



Carrying the Message

Use this guide with suggestions of what to say and what not to say when speaking to someone about OA for the first time.

DOs

- I am open to talking about my recovery.
- I mention how much my weight has changed, and I may show my pre-OA photo.
- I am positive and happy when talking about OA.
- I am always willing to give out the *New Prospect Card* and my phone number.
- I emphasize the peace of mind I have found in life around food.
- I suggest that people come to a meeting and just listen. Nothing is required of them.
- I mention OA to my doctor and other health care professionals.
- I carry the message as part of my action plan.
- I am concise when talking about the OA program, leaving room for curiosity.
- I explain the concept of “just for today.”
- I mention that OA is a nonprofit organization and there are no membership dues or fees.
- I share how OA has helped in all facets of my life.
- I explain some of the program’s Tools.
- I give examples of my unhealthy eating behaviors from before OA (such as eternal dieting, starving, bingeing, constantly weighing myself).
- I say that our program is modeled on Alcoholics Anonymous and that my problem is similar to alcoholism. OA is for people who use food just like alcoholics use alcohol.
- I offer to meet them at their first meeting if at all possible.

DON'Ts

- I don't tell people that OA is the only way.
- I try not to sound like a preacher or give a speech.
- I don't judge other people, and I don't label them as compulsive overeaters.
- I don't talk about another's shape or weight, only my own.
- I do not mention specific spiritual or religious beliefs.
- I don't speak about OA to someone new unless he or she shows an interest.
- I don't try to “sell” the Twelve Step program or exaggerate about it.
- I don't promise anything.
- I don't put down diets or methods of weight loss; I don't compare OA to other programs.

- I don't give too much information about meetings and how it all works; the best way to understand is to come to a meeting.
- I don't give unsolicited advice or suggestions.
- I don't rush people into making a decision.
- I don't argue.
- I don't shut the door. Even if someone is not interested now, he or she may be interested in the future.
- I don't try to give away what I don't have.

WHY CARRY THE MESSAGE?

"Service is its own reward." (*OA Twelve and Twelve*, p. 175)

"When I give service, I receive more than I could ever give." (*Voices of Recovery*, p. 328)

"I don't have to wait until I am perfect to do service." (*Voices of Recovery*, p. 252)

"Service gives me practice at freeing myself from the bondage of self." (*Voices of Recovery*, p. 284)

"Only by working with those who are not yet free [from the disease] do I fully realize that freedom." (*For Today*, p. 252)

"We now have a message of hope to carry to other compulsive overeaters." (*OA Twelve and Twelve*, p. 99)

"When all other measures failed, work with another alcoholic would save the day." (*Alcoholics Anonymous, 4th ed.*, p. 15)

"Most of us who've worked this program will be unable to keep the recovery we have unless we share our experience, strength, and hope with others." (*OA Twelve and Twelve*, p. 101)

"Practical experience shows that nothing will so much insure immunity from drinking as intensive work with other alcoholics." (*Alcoholics Anonymous, 4th ed.*, p. 89)

"Those of us who live this program don't simply carry the message; *we are the message.*" (*OA Twelve and Twelve*, p. 106)

STEP TWELVE

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.

TRADITION FIVE

Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry its message to the compulsive overeater who still suffers.

OA RESPONSIBILITY PLEDGE

Always to extend the hand and heart of OA to all who share my compulsion, for this I am responsible.

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.

Permission to use the Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous for adaptation granted by AA World Services, Inc.

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.

Permission to use the Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous for adaptation granted by AA World Services, Inc.

OA Board-approved

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