***Welcome Back To OA – A New Beginning***

**MODERATOR:**  Welcome to “*Welcome Back to OA – A New Beginning”.*My name is **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** and I am the facilitator for the meeting. Would all who wish to please join me in a moment of silence and the Serenity Prayer?

**God, grant me the serenity To accept the thing I cannot change, The courage to change the things I can, And the wisdom to know the difference.**

***\*\* Read: Please kindly silence any cell phones or other electronic devices.***

**MODERATOR:**

**THE OA PREAMBLE**

 Overeaters Anonymous is a fellowship of individuals who, through shared experience, strength and hope are recovering from compulsive overeating. We welcome everyone who wants to stop eating compulsively. There are no dues for members. We are self-supporting through our own contributions, neither soliciting nor accepting outside donations. OA is not affiliated with any public or private organization, political movement, ideology or religious doctrine. We take no position on outside issues. Our primary purpose is to abstain from compulsive eating and to carry this message of recovery through the Twelve Steps of OA to those who still suffer.
(World Service Business Conference - May 2013)

**MODERATOR**: Who would like to read the **‘OA Welcome’** which is taken from the ‘Overeaters Anonymous’ book ? (2nd edition - pages. 3, 5, 6)

**‘OA Welcome’**

As a result of practicing the Steps, the compulsion of overeating is removed on a daily basis. Thus, for most of us, abstinence means freedom from the bondage of compulsive eating, achieved through the process of surrendering to something greater than ourselves; the more total our surrender, the more fully realized is our freedom from food obsession.

After hearing our personal stories, you may proclaim, I’m not *that* bad! We ask you to keep in mind that compulsive overeating is a progressive illness. If you really are a compulsive overeater, the symptoms will grow worse. Within our ranks are those who were recovering but tried once again to control food by their own means, with a consequent return to serious overeating and, in many cases, massive weight gain.

“But I’m too weak. I’ll never make it!” Don’t worry; we have all felt the same thing. If you decide you are one of us, we welcome you with open arms. You are not alone any more. Overeaters Anonymous extends to all of you, the gift of acceptance. No matter, who you are, where you come from, or where you are going, you are welcome here.  Regardless of what you have done or failed to do, you may be sure of our unconditional acceptance. We will help you and support you. We will hold out our hands and stand beside you as you pull yourself back up and walk on again to where you are heading.

Let us rejoice together in our recovery and be deeply grateful and thankful that we have a solution and a home, a place to come to, if we want it. Welcome!  Welcome to Overeaters Anonymous!

**MODERATOR:** Who would like to read the **Twelve Steps?**  (separate page)

MODERATOR: Would someone please read the Twelve Traditions? (Separate page)

**MODERATOR:** We will now read the short version of The Tools of the Program. Anyone can read a tool. (handout)

**SPEAKERS SHARE:**  - Now it is time for our speakers, who will each tell their experience specifically highlighting their experience with relapse: how they got back into the food and how they came back to OA and how they got the courage to get back to OA and commit to their abstinence. They will each speak for 20 minutes. (Ask someone to keep time)

After each person qualifies, Moderator asks each speaker to answer the following (one at a time):

Prior to each person’s share, introduce them by name and then remind them during their share to focus on/answer these questions in their share (15-20 minutes per person):

* *What happened to make you lose your abstinence?*
* *What significant factors helped you come back?*
* *What key factors helped you stick with it when you came back?*
* *Is there anything further you would like to say about avoiding relapse?*

***At this time you can either:***

***Read aloud (1 at a time) the Ask-it-Basket questions (list provided if no one submitted any) one at a time and have panelists or members of the organizing committee answer them.***

***OR***

***Break into small discussion groups using the list of potential questions for 10-15 minutes and then have each group choose a representative to read their group’s question and suggested answers.***

 **SPONSORS:**  Are there any sponsors with time available? Please stand and let us know your first name and town. (PAUSE) Is there anyone who could get someone started?

**MODERATOR:** We now close with a moment of silence and the Serenity Prayer. *Thank you for coming*.

**MODERATOR:**

Would all those who wish to, please join me in a moment of silence and the Serenity Prayer.

**God, grant me the serenity**

**To accept the things I cannot change,**

**The courage to change the things I can,**

**And the wisdom to know the difference.**

**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 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.

**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 Moderators 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.

**OA TOOLS OF RECOVERY Short Form**

**MODERATOR**: ACTION is the magic word. In Overeaters Anonymous (OA), “Abstinence is the action of refraining from compulsive eating and compulsive food behaviors while working towards or maintaining a healthy body weight. Spiritual, mental, emotional, and physical recovery is the result of living the Overeaters Anonymous Twelve-Step program.”

**1. A Plan of Eating:** As a tool, a plan of eating helps us to abstain from eating compulsively. This tool helps us deal with the physical aspects of our disease, and helps us achieve physical recovery. From this vantage point, we can more effectively follow OA's Twelve Step program of recovery and move beyond the food to a happier, healthier and more spiritual living experience.

**2. Sponsorship:** Sponsors are OA members who are living the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions to the best of their ability. They are willing to share their recovery with other members of the Fellowship and are committed to abstinence. Ours is a program of attraction; find a sponsor who has what you want, and ask that person how he or she is achieving it.

**3. Meetings:** Meetings are gatherings of two or more compulsive overeaters who come together to share their personal experience and the strength and hope OA has given them. Though there are many types of meetings, fellowship with other compulsive overeaters is the basis of them all.

**4. Telephone:** The telephone helps us share on a one to one basis, and avoid the isolation, which is so common among us. As a part of the surrender process, it is a tool with which we learn to reach out, ask for help, and extend help to others.

**5. Writing:** In addition to writing our inventories and the list of people we have harmed, most of us have found that writing has been an indispensable tool for working the steps. In the past, compulsive eating was our most common reaction to life. When we put our difficulties down on paper, it becomes easier to see situations more clearly and perhaps better discern any necessary action.

**6. Literature:** Our OA literature and the AA "Big Book" are ever available tools, which provide insight into our problem of eating compulsively, strength to deal with it, and the very real hope that there is a solution for us.

**7. Action Plan:** An action plan is the process of identifying and implementing attainable actions that are necessary to support our individual abstinence. Just like our plan of eating, it may vary widely among members and may need to be adjusted to bring structure, balance, and manageability into our lives.

**8. Anonymity:** Anonymity, referred to in Traditions Eleven and Twelve, is a tool that guarantees that we will place principles before personalities. The protection anonymity provides offers each of us freedom of expression and safeguards us from gossip. What we hear at meetings should remain there.

**9. Service:** Carrying the message to the compulsive overeater who still suffers is the basic purpose of our Fellowship; therefore, it is the most fundamental form of service. "A life of sane and happy usefulness" is what we are promised as the result of working the Twelve Steps. Service helps to fulfill that promise. As OA's responsibility pledge states: Always to extend the hand and heart of OA to all who share my compulsion; for this, I am responsible."