



## Unity Day Workshop –

February 25, 2012

1:00      Opening      Serenity Prayer & Intro



1:10      **Meeting** – **A Glimpse at Traditions**

(break at 1:45)

2:00      **Speakers** - **Personal Traditions:** 1, 2, 3, 8, 12

Journal Exercise & Sharing

(break at 2:45)

3:00      **Speakers** - **Relationship Traditions:** 5, 6, 7, 10, 11

**Administrative Traditions:** 4, 9

Journal Exercise & Sharing

4:00      Wrap up and close the workshop

*For an electronic copy of this manual go to the PPSI website,  
Click on **EVENTS** and select this workshop.*

[www.OASouthernColorado.org](http://www.OASouthernColorado.org)



## **Selected Readings on Personal Traditions 1, 2, 3, 8, 12**

**Tradition One:** Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends on OA unity.

**Principle: Unity** – Oneness, a condition of harmony; continuity without deviation or change.

(Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 10<sup>th</sup> Ed).

"If we as individuals did not value the common welfare of the Fellowship above our own personal viewpoints, OA would soon split into argumentative factions, and would lose the strength that comes from our union of many. ... In OA, we resolve our differences of opinion by considering the welfare of the group as a whole." OA 12&12, pgs 110-111.

**Tradition Two:** For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.

**Principle: Trust** – To do something without fear or misgiving; hope; to place confidence in.

(Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 10<sup>th</sup> Ed).

"In OA ... there are no powerful offices to hold. Instead of a power structure, we have a service structure. The group conscience is not the same as majority rule. This conscience is an expression of the group unity spoken of in the first tradition, a common bond which grows among us as we each let go of self-will. ...In order to reach an informed group conscience, we affirm each group member's right to take part in the discussion. ... In light of tradition two, nobody ever 'loses' a group conscience vote in OA. .. Whether we feel this way or not, the reality is that we all win when God's will is done."

OA 12&12, pgs 119-122.

**Tradition Three:** The only requirement for OA membership is a desire to stop eating compulsively.

**Principle: Identity** – Sameness in all that constitutes the reality of a thing; the relation established by psychological identification. (Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary, 10<sup>th</sup> Ed)

“No person who has the desire to stop eating compulsively can be barred from any OA group. ...A person can never be too overweight, too underweight, or too normal in weight to be an OA member. As tradition three implies, a desire to abstain—to refrain from eating compulsively—is at the heart of OA membership. OA is where we learn to open our hearts to receive it (friendship). ... Welcome to Overeaters Anonymous. Welcome home!” OA 12&12, pgs 129-135.

**Tradition Eight:** Overeaters Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers.

**Principle: Fellowship** – A community of interest, activity, feeling, or experience; a company of equals or friends. (Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary, 10<sup>th</sup> Ed)

“The principle of giving freely to one another makes our Fellowship unique among programs for compulsive overeaters. The tradition of non-professionalism helps OA steer clear of the profit motive and concentrate on offering twelve-step recovery to all who seek it. OA has no professionals charged with the responsibility for guiding and working with members of the group. Though most of us feel free to share our problems at OA meetings, providing psychotherapy is not the purpose of OA.” OA 12&12, pgs 171&174.

**Tradition Twelve:** Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all these traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

**Principle: Spirituality** – “of or pertaining to the spirit or soul as distinguished from the physical nature.”  
from [dictionary.com](http://dictionary.com)

“...We give up our dependence on authorities and power structures, along with our ambitions to climb to the top of some imagined OA ladder. We cease all attempts to use OA to promote our favorite outside issues and enterprises. ... We give up all aspirations to gain professional status as OA members. ... Behind all these self-sacrificing attitudes is a single spiritual foundation, so important to our fellowship it is part of our name: anonymity. ... to be anonymous in OA means to be one among many, to accept ourselves as no better or worse than our fellows.” OA 12&12, pgs 199-200.

### *Journal Ideas: Personal Traditions*

1. The OA Promise prayer (also known as the Founder’s Prayer) captures the essence of the “we” that is the foundation of Tradition One – Unity. This prayer is in your Manual. Take the prayer and reflect on whichever phrase or phrases speak to you through the lens of principle of Tradition One-Unity.

2. The remaining Personal Traditions--2 (trust), 3 (identity), 8 (fellowship) and 12 (spirituality)--address different areas of our recovery. They do this by beautifully tying the theme of the Tradition to how we in the membership relate between and among groups. Think about how each of these principles blends to support OA’s Unity as expressed in Tradition One. Journal on one or two aspects of how each Tradition supports and naturally leads to the next and, more importantly, how these Traditions come to life in your program of recovery or your personal life.





## **Selected Readings on OA's Relationship Traditions 5, 6, 7, 10, 11**

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

**Principle: Purpose** – something set up as an object or end to be attained. (Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 10<sup>th</sup> Ed).

“One important reason we stick to our primary purpose in OA meetings is so our groups can help us practice the twelfth step. ... When we focus our discussion on the principles embodied in the twelve steps and twelve traditions, when we share how we've found the solution to our eating problems through practicing these principles, we discover that we carry the message to those who still suffer, and to ourselves as well.” OA 12&12, pgs 145-146.

**Tradition Six:** 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.

**Principle: Solidarity** – Unity (as of a group) that is based on community of interests, objectives, and standards. (Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 10<sup>th</sup> Ed).

“The sixth tradition helps OA groups fulfill our primary purpose of carrying the OA message. If meeting time is take up with pitches for religious groups or other twelve-step programs, if newcomers can't tell the outside literature from the OA literature at our meetings, if members put their phone numbers on OA telephone lists only to be bothered by sales calls, the OA message of recovery soon gets lost.” OA 12&12, pg 154.

**Tradition Seven:** Every OA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.

**Principle: Responsibility** – Moral, legal or mental accountability; reliable; trustworthy; able to answer for one’s own conduct and obligations. (Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary, 10<sup>th</sup> Ed).

“Tradition seven tells us that the financial support of OA is our responsibility as members of the Fellowship. If we accept ‘free’ gifts from outsiders, or too much from one member, we become less than free ourselves. The seventh tradition doesn’t simply apply to financial support, however. In order to be fully self-supporting, groups and individuals need to take on their share of the service work as well.” OA 12&12, 162&165

**Tradition Ten:** Overeaters Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the OA name ought never be drawn into public controversy.

**Principle: Neutrality** – Not engaged on either side; not aligned with an ideological grouping. (Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary, 10<sup>th</sup> Ed).

“We live in a world which thrives on controversy. When we arrive at OA and first hear OA’s tenth tradition, it comes as a surprise to many of us that this organization, so supportive of our recovery from compulsive eating, will not be moved to throw its moral weight behind other good causes. How can OA sit by and say nothing... The reason is simple. Our members come from many areas and backgrounds, and we have many shades of opinion on every issue. If OA were to take a stand on one of these, we would immediately alienate some of our membership as well as many of our fellow sufferers outside.” OA 12&12, pg 185.

**Tradition Eleven:** 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.

**Principle: Anonymity** – Not named or identified; lacking individuality or recognizability. (Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 10<sup>th</sup> Ed)

“The eleventh tradition gives us some guidelines for carrying OA’s message, guidelines all OA members need to be aware of as we begin to share our program with those outside OA. The first suggestion is that we publicize OA to the public at large without promoting it. ... we use the public media of communication—radio, television, newspapers, billboards, telephone book ads, handbills on bulletin boards, films, displays at health fairs, etc.—to provide factual information about our program. ... Personal anonymity at the public level shows the world that we take this tradition seriously, and so that others can join us and be assured their membership will be kept private.” OA 12&12, pgs 193&195.

### *Journal Ideas - OA's Relationship*

Tradition 5 (purpose), 6 (solidarity), 7 (responsibility), 10 (neutrality) and 11 (anonymity) ensure OA that we will stay to our primary purpose – to carry the message – and keep that ever-challenging ego in check. Think about how these principles work together for our meetings and our fellowship so that whenever we go to an OA meeting, no matter where it is, we are "home". Journal on what elements of these principles speaks to you currently in your program of recovery or in your home or work life.







## Selected Readings on Administrative Traditions 4, 9

**Tradition Four:** Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting the other groups or OA as a whole.

**Principle: Autonomy** – Being self-governing; self-directed freedom.

(Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 10<sup>th</sup> Ed).

“...OA groups have the right and responsibility to operate as they see fit, free from any outside influence. ... to do what works best for them. ... Every OA group operates in an atmosphere which promotes recovery from compulsive overeating through the twelve steps and twelve traditions. ... Autonomy extends only to matters which don't affect other OA groups or OA as a whole. ... When a group breaks one of the traditions, it's usually because members aren't well informed about them, not because members choose to ignore them. ... The fourth tradition offers OA groups the freedom to find their own way and learn from their own experiences. ...Living by the fourth tradition in OA means learning to act autonomously, even as we live in harmony with others.” OA 12&12, pgs 137-143.

**Tradition Nine:** OA, as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.

**Principle: Structure** – Something arranged in a definite pattern or organization. An organization of parts as dominated by the general character of the whole. (Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 10<sup>th</sup> Ed)

“What this tradition encourages us to do is remain as free as possible from the bureaucracy which tends to form around organizations, taking on a life of its own and obscuring the real purpose of the

group. Though our service bodies need to be organized, OA as such is encouraged by tradition nine to keep the emphasis on fellowship, rather than organization.” OA 12&12, pgs 177-178.

### *Journal Ideas- Administrative Traditions*

Tradition 4 (autonomy) and 9 (structure) help our non-organized organization function. These apparent opposites (yet another paradox in our program) work together so that OA will be able to carry the message to still suffering compulsive overeaters all over the world. Think about how your home group benefits from this freedom to function without outside influence (from within OA) and yet functions quite well within the structure of the inverted service pyramid where the individual group is the key foundation block and the World Service level is the least important. Journal on how this spiritual atmosphere supports your own individual recovery. Relate this concept to your own home or work life—where it is common that the individual is more "important" than the people they serve. Do you suffer under the outside influence of a power structure that serves the top (rather than the bottom)? How does that impact ego? Spirit of service?

### **Traditions Checklist**

#### **I. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon OA Unity:**

1. Am I in my group a healing, integrating person, or am I divisive? What about gossip and taking other members' inventories?
2. Am I a peacemaker or not, speaking my truth for fear of rejection?
3. Am I gentle with those who rub me the wrong way, or am I abrasive, or do I just ignore them?
4. Do I make competitive OA remarks, such as comparing one group with another or contrasting OA in one place with OA in another?
5. Do I put down some OA activities as if I were superior for not participating in this or that aspect of OA?
6. Am I informed about OA as a whole? Do I support, in every way I can, OA as a whole or just the parts I understand and approve of?

7. Am I as considerate of OA members as I want them to be of me?
8. Do I spout platitudes about love while indulging in and secretly justifying behavior that bristles with hostility?
9. Do I go to enough OA meetings or read enough OA literature, such as Lifeline or our Intergroup newsletter, to really keep in touch?
10. Do I share with OA all of me, the healthy and unhealthy, accepting as well as giving the help of fellowship?
11. Do I truly accept and live the intent of the tradition when someone's views about recovery differ from mine?
12. How can I apply this tradition in my family or work life?

**II. For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.**

1. Do I criticize or do I trust and support my group officers, OA committees, newcomers, and old-timers?
2. Am I absolutely trustworthy, even in secret, with OA 12-step jobs or other OA responsibilities?
3. Do I look for credit in OA jobs, praise for my OA ideas?
4. Do I have to save face in group discussion, or can I yield in good spirit to the group conscience and work cheerfully along with it?
5. Although I have been abstinent for several 'one days at a time' and held some service jobs, am I still willing to serve my turn at OA service jobs?
6. In group discussion, do I sound off about matters on which I have experience and little knowledge?
7. Do I accept and respect the OA guidance regarding rotation of service?
8. Do I understand that group consciences are not determined by majority rule but through spiritual application to listen to majority and minority opinions?
9. How can I apply this tradition in my family or work life?

**III. The only requirement for OA membership is a desire to stop eating compulsively:**

1. In my mind, do I prejudge some new OA members?
2. Is there some kind of compulsive overeater/anorexic/bulimic whom I privately do not want in my OA group?
3. Do I set myself up as a judge of whether a newcomer is sincere or insincere?
4. Do I let language, religion (or lack of it), race, education, age, or other such things interfere with my carrying the message?
5. Am I over-impressed by a member who is a professional 'something' in their non-OA life? Or, can I just treat this member simply and naturally as one more sick human, like the rest of us?
6. When someone turns up at OA needing information or help (even if she/he can't ask for it aloud), does it really matter to me what he/she does for a living? Where he/she lives? What his/her domestic arrangements are? Whether she/he has been in OA before? What her/his other problems are? How much that person weighs?

7. Am I influenced by the person's situation such as relapse, struggling with HP issue, special eating issues, or various 'schools of thought' regarding recovery?

8. How can I apply this tradition to my family or work life?

**IV. Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or OA as a whole:**

1. Do I insist that there are only a few right ways of doing things in OA?

2. Does my group always consider the welfare of the rest of OA? Of nearby groups? Of loners out of town?

3. Do I put down other members' behavior when it is different from mine, or do I learn from it?

4. Do I always bear in mind that, to those outsiders who know I am in OA, I may, to an extent represent our entire beloved Fellowship?

5. How can I apply this tradition to my family or work life?

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

1. Do I ever cop out by saying, "I'm not a group, so this or that Tradition doesn't apply to me"?

2. Am I willing to explain firmly to a newcomer the limitations of OA – especially w/re to opinions on specific food plans, recovery paths, and drug or surgical interventions?

3. Do I help my group in every way I can to fulfill our primary purpose?

4. Do I remember that current OA members (and old-timers) can be compulsive overeaters who still suffer? Do I try both to help them and to learn from them?

5. How can I apply this tradition to my family or work life?

**VI. 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:**

1. Do I and my group really get the experience behind this Tradition—meaning that OA's singleness of purpose is the key to our continued success in helping those who suffer from compulsive overeating?

2. Do I share in and out of meetings from an understanding that OA really does have an unspoken opinion, however subtly I do this, on sensitive topics such as specific food plans, recovery approaches or drug/surgical interventions?

3. How can I apply this tradition to my family or work life?

**VII. Every OA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions:**

1. Honestly now, do I do all I can to help OA (my group, Intergroup, Region, WSO) remain self-supporting? By my time as well as by my finances?

2. Could I put a little more into the basket?

3. Should the Lifeline sell advertising space to food or drug companies or weight loss programs, etc. to make it a viable magazine?

4. Is a group's treasurer's report unimportant OA business? How does the (role of the) treasurer feel about it?
5. How important in my recovery is the feeling of self-respect rather than shame and obligation for help received, such as scholarships, etc.?
6. How can I apply this tradition to my family or work life? Do I enable my grown children or other family members by giving support that is not appropriate for adults? Do I do my share within my family roles?

**VIII. Overeaters Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers:**

1. Is my own behavior described by the Traditions? If not, what needs changing?
2. Do I sound like an expert on food plans, recovery programs, sponsoring, etc.?
3. Do I give deference to other OA members' shares when I know they are professionals in the fields of psychology, nutrition, finances, etc.?
4. Do I pay enough attention to the OA and AA literature that details the importance of this Tradition?
5. Is there a way to apply this tradition to my family or work life? If so, how?

**IX. OA, as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve:**

1. Do I still try to control things in OA—even if subtly?
2. Do I exercise patience and humility in any OA service position I take on, including sponsorship?
3. Am I aware of all those to whom I am responsible in any OA job, including Region and WSBC?
4. Am I committed to the OA guidance of rotation of service? How has this aided my recovery?
5. What has rotation to do with anonymity? With humility?
6. Is there a way to apply this tradition to my family or work life? If so, how? Do I trust that family members will do their responsibilities, or do I assume too much of others' responsibilities? If so, how has that impacted me practicing my recovery 'in all my affairs'?

**X. Overeaters Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the OA name ought never be drawn into public controversy:**

1. Do I ever give the impression that there really is an OA opinion on nutrition, healthy weights, appetite suppressants, bariatric surgical procedures, etc.?
2. Can I honestly share my own personal experience concerning any of the above without giving the impression I am stating the OA opinion?
3. What in the AA history gave rise to this Tenth Tradition? (AA pamphlet or AA 12&12)
4. Have I had similar experiences in my own OA life?
5. Do I apply this Tradition to my personal life? How? To my OA interactions?

6. Do I breach this or any of its supporting Traditions in subtle, perhaps unconscious, ways?
7. Is there a way to apply this tradition to my family or work life? If so, how? Have I unnecessarily expressed opinions on how others live their lives? If so, how has this impacted my family relationships and the outcome for others?

**XI. 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:**

1. Do I sometimes promote OA so fanatically that I make it seem unattractive?
2. Do I emphasize the physical recovery aspect of OA more than the emotional and spiritual recovery aspects?
3. Am I ashamed of being a recovering compulsive overeater? If so, how has that impacted my carrying the message?
4. What would OA be like if we were not guided by the ideas in Tradition Eleven? Where would I be?
5. Is my OA recovery attractive enough that a hurting compulsive overeater would want such a quality for her/himself?
6. Is there a way to apply this tradition to my family or work life? If so, how?

**XII. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all these traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities:**

1. Why is it a good idea for me to place the common welfare of all OA members before individual welfare? What would happen to me if OA as a whole disappeared?
2. In my opinions of and remarks about other OA'rs, am I implying membership requirements other than a desire to stop eating compulsively?
3. Do I ever try to get a certain OA group to conform to my standards, not its own?
4. Have I a personal responsibility in helping an OA group fulfill its primary purpose? What is my part?
5. Am I willing to 12-step the next newcomer w/o regard to who or what is in it for me—meaning if I do not agree with their appearance, personality, type of food plan or recovery approach that is required?
6. Am I willing to help a newcomer go to any lengths—his/her lengths as well as mine—to get and stay abstinent and to pursue their own program of recovery?
7. How can I apply this tradition in all areas of my life? Do I sometimes think 'my opinion' is necessary (which is probably really ego or gossip, etc.)? If so, how has their behavior impacted my recovery and my relationships with those I talk with or gossip about?