



## **Step of the Month: Step 1**

### **Guiding principle: Honesty**

***“We admitted we were powerless over food— that our lives had become unmanageable.”***

I am powerless over food, and my life had become unmanageable. That sounds negative. Am I supposed to admit to being weak? That was what I thought. However, I have been trying to control the weight my whole life with diets, exercise, and even weight loss surgery. I hit a good bottom after three years of being in OA. I had a good job, a boyfriend, survived the worst health year of my life, built a village of support since I moved to Texas, and bought a house. I should be happy, right? Wrong.

I was close to 300lbs again by gaining all the weight I lost in program and then some. I was treating OA like a diet. I thought I would get fired every day at work due to my low self-esteem and perfectionism. My crippling anxiety of fearing the future and regretting the past made me physically ill often. I had poor communication skills and rather suffer than ask for help. My life was unmanageable, alright. It hit me as I stared at that number on the scale that life will never be enough with my frame of thinking. I was done. I started making my program a priority. The people in the rooms have shown me another way to look at Step One. I am not a failure! It is weakness that binds us. This disease is three-fold: mental, spiritual, and physical. I am powerless over food, but not everything. Therefore, I started somewhere. I am still doing the footwork by working the steps imperfectly one day at a time. I am forever grateful to be experiencing the promises.

-Latoya

### **Announcements**



- January 4 & February 1**  
Step of the month mtg  
9:45 am, Church of Reconciliation,  
Alban Room
- January 11 & February 8**  
Intergroup 9:45 am,  
Church of Reconciliation,  
Cranmer Room
- January 4 & February 1**  
Newcomer/Welcome  
Back meeting  
9:45 am, Church of Reconciliation,

**Unity Day**  
This event is coming up in a few months  
See the 3rd page under News for OA WSO for more info.

Step 1 – We admitted we were powerless over food and our lives had become unmanageable.

What I can admit is that when I walked into my first meeting in August 2018, a miracle had already taken place. My heart and mind were ready and open to accept whatever came next before I even walked through the door. However, it took me three months to connect with a sponsor and began working my 12 Steps in earnest. Admitting I was powerless... the first step was my biggest hurdle. I thought I was ready but when I had to own the word "powerless," I just couldn't wrap my head around it. You see, from 2012 to 2018 I had experienced major losses and major gains in my personal and professional life. In 2014 after almost 20 years of marriage, I had to take on my own decision-making. I decided to buy a house, trade in my luxury car for a more economical choice, signed up for university courses, and the list goes on. In 2016, my beloved father died nine weeks after a terminal cancer diagnosis. And in 2018, six months into a new job, my name change was signed by a judge on my birthday and I was at the highest weight I had ever been in my life. Needless to say, I thought I had to be "in control" of everything, regain "power" I thought I had lost in the last 6 years. I actually had to own Step 2 and Step 3 before I could go back and own Step 1. I needed to understand and believe that my Higher Power is greater than I am and He was all-powerful. When I gave my will and my life over to God, I no longer felt the need to be "in control" or regain "power." I finally admitted I was powerless over food and over my life that was clearly unmanageable. I was assured and found comfort in an all-powerful God and that helped me admit I was powerless. I'm okay with that now; I own it and have found serenity in it. May I do His will

always.

-Deborah A.

## Step 1

I love word games, and especially the ones that require changing or rearranging letters and coming up with a completely different word. So imagine my surprise when I recently read Step One in the AA 12 & 12 and started with the bankruptcy, changed it to humiliation and ended up with redemption. It was a word game and human experience all in one. How do I end up in bankruptcy when it comes to Step One and my disease? I have no more assets when it comes to compulsive eating. My brain and body will always want some quick fix to take away the pain. That pain can be physical, emotional or spiritual and I will always have the thought and action to turn to food for relief. My disease has taken away the power of choice and I have no more capital to rescue me from bankruptcy. My intellect, my well being, my home, bank account, family and friends cannot bail me out of this predicament. As a sponsor once explained to me, "If you are in a fight with the food, the food will always win." It would seem that declaring bankruptcy in regard to my disease you be the end of the story. But no, it is not. Facing my bankruptcy is humiliation. How could I be in this predicament?! I stopped ruminating on this question and instead just sunk into the reality that food had me. I am reduced to a lower position in my own eyes. Do I have to walk around life from here on ashamed, embarrassed, with no self respect. No says, Step One. My utter defeat with compulsive eating and compulsive food behaviors is the what it takes for me to pick up the rest of the Steps and practice them today. And that humiliation transforms into redemption. My fully grasping my hopeless disease and my own self destruction brings me face to face with a loving Higher Power's plan for me today. I experience redemption when I turn to the Steps: become rigorously honest and tolerant; confess my faults and seek restitution; care about my Higher Power and practice prayer and meditation; sacrifice time and energy to carry the message to another sufferer (AA 12 & 12, p. 24, paraphrased). The transformation from bankruptcy to humiliation to redemption can happen just like this - finger snap! I am so grateful for the three women who invited me to read and study this step three different times in the last year. I am experiencing redemption from utter bankruptcy when I practice Step One and the remaining Steps today.

Anonymous, New Braunfels

## One Hot Stove—Honesty

At my first OA meeting in 1978, I heard about the deadly, PROGRESSIVE disease of compulsive overeating. I identified with many of the experiences shared by others at that Newcomers Meeting, yet left thinking that, while THEY might have a disease, I just needed to lose some weight. Despite my denial, some part of me "got" the truth about the disease at that first meeting. In my experience, practicing HONESTY, the principle of the First Step, has been a PROGRESSIVE solution. After the deaths of my parents four months apart in 1981, I dropped out of OA for 2 years. In the first year after leaving, my pant size expanded from 6 to 38. The food wasn't working, but I couldn't stop eating. My first honest conversation with God was a turning point. Until that night my attitude toward God could be summarized as: "What do I need to tell you to keep you off my back, so I can go on doing whatever I want?" That night I started the conversation with: "If I have to be abstinent to have a relationship with You, I can't have a relationship with you because I can't get abstinent." From there I got as honest as I could with God. I closed with "If I'm lying to myself and all I've just told you is a lie, then You'll just have to deal with it, because that's the best I've got!" My sense was that God was OK with that. On my side, being "real" with God was a relief, and I was willing to return to OA. I got a sponsor and "sort of" worked the steps. Over time I lost weight and looked like I was in recovery; however, I continued to include foods that I realize now don't work for my body. [Note: This is just MY experience.] A turning point during this phase was parking in front of a fast food place and telling God: "I know if I asked, You would help me not eat this. I'm NOT going to ask right now; but I do want to ask some time soon." For me this statement was progress in being honest. In 1988 I lost a job because I was too food-fogged to function well as the secretary for a new boss. During this period I was both eating and reading fiction compulsively to deal with my fear and depression. One evening in my car, while waiting at a red light, I remember casually thinking, "The books and the food aren't working [to numb the pain]. Maybe I need to start drinking." THAT got my attention, since I knew that I did not like the taste of liquor and would be drinking just to get drunk. In that moment I understood the meaning of "PROGRESSIVE" disease at a deeper level and decided to go to treatment. I was obsessed with food while I was in treatment and paid \$7,500 of my money to stay for 2 extra weeks. My "deal" with God was that I would do whatever I was asked to do, but, if I still wanted to eat after I left, I was going to do so. On my last night at treatment I told God that I knew that it was crazy after what I had spent, but I could not stand the obsession with a certain food any longer. I was going to eat compulsively as soon as I left. In my experience, once I flipped the "EAT" switch "ON", the decision was made. Later that evening, when a treatment friend asked me what I was going to do when I left, I told her the truth. She asked me if I could just not eat [compulsively] for 90 days. To my shock, I told her, "Yes." I believe that, because of my honesty, God flipped my "EAT" switch "OFF". That evening was the beginning of a slow journey of growth in honesty and faith in the program and in God. Working the steps with a sponsor continues to reveal new areas and degrees of dishonesty in my life. With the help of God, the steps, and my OA family, I continue to practice PROGRESSIVE HONESTY,

moving through denial to slow acceptance of reality and, ultimately, to the "new freedom and new happiness" of the Promises. Keep coming back – it works!

## San Antonio Area Intergroup—Service Board

SAAI is duly registered with the World Service Office of Overeaters Anonymous.

Our primary purpose is to aid those with the problem of compulsive eating through the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous and to serve and represent the OA groups from which the Intergroup is formed.

SAAI can be reached in the following ways:

Phone: 210.492.5400

Email:  
[news@oasanantonio.com](mailto:news@oasanantonio.com)

US mail:  
SAAI  
PO Box 5458  
San Antonio, TX 78201

Website:  
[www.oasanantonio.com](http://www.oasanantonio.com)

### 2020-2021 Board

Chair: Carie H.  
Vice Chair: Barbara F.  
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Recording Secretary:  
Helen  
Communications Secretary:  
Mike H.  
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WSO Delegate: Ron J  
Region III Representative:  
Amanda

SAAI has standing and special committees to carry out its purposes in an effective and efficient manner.

### 2018-2019 SAAI Standing Committees

**Audio Library:** Steve M.  
**Archives:** Barbara F.  
**Communication:** Mike H.  
**Swan/El Cisne:** Chris B.  
**Website:** Mike H.  
**Lifeline Rep:** Richard V.  
**Public Information:** Mersi

**Professional Outreach:**  
Mary Rose J.  
**Meeting Info/Phone line:**  
Sharon V.  
**Welcome Back/Newcomer:**  
David & Lea B.  
**12X12:** Vacant

**Literature:** Elaine L.  
OA and AA literature can be ordered and picked up at Intergroup meetings.  
[Literature forms online](#)

Place literature order at:  
[oasaliterature@gmail.com](mailto:oasaliterature@gmail.com)

**Want to receive The Swan/El Cisne and important updates via email?**  
[news@oasanantonio.com](mailto:news@oasanantonio.com)

### NEWS FROM OA'S WORLD SERVICE OFFICE

The purpose of Unity Day is to recognize the strength of the OA Fellowship worldwide. This is a time when OA members pause to reaffirm the strength inherent in OA unity.

In OA, Unity is considered so important we speak of it in our OA preamble, which states: "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.

We also have a Unity with Diversity policy to remind us all how much we need to be open and accepting of one another. In our suggested meeting formats we read: "Let us be mindful of OA's Unity with Diversity Policy: whatever problem you may have with food, you are welcome at this meeting, regardless of race, creed, nationality, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, or any other trait

OA as a whole has agreed on a number of things that do affect us all. We embody unity when we adhere to the definition of an OA group. This four-part definition is found in our OA Bylaws, which says:

- 1) As a group, we meet to practice the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous, guided by the Twelve Concepts of OA Service.
- 2) All who have the desire to stop eating compulsively are welcome in the group.
- 3) No member is required to practice any actions in order to remain a member or to have a voice (share at a meeting).
- 4) As a group we have no affiliation other than Overeaters Anonymous."

So, come to our Unity Day workshop and "feel the unity".

### **TWELVE STEPS (Continued)**

- 1. We admitted we were powerless and our lives have 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***

## TWELVE STEPS (cont.)

### 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.

#### Step 1 story

Yesterday, I got my nine-month abstinent chip. However, I stepped into my first O.A. meeting in May of 2017. You don't have to be a math whiz to see that I didn't instantly embrace recovery. I took Step One a whopping seven times before it finally sunk in. Not once. Not twice. Seven times.

Don't get me wrong, I was willing. But, you see, I was still trying to control everything. And, while I have lost over seventy pounds and haven't eaten sugar in nine months, my abstinence is a daily CHOICE, not a given. Cravings don't magically disappear. My life didn't miraculously become manageable once I learned how to 'Let Go and Let God.' I am still 'powerless over food.'

The key is that I keep coming back. I hit three meetings a week on average, and have a sponsor and O.A. peers I am accountable to. I share honestly if I'm triggered to slip up, and stay away from restaurants and parties if I'm having an emotional day.

In the past, I was numb to daily struggles and family drama. Flat tire? Eat. Payday short? Eat more. Bills to pay? Eat even more. Divorce court? Eat everything in sight. Now, I plan my three-square meals and shop once a week for healthy food, so I don't have to worry about throwing something haphazard together or binging after a bad day.

I used to bury my anger and fear in false cheerfulness and food. In O.A. I have found a new approach to life.

In the margins of my workbook, I've written these notes: "It's still a Disease. Accept that, and get over yourself." I am a food addict. That is the only thing I am sure of. Staying abstinent is a conscious choice. Just for today, I choose to embrace recovery.

-Karen K

## AREA MEETINGS

SUN	5:00 P.M.	Lynn G. (210) 240-3277	University United Methodist Church, South Campus, Main Entrance Second Floor Room S210, 5084 De Zavala (at Vance Jackson), 78249	Step Study / Discussion / Speaker (2nd Sun)
	7:00 P.M.	Elaine (210) 332-0551	Unity Church, 408 Gruene Road, <b>NEW BRAUNFELS</b> , 78130	Literature / Discussion
MON	9:30 A.M.	Vera C. (210) 494-2713	Shearer Hills Baptist Church, North Building (Interpark Entrance) Room 128, 12615 San Pedro, 78216	Literature: Currently Big Book
	6:00 P.M.	Graciela (210) 219-9660	La Iglesia El Divino Redentor, 2803 W. Salinas, 78207	Literatura / Discusion <b>EN ESPANOL</b>
	7:00 P.M.	Ken R. (210) 520-3727	St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, 6110 NW Loop 410, 78238	Discussion
TUES	5:45 P.M.	Julene (512) 923-0707	Alamo Heights Baptist Church, 6501 Broadway, 78209	Joe & Charlie Big Book Study - Bring BB, Notebook & Dinner if desired
	7:00 P.M.	Noe G. (210) 392-8031	Alamo Heights Baptist Church, 6501 Broadway, 78209	12 & 12 Study / Discussion
WED	12 Noon	Kay (404) 286-9169	Unity Church of the Hill Country, Library, 1016 Jefferson St., <b>KERRVILLE</b> , 78028	Steps / Traditions
	7:30 P.M.	Barbara D. (210) 637-7203	Church of Reconciliation, Brigid Room, 8900 Starcrest, 78217	Step Study / Newcomers ' Ask It Basket
THURS	12:15 P.M.	Graciela (210) 219-9660	Collins Garden Library 200 N. Park Blvd. (corner of Nogalitos) San Antonio, TX 78204	Discussion— <b>Please note new location</b>
	7:00 P.M.	Kay R. (210) 831-8079	Unity Church, Life Room, 408 Gruene Rd., <b>NEW BRAUNFELS</b> , 78130	Step Study
FRI	9:30 A.M.	Gwen (210) 862-8211	N.E. Christian Church, 2839 Woodbury (at Nacodoches .6 miles outside Loop 410 ), 78217	Literature, Discussion, Speaker 2nd Fri.
	7:00 P.M.	Dawn C. (210) 849-0027	University United Methodist Church, South Campus, Main Entrance First Floor Parlor, 5084 De Zavala (at Vance Jackson), 78249	Speaker / Step Study / Discussion
SAT	8:30 A.M.	Sharon V. (210) 863-3338	Church of Reconciliation Alban Room 8900 Starcrest, 78217	Literature / Discussion
<b>****MONTHLY MEETINGS****</b>				
1st SAT	9:45 A.M.	Lizanne (210) 240-6667	Church of Reconciliation Alban Room 8900 Starcrest, 78217	Step of the Month
2nd SAT	9:45 A.M.	Denise (210) 884-6749	Church of Reconciliation Alban Room 8900 Starcrest, 78217	SAAI Newcomer / "Welcome Back"

### RESOURCES FOR YOU @ WWW.OA.ORG

Phone Meetings: <https://oa.org/find-a-meeting/?type=2>—

Online Meetings: <https://oa.org/find-a-meeting/?type=1>

Podcasts: <https://oa.org/podcasts/>