

**Quick Step Study**  
**Session 1 – Steps 1 - 3**  
**Introduction**

Thank you for registering for this Overeaters Anonymous workshop. Please see your email for the Zoom link and the dates and times of your workshop.

Attached are the Writing Suggestions (pp. 12 – 15), and Big Book excerpts (pp. 3 – 12) for Session 1, Steps 1 – 3.

**THINGS TO HAVE READY at each session:**

- Pens
- Paper
- Your computer or phone or other device to log into zoom.
- Handouts for each week – especially the Writing Suggestions

**THINGS TO DO AHEAD OF EACH SESSION:**

Before each session, please read the steps we will be working on. You can read them from the OA 12 & 12, if you have one, or from the Big Book Excerpts attached to this email. Either way is fine. If you want the OA 12 Steps and 12 Traditions book, and you don't have it, you may order it from world service (<https://bookstore.oa.org/books/the-twelve-steps-and-twelve-traditions-of-overeaters-anonymous-second-edition-990-2.asp>), but it may take 3 - 4 weeks to reach you. It may be faster to order from your local Intergroup. Or you can order it on amazon, or download the kindle version, or you may be able to buy or borrow a copy from someone in your local group (even if they are not meeting in person yet.) You may want a copy for Session 3 when we do Steps 6 and 7, because the big book doesn't say very much about those steps.

SESSION 1 – Steps 1, 2, and 3

SESSION 2 – Steps 4 and 5

SESSION 3 – Steps 6 and 7

SESSION 4 - Steps 8 - 9

SESSION 5 - Steps 10 - 12

**Please read Steps 1, 2, and 3 before the first session.** But - don't worry if you haven't, just come anyway.

### **Schedule for Session 1:**

Introductions ~ 15 minutes

Write about Steps 1, 2, and 3 ~ 30 min

Explanation about sharing ~ 5 min

Sharing in groups of 2 – 3 people ~ 25 – 30 min

Evaluation and Wrap Up ~ 10 min

If you read the big book excerpts, please change:  
alcohol to food,  
drinking to compulsive eating,  
drink to compulsive bite or binge food,  
alcoholic to compulsive eater, and,  
sobriety to abstinence, as you are reading.

OA and AA have not given us permission to change any of the words of the Big Book when we write them or say them in a meeting. But you can change them in your own mind and on your own personal copy. Also, please note that the Big Book was written in 1939. The language is male, Christian, white, heterosexual and cis-gendered. If that fits you, great! If not, please feel free to change the language, on your copy to suit yourself. For example, you may change "he" to "she" or "they," and "God" to "Higher Power" or another word that suits you.

Contact Pat if you have any problems. My contact info is in your email.

### **7th TRADITION DONATIONS:**

The workshop is free. However, if you would like to make a donation, there are three ways to do that:

All of them work if you live in Canada.

The second one works for cheques and money orders in Canadian or U.S. dollars.

The third one works from anywhere.

**1. E-transfer** to [coitreasurertoronto@gmail.com](mailto:coitreasurertoronto@gmail.com) (Put Quick Steps in the comments.)

**2. Send a cheque** by mail to:  
Central Ontario Intergroup – OA

c/o A. Goodale

108 Waterloo St.

Waterloo, ON N2J 1X9

Again, let her know it is for the Quick Steps.)

**3. Or by credit card** to: <https://oa.org/contribute/> Select “General Fund”. In the comments put, “ Intergroup number 09110 – Quick Steps.”

### **BIG BOOK EXCERPTS**

From the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous

#### **QUICK STEP STUDY**

We have not been given permission by AA to make changes to their text. Please in your own mind substitute, “food,” “sugar,” “binge food,” or “compulsive bite,” for the word “alcohol,” and substitute “compulsive eater” for the word “alcoholic.” Substitute, “abstinence,” for “sobriety.” You may also choose to substitute, in your own mind, or on your own copy, “she” or “they,” for “he.” And “Higher Power” or other word for “God.”

You can read the big book on-line at this link and on many other websites.

<http://www.portlandeyeopener.com/AA-BigBook-4th-Edition.pdf>

### **THE DOCTOR’S OPINION**

#### **[AN ALLERGY OF THE BODY]**

**[The dictionary definition of allergy is: an abnormal bodily reaction to a physical substance.]**

p.xxiv

...The action of alcohol on these chronic alcoholics is a manifestation of an allergy...they cannot start drinking without developing the phenomenon of craving...These allergic types can never safely use alcohol in any form at all...

p.xxiv

...Men and women drink essentially because they like the effect produced by alcohol. The sensation is so elusive that, while they admit it is injurious, they cannot after a time differentiate the true from the false. To them, their alcoholic life seems the only normal one. They are restless, irritable and discontented, unless they can again experience the sense of ease and comfort which comes at once by taking a few drinks—drinks which they see others taking with impunity. After they have succumbed to the desire again, as so many do, and the phenomenon of craving develops, they pass through the well-known stages of a spree, emerging remorseful, with a firm resolution not to drink again. This is repeated over and over, and unless this person can experience an entire psychic change there is very little hope of his recovery.

On the other hand—and strange as this may seem to those who do not understand—once a psychic change has occurred, the very same person who seemed doomed, who had so many

problems he despaired of ever solving them, suddenly finds himself easily able to control his desire for alcohol, the only effort necessary being that required to follow a few simple rules...

p. xxvi

the phenomenon of craving... has never been... permanently eradicated.

...The only relief we have to suggest is entire abstinence...

p. 22

...We are equally positive that once he takes any alcohol whatever into his system, something happens, both in the bodily and mental sense, which makes it virtually impossible for him to stop...

**[Once I start, I can't stop.]**

### **[THE MENTAL OBSESSION]**

[Even after months and years without alcohol, an alcoholic still thinks about alcohol and craves it most of the time. Even after months and years without our binge foods, we still think about them, crave them, and remember how they tasted and how they made us feel. If we are not in fit spiritual condition, food thoughts will enter our minds and cravings are a daily battle.]

p. xii The body of the alcoholic is quite as abnormal as his mind.

p. xxiv I do not hold with those who believe that alcoholism is entirely a problem of mental control... These men were not drinking to escape; they were drinking to overcome a craving beyond their mental control...

**[When I stop, I can't stay stopped.]**

p. 23

**[The Allergy of the body would not be a problem if the addict never took the first compulsive bite.]** Therefore, the main problem of the alcoholic centers in his mind, rather than his body. If you ask him why he started on that last bender, the chances are he will offer you any one of a hundred alibis... ..but none of them really makes sense in light of the havoc an alcoholic's drinking bout creates...

Once in a while, he may tell the truth. And the truth, strange to say, is usually that he has no more idea why he took the first drink than you have...

### **[INSANELY TRIVIAL EXCUSES]**

**[FORGETTING THE IMPORTANCE OF ABSTINENCE OR MODERATION WITH FOOD.]**

**[THOSE CURIOUS BLANK SPACES IN OUR MINDS]**

p. 24

The almost certain consequences that follow taking even a glass of beer do not crowd into the mind to deter us. If these thoughts occur, they are hazy, and readily supplanted with the old threadbare idea that this time we shall handle ourselves like normal people. There is a complete failure of the kind of defense that keeps one from putting his hand on a hot stove.

The alcoholic may say to himself in the most casual way, "It won't burn me this time, so here's how." Or perhaps he doesn't think at all...

p. 36 - 37

[The big book brings up two examples of men who knew they were alcoholics. They had a lot of self-knowledge. They knew about the allergy of the body and the obsession of the mind. They knew they were powerless over alcohol. They knew that abstinence was the only answer for them. However, in a few months, both of them succumbed again to the craving for alcohol. One of them had an insanely trivial excuse for starting to drink again. They called him "Jim." Jim recounted:]

*"Suddenly the thought crossed my mind that if I were to put an ounce of whiskey in my milk, it couldn't hurt me on a full stomach. I ordered a whiskey and poured it into the milk. I vaguely sensed that I was not being any too smart. But I felt reassured, as I was taking the whiskey on a full stomach"*

*...He had much knowledge of himself as an alcoholic. Yet all his reasons for not drinking were easily pushed aside in favor of the foolish idea that he could take whiskey if only he mixed it with milk!*

... We call this plain insanity...

p. 41

[Fred had the following experience:]

*As I crossed the threshold of the dining room the thought came to mind that it would be nice to have a couple of cocktails with dinner. That was all, nothing more.*

[This led to a binge of days or weeks for Fred and eventually landed him back at the treatment center. Fred said:] *When I regained my ability to think, I went carefully over that evening in Washington. Not only had I been off guard, I had made no fight whatever against the first drink. This time, I had not thought of the consequences at all...*

## [THE SOLUTION]

p.27

[One man went to Dr. Carl Jung for treatment. He had been in and out of treatment centers. He knew about the allergy of the body and the mental obsession. He knew he could not take even one drink.] He finished his treatment [Jungian Analysis] with unusual confidence. His physical and mental condition were unusually good... Nevertheless, he was drunk in a short time. [He went back to Jung and asked for an explanation. Dr. Jung said,] "You have the mind of a chronic alcoholic. I have never seen one single case recover where that state of mind existed to the extent that it does with you.... p.26 [You] will have to put [yourself] under lock and key or hire a body guard, if [you expect] to live long..." Our friend felt as though the gates of hell had closed on him with a clang.

[He asked,] "Is there no exception?"

[The Doctor replied,] "Yes... Here and there, once in a while, alcoholics have had vital spiritual experiences... Ideas, emotions, and attitudes which were once the guiding forces of the lives of these men are suddenly cast to one side, and an entirely new set of conceptions and motivations begins to dominate them..."

p. 24

The fact is that most alcoholics, for reasons yet obscure, have lost the power of choice in drink. Our so-called will power becomes practically nonexistent. We are unable, at certain times, to bring into our consciousness with sufficient force the memory of the suffering and humiliation of even a week or a month ago. We are without defense against the first drink.

p. 25 – 26

There is a solution. Almost none of us liked the self-searching, the leveling of our pride, the confession of shortcomings which the process requires for its successful consummation. But we saw that it really worked in others, and we had come to believe in the hopelessness and futility of life as we had been living it. When, therefore, we were approached by those in whom the problem had been solved, there was nothing left for us but to pick up the simple kit of spiritual tools laid at our feet. We have found much of heaven and we have been rocketed into a fourth dimension of existence of which we had not even dreamed.

The great fact is just this, and nothing less: That we have had deep and effective spiritual experiences which have revolutionized our whole attitude toward life, toward our fellows and toward God's universe. The central fact of our lives today is the absolute certainty that our Creator has entered into our hearts and lives in a way which is indeed miraculous. He has commenced to accomplish those things for us which we could never do by ourselves.

If you are as seriously alcoholic as we were, we believe there is no middle-of-the-road solution. We were in a position where life was becoming impossible, and if we had passed into the region from which there is no return through human aid, we had but two alternatives: One was to go on to the bitter end, blotting out the consciousness of our intolerable situation as best we could; and the other, to accept spiritual help. This we did because we honestly wanted to, and were willing to make the effort.

p. 28

[...The Big Book tells the story of a talented business man who was an alcoholic of the “utterly hopeless type.” However, he regained his freedom in the only way his doctor said was possible - through a, “vital spiritual experience.” The Big Book goes on to say...] We, in our turn, sought the same escape [from our compulsion] with all the desperation of drowning men. What seemed at first a flimsy reed, has proved to be the loving and powerful hand of God. A new life has been given us or, if you prefer, "a design for living "that really works.

**STEP ONE – We admitted we were powerless over food - that our lives had become unmanageable.**

p. 30 – 31

Most of us have been unwilling to admit we were real alcoholics. No person likes to think he is bodily and mentally different from his fellows. Therefore, it is not surprising that our drinking careers have been characterized by countless vain attempts to prove we could drink like other people. The idea that somehow, someday he will control and enjoy his drinking is the great obsession of every abnormal drinker. The persistence of this illusion is astonishing. Many pursue it into the gates of insanity or death.

We learned that we had to fully concede to our innermost selves that we were alcoholics. This is the first step in recovery. The delusion that we are like other people, or presently may be, has to be smashed.

We alcoholics are men and women who have lost the ability to control our drinking. We know that no real alcoholic ever recovers control. All of us felt at times that we were regaining control, but such intervals - usually brief - were inevitably followed by still less control, which led in time to pitiful and incomprehensible demoralization. We are convinced to a man that alcoholics of our type are in the grip of a progressive illness. Over any considerable period we get worse, never better.

We are like men who have lost their legs; they never grow new ones. Neither does there appear to be any kind of treatment which will make alcoholics of our kind like other men. We have tried every imaginable remedy. In some instances there has been brief recovery, followed always by a still worse relapse. Physicians who are familiar with alcoholism agree there is no such thing as making a normal drinker out of an alcoholic. Science may one day accomplish this, but it hasn't done so yet.

Despite all we can say, many who are real alcoholics are not going to believe they are in that class. By every form of self-deception and experimentation, they will try to prove themselves exceptions to the rule, therefore nonalcoholic. If anyone who is showing inability to control his drinking can do the right- about-face and drink like a gentleman, our hats are off to him. Heaven knows, we have tried hard enough and long enough to drink like other people!

Here are some of the methods we have tried: Drinking beer only, limiting the number of drinks, never drinking alone, never drinking in the morning, drinking only at home, never having it in the house, never drinking during business hours, drinking only at parties, switching from scotch to brandy, drinking only natural wines, agreeing to resign if ever drunk on the job, taking a trip, not taking a trip, swearing off forever (with and without a solemn oath), taking more physical exercise, reading inspirational books, going to health farms and sanitariums, accepting voluntary commitment to asylums - we could increase the list ad infinitum.

p. 33

We have seen the truth demonstrated again and again: "Once an alcoholic, always an alcoholic." Commencing to drink after a period of sobriety, we are in a short time as bad as ever. If we are planning to stop drinking, there must be no reservation of any kind, nor any lurking notion that someday we will be immune to alcohol.

p.34

As we look back, we feel we had gone on drinking many years beyond the point where we could quit on our will power. If anyone questions whether he has entered this dangerous area, let him try leaving liquor alone for one year. If he is a real alcoholic and very far advanced, there is scant chance of success. In the early days of our drinking we occasionally remained sober for a year or more, becoming serious drinkers again later. Though you may be able to stop for a considerable period, you may yet be a potential alcoholic. We think few, to whom this book will appeal, can stay dry anything like a year. Some will be drunk the day after making their resolutions; most of them within a few weeks.

p. 37-39

But there was always the curious mental phenomenon that parallel with our sound reasoning there inevitably ran some insanely trivial excuse for taking the first drink. Our sound reasoning failed to hold us in check. The insane idea won out. Next day we would ask ourselves, in all earnestness and sincerity, how it could have happened.

In some circumstances we have gone out deliberately to get drunk, feeling ourselves justified by nervousness, anger, worry, depression, jealousy or the like. But even in this type of beginning we are obliged to admit that our justification for a spree was insanely insufficient in the light of what always happened. We now see that when we began to drink deliberately, instead of casually, there was little serious or effective thought during the period of premeditation of what the terrific consequences might be.

Our behavior is as absurd and incomprehensible with respect to the first drink as that of an individual with a passion, say, for jay-walking. He gets a thrill out of skipping in front of fast-moving vehicles. He enjoys himself for a few years in spite of friendly warnings. Up to this point you would label him as a foolish chap having queer ideas of fun. Luck then deserts him and he is slightly injured several times in succession. You would expect him, if he were normal, to cut it out. Presently he is hit again and this time has a fractured skull. Within a week after leaving the hospital a fast-moving trolley car breaks his arm. He tells you he has decided to stop jay-walking for good, but in a few weeks he breaks both legs.

On through the years this conduct continues, accompanied by his continual promises to be careful or to keep off the streets altogether. Finally, he can no longer work, his wife gets a divorce and he is held up to ridicule. He tries every known means to get the jay-walking idea out of his head. He shuts himself up in an asylum, hoping to mend his ways. But the day he comes out he races in front of a fire engine, which breaks his back. Such a man would be crazy, wouldn't he?

You may think our illustration is too ridiculous. But is it? We, who have been through the wringer, have to admit if we substituted alcoholism for jay-walking, the illustration would fit us exactly. However intelligent we may have been in other respects, where alcohol has been involved, we have been strangely insane. It's strong language - but isn't it true?

Some of you are thinking: "Yes, what you tell us is true, but it doesn't fully apply. We admit we have some of these symptoms, but we have not gone to the extremes you fellows did, nor are we likely to, for we understand ourselves so well after what you have told us that such things cannot happen again. We have not lost everything in life through drinking and we certainly do not intend to. Thanks for the information."

That may be true of certain nonalcoholic people who, though drinking foolishly and heavily at the present time, are able to stop or moderate, because their brains and bodies have not been damaged as ours were. But the actual or potential alcoholic, with hardly an exception, will be absolutely unable to stop drinking on the basis of self-knowledge. This is a point we wish to emphasize and re-emphasize, to smash home upon our alcoholic readers as it has been revealed to us out of bitter experience.

p.43

Once more: The alcoholic at certain times has no effective mental defense against the first drink. Except in a few rare cases, neither he nor any other human being can provide such a defense. His defense must come from a Higher Power.

**STEP TWO – Came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.**

## **WE AGNOSTICS**

p.44-45

In the preceding chapters you have learned something of alcoholism. We hope we have made clear the distinction between the alcoholic and the nonalcoholic. If, when you honestly want to, you find you cannot quit entirely, or if when drinking, you have little control over the amount you take, you are probably alcoholic. If that be the case, you may be suffering from an illness which only a spiritual experience will conquer.

To one who feels he is an atheist or agnostic such an experience seems impossible, but to continue as he is means disaster, especially if he is an alcoholic of the hopeless variety. To be doomed to an alcoholic death or to live on a spiritual basis are not always easy alternatives to face.

But it isn't so difficult. About half our original fellowship were of exactly that type. At first some of us tried to avoid the issue, hoping against hope we were not true alcoholics. But after a while we had to face the fact that we must find a spiritual basis of life - or else. Perhaps it is going to be that way with you. But cheer up, something like half of us thought we were atheists or agnostics. Our experience shows that you need not be disconcerted.

If a mere code of morals or a better philosophy of life were sufficient to overcome alcoholism, many of us would have recovered long ago. But we found that such codes and philosophies did not save us, no matter how much we tried. We could wish to be moral, we could wish to be philosophically comforted, in fact, we could will these things with all our might, but the needed power wasn't there. Our human resources, as marshalled by the will, were not sufficient; they failed utterly.

Lack of power, that was our dilemma. We had to find a power by which we could live, and it had to be a Power greater than ourselves. Obviously. But where and how were we to find this Power?

Well, that's exactly what this book is about. Its main object is to enable you to find a Power greater than yourself which will solve your problem.

p. 46-47

Much to our relief, we discovered we did not need to consider another's conception of God. Our own conception, however inadequate, was sufficient to make the approach and to effect a contact with Him. As soon as we admitted the possible existence of a Creative Intelligence, a Spirit of the Universe underlying the totality of things, we began to be possessed of a new sense of power and direction, provided we took other simple steps. We found that God does not make too hard

terms with those who seek Him. To us, the Realm of Spirit is broad, roomy, all inclusive; never exclusive or forbidding to those who earnestly seek. It is open, we believe, to all men.

When, therefore, we speak to you of God, we mean your own conception of God. This applies, too, to other spiritual expressions which you find in this book. Do not let any prejudice you may have against spiritual terms deter you from honestly asking yourself what they mean to you. At the start, this was all we needed to commence spiritual growth, to effect our first conscious relation with God as we understood Him. Afterward, we found ourselves accepting many things which then seemed entirely out of reach. That was growth, but if we wished to grow we had to begin somewhere. So we used our own conception, however limited it was.

We needed to ask ourselves but one short question. "Do I now believe, or am I even willing to believe, that there is a Power greater than myself?" As soon as a man can say that he does believe, or is willing to believe, we emphatically assure him that he is on his way. It has been repeatedly proven among us that upon this simple cornerstone a wonderfully effective spiritual structure can be built.

p. 50-51

In our personal stories you will find a wide variation in the way each teller approaches and conceives of the Power which is greater than himself. Whether we agree with a particular approach or conception seems to make little difference. Experience has taught us that these are matters about which, for our purpose, we need not be worried. They are questions for each individual to settle for himself.

On one proposition, however, these men and women are strikingly agreed. Every one of them has gained access to, and believes in, a Power greater than himself. This Power has in each case accomplished the miraculous, the humanly impossible. As a celebrated American statesman put it, "Let's look at the record."

Here are thousands of men and women, worldly indeed. They flatly declare that since they have come to believe in a Power greater than themselves, to take a certain attitude toward that Power, and to do certain simple things, there has been a revolutionary change in their way of living and thinking. In the face of collapse and despair, in the face of the total failure of their human resources, they found that a new power, peace, happiness, and sense of direction flowed into them. This happened soon after they wholeheartedly met a few simple requirements. Once confused and baffled by the seeming futility of existence, they show the underlying reasons why they were making heavy going of life. Leaving aside the drink question, they tell why living was so unsatisfactory. They show how the change came over them. When many hundreds of people are able to say that the consciousness of the Presence of God is today the most important fact of their lives, they present a powerful reason why one should have faith.

p. 52

When we saw others solve their problems by a simple reliance upon the Spirit of the Universe, we had to stop doubting the power of God. Our ideas did not work. But the God idea did.

**STEP THREE – Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.**

p. 60 - 63

Being convinced, we were at Step Three, which is that we decided to turn our will and our life over to God as we understood Him. Just what do we mean by that, and just what do we do?

The first requirement is that we be convinced that any life run on self-will can hardly be a success. On that basis we are almost always in collision with something or somebody, even though our motives are good. Most people try to live by self-propulsion. Each person is like an actor who wants to run the whole show; is forever trying to arrange the lights, the ballet, the scenery and the rest of the players in his own way. If his arrangements would only stay put, if only people would do as he wished, the show would be great. Everybody, including himself, would be pleased. Life would be wonderful. In trying to make these arrangements our actor may sometimes be quite virtuous. He may be kind, considerate, patient, generous; even modest and self-sacrificing. On the other hand, he may be mean, egotistical, selfish and dishonest. But, as with most humans, he is more likely to have varied traits.

What usually happens? The show doesn't come off very well. He begins to think life doesn't treat him right. He decides to exert himself more. He becomes, on the next occasion, still more demanding or gracious, as the case may be. Still the play does not suit him. Admitting he may be somewhat at fault, he is sure that other people are more to blame. He becomes angry, indignant, self-pitying. What is his basic trouble? Is he not really a self-seeker even when trying to be kind? Is he not a victim of the delusion that he can wrest satisfaction and happiness out of this world if he only manages well? Is it not evident to all the rest of the players that these are the things he wants? And do not his actions make each of them wish to retaliate, snatching all they can get out of the show? Is he not, even in his best moments, a producer of confusion rather than harmony?

Our actor is self-centered - ego-centric, as people like to call it nowadays. He is like the retired business man who lolls in the Florida sunshine in the winter complaining of the sad state of the nation; the minister who sighs over the sins of the twentieth century; politicians and reformers who are sure all would be Utopia if the rest of the world would only behave; the outlaw safe cracker who thinks society has wronged him; and the alcoholic who has lost all and is locked up. Whatever our protestations, are not most of us concerned with ourselves, our resentments, or our self-pity?

Selfishness - self-centeredness! That, we think, is the root of our troubles. Driven by a hundred forms of fear, self-delusion, self-seeking, and self-pity, we step on the toes of our fellows and they retaliate. Sometimes they hurt us, seemingly without provocation, but we invariably find that at some time in the past we have made decisions based on self which later placed us in a position to be hurt.

So our troubles, we think, are basically of our own making. They arise out of ourselves, and the alcoholic is an extreme example of self-will run riot, though he usually doesn't think so. Above everything, we alcoholics must be rid of this selfishness. We must, or it kills us! God makes that possible. And there often seems no way of entirely getting rid of self without His aid. Many of us

had moral and philosophical convictions galore, but we could not live up to them even though we would have liked to. Neither could we reduce our self-centeredness much by wishing or trying on our own power. We had to have God's help.

This is the how and why of it. First of all, we had to quit playing God. It didn't work. Next, we decided that hereafter in this drama of life, God was going to be our Director. He is the Principal; we are His agents. He is the Father, and we are His children. Most good ideas are simple, and this concept was the keystone of the new and triumphant arch through which we passed to freedom.

When we sincerely took such a position, all sorts of remarkable things followed. We had a new Employer. Being all powerful, He provided what we needed, if we kept close to Him and performed His work well. Established on such a footing we became less and less interested in ourselves, our little plans and designs. More and more we became interested in seeing what we could contribute to life. As we felt new power flow in, as we enjoyed peace of mind, as we discovered we could face life successfully, as we became conscious of His presence, we began to lose our fear of today, tomorrow or the hereafter. We were reborn.

We were now at Step Three. Many of us said to our Maker, as we understood Him: "God, I offer myself to Thee-to build with me and to do with me as Thou wilt. Relieve me of the bondage of self, that I may better do Thy will. Take away my difficulties, that victory over them may bear witness to those I would help of Thy Power, Thy Love, and Thy Way of life. May I do Thy will always!" We thought well before taking this step making sure we were ready; that we could at last abandon ourselves utterly to Him.

We found it very desirable to take this spiritual step with an understanding person, such as our wife, best friend or spiritual adviser. But it is better to meet God alone than with one who might misunderstand. The wording was, of course, quite optional so long as we expressed the idea, voicing it without reservation. This was only a beginning, though if honestly and humbly made, an effect, sometimes a very great one, was felt at once.

## **DAY 1**

### **WRITING SUGGESTIONS**

#### **O.A. QUICK STEP STUDY**

#### **Writing Suggestions, Prayers and Meditative Readings related to the 12 steps of Overeaters Anonymous**

Taken from the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous and  
The 12 Steps and 12 Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous  
per OA's 10th Tool, AA Literature.

**Writing Suggestions** from the O.A. Sponsorship Guide

plus some additions by Pat G.

**Serenity Prayer** - God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and wisdom to know the difference.

**STEP 1 – We admitted we were powerless over food - that our lives had become unmanageable.**

**STEP 1 Writing Suggestions:**

Please pick one question to answer or take these questions as suggestions and “jumping off points.” They are here to stimulate your thinking about the step. Feel free to write as your Higher Power directs. In other words, your Higher Power may give you your own Step One topic. If you have never written A HISTORY OF YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH FOOD, we recommend doing that one. If you have more time, pick another question.

1. Write a history of your relationship with food, beginning with the first time you remember food-related events. How have food issues affected your life?
2. Are there certain foods or certain food behaviours that you are powerless over? Do certain foods trigger a skyrocketing of your cravings? Is it hard to have, “just one?”
3. Do you have a mental obsession with food, even after you have refrained from eating your binge foods for weeks, months, or years?
4. Do you have “curious blank spaces” in your brain around food? Do you easily forget your intention to eat moderately? Do you easily forget your reasons for wanting to eat moderately? What, “insanely trivial excuses,” do you use to justify taking that first compulsive bite? (of excess food or of a binge food?)
5. Have you fully conceded to your innermost self, that you are a compulsive eater?
6. Using free-flow writing, explore the feelings (fear, anxiety, anger, shame, etc.) underneath the idea of being powerless. (Free-flow writing is writing which is done quickly, freely, and is uncensored. You might begin with a sentence such as, “When I think of being powerless, I feel...”)
7. Discuss, specifically, how and where your life is unmanageable.

**STEP 2 – Came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.**

**STEP 2 Writing Suggestions:**

**Pick one Step 2 question and then write out the third step prayer in your own words.**

1. Exactly what do you need your Higher Power to do for you and be for you?
2. Specifically describe the ways in which you were insane (irrational behaviour, thinking, feeling) while you were in your illness.
3. Discuss the self-destructive things you have done to lose weight. And/or Discuss the healthy and unhealthy things you have done in an attempt to solve your problems with food.
4. Discuss and reflect on how we use the “Substitution Method” rather than accepting the presence of a Higher Power in our lives. How have you looked for substitutes for a Higher Power in your life? Are you still looking?
5. Discuss and reflect on one of the following concepts addressed in Step 2:
  - a. What was I taught about God that I do not believe? What ideas about God do I need to set aside?
  - b. What is my own definition of a Higher Power?
  - c. Belief means reliance not defiance.
  - d. Defiance is an outstanding characteristic of many a compulsive eater. Refer to page 31 in the “AA 12 x 12”
  - e. “The hoop you have to jump through is a lot wider than you think.” (AA 12 x 12, p. 26)
6. Using free-flow writing, explore your rage at God, past and present.

### **3rd Step Prayer**

Many of us said to our Maker, [or use your own word or concept]:

"God, I offer myself to Thee --to build with me and to do with me as Thou wilt. Relieve me of the bondage of self, that I may better do Thy will. Take away my difficulties, that victory over them may bear witness to those I would help of Thy Power, Thy Love, and Thy Way of life. May I do Thy will always!" (Alcoholics Anonymous, Page 63)

### **STEP 3 – Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.**

#### **STEP 3 Writing Suggestions:**

1. WRITE OUT YOUR THIRD STEP PRAYER IN YOUR OWN WORDS. If there is more time, pick another step 1, 2 or 3 question to write about or make up your own.
2. Discuss and reflect on the idea that “abstinence is the most important thing in my life without exception.”
3. Discuss and reflect on the idea that “my relationship with my HP is the most important thing in my life, without exception.”

4. Using “free-flow” writing, explore your feelings about turning your will and your life over to the care of your Higher Power.

**STEP 1, 2, and 3 Sharing in Small Groups**  
**SHARING AND LISTENING GUIDELINES**

**Start with the SERENITY PRAYER**

**Choose a TIMEKEEPER**

**No CROSSTALK**

**Ask for HELP**

**Timekeeper, please give everyone a two-minute warning, so that they have time to say their Third Step prayer aloud** at the end of their sharing time.

Everything in 12 step groups is a suggestion. If you are not comfortable sharing what you have written, you may feel free to pass and just listen. Or, you may ask to share last, or share just a little bit. If you are willing, share any writing that you have done. And at the end of your share, **Say your own 3<sup>rd</sup> step prayer with your small group as witness, in your own words or as written in Big Book.** It is optional to adopt a posture of humility, as you say the Third Step prayer as a symbol of surrender to your higher power.

Please remember to keep everything you hear confidential. That means you do not tell anyone inside or outside of OA what you have heard. Please set judgments aside and listen with an open heart. Also, please respect the OA tradition of No Cross Talk – do not interrupt, comment upon what another person has shared or give advice. Also, please do not share outside resources. **ASK ME FOR HELP** IF anyone is giving feedback, or not respecting the timelines, or if you have a question.

N.B. The only exception to confidentiality is an extreme circumstance. For example, by law we have to report suspicion of child abuse, or serious risk of injury to yourself or others. Your conversation with your small group is not privileged under the law. If you are about to reveal a breach of the law, your group might advise you to speak to someone with whom you could have a protected conversation, such as a lawyer or licensed clergy person.