



Step of the Month: Step 4

Guiding principle: Courage

Made a searching and fearless inventory of ourselves.

Life is much different than I ever imagined it would be. And I'd have to say that, up until recently, that hasn't been a good thing. As a kid, I was smiley and talkative: I loved people and loved any opportunity to chatter away to anyone and everyone. When I think back, I don't think many people had much of a problem with me. In fact, if I think hard, I can remember there were several adults who loved my gregariousness. But that never stayed uppermost in my memory banks.

What stayed with me? My aunt, who made it clear she didn't think I was too bright. If I was playing with her son and we weren't getting along, she'd say, "Go play with Cheryl, you'll learn something." Cheryl was my older and much smarter sister. Or so I came to believe. After all, why would my aunt say that if it wasn't true? My piano teacher, who told me she didn't like me and that I was "irresponsible." I was only 12 or 13 at the time. (She thought Cheryl was the bee's knees.) My Grade 13 calculus and algebra teacher, who told me I would never succeed in math and sciences in university, even though my grades were good. And I thought, "He must be right; he is the teacher." He'd been Cheryl's teacher too.

I have spent many years dealing with the pain of these so-called truths, wondering what was wrong with me and feeling like a failure. I always felt "less than." I've spent my life doubting my abilities, comparing myself with others, and always coming up short. I now know these resentments and feelings fueled my need to comfort and numb myself with food. As I work through Step Four, I am learning a lot about myself. I've learned that I've long been angry, resentful, and jealous—before, I didn't even know it! I worried all the time that people would find out the "truth": that I was dumb. Thanks to the program, I no longer have to eat over it. I'm starting to work through my resentments and fears. It's not exactly fun or easy. But I can face it now. I no longer need the help of my false friend, Food.

I have been in the program for four months and have three and a half months of abstinence. At last check, I'd lost 23 pounds (10 kg). I have a lot more Fourth Step work to do. It scares me. And it gives me hope. I have a lot more to learn about myself. I'm looking forward to getting free of the shackles of my self-imposed prison. I have hope that life from here will be joyful and I will experience freedom. I have the Tools, a sponsor, and an HP whose love is unending and who wants the best for me. I have the fellowship of OA: a community that loves me, accepts me with no judgement, and understands me. Such are the gifts of the program . . . and the beginning of a different life. Now that is a good thing.

— Bobbi W., Canada

Announcements



April 9 & May 14
Intergroup 9:45 am-
ZOOM and Hybrid meet-
ing Church of Reconcilia-
tion, 8900 Starcrest, 78217

April 2 & May 7
Newcomer/Welcome
Zoom meeting 9:45
Meeting ID: 889 6271
3898
Passcode: 121212

**If you need zoom
info on meetings
then go to page
3. We would love
to have you.
Come on in. You
are welcome to
our meetings.
Good luck on
recovery.**

Fourth Step Prayer

**Dear God,
It is I who
has made
my life a
mess.
I have done
it, but I
cannot un-
do it.
My mis-
takes are
mine &
I will begin
a search-
ing & fear-
less moral
inventory.
I will write
down my
wrongs
But I will
also in-
clude that
which is
good.
I pray for
the
strength to
complete
the task.**

Fourth Step Persistence

My sponsor taught me “Abstinence no matter what,” and for me, it all begins with willingness. I have severe and persistent mental illness, or SPMI. I don’t see myself as a victim, but I do feel anger regarding my symptoms. I’ve learned, though, that everyone in OA has challenges in addition to their overeating illness that make it difficult to remain abstinent.

I started out, weighing 310 pounds (141 kg), but I’ve been abstinent now for ten years and have maintained a 100-pound (45 kg) weight loss, only by the grace of my Higher Power. I started working the Steps immediately when I came to OA. I wrote out Steps One, Two, and Three fairly quickly and turned them over to my sponsor. But writing out the list of resentments for Step Four, as recommended in the Big Book, took much longer. I was determined to be as thorough as possible, but every time I worked on it for longer than five or ten minutes, I would experience a severe episode from my post-traumatic stress disorder. I had painful flashbacks and severe anxiety as I wrote of the abuse I’d suffered at the hands of my parents during my childhood. Often, I would have to let three weeks pass before I could spend another five to ten minutes putting my resentments down on paper. But I did not give up!

I used a chart-based inventory format, the briefest method possible, instead of writing out extended paragraphs about each incident. At the end of five years of persistent Fourth Step action, I’d completed my list of resentments. The chart included a column labeled “Fourth Step Resentment Prayer,” which I was to check off once I’d prayed on that resentment enough to feel fully forgiving of the person or circumstance.

It was just at that time that my HP gave me a beautiful new sponsor, whom I’m still lucky to speak with once a week. It took me two years of weekly visits with her to fully turn over my resentment list. She worked her program by patiently listening to everything about me, every detail of the horrific and twisted abuse I’d been through, which I’ve learned from listening to people in the program is not that uncommon. The emotional and spiritual healing I received from working Steps Four and Five was deeper and more profound than anything I’ve experience in more than thirty years of psychotherapy.

As I said, I do not consider myself a victim. I don’t blame my circumstances on my parents or my SPMI symptoms. I remain willing, one day at a time, to be abstinent. Whenever I feel that willingness begin to wane, I call a fellow OA member. Just today, I made an outreach call to a woman I didn’t know. She too is abstinent in OA and has SPMI. HP had offered me a person to talk to who spoke my language—the language of OA and recovery from dual diagnoses: mental illness and food addiction.

No matter what. — *Julie C., Brooklyn, New York USA* <https://www.oalifeline.org/steps/fourth-step-persistence/>

Fear Removal

I must confess: After nearly three years in this program, Step Three is the one I’ve struggled with most. Naturally, that’s the Step I’ve been asked to write about. I wonder if my Higher Power has anything to do with that! Like a lot of people, I experienced a childhood of abuse. I guess you could say I had a bone to pick with my Higher Power. How could I trust any Higher Power who let those things happen to a defenseless child? At a young age, I decided if I couldn’t control the moods of my rage-aholic father, I was going to try to control everything else. Like the actor in the Big Book, I also wanted to be the director, the producer, the lighting technician, and more—the world would be perfect if everything would just go my way (Alcoholics Anonymous, 4th ed., pp. 60–61). Finally, when I reached a top weight of 476 pounds (216 kg), I had to admit my way was definitely not working.

That’s when my Higher Power interceded. I was laid off from my job and circumstances lined up to bring me to OA. This program has been a lifesaver in so many ways. From a physical recovery standpoint, I’ve lost 225 pounds (102 kg) so far, but OA is not a diet club. This is a spiritual program.

Creating a relationship with my Higher Power is where I’ve had to do the most work. I had to be willing to give up my childhood idea of a Higher Power. My resistance to turning my will and my life over to the care of God as I understand him has everything to do with my fear of letting go of control. So, one of the ways I let go of that fear is by saying the following prayer: “God, please remove my fear of _____ and direct my attention to what you would have me be.”

Through this program of recovery, God would have me be a woman able to trust, a woman able to forgive and make peace with her past, a woman able to love and be loved, and a woman who feels worthy of the best of what life has in store.

— Erin B., Newport News, Virginia USA

<https://www.oalifeline.org/steps/fear-removal/>

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

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

Website:
www.oasanantonio.com

2021-2022 Board

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

2020-2021 SAAI Standing Committees

Audio Library: Steve M.
Archives: Barbara F.
Communication: Deborah A.
Swan/El Cisne: Chris B.
Website: Deborah A.
Public Information: Open

Professional Outreach:
Mary Rose J.
Meeting Info/Phone line:
Sharon V.
Welcome Back/Newcomer:
Carrie
12X12: Open

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

Place literature order at:
oasaliterature@gmail.com

Want to receive The Swan/El Cisne and important updates via email?
news@oasanantonio.com

Zoom Meeting IDs & Passwords (PW):

Sunday 5:00 PM, Hybrid, ID: 193-124-988, PW: 474395
Sunday 7:00 PM New Braunfels, Hybrid, ID: 845-9501-1410, PW: 1111111
Monday 9:30 AM, Virtual Only, ID: 324-599-463, PW: 281
Monday 5:45 PM, Virtual Only, ID: 715-513-8641, PW: 121212
Monday 7:00 PM, Virtual Only, ID: 297-185-376, PW: Monday7PM
Tuesday 5:45 PM, Virtual Only, ID: 832-0041-1425, PW: 831971
Tuesday 7:00 PM, In Person Only
Wednesday 12:00 PM Kerrville, In Person Only
Wednesday 7:30 PM, Hybrid, Audio: (712) 432-0900, Access code 637-445
Thursday 12:15 PM, In Person Only
Thursday 7:00 PM New Braunfels, Hybrid, ID: 845-9501-1410, PW: 1111111
Friday 9:30 AM, Virtual Only, ID: 803-900-343, PW: 2839
Friday 5:45 PM, Virtual Only, ID: 715-513-8641, PW: 121212
Saturday 8:30 AM, Hybrid, ID: 140-019-469, PW: 111111

1st Saturday 9:45 AM, Newcomers/Return, Hybrid, ID: 889 6271 3898
Passcode: 121212

TWELVE STEPS

- 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 knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.**

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.



Service Station

Why Service? Show up. Attending a meeting is service. Unlock the venue for meetings each week. This is a seemingly simple task, but one of great importance. Without this act of service, your group can't meet to work on their recovery. Set up and clean up meetings. Putting out and returning chairs, making the books available, and passing out materials are all ways to serve. Participate in the meeting. Welcome newcomers, read or share your own experience, strength and hope on the topic. When you are ready for more moderate or lead the meeting. The leader/moderator is just a member who follows the format to keep the meeting on topic and on time. Operate the dashboard. Unique to the virtual world this position protects the meeting from disruptive participants. Participate in group conscience. There are always different ways of doing things and the meeting members decide together what is best for the group.

<https://oa.org/why-service/>

AREA MEETINGS

SUN	5:00 PM Hybrid	Lynn G. (210) 240-3277	University United Methodist Church, South Campus, Main Entrance, 2nd Floor, Room S210, 5084 De Zavala (at Vance Jackson), 78249	Step Study Discussion Speaker, 2nd Sun
	7:00 PM Hybrid	Sondra (830) 212-2818	Unity Church, 408 Gruene Road, NEW BRAUNFELS , 78130	Literature Discussion
MON	9:30 AM Virtual Only	Vera C. (210) 494-2713	Shearer Hills Baptist Church, South Building (San Pedro Entrance) Room 201, 12615 San Pedro, 78216	Literature: Big Book
	5:45 PM Virtual Only	David E. (830) 928-4844	Zoom	Literature Discussion Speaker, 5th Monday
	7:00 PM Virtual Only	Ken R. (210) 520-3727	St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, 6110 NW Loop 410, 78238	Discussion
TUES	10:00 AM In Person Only	Graciela (210) 219-9660	Emmanuel Presbyterian Church 713 Division Ave SA TX 78225	Spanish <i>español</i> Literatura y Discusión
	5:45 PM Virtual Only	Julene (512) 923-0707	Alamo Heights Baptist Church, 6501 Broadway, 78209	Joe & Charlie Big Book Study; Bring BB, Notebook; Listening, writing, & sharing
	7:00 PM In Person Only	Curtis (210) 487-1683	Alamo Heights Baptist Church, 6501 Broadway, 78209	Steps, 1st Tues Big Book, 2nd Tues Traditions, 3rd Tues Abstinence Book, 4th T
WED	12 Noon In Person Only	Kay (404) 286-9169	Unity Church of the Hill Country, Library, 1016 Jefferson St., KERRVILLE , 78028	Steps / Traditions
	7:30 PM Hybrid	Barbara D. (210) 637-7203	Church of Reconciliation, Brigid Room, 8900 Starcrest, 78217	Step Study OA 12 & 12 Newcomers, Ask It Basket
THURS	12:15 PM In Person Only	Graciela (210) 219-9660	Collins Garden Library, 200 N. Park Blvd. (corner of Nogalitos), San Antonio, TX 78204	OA Literature Discussion
	7:00 PM Hybrid	Kay R. (210) 831-8079	Unity Church, Life Room, 408 Gruene Rd., NEW BRAUNFELS , 78130	OA Literature
FRI	9:30 AM Virtual Only	Gwen (210) 862-8211	N.E. Christian Church, 2839 Woodbury (at Nacogdoches .6 miles outside Loop 410), 78217	Literature Discussion Speaker, 2nd Friday
	5:45 PM Virtual Only	David E. (830) 928-4844	Zoom	Speaker & Topics Alternating Fridays
SAT	8:30 AM Hybrid	Sharon V. (210) 863-3338	Church of Reconciliation Alban Room 8900 Starcrest, 78217	OA For Today OA Voices of Recovery Discussion
****MONTHLY MEETINGS****				
1st SAT	9:45 AM Hybrid	Carrie H. (507) 530-5115	Church of Reconciliation, Alban Room 8900 Starcrest, 78217	SAAI Newcomer / "Welcome Back"
2nd SAT	9:45 AM Hybrid	SAAI Chair chair@oasantonio.com	Church of Reconciliation, Brigid Room 8900 Starcrest, 78217	San Antonio Area Intergroup (SAAI)