

1 ~~**A COMMITMENT TO ABSTINENCE**~~

2 **A LIFETIME OF ABSTINENCE**

3
4 *A decision, one day at a time*

5 *One Day at a Time*

6
7 **The Twelve Steps**

- 8 1. We admitted we were powerless over food—that our lives had become unmanageable.
9 2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
10 3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God *as we understood Him*.
11 4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
12 5. Admitted to God, to ourselves and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
13 6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
14 7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
15 8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
16 9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them
17 or others.
18 10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong, promptly admitted it.
19 11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God *as we*
20 *understood Him*, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.
21 12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these Steps, we tried to carry this message to
22 compulsive overeaters and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

23
24 Permission to use the Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous for adaptation granted by AA World
25 Services, Inc.

26
27 **A COMMITMENT TO ABSTINENCE**

28
29 *Introduction to Abstinence and Recovery*

30
31 It is the great paradox of the Twelve Step program of Overeaters Anonymous that we make a
32 commitment to sane eating for only twenty-four hours in order to achieve a lifetime of recovery
33 from compulsive eating and compulsive food behaviors. One of the program's sayings is "I can do
34 for one day what I could never do for a lifetime." And yet, our intention, and our reality, is to have
35 many days, months, and years of continuous abstinence. How do we go about this?

36
37 It may be daunting at first if we think about never being able to eat a certain food again. Yet there
38 are thousands of recovering compulsive eaters who do just that, happily. This pamphlet is designed
39 to assist us in making a commitment to be abstinent just for today; to keep that commitment no
40 matter what; and to live our lives at a healthy body weight without food controlling us. This is the
41 achievable goal. It takes action, perseverance, and faith. The result is recovery.

42
43 **Recovery and a commitment to abstinence**

44
45 ~~RECOVERY IS THE RESULT of living the Overeaters Anonymous Twelve Step program. Many~~
46 ~~of us have come to believe that committing ourselves to abstinence on a daily basis is essential to~~
47 ~~our recovery.~~

48
49 **What is recovery in Overeaters Anonymous?**

50 Recovery in OA is defined as the "removal of the need to engage in compulsive eating behaviors.
51 Spiritual, emotional, and physical recovery is achieved through working and living the Overeaters

52 Anonymous Twelve Step program.**

53
54 Most of us have come to believe that committing ourselves to abstinence on a daily basis is essential
55 for recovery.

56
57 **What is abstinence?**

58 ~~According to the dictionary, T~~he word “abstain” means to refrain from. In Overeaters Anonymous,
59 “abstinence is the action of refraining from compulsive eating and compulsive food behaviors while
60 working towards or maintaining a healthy body weight. ~~Spiritual, emotional and physical recovery~~
61 ~~is the result of living the Overeaters Anonymous Twelve Step program.~~**

62
63 **What is a commitment to abstinence?**

64 “Commitment” means to ~~entrust, to put into safekeeping,~~ to pledge oneself to a particular course.
65 Hasn’t this been our greatest problem: truly committing ourselves to refraining from compulsive
66 eating on an ongoing basis? Full of determination, we are great in the short run, but when the
67 “~~everydayness~~” boredom from the daily routine begins to set in, we lose interest.

68
69 For most people, ~~especially compulsive overeaters,~~ a diet is something temporary—one goes on it
70 and then one goes off it. ~~In Overeaters Anonymous we believe in abstaining from compulsive eating~~
71 ~~every day, one day at a time. Each individual is free to determine his or her own way of achieving~~
72 ~~abstinence according to personal needs and preferences.~~ Abstaining from compulsive eating, unlike
73 dieting, has a sense of permanence about it. However, Unlike our dieting days, we abstain only
74 one day at a time, not worrying about any ensuing results. Each new day, we recommit to our
75 ~~personal plan of abstinence,~~ without thinking about tomorrow, next month, or next year. The next
76 day, we make the same twenty-four-hour commitment. In this manner, we *can* abstain for a lifetime.

77
78 **MAKING OUR COMMITMENT TO ABSTINENCE**

79
80 *Getting Started*

81
82 Here are various actions OA members have taken to help promote their abstinence:

- 83
84 • **Work with a sponsor.** Find a sponsor who will help you with the program of recovery on
85 all three levels: physical, emotional, and spiritual. Many OA members find it helpful to
86 commit their plan of eating to a sponsor each day. You will want to develop your own
87 commitment to abstinence by discussing the suggestions in this section with your sponsor.
88 • **Develop a plan of eating.** A plan of eating is a guide to the food you choose to eat each
89 day. (See *Dignity of Choice*[†] for some sample plans of eating.) A food plan can be as simple
90 as an outline that promotes sane eating, or it can include planning, weighing, and measuring
91 all portions. Before choosing a specific food plan, we encourage you to consult a qualified
92 health professional who has some knowledge of this disease, especially if you have a
93 medical condition.
94 • **Plan your meals in advance.** Whether you weigh and measure your food or trust your
95 judgment regarding portions, your day may be simplified by planning, buying, preparing,
96 and committing your food to your sponsor in advance. This can free you from on-the-spot
97 decision making. Don’t be caught unprepared! Have a plan when attending events where

* WSBC Policy 1988b (amended 2002, 2009, 2011, and 2019)

† Refer to the OA pamphlet *Dignity of Choice*, available at bookstore.aa.org.

- 98 food will be provided for you. This may include inquiring about the menu or even choosing
99 to bring your own food.
- 100 • **Use the Tools.**[‡] In addition to a plan of eating and sponsorship, OA has seven other Tools
101 of Recovery; use one or more of them instead of eating compulsively. Expressing your
102 feelings by putting them in writing or by reaching out to someone by phone or text
103 ~~telephoning someone~~ often relieves the desire to numb such feelings with food. Reading
104 OA literature or attending an OA meeting helps strengthen ~~you~~ your commitment to abstain
105 until the obsession/compulsion passes. Doing service or reaching out to others is a
106 ~~guaranteed~~ proven way to refocus your thoughts.
 - 107 • **Remember HALT.** Don't allow yourself to get too *hungry*, too *angry*, too *lonely*, or too
108 *tired*. Particularly avoid skipping meals, which may tempt you to overeat later, justifying
109 it as "making up" for that missed meal. Avoid skipping a meal or eating a meal too soon
110 after the previous one. These actions may tempt you to justify overeating later.
 - 111 • **Enjoy your meals.** Abstinence releases the pain and guilt accumulated over the many years
112 of destructive eating behaviors. Relax. Slow down. Take the time to enjoy your meals. You
113 deserve it.
 - 114 • **Be conscious of the amount of food you eat.** Many OA members don't take second
115 helpings at meals, since overeating often begins with "just a little bit more."
 - 116 • **Follow a predetermined schedule for weighing yourself, self-weighing plan.** Many OA
117 members have found that weighing monthly is advisable. Frequent weighing or refusing to
118 weigh can put too much emphasis on physical recovery alone.
 - 119 • **Entrust yourself and your abstinence to a Power greater than yourself as you continue**
120 **to do the work each day to bring about recovery.**

121
122 Don't let any uncomfortable feelings or negative impressions you may have about making a
123 commitment scare you away. Most of us felt the same way in the beginning. And yet, we soon
124 found that practicing the OA Twelve Step program of recovery was doing for us what we had never
125 been able to do for ourselves. In time, we learned a whole new way of living, and you can, too.

126 **STRENGTHENING OUR COMMITMENT TO ABSTINENCE:**

127 *Developing Your Program*

128
129
130
131 As time passes, and the number of days we refrain from compulsive eating add up, it becomes
132 necessary to further strengthen our commitment to abstinence. To facilitate this, we offer these
133 suggestions:

- 134
135 • Work with a sponsor who is able to guide you through the Twelve Steps. It is acceptable
136 to work with more than one sponsor at a time.
- 137 • Create daily gratitude lists. Thank your Higher Power that you have found OA and no
138 longer need to use food to solve your problems. A growing sense of appreciation and
139 gratitude for even the smallest aspects of life can create acceptance and peace.
- 140 • Develop a list of people you can call or text who will support you in your recovery. This is
141 especially helpful when your program is being challenged by food or life's problems.
- 142 • Remember, while many come to OA for the vanity, most stay for the sanity that living in
143 recovery brings.
- 144 • Volunteer to do service at your meeting(s). It makes you a contributing member of the
145 Fellowship and helps create a sense of belonging.

[‡] Refer to the OA pamphlet *The Tools of Recovery*, available at bookstore.oa.org.

- 146 • Attend OA recovery events, such as workshops, retreats, and conventions. There is nothing
- 147 more exhilarating than to see and hear recovery in action, and to know so many others are
- 148 abstaining one day at a time.
- 149 • If you are having frequent food thoughts or cravings:
 - 150 ○ Examine whether you are eating something that contains a substance that you
 - 151 ordinarily avoid. Perhaps you have discovered a new “trigger food,” one that you
 - 152 would be wise to stay away from. Your cravings may also stem from some inner
 - 153 turmoil over a situation you have not addressed. Regardless of the possible causes,
 - 154 discuss what is happening with your sponsor.
 - 155 ○ Avoid dwelling on pleasant memories associated with certain foods or thoughts about
 - 156 how good a particular food might taste. You are kidding yourself if you think “just
 - 157 one bite” will “bring back the good old days” or make some bad situation better or
 - 158 easier to live with.
 - 159 ○ When obsessive thoughts arise, remember that you always have a choice between the
 - 160 peace and sanity gained from refraining from that food you’re obsessing about and
 - 161 the pain created by over- or under-eating. The pleasure is, at best, fleeting, the despair
 - 162 unending.
- 163 • Remember that each time you face a situation without eating compulsively it will be easier
- 164 for you to abstain the next time. Making abstinence a priority strengthens your
- 165 commitment.
- 166 • Avoid lamenting that you may never be able to eat like a normal person. Recognize that you have
- 167 an illness, one that can never be cured. However, by working the Twelve Steps and Twelve
- 168 Traditions of the OA program, you can develop a way of thinking and living that allows you a
- 169 daily reprieve from your disease.

170
 171 Many OA members consciously cultivate their enjoyment of abstinence from compulsive eating.
 172 As a result of abstinence, we have found freedom from guilt, remorse, and self-condemnation about
 173 the food we eat. We have freedom from the power food once had over us, and we have the ability
 174 to make healthy food choices. We have the gift to eat and sleep normally, and wake up glad we are
 175 abstinent.

176
 177 **How do we help ourselves keep this commitment?**

178 We strive to:

- 179 • ~~Entrust ourselves and our abstinence to a power greater than ourselves every day. All we~~
- 180 ~~need to do is to make the commitment.~~
- 181 • ~~Cultivate continued acceptance of the fact that our choice is between uncontrollable~~
- 182 ~~compulsive eating and doing without that first compulsive bite.~~
- 183 • ~~Cultivate humble gratitude for having discovered that we were compulsive eaters, and that~~
- 184 ~~we found OA when we did.~~
- 185 • ~~Accept as natural that for a period of time—and it can be a long one—we may repeatedly~~
- 186 ~~experience:~~
 - 187 ○ ~~the conscious nagging and craving for excess and/or inappropriate food;~~
 - 188 ○ ~~the sudden, overwhelming impulse to eat compulsively or to take that first compulsive~~
 - 189 ~~bite;~~
 - 190 ○ ~~the gnawing desire for the soothing comfort that just a bite or two of food once gave~~
 - 191 ~~us.~~
- 192 • ~~Avoid cultivating or dwelling on thoughts about any real or imagined pleasure once derived~~
- 193 ~~from certain foods, and avoid talking about them.~~
- 194 • ~~Stop kidding ourselves that a bite or two would make some bad situation better or easier to~~
- 195 ~~live with. By working the Twelve Steps, we develop a way of thinking and acting which~~

- 196 enables us to live each day without eating compulsively regardless of what may upset us,
197 or how hard the urge for a little taste may hit us.
- 198 ● Remember that each time we face a situation without eating compulsively it will make it
199 easier for us to abstain the next time. Making abstinence a priority strengthens our
200 commitment. Many times we're afraid we won't make it. Although the drive to overeat is
201 powerful, it cannot really hurt us as long as we don't act on it. Our experience shows us
202 that even the strongest urge will pass.
 - 203 ● Cultivate enjoyment of abstinence from compulsive eating; because, as a result, we have
204 found:
 - 205 ○ freedom from guilt, remorse and self-condemnation about the food we eat;
 - 206 ○ freedom from the power food once had over us, and the ability to make choices
207 about what we eat;
 - 208 ○ the gift to eat and sleep normally and wake up glad we are abstinent.

210 **Some actions that help promote personal abstinence**

211 Here are various actions OA members have used to help promote their abstinence. You are
212 encouraged to **take what you like and leave the rest**. The following suggestions are not rules. As
213 you develop your own abstinence, you may want to discuss these various approaches with your
214 sponsor.

- 216 ● **Develop a plan of eating.** A plan of eating includes a guide to the food we choose to eat
217 each day. Some members find that following a plan of eating simplifies their daily lives
218 and frees them from on-the-spot decision making. For some an effective plan includes
219 specific foods and portions and the elimination of known binge foods or foods
220 compulsively craved. For others, a plan of eating is simply an overall guide that allows
221 flexibility and promotes sane eating. A plan can be as simple as a set number of moderate
222 meals a day or it can include weighing and measuring all portions. Before choosing a
223 specific plan, we suggest and encourage you to consult a qualified professional.
- 225 ● **Plan your meals in advance.** Whether you weigh and measure your food or trust your
226 judgment regarding portions, your day may be simplified by planning or even preparing
227 your meals in advance. This can free you from facing food choices throughout the day.
- 229 ● **Work with a sponsor.** Find a sponsor who will help you with the program of recovery on
230 all three levels: physical, emotional and spiritual. Many OA members find it helpful to
231 commit their plan of eating to a sponsor each day.
- 233 ● **Use the tools.** In addition to a plan of eating and sponsorship, OA has seven other tools of
234 recovery; try to use one or more of them before you start eating compulsively. Expressing
235 your feelings by putting them in writing or by telephoning someone often relieves the
236 desire to obliterate such feelings with food. Reading OA literature or attending an OA
237 meeting helps strengthen you until the compulsion passes. Doing service or reaching out
238 to others is a guaranteed way to refocus your thoughts.
- 240 ● **Remember HALT.** It is suggested that you not get too hungry, too angry, too lonely, or
241 too tired. Particularly avoid skipping meals, which may tempt you to overeat later,
242 justifying it as "making up for" that missed meal.
- 243 ● **Enjoy your meals.** Abstinence releases the pain and guilt accumulated over the many years
244 of overeating. Relax. Take the time to enjoy your meals. You deserve it.
- 245 ● **Be conscious of the amount of food you eat.** Some OA members don't take second

246 helpings at meals, since overeating often begins with “just a little bit more.”
247 • **Follow a predetermined weighing plan.** Many OA members have found that weighing
248 monthly is advisable. Frequent weighing or refusal to weigh can put too much emphasis
249 on physical recovery alone.

250
251 **Does keeping a commitment to abstinence seem too much for you?**
252 Please don't let any uncomfortable feelings or negative impressions you may have scare you away.
253 Most of us felt the same way in the beginning. And yet, we soon found that practicing the OA
254 Twelve Step program of recovery was doing for us what we had never been able to do for ourselves.
255 In time, we learned a whole new way of living.

256
257 One day at a time, it works for us, and it can work for you. This we promise.

258
259 **The Twelve Traditions**

- 260 **1.** Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon OA unity.
261 **2.** For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority—a loving God as He may express
262 Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.
263 **3.** The only requirement for OA membership is a desire to stop eating compulsively.
264 **4.** Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or OA as a whole.
265 **5.** Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry its message to the compulsive overeater who
266 still suffers.
267 **6.** An OA group ought never endorse, finance or lend the OA name to any related facility or outside
268 enterprise, lest problems of money, property and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.
269 **7.** Every OA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
270 **8.** Overeaters Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may
271 employ special workers.
272 **9.** OA, as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly
273 responsible to those they serve.
274 **10.** Overeaters Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the OA name ought never be
275 drawn into public controversy.
276 **11.** Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always
277 maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, films, television and other public media
278 of communication.
279 **12.** Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all these Traditions, ever reminding us to place
280 principles before personalities.
281 Permission to use the Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous for adaptation granted by AA
282 World Services, Inc.

283
284 How to find OA
285 Visit the OA Website at www.oa.org
286 Or contact the World Service Office at 505-891-2664
287 Many local telephone directories also include listings for Overeaters Anonymous

288
289 Overeaters Anonymous
290 World Service Office
291 6075 Zenith Court NE
292 Rio Rancho, NM 87144-6426 USA
293 Mail Address: PO Box 44727
294 Rio Rancho, NM 87174-4727 USA
295 Tel: 1-505-891-2664 * Fax: 1-505-891-4320
296 Email: info@oa.org

297 www.oa.org

298

299 Copyright 1981, 1989, 1996 Overeaters Anonymous, Inc.

300 All rights reserved.

301 Rev. 10/11 #141

302

303 **KEEPING OUR COMMITMENT TO ABSTINENCE:**

304

305 *No Matter What*

306

307 While our commitment to abstinence from compulsive eating is vital to our lives, we shouldn't be

308 surprised or discouraged if we have an occasional, sudden desire to eat outside of our food plan.

309 As disturbing as these cravings and thoughts may be, it is important to remember that we *do not*

310 *need to act on them!* Regardless of how intense the desire to eat or restrict may be, you can take

311 specific actions:

312

313 • Call or text your sponsor or an OA friend. Commit to not breaking your abstinence. Talk

314 about anything that is bothering you at the moment. Ask for help! There are many members

315 in program who want to help you stay abstinent.

316 • Go to a meeting! There are many face-to-face, telephone, and virtual meetings. Attend one

317 instead of picking up the food. To find a meeting, go to oa.org and click Find a meeting.

318 • Write about it. Carry a small journal with you for this purpose.

319 • Write a gratitude list. Thank your Higher Power for your abstinence.

320 • Reach out to help another compulsive eater. And remember, the first and best way you can

321 help others is to be abstinent yourself.

322 • Pray to your Higher Power for help to get through the desire without eating or restricting.

323 The obsession will pass if you do not pick up the food. If you do pick up the food, the

324 craving will continue or worsen.

325 • Look beyond the imagined pleasure of that first bite to the inevitable feelings of physical

326 discomfort, remorse, and hopelessness. Many OA members refer to this as "thinking the

327 bite through."

328 • Ask yourself, "How much of this food would it take to satisfy me? Do I really want to do

329 that?" Recognize that "just one bite" is a lie.

330 • Remember that each time you face a situation without restricting, purging, or compulsively

331 overeating you strengthen your spiritual connection to your Higher Power, making the next

332 challenge easier.

333 • Don't believe the lie that food will make a bad situation better or easier to live with.

334 Compulsively over- or under-eating your way through a bad situation only creates more

335 problems; remaining abstinent helps you think clearly and remain "in the solution."

336 • Focus your thoughts on these benefits of abstinence:

337 ○ Abstinence leads to being happy, joyous, and free; taking that first compulsive bite

338 or engaging in compulsive food behaviors brings back shame and remorse.

339 ○ Abstinence leads to self-respect and peace of mind; taking that first compulsive bite

340 or engaging in compulsive food behaviors activates the disease, leading to cravings

341 and food obsession.

342 ○ Abstinence can help reverse the devastating effects of this disease and restore balance

343 to mind, body, and spirit.

344 ○ Abstinence gives us the ability to face life's challenges with peace of mind, self-

345 respect, and an open heart.

346

347 Remind yourself that when your heart is heavy, or your mind is troubled and confused, your
348 resistance is low. In the Fellowship of Overeaters Anonymous, you are among people who truly
349 understand you. You are no longer alone!

350
351 **Before You Take That First Compulsive Bite, Remember...**

352 *You have a friend in Overeaters Anonymous*
353

354 Our commitment to abstinence from compulsive eating is the most important thing in our lives
355 without exception! When we eat more (or less) food than we need, we are quickly reminded that
356 compulsive eating impairs our health, dulls our faculties, and disrupts any chance we have for peace
357 of mind. Abstinence brings clarity and can help us more quickly understand the underlying causes
358 of our destructive relationship with food. Cultivate continued acceptance of the fact that your choice is
359 between unhappy eating binges and doing without just one small compulsive bite.

360 When confronted with the urge to eat compulsively, we find it helpful to consider the following
361 points *before* taking that first compulsive bite.
362

- 363 1. ~~Look beyond the initial pleasure of eating to the inevitable feelings of physical discomfort,~~
364 ~~self-recrimination and hopelessness. Many OA members refer to this practice as “thinking~~
365 ~~the bite through.”~~
- 366 2. ~~Be grateful that you have found OA and no longer need to use food to solve your problems.~~
- 367 3. ~~Don’t be surprised by a desire to eat compulsively. Even after being abstinent for a period~~
368 ~~of time, you may find that your overactive imagination tempts you with sudden impulses~~
369 ~~to restrict or eat compulsively, feeling you will be free from the inevitable destructive~~
370 ~~consequences.~~
371 ~~As disturbing as these cravings and feelings are, you do not have to act on them.~~
- 372 4. ~~Always remember: each time you face a situation without restricting, purging, or~~
373 ~~compulsively overeating, you strengthen your spiritual connection to your Higher Power,~~
374 ~~making the next challenge easier.~~
- 375 5. ~~Regardless of how upset you are, or how intense the desire to eat may be, you can take~~
376 ~~specific actions to offset an inappropriate desire for food, such as praying, calling an OA~~
377 ~~friend, or writing about it.~~
- 378 6. ~~Avoid self pity! You may never be able to eat like a “normal” person. However, by following the~~
379 ~~OA program you can learn a way of living that addresses your shortcomings and helps you~~
380 ~~become the person you were meant to be.~~
- 381 7. ~~Don’t dwell on any real or imagined pleasure you once got from certain foods. “Change the~~
382 ~~channel!”~~
- 383 8. ~~Don’t believe the lie that food will make a bad situation better or easier to live with.~~
384 ~~Compulsively over- or undereating your way through a bad situation only creates more~~
385 ~~problems; remaining abstinent helps you think clearly and remain “in the solution.”~~
- 386 9. ~~Remember all the people you’ve met in program who are helping you stay abstinent.~~
- 387 10. ~~Seek out ways to help other compulsive eaters. Remember, the first and best way you can~~
388 ~~help others is to be abstinent yourself. “Those of us who live this program don’t simply carry~~
389 ~~the message; we are the message” (*The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Overeaters*~~
390 ~~*Anonymous*, p. 106).~~
- 391 11. ~~Remember that:~~
392 ~~each abstinent day brings with it honesty, integrity, and accountability;~~
393 ~~each abstinent day is a gift worth going to any length to experience; and~~
394 ~~a decision to be abstinent today will enable you to overcome fears of not getting enough food,~~
395 ~~attention, or love.~~
- 396 12. ~~Cultivate a helpful association of ideas:~~

397 Abstinenence leads to being happy, joyous, and free; taking that first compulsive bite brings back
398 shame and remorse.
399 Abstinenence leads to self-respect and peace of mind; taking that first compulsive bite activates
400 the disease, leading to cravings and food obsession.
401 13. Cultivate gratitude that:
402 refraining from one small bite can dramatically change your outlook on life;
403 you are no longer alone—you have found OA and a Fellowship of people who truly understand
404 and want to help you;
405 you have an illness, not a moral shortcoming, and your disease can be arrested one day at a
406 time, simply by not taking that first compulsive bite;
407 abstaining from compulsive overeating can help reverse the devastating effects of this disease on
408 mind, body, and spirit; and
409 you no longer need to use food for comfort; in time, you will learn to accept life on life's terms
410 without the need to chase food for pleasure.
411 14. Think again and again about the joyful aspects of abstinence, such as:
412 the return of balance to mind and body;
413 the growing sense of appreciation and gratitude for even the smallest aspects of a new life; and
414 the ability to face life's challenges with peace of mind, self-respect, and an open heart.
415 15. Remind yourself that when your heart is heavy, your resistance is low, or your mind is
416 troubled and confused, you will find comfort in the Fellowship of Overeaters Anonymous.
417 In OA, you are among people who truly understand you—a part of something special. Welcome
418 to Overeaters Anonymous. Welcome home.

419 420 The Twelve Steps

- 421 1. We admitted we were powerless over food that our lives had become
- 422 unmanageable.
- 423 2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
- 424 3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God *as we*
- 425 *understood Him.*
- 426 4. Made a searching and fearless moral
- 427 inventory of ourselves.
- 428 5. Admitted to God, to ourselves and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
- 429 6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
- 430 7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
- 431 8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.
- 432 9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them
- 433 or others.
- 434 10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong, promptly
- 435 admitted it.
- 436 11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God *as we*
- 437 *understood Him*, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.
- 438 12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these Steps, we tried to carry this message to
- 439 compulsive overeaters and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

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

443 444 How to find OA

445 Visit the OA Website at www.oe.org
446 Or contact the World Service Office at 505-891-2664
447 Many local telephone directories also include listings for Overeaters Anonymous

448
449 Overeaters Anonymous
450 World Service Office
451 6075 Zenith Court NE
452 Rio Rancho, NM 87144-6424
453 Mail Address: PO Box 44720
454 Rio Rancho, NM 87174-4727 USA
455 Tel: 1-505-891-2664 *. Fax: 1-505-891-4320
456 info@oa.org
457 www.oa.org
458

459 MAINTAINING OUR COMMITMENT TO ABSTINENCE:

460 *A lifetime commitment one day at a time*

461 *Living with a ~~h~~Healthy ~~b~~Body ~~w~~Weight*

462 The Twelve Steps

- 463 1. We admitted we were powerless over food—that our lives had become unmanageable.
- 464 2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
- 465 3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God *as we understood Him*.
- 466 4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
- 467 5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
- 468 6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
- 469 7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
- 470 8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.
- 471 9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
- 472 10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong, promptly admitted it.
- 473 11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God *as we*
- 474 *understood Him*, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.
- 475 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.

476
477
478
479
480
481 Permission to use the Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous for adaptation granted by AA World
482 Services, Inc.

483
484 The OA definition of abstinence speaks of “working towards or maintaining a healthy body
485 weight.” But how do we determine what that weight is for us? Many factors must be considered:
486 body type, gender, height, age, physical limitations, medications, and more. Since we have likely
487 been obsessed with reaching “goal weight” for years, it is not advisable for us to make a
488 determination of a healthy weight by ourselves. It is suggested that we work with one or more
489 health care professionals and our sponsor to determine a range for our healthy weight.
490

491 The day When we initially reach a reasonable, healthy body weight, is a day we may be filled with
492 conflicting emotions: joy, fear, anxiety, perhaps even anger. We ask ourselves, “Now what?” We
493 may have attained a healthy body weight before, only to return to where we were, or even worse.
494 The difference between past attempts at weight control and our recovery program ~~within the~~
495 Fellowship of Overeaters Anonymous is the incorporation of the OA’s Twelve Steps, the Twelve
496 Traditions, and OA’s nine program Tools into our lives. The path outlined for us in the Steps and
497 Traditions assures that we will be free from the disease of compulsive eating and compulsive food
498 behaviors and that we will experience the miracles of physical recovery and continued abstinence.

499

500 In the early stage of maintenance, some of us may have to face the frightening prospect of adjusting
501 our food plan to stop losing or gaining weight. We may experience emotional pain that we
502 previously masked with food, or a preoccupation with our weight. Relationships may suddenly be
503 frightening. We may feel vulnerable in our new body shape. Sexuality may become an issue. It
504 may be difficult to pick out new clothes, look at ourselves in the mirror, or walk into a roomful of
505 people. We can no longer attribute our feelings of guilt, remorse, and self-hate to our compulsive
506 eating and food behaviors or to being or feeling fat. As a result, anxiety, insecurity, and resentment
507 may take their toll. It is important to address these feelings through the Twelve Steps so that we
508 don't return to old, unhealthy behaviors in order to avoid them. Remember, our personal Higher
509 Power, our OA sponsor, and other members of the Fellowship are available to help us through the
510 hard times.

511

512 While working toward a healthy body weight, M~~any of us were~~ may have been so focused on
513 following our plan of eating and physical recovery that we did not devote enough time to the
514 emotional and spiritual aspects of our program. We ~~and failed to delve into the issues that caused~~
515 us to eat compulsively. Now, even though we've achieved a healthy body weight, our thoughts and
516 feelings often remain unchanged. Others of us may have experienced some emotional and spiritual
517 recovery before ~~we were~~ being able to achieve physical recovery. Regardless of our personal path,
518 it is important to acknowledge that reaching a healthy body weight is only one factor in recovery.

519

520 Society, h However, since society places such a great importance on appearance, -If it looks good,
521 it is good once we have reached a healthy body weight, our family and friends may think that all
522 our problems are solved. They are probably unaware that, perhaps for the first time in our lives, we
523 are confronted with the real problems of the disease of underlying problems that led to our
524 compulsive overeating or compulsive food behaviors. We may be experiencing emotional pain,
525 which we had previously masked with food, or a preoccupation with our weight. Relationships may
526 suddenly be frightening. Sexuality no longer feels safely hidden. Meeting new people can bring on
527 a feeling of terror. It may be difficult to pick out new clothes, look at ourselves in a the mirror, or
528 walk into a roomful of people.

529

530 In order to protect our life of abstinence, we should be aware of the continued challenges we may
531 face. For example, as years pass, many of us may miss the compliments that weight loss (or weight
532 gain) brought us. Others may find that, as we age, the plan of eating that once worked successfully
533 now results in weight gain. In some cases, this may be further impacted by physical ailments that
534 require new medications or preclude us from doing our normal exercise routines.

535

536 Or, we may become complacent about what supported our recovery in the first place. After many
537 months or years since we came to OA in desperation, we who are living with a healthy body weight
538 may have forgotten the pain of active compulsive eating. If we do
539 not want to return to that state, it is imperative we remain committed to our abstinence and our
540 program.

541 How do we deal with all of this and the accompanying thoughts and feelings and still stay abstinent?

542 In addition to practicing the actions listed in the previous sections, we offer these additional
543 suggestions for maintaining abstinence and a healthy body weight:

544

545 We can no longer attribute our feelings of guilt, remorse, and self-hate to our compulsive eating
546 and food behaviors, or to being or feeling fat. As a result, anxiety, insecurity, and resentment may
547 take their toll. For those of us who must change our plan of eating at this stage to prevent further
548 weight loss or gain, a different way of eating may be a terrifying idea. Remember, our personal

549 Higher Power, our OA sponsor, and other members of the Fellowship are available to help us
550 through the hard times.
551

552 In OA, we don't just stop eating compulsively or engaging in compulsive food behaviors; we
553 did that plenty of times on diets. OA gives us a spiritually based program for living one day at a
554 time. We are given a daily reprieve from our disease that is contingent on remaining "in fit spiritual
555 condition" (*Alcoholics Anonymous*, 4th ed., p. 85). We know serenity and peace of mind. We know
556 that we can be uniquely useful to another compulsive overeater by sharing our experience, strength,
557 and hope. Today we live life with all its feelings, and we have faith that if we work the program, it
558 will continue to work for us.
559

560 Since the day we walked into our first OA meeting, we've learned and experienced much. Using
561 our Higher Power and the OA program, we are ready to continue this wonderful new adventure of
562 living life to the fullest, one day at a time.
563

564 * Refer to the OA pamphlet *The Tools of Recovery* (#160P).
565 ** STATEMENT ON ABSTINENCE AND RECOVERY: "Abstinence in Overeaters
566 Anonymous is the action of refraining from compulsive eating and compulsive food
567 behaviors while working towards or maintaining a healthy body weight. Spiritual,
568 emotional, and physical recovery is the result of living the Overeaters Anonymous Twelve-
569 Step program."
570

571 Remember, our personal Higher Power, our OA sponsor,
572 and other members of the Fellowship are available to help us
573 through the hard times.
574

575 **Personal Stories of Maintenance**

576 **He Asked for Direction**

577 —The journey that led me here began in high school when I was a miserable, obese teenage boy. I
578 cried for help, and my mother took me to a diet doctor, which began fourteen years of dieting and
579 a fluctuating weight of 30 to 95 pounds (14 to 43 kg) over my current weight. Eventually, I wasn't
580 able to diet anymore and became frightened. The things I was doing with food were unhealthy and
581 sick, and becoming progressively worse.
582

583 —I had a strong diet mentality when I entered our Fellowship but quickly realized that OA was
584 different than anything I had ever tried before. The first night, I selected a food plan from the
585 *Dignity of Choice* pamphlet and got a sponsor.
586

587 —With my sponsor's guidance, I crafted my action plan to help me achieve abstinence. I used my
588 plan of eating as one of the Tools to help me achieve abstinence. In addition to being addicted to
589 refined sugar, I identified my compulsive food behavior as a volume eater without any defined
590 mealtimes; in other words, I ate a lot all the time. For the first time, I began weighing and measuring
591 my food, and I continue to do so daily. My surplus weight was removed in a few months, and for
592 the first time, I was at a normal body weight. In the past, I'd always thought of the end of the diet
593 as reaching goal weight because diet clubs I belonged to referred to it that way. I now began to
594 think of "maintenance," that word that was spoken in the OA rooms. I had finally reached the
595 mountaintop—so now what?

596 —During my dieting years, I had blamed my obesity on everything and truly thought that, once I
597 was thin, all those problems would lessen and eventually disappear. That sure didn't happen, but
598 reaching a normal body weight was the beginning of my life of looking inward and trying to live
599 the Twelve Steps as written, one day at a time.

600 —After ten years of staying within my chosen weight range, I gained 5 pounds (2 kg). I was not
601 sure why—maybe a change in activity or the aging process. Someone, not my sponsor, suggested
602 I just allow for this change and raise my goal weight range by 5 pounds (2 kg). I know me, though,
603 and could see myself doing that every year. I also knew that, for me, this would be giving in to the
604 power of the food. For someone who is powerless over food, this is not a wise choice. Working
605 with my sponsor, I reduced amounts, and I weighed myself a little more often. Over the past twenty-
606 five years, my weight has fluctuated, sometimes over range and sometimes under range. I turn this
607 over to my Higher Power and my sponsor and just listen and adjust with their guidance.
608 —God-given abstinence is the most important thing in my life, and through the grace of God, I've
609 been abstaining one day at a time for thirty five years and maintaining a weight loss of 75 to 80
610 pounds (34 to 36 kg) for over thirty four and a half years.

611 612 **What Is a Healthy Body Weight?**

613 Having been a professional yo-yo dieter, I found that the hardest thing has been learning and
614 accepting the amount of food and exercise my body needs to stay around the same weight
615 permanently. What is a healthy weight anyway?

616 When I was 50 pounds (23 kg) overweight, I said I was a “healthy” weight, but it was a lie.
617 On the other hand, my anorexic side is never satisfied with how thin I am, so I struggle with
618 deciding what is a healthy weight. I have come to rely on fellow OA members and height and
619 weight charts to tell me if I am healthy. I am 5 feet 4 inches (163 cm) tall and stay around 130
620 pounds (59 kg). At age 40, that seems to be a healthy weight for me. I still don't like it. I'd rather
621 be 125 (57 kg) or less, but I've been there and didn't look or feel healthy. When I weigh over 135
622 pounds (61 kg), I feel fat and lethargic.

623 I weigh once a month to stay honest about my weight. When I see the weight creeping up,
624 I know it's time to inventory my food and start cutting back a little.

625 I do not restrict my food or take second helpings. I don't eat sweets because I'm more
626 powerless over the craving once sweets are in my system. I eat real food—just in smaller quantities.
627 I am able to attend picnics and eat in restaurants because I have a plan for what I'll eat, and I ask
628 God for the strength to stick with it as imperfectly as I can. I have learned to focus on the people
629 around me, not on how much food I can eat.

630 To maintain my abstinence at work, I eat my breakfast before I go, and I pack lunch *and*
631 *eat it.* (It's easy to pack lunch and then conveniently go out for lunch thinking, I'll keep my packed
632 lunch for tomorrow.) Most of my coworkers know I'm an OA member, and they respect my
633 limitations because they know I'm serious about my program. They don't push food on me. I always
634 say, “No, thank you.” Sometimes when I start feeling sorry for myself because I won't eat
635 something that is sitting around, I take one piece, wrap it in a paper towel, crush it, and throw it
636 away. This helps me feel like I both had my share and have strangled the disease with my bare
637 hands!

638 The hardest thing at work is office meetings. The company buys lunch for everyone, and
639 everyone eats during the meeting. I could participate if the meeting time coincided with my lunch
640 time, but it does not. My coworkers eat three hours after I've had lunch and three hours before it's
641 time for my dinner. Since I eat three meals a day with nothing in between, I am unable to eat with
642 them because it is not my time to eat. If the smell of food gets too overwhelming, I pop a sugar-
643 free mint in my mouth, and I always have my water. If the meeting disturbs me too much, I call an
644 OA member or go to a meeting after work to help me cope.

645 646 **The Gift of Maintenance**

647 —Today, I am a recovered compulsive eater. After a lifetime of anorexia, bulimia, and compulsive
648 eating, I have been gratefully abstinent for over three years. Even more of a miracle, I have been
649 given the gift of maintenance. For the first time in my life, my weight has remained in a healthy

650 range. I have a daily reprieve from the disease, as long as I remain “in fit spiritual condition”
651 (*Alcoholics Anonymous*, 4th ed., p. 85).

652 —I have been a compulsive eater for as long as I can remember. I went on my first diet at the age
653 of 8. After hitting 230 pounds (105 kg) as a young woman, I vowed to muster enough willpower to
654 lose weight, or I would end my life. The diet of a lifetime began, and I lost weight. I became
655 addicted to dieting and the daily weighing on the scale ritual defined my worth as a person. Five
656 years later, I was lying in a hospital bed; my weight was a mere 79 pounds (36 kg). I was spiritually,
657 emotionally, and physically exhausted and devoid of feeling. I refused the radical treatment offered
658 to anorexics at the time and once again promised myself I’d be strong enough to recover on my
659 own. All I needed was willpower! The eating disorder then turned into a long cycle of bingeing and
660 purging, eating compulsively, abusing laxatives, and exercise bulimia that lasted for the next
661 twenty five years.

662 —At the age of 47 and weighing 220 pounds (100 kg), I was once again desperate and did not want
663 to live. I was the mother of three, had a successful career, and was in a long term marriage, yet I
664 felt dead. I could not stop bingeing, grazing, dieting, starving, and self loathing. I didn’t know it at
665 the time, but a Higher Power heard my plea and led me to Overeaters Anonymous. Little did I know
666 that was the beginning of the healing journey of a lifetime.

667 —At my first meeting, I felt like I had come home. The love in the rooms of OA surrounded me. I
668 did not think weight loss would be possible for me, ever. I believed OA could work for others, but
669 not for me. I believed that others could have a loving Higher Power, but I was not deserving enough
670 to have one of my own. I heard the message to keep coming back, so I did. I asked someone to
671 sponsor me, began to work the Steps, listened, shared, and read OA literature. The gift of recovery
672 began, and my Higher Power released 78 pounds (35 kg) from me.

673 —Maintenance requires trust in a Higher Power greater than myself. As an anorexic, I was terrified
674 that if I began to lose weight, I would not be able to stop. Other times, I wanted to buy clothing that
675 was too big for me, fearing the inevitable expansion that was sure to follow. It hasn’t happened. I
676 am wearing the same clothes I wore last fall. What a gift! Action is required on my part to keep
677 what I have been given and to stay “in fit spiritual condition” (*Alcoholics Anonymous*, 4th ed., p.
678 85). It takes willingness and daily surrender. I use the Tools, have a loving sponsor, and sponsor
679 others.

680 —In recovery I have learned that I am not in control of the number on the scale. The disease tries
681 to tell me the number is never good enough. Maintenance has proved the disease wrong. Thank
682 goodness it is not up to me! I gratefully accept that I am powerless over food and compulsive food
683 behaviors. Surrender has never felt so good. I remain grateful for my Higher Power and my OA
684 family.

685

686 **A New Way of Thinking—After Weight-Loss Surgery**

687 —I came to OA while I was losing weight after weight loss surgery. I had already lost 60 pounds
688 (27 kg) and knew that, without a plan, either I would not hit my target goal weight or I would regain
689 all the weight I had lost. People think having surgery is a cheat, a shortcut. It isn’t. Weight loss
690 surgery patients can regain the weight just like those who have lost weight on any diet, and the
691 repercussions can be more severe.

692 —Six months before joining OA, I was in the midst of severe depression. I had hit bottom in all
693 the ways a person can. I was isolating myself and feeling that life was just not worth it any longer.
694 The funny thing is that I had so much, and I didn’t see it. I thought that the reason I was so sad, so
695 out on the fringe of life, was because I was obese. But obesity and my need to overeat were just the
696 results of a much bigger problem.

697 —Fast forward six years, and today, I see so much more clearly because of OA. I eventually lost
698 118 pounds (54 kg)—half of myself—and I saw that I had been hiding behind the fat for a dozen
699 years because of unresolved anger, immaturity, and ignorance. Working the Twelve Steps of OA,
700 I found that the program gave me the tools to create and live a balanced life, one that inspires me

701 every day to work on the mental, physical, and spiritual. No part of the transition was easy, but it
702 was worth it in so many ways.

703 —Each day, I still need to remove the old way of thinking and replace it with hope—even if I have
704 just 10 percent. Because with hope comes encouragement—and with courage comes strength.
705 Thank you, OA, for giving me a life worth living again!

706 707 **Maintaining—Energized, Not Bored**

708 —I have been in OA since 1977. I joined when I was 25 years old. My food and my life were totally
709 out of control. I was 50 pounds (23 kg) overweight and had tried everything. I am grateful to say
710 that I have been maintaining a 50-pound (23 kg) weight loss for thirty-seven years. It is possible.

711 —I want to focus on just the physical, practical aspects of maintenance. First of all, the bad news:
712 I cannot eat the same amount of food that I did when I was 25 years old. I will gain weight if I do.
713 Here is the good news: The changes are gradual, and the willingness is always there (or I pray for
714 it). I do have a very Twelve Step-oriented dietitian who helps me keep my food plan honest and
715 sane. This works for me. Second, I do weigh myself once a month. This is just a way for me to
716 know that my food plan is appropriate for where I am now. If I see that my weight is creeping up
717 three months in a row, I know it's time for a tweak. The changes have been small and gradual, and
718 honestly, I do not feel them.

719 —Another way that I maintain this healthy body is through physical activity. I love that, at 63 years
720 old, I can still ride my bike and run. Not everyone is this fortunate. I have these abilities as benefits
721 of this wonderful program. Here again, I have had to make tweaks so that I can be physically active
722 for a lifetime. I have reduced the amount of exercise to what is appropriate for me (although my
723 sedentary friends beg to differ).

724 —All of these physical changes would mean nothing if that was all this program was about for me.
725 My healthy body weight is just a lovely side effect of committing myself to this program—working
726 and living the Twelve Steps as a way of life and giving service at all levels. I know that I have
727 enough. I maintain an attitude of gratitude about the way I live. My first sponsor said some very
728 important words to me: “You can't afford to be bored with this program.”

729 —I am as excited and enthusiastic about OA today as I was on April 19, 1977, when I first walked
730 into the rooms.

731 732 **More Than a Number**

733 When I came into OA, I had over 100 pounds (45 kg) to lose. I had experience with another
734 Twelve Step program, so I knew the OA program would work. I found a plan of eating and followed
735 suggestions; I was one of those my group referred to as being “struck abstinent” and the weight came
736 off fairly quickly. For the first time in my life, I had an average-sized body. More importantly, I was
737 closer to my Higher Power than I thought possible. Many issues came up as the food obsession came
738 down—things I thought I'd dealt with but hadn't fully. With my mind clear, my options were clear.
739 My serenity reached an entirely new level, and I was beginning to gain some of the self-respect that
740 had always eluded me.

741 One day, a well-meaning member asked me if I'd reached “goal” weight yet. I had no idea what
742 that meant. (My idea of a healthy body size meant there were no XX's on my clothing labels.) I
743 consulted with my doctor and a nutritionist, came up with a number I “ought” to strive for, and
744 promptly lost my focus.

745 The word “goal” implies an end. It implies that once we have reached a particular weight, we
746 are finished. We have arrived. My disease seized upon this idea and began to tell me that I could
747 eat just like others; that because I was no longer obese, my eating disorder had vanished with my
748 excess weight. It was like bingo—I hit the number, and my struggle was over.

749 For me, the struggle has just begun, perhaps because what I want is less tangible than a number
750 on the scale or a certain dress size. I want food to have an appropriate role in my life. Though I stay
751 within 10 pounds (5 kg) of what is healthy for me, my mind reels when I use food for other than

752 nutritional purposes. I want to form a healthy partnership with my meals. It is a constant challenge
753 for me to remember that setting boundaries is not deprivation; it is safety.

754 It has been helpful for me to examine why I do what I do, to remind myself that I am taking care
755 of myself, and what others do, in and out of our rooms, is not my concern.

756 I write down my food every day to avoid becoming caught up in planning “the perfect meal” or
757 becoming overwhelmed with choices at mealtimes. I have a sponsor, and I commit my food to her
758 to take the secrecy out of eating. I listen to her suggestions because sometimes I cannot see the
759 sneakiness of this disease. I take what I like and leave the rest, trusting that if I make an unwise
760 decision, my Higher Power will let me know. I go to meetings to remind myself I’m not alone and
761 I still have an eating disorder, no matter what the labels in my clothing say. I stay connected. We
762 are all the same. Whether we binged or purged, no matter what our trouble foods are, I can always
763 identify at a meeting.

764 Most importantly, I follow the Steps and practice these Principles in all my affairs, every day
765 and to the best of my ability. I turn my food, my life, and my will over to my Higher Power. I pray.
766 I read literature. I write. I make my best effort to be kind; when I am not, I apologize and let things
767 go. I assert myself appropriately. On many levels, the inability to do these things is what kept me
768 eating.

769 I have learned to trust my Higher Power completely, and the peace this brings me is indescribable
770 and more delicious than anything I ever put in my mouth. My body size is a fringe benefit of this
771 program. It serves as a reminder that miracles happen in these rooms. I am not at “goal.” I am at
772 “life.”

773
774 **Individual _____ Members’ _____ Suggestions _____ for**
775 **Maintaining a Healthy Body Weight**
776

- 777 • ~~I m Maintain a strong, daily connection to my your Higher Power through prayer and~~
778 ~~meditation, turning over your fears, resentments, and regrets (sometimes many times a~~
779 ~~day!).~~
- 780 • ~~In my morning prayer and meditation, I a Ask the God of your understanding for an~~
781 ~~abstinent day. I e Commit a your plan of eating to God, to my yourself, and to my your~~
782 ~~sponsor. I find that I’ve established a sort of rhythm with my food now, which feels natural~~
783 ~~and free.~~
- 784 • ~~If maintenance seems boring, I use a new Tool or focus on the Twelfth Step. Nothing~~
785 ~~revitalizes my recovery as much as working with a newcomer. I maintain a strong, daily~~
786 ~~connection to my Higher Power.~~
- 787 • ~~I m Maintain a positive attitude, asking God to relieve me you of the “bondage of self”~~
788 ~~(*Alcoholics Anonymous*, 4th ed., p. 63) and to help me you do God’s will. This gives me~~
789 ~~provides the serenity and emotional balance I needed to stay abstinent and live life on life’s~~
790 ~~terms. I remember that my worst day abstinent is far better than my best day in the disease.~~
- 791 • ~~I make a gratitude list and thank my Higher Power every day.~~
- 792 • ~~I turn over my fears, anger, resentments, and regrets to my Higher Power — sometimes~~
793 ~~many times a day.~~
- 794 • ~~I w Work the Steps daily and use the Tools of the program. I Use spot-check inventories~~
795 ~~to identify behaviors that may signal the need for more intensive use of the Steps and Tools.~~
796 ~~As I continue to grow and develop as a human being, I am able to share my recovery with~~
797 ~~others.~~
- 798 • ~~I t Take care of my your body, making sure I to get adequate rest, and exercise and to eat~~
799 ~~nourishing foods.~~
- 800 • ~~If physical limitations occur, ask your doctor, physical therapist, or fitness consultant to~~
801 ~~suggest modifications so you can continue to keep your body flexible and fit.~~

- 802 ● I am gentle with myself. There is no one right way. I have found the way that works for
- 803 me.
- 804 ● I use the slogans, especially “live and let live,” “one day at a time,” and “keep it simple.”
- 805 ● ~~Accept that, Over time, I’ve had you may have to adjust my your food plan of eating to~~
- 806 ~~cope with an aging body and different nutritional needs. My weight or the fit of my clothes~~
- 807 ~~tells me how well my food plan is working.~~
- 808 ● I Remember that my your disease is progressive; items on my your food plan that I have
- 809 enjoyed for years may become difficult for me you to eat in moderation. I Avoid them!
- 810 ● I-w Watch for old dieting or food-controlling behaviors, such as feeling the urge to weigh
- 811 at inappropriate times, cutting portion sizes, or skipping meals without consulting a your
- 812 sponsor or a health care professional.
- 813

814 Achieving and maintaining a healthy body weight and a sane mind are the miracles of the OA

815 program. Above all else, we continue to attend meetings because they are essential to recovery. We

816 continue to carry the message of recovery through the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. We

817 “practice these principles” in all our affairs. And we give service, because it is vital to long-term

818 abstinence.

- 819
- 820 ● ~~If maintenance seems boring, I use a new Tool or focus on the Twelfth Step. Nothing~~
- 821 ~~revitalizes my recovery as much as working with a newcomer.~~
- 822 ● ~~I maintain a strong, daily connection to my Higher Power.~~
- 823 ● ~~I maintain a positive attitude, asking God to relieve me of the bondage of self and to help~~
- 824 ~~me do God’s will. This gives me the serenity and emotional balance I need to stay abstinent~~
- 825 ~~and live life on life’s terms. I remember that my worst day abstinent is far better than my~~
- 826 ~~best day in the disease.~~
- 827 ● ~~I practice daily meditation.~~
- 828 ● ~~I make a gratitude list and thank my Higher Power every day.~~
- 829 ● ~~I turn over my fears, anger, resentments, and regrets to my Higher Power—sometimes~~
- 830 ~~many times a day.~~
- 831 ● ~~I work the Steps daily and use the Tools of the program. I use spot check inventories to~~
- 832 ~~identify behaviors that may signal the need for more intensive use of the Steps and Tools.~~
- 833 ~~As I continue to grow and develop as a human being, I am able to share my recovery with~~
- 834 ~~others.~~
- 835 ● ~~I take care of my body, making sure I get adequate rest and eat nourishing foods.~~
- 836 ● ~~I am gentle with myself. There is no one right way. I have found the way that works for~~
- 837 ~~me.~~
- 838 ● ~~I use the slogans, especially “live and let live,” “one day at a time,” and “keep it simple.”~~
- 839 ● ~~Over time, I’ve had to adjust my food plan to cope with an aging body and different~~
- 840 ~~nutritional needs. My weight or the fit of my clothes tells me how well my food plan is~~
- 841 ~~working. I remember that my disease is progressive; items on my food plan that I have~~
- 842 ~~enjoyed for years may become difficult for me to eat in moderation. I avoid them.~~
- 843 ● ~~I watch for old dieting or food-controlling behaviors, such as feeling the urge to weigh at~~
- 844 ~~inappropriate times, cutting portion sizes, or skipping meals without consulting a sponsor~~
- 845 ~~or health care professional.~~
- 846 ● ~~In my morning prayer and meditation, I ask God for an abstinent day. I commit a plan of~~
- 847 ~~eating to God, to myself, and to my sponsor. I find that I’ve established a sort of rhythm~~
- 848 ~~with my food now, which feels natural and free.~~
- 849 ● ~~If I’m going to a restaurant for a meal or if my plans change, I decide beforehand, if at all~~
- 850 ~~possible, what I’m going to eat. This allows me to prepare an action plan ahead of time in~~
- 851 ~~a safe place—and walk right through temptations before they even happen. By the time I~~

852 ~~get there, my commitment is firm.~~
853 ● Above all else, I continue to attend meetings because they are the lifeblood of my recovery.
854 I continue to carry the message of recovery through the Twelve Steps and to “practice these
855 principles” in all my affairs (*Alcoholics Anonymous*, 4th ed., p. 60). Service is vital to long-
856 term abstinence.
857

858 LIVING IN ABSTINENCE

859 *The Joy of Recovery*

861
862 In OA, we don’t just stop eating compulsively or engaging in compulsive food behaviors; we did
863 that plenty of times on diets. OA gives us a spiritually based program for living one day at a time.
864 We are given a daily reprieve from our disease that is contingent on remaining “in fit spiritual
865 condition” (*Alcoholics Anonymous*, 4th ed., p. 85). We know serenity and peace of mind. We know
866 that we can be uniquely useful to another compulsive overeater by sharing our experience, strength,
867 and hope. Today, we live life with all its feelings, and we have faith that if we work the program it
868 will continue to work for us.
869

870 “Those of us who live this program don’t simply carry the message; *we are the message*. Each day
871 that we live well, we *are* well, and we embody the joy of recovery, which attracts others who want
872 what we’ve found in OA. We’re always happy to share our secret: the Twelve Steps of Overeaters
873 Anonymous, which empower each of us to live well and be well, one day at a time” (*The Twelve*
874 *Steps and Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous*, p. 106 *Second Edition*, pp. 86–87).
875

876 *God grant me*
877 *the serenity to accept*
878 *the things I cannot change,*
879 *courage to change*
880 *the things I can,*
881 *and wisdom to know the*
882 *difference.*
883

884 **The Twelve Traditions**

- 885 1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon OA unity.
- 886 2. For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority—a loving God as He may express
887 Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.
- 888 3. The only requirement for OA membership is a desire to stop eating compulsively.
- 889 4. Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or OA as a whole.
- 890 5. Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry its message to the compulsive overeater who
891 still suffers.
- 892 6. An OA group ought never endorse, finance or lend the OA name to any related facility or outside
893 enterprise, lest problems of money, property and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.
- 894 7. Every OA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
- 895 8. Overeaters Anonymous should remain forever non-professional, but our service centers may
896 employ special workers.
- 897 9. OA, as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly
898 responsible to those they serve.
- 899 10. Overeaters Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence, the OA name ought never be
900 drawn into public controversy.

901 11. Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always
902 maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, films, television and other public media
903 of communication.

904 12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all these Traditions, ever reminding us to place
905 principles before personalities.

906
907 Permission to use the Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous for adaptation granted by AA
908 World Services, Inc.

909
910 **[Conference Seal of Approval to go here if adopted]**

911
912 **How to find OA**

913 Visit the OA website at www.oa.org
914 or contact the World Service Office at 1-505-891-2664.
915 Many directories also include local listings
916 for Overeaters Anonymous.

917
918 **Overeaters Anonymous®**

919 World Service Office
920 6075 Zenith Court NE
921 Rio Rancho, NM 87144-6424 USA
922 Mail Address: PO Box 44727
923 Rio Rancho, NM 87174-4727 USA
924 Tel: 1-505-891-2664 • Fax: 1-505-891-4320
925 info@oa.org • www.oa.org

926 © 20TK Overeaters Anonymous, Inc.

927 All rights reserved

928 #XXX

929