27 years in OA, I have owned spiritual bankruptcy at least three times. Doing that has been an important step in releasing the old so a newer, healthier and freer spirituality might take its place.

Much distortion comes with our disease. My perceptions of life, others, HP and myself experienced vast changes because I found healing and miracles in the Twelve Steps. I had to be willing to learn. I can't add to a full glass. But if I empty the glass, I receive new sanity, perceptions and health. I liken that to my experience with bankruptcy. It's a lesson I will never forget.

— Kathy B., St. Cloud, Minnesota USA

As a compulsive overeater, the new year has often been a time of renewed hope and resolution followed by the disappointment of falling headlong into the food...again. I for one spent many a January 1st looking for a promotional price on the next new best diet or the waiving of a registration fee for a new gym membership, only to be stymied by the lack of impulse control and overwhelming apathy that define my disease.

Then I came to Overeaters Anonymous. I attended my first in person OA meeting on January 1st of last year. Now, instead of looking to the next year, month, Monday, or sunrise, I simply greet each moment as an opportunity to ask my HP to show me the next right thing. I don't need to make resolutions around food that I cannot keep. I do not need to be the master of my own destiny. I only need to follow a simple, spiritual plan of action each day and reap the rewards of recovery.

This year I resolve to not make resolutions, but to keep doing what I did the day before and leave it to God to show me where and how I am needed next. I have no burden of decision, no risk of failure, no desire for accolades. What freedom, what peace, what serenity I have for today.

Happy New Day Fellows!

Slow Successes

It was late summer of 1979 when I walked into my first Overeaters Anonymous meeting. I was 23 years old, a bride of one year and 152 pounds. The previous week I had read that for my 5foot 1inch height I was considered OBESE! I was mortified. It was one thing to be fat but obese was a whole different category. Little did I know there would come a time I would long to be that weight.

I was a straight A student and a rule follower so that first meeting I did everything I was told. I found a sponsor, picked a food plan out of the suggested ones and committed myself to those first three steps. I gave up sugar and white flour and off I went...dieting the OA way.

If there was one thing I knew about diets, it was that they all worked. Every last one of them worked if you worked them. I worked my OA diet and faithfully attended meetings and 32 pounds fell off.

Then things became hard. You see losing weight had never been hard; it was maintaining the weight loss that was hard. I kept coming to meetings and reading and listening to the steps and listening to the leader qualifies. We had many slogans but the one I couldn't grasp was "There are no failures only slow successes." Remember I was the straight A student, if you worked hard enough and followed the rules you would succeed.

Gradually I did a fourth and a fifth step. I white-knuckled it through four and a half years of abstinence from sugar and white flour but a not-so-funny thing happened along the way. I gained back all of my weight. I learned it is possible to compulsively eat fruits, vegetables protein, whole grains and dairy. It just takes a lot longer to gain the weight.

In the Spring of 1983, I hosted a get-together for the parents of my 32 piano students. I had made all kinds of delectable goodies. I didn't eat sugar, so baking didn't bother me. No one showing up bothered me. It bothered me a lot and thus ended four and a half years of freedom from sugar.

The binge I had that night scared me enough that I hoofed it back to my home meeting and to a couple of others in town. I recommitted myself to abstinence and decided maybe there was such a thing as a slow success. I had no idea how much further I had to fall before I truly believed it.

August of 1983 brought about three significant changes in my life. I completely revamped my style of piano teaching; we bought our first home, and we received the miracle of our first adoption! We were blessed with a perfect three-week-old baby boy. My joy knew no bounds nor did my eating. The twenty pounds I had lost after that first momentous slip came piling back on with another twenty. As happy as I was, constant sleep deprivation and equally constant reminders that "part of being a good parent is keeping a clean house" made abstinence next to impossible for me.

I continued my fertility treatments carrying my adopted son with me and trying to hang on to my abstinence and find some spiritual peace. By summer of 1984, I was ready to be done with fertility treatment. I felt like half the hands of world had been places they shouldn't. My very understanding specialist told me my mucus looked perfect, go home and be intimate tonight then take a break from treatment. I did and to my immense joy became pregnant.

The first four months of pregnancy went well. I only gained a total of ten pounds. Then my subconscious must have decided I was an astronaut because I gained weight like I was blasting off, 10 pounds, 9 pounds, 8 pounds in months five through seven and another 10 in the last 7 weeks.

I delivered my son Donald via cesarian at 36 weeks 5 days. He had Apgar scores of 9 and 10. He weighed 6 pounds 14 ounces. Everyone in delivery told me what a beautiful son I had. Seven hours later he died. In that horrific moment, I lost all trust in my higher power. If He hadn't caused my son's death, He certainly hadn't prevented it and was no longer worth of my surrender.

I did go back to meetings. "Bring the body and mind will follow" right? Sort of, I managed a modicum of forgiveness with my higher power. I limped through the godawful pain of loss during the next several months and in January of 1986 I was given the miracle of another pregnancy. I had managed by then to lose most of my pregnancy weight from my son. My little adopted son was 17 months had gotten me through the first Christmas without the baby and now we were expecting again.

Slow Success Cont.

We were not meant to have biological children, and that pregnancy was found to be ectopic. Another surgery, another dead baby. I wasn't a slow success; I was simply a failure. A failure as a wife, certainly a failure as a mother and still very much a compulsive overeater.

I went to meetings. I tried to work the spiritual side. Some weight came off. I tried another fertility surgery to repair my shattered tube but never achieved another pregnancy.

In 1988, we were granted a second adoption, a little girl. I was ecstatic. I grabbed on to program with both hands, agreed to chair the Buffalo retreat and promptly gained 20 pounds. The Buffalo retreat went off without a hitch and I proceeded to gain another 28 pounds. By the time we finalized our daughter's adoption I had reached a new high of 198 pounds. I overheard my mother say, "She can't possibly get heavier." How little did she know. I left the program. I could no longer stand the hypocrisy of talking the talk and not walking the walk.

The next year saw me drop 68 pounds only to be told I had failed to reach my goal in the allotted time. Of course, I only heard "failure". In the next six months I not only regained the 68 but added an additional 20. For the next seven years there was only gaining no losing. We were given the rare gift of a 3rd adoption. This little girl was a speed demon and there was no way her 5 foot tall 295-pound mother could catch her.

I got to the point where taking care of bodily needs was becoming impossible, so I opted for gastric by-pass surgery. It was my "easier softer way." I knew going in it wouldn't cure my compulsive eating but the 103-pound weight loss did allow me to move again and have some normalcy in my life. I went back to meetings tentatively. I played with about 40 pounds of my weight loss sometimes going as far as 30 pounds lower.

For the next 20 years I yo-yoed between 163& 230. I would drop into meetings, sometimes being regular for a few months at a time. In 2020, two things happened that would change the trajectory of my recovery; the Covid pandemic hit and my husband's mild cognitive impairment became pronounced. My weight stayed relatively stable around 187 throughout the pandemic but my husband's impairment grew to recognizable dementia.

In January of 2022, I was back over 200 pounds and had had enough. I started do some intermittent fasting on my own and with a low carb diet began to drop weight. By this time, I was also type two diabetic with an A1C over 7.0

The weight came off slowly, but it did come off. In June we were given an official diagnosis of Alzheimer's for my husband. I disagreed with the type of dementia but was told the treatment was the same. At that point I knew if I were to get my three children and three grandchildren through this, I had to live my best life.

I turned back to my higher power and really surrendered. I gave up sugar again this time for good and I went back to meetings. In February of 2021 I reached a plateau with my weight and my A1C so I asked the doctor if I could try Ozempic. The final 35 pounds fell off. I am on the lowest prescribed dose. I am maintaining a 90 pound weight loss from 2022 and a total weight loss of 180 pounds. My A1C is 5.3.

Most importantly, I am free to work a program of spiritual recovery daily. I strive for improvement not perfection. I still have a long way to go but that's ok. After all, there are no failures only slow successes.

~Anonymous

**2024 Minnesota OA
Convention:
“Acceptance is the
Answer”
October 25 & 26**

**Speaker
Recordings have
been posted!**





Step Of The Month

Step 1:

We admitted we were powerless over food- that our lives had become unmanageable.

Spiritual Principle of Step 1:
Honesty

1st Tradition:

Our common welfare should come first-
personal recovery depends on OA Unity.

Spiritual Principle of Tradition 1:
Unity