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Seventh Tradition of OA

The Seventh Tradition

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

*Give as if your life
depends on it!*



The Twelve Steps

1. We admitted we were powerless over food—that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and 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.
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.

How much is your recovery worth to you?

**Our disease tells us,
“There will never be enough.”**

Scores of OA members worldwide have discovered that their fears of not having enough food, money, security or love have been lifted by a power greater than themselves. Experience has shown that OA recovery is far stronger than the debilitating disease of compulsive overeating, which also kept us captive to shame and insecurity about the future.

When describing the benefits of recovery, many members point to the promises listed in *Alcoholics Anonymous* (the Big Book), including: “Our whole attitude and outlook upon life will change. Fear of people and of economic insecurity will leave us” (p. 84).

To know the true freedom of recovery is to know that we can make sensible and necessary financial contributions to OA at all levels, and that this investment in our Fellowship ensures we can continue to carry the message to the still-suffering compulsive eater.

Our Seventh Tradition states that OA is fully self-supporting, accepting contributions only from OA members. *While no fees or dues will ever be required for membership*, OA needs help to keep its rooms open, provide opportunities for fellowship and spread its message to still-suffering compulsive overeaters.

How do members give?

Individual members can send checks and money orders to any OA service body. Credit card contributions to the World Service Office (WSO) can be made at www.oa.org.

Here are several strategies members use to make their contributions:

- Member A gives an average of US\$3 *or more* each time the basket is passed in a meeting.
- Member B gives at meetings and sends a monthly contribution to WSO equivalent to the amount once spent on a binge.
- Member C gives at meetings and sends an annual contribution for each year in program. (Individual members may contribute up to US\$5,000 per year.) Money orders in US dollars can usually be purchased at a post office.
- Member D gives at meetings and contributes to the intergroup in memory of a deceased OA member.
- Member E contributes to a virtual group via check, money order or electronic funds transfer.
- Member F makes certain that his or her group makes regular contributions to intergroup, service board, region and WSO.

What if I can't afford to contribute now?

OA never requires a contribution. Members may attend meetings for free as long as they like. However, many of us have found that a financial contribution, no matter how small, supports our recovery.

Also, the concept of self-support applies to service as well as finances. OA members strengthen their recovery by giving service to groups, intergroups, service boards, regions or the World Service Office.

Are my contributions tax-deductible?

It depends on the laws of the country in which you live. In the United States, your contributions to WSO are tax-deductible.

Contributions to groups or service bodies are tax-deductible if the group or service body is registered as a non-profit organization [501(c) (3)]. Outside the United States, OA service bodies may have information on the tax situation in your country.

Check with a tax advisor in your area if you are unsure.

Are there special considerations for OA members who live outside the United States?

Yes, WSO can incur costly transaction fees for international contributions. Here are some ways to maximize the value of your contributions to WSO:

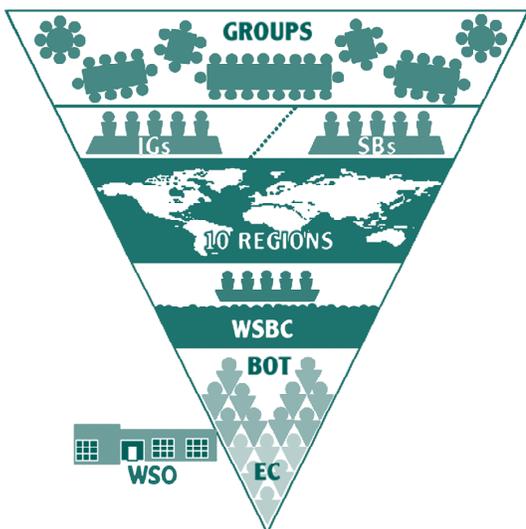
- Use your credit card to make a contribution on the OA Web site (the most cost-effective method).
- If you are sending money by wire transfer, check with your bank for the cheapest method.

- Combine with other OA members from your country to send one larger contribution through a service board.
- Send your contribution with your delegate to the annual World Service Business Conference (WSBC).
- Add your contribution to any other payment you send to WSO; for example, literature orders.
- Make a few large contributions instead of many small ones.

Contributions flow downhill in OA

The structure of OA can be compared to an upside-down pyramid.

At the top are thousands of individual **members** all over the world. They contribute



to all levels of OA. Anyone who wishes to stop eating compulsively can become a member.

Groups can be made up of two or more people. Each group practices the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of OA, but no member of a group is required to practice any action

to remain a member or to have a voice at a meeting.

Intergroups are formed by two or more groups. They provide support services for groups and spread the OA message of recovery to those who still suffer.

Virtual meetings may affiliate with a land-based intergroup.

Service boards may be formed to serve groups and/or intergroups that are not otherwise served within the existing region structure.

OA has 10 **regions** around the world that maintain direct communication with groups, intergroups and service boards, and sponsor local conventions and assemblies.

The 16-member OA **Board of Trustees** is elected at the annual World Service Business Conference. The board is responsible for representing the Fellowship as a whole, including oversight of finances at the world service level.

The **World Service Office** in Rio Rancho, New Mexico USA, receives contributions from all levels of OA. Its purpose is to support all other levels of the Fellowship and help spread the OA message of recovery worldwide.

How are finances handled within the OA structure?

All service bodies are encouraged to be self-supporting by meeting their own expenses, adopting a prudent reserve, using funds to carry the message and contributing excess funds to the next level of service.

Groups may contribute according to the informed group conscience. Groups frequently choose to send 60 percent of funds left over after expenses to their intergroup or service board, 10 percent to their region and 30 percent to WSO. Groups may also choose to contribute the funds to their intergroup or service board, and allow those service bodies to contribute to the region and WSO.

The Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees makes most of the decisions about how to use OA funds at the world service level. In addition, elected delegates at the World Service Business Conference vote on major new initiatives that involve the worldwide Fellowship. The full BOT approves the annual budget, and the Executive Committee reviews budget expenditures throughout the year.

What does OA do with your contributions?

Groups:

- Provide places to meet and share recovery
- Purchase supplies to run meetings
- Buy literature and media from WSO
- Support their intergroup, service board, region and WSO

Intergroups or Service Boards:

- Offer local outreach to professional communities, hospitals, schools and libraries
- Hold recovery events
- Maintain Web sites
- Keep updated meeting lists
- Provide telephone information/answering services
- Publish newsletters
- Send representatives to region assemblies and delegates to the World Service Business Conference to vote on your behalf, and to contribute to the group conscience of OA as a whole concerning policies and services
- Translate literature

Regions:

- Hold assemblies and recovery events
- Support community and media outreach
- Maintain Web sites

- Publish newsletters
- Keep lists of speakers
- Support officers' expenses
- Maintain reference and media libraries
- Offer support to intergroups and unaffiliated groups

World Service Office:

- Produces and distributes OA-approved literature, media and specialty items
- Maintains the OA Web site, www.oa.org
- Offers worldwide meeting location contacts and information on virtual groups through the Web site, as well as a telephone referral service and service by mail
- Publishes *Lifeline* magazine
- Produces *A Step Ahead* newsletter
- Sends starter kits for new groups
- Registers intergroups and groups, including virtual groups (online and telephone)
- Holds the annual World Service Business Conference
- Puts on World Service Conventions
- Handles OA's media and public relations contacts
- Reaches out to professionals

Special Service and Outreach Programs

OA service bodies sometimes initiate programs to be funded by special contributions instead of by money from regular operating expenses. Here are some examples:

- A group may collect contributions from members for extraordinary needs.
- An intergroup or service board may ask for special contributions to run a large ad in the local newspaper.
- A service board may request contributions to enable translation of OA literature.

- A region assembly may decide to ask for special contributions to fund an OA exhibit at a convention for nutritionists or other professionals.
- The World Service Office accepts special contributions to fund worldwide public information campaigns administered by the Board of Trustees.

Additional references are available at www.aa.org or through the World Service Office

- On fund-raising and prudent reserve:

OA Guidelines, #570

- On group conscience:

OA Handbook for Members, Groups and Intergroups, #120

Group Conscience Guidelines, available for download at the OA Web site, www.aa.org

- On service:

The Twelve Concepts of OA Service, #330

- On the Traditions:

The Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous, #230

Service, Traditions and Concepts Workshop Manual, #773

The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous, #990

The Twelve Traditions

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon OA unity.
2. For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.
3. The only requirement for OA membership is a desire to stop eating compulsively.
4. Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or OA as a whole.
5. Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry its message to the compulsive overeater who still suffers.
6. An OA group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the OA name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property, and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.
7. Every OA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
8. Overeaters Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers.
9. OA, as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.
10. Overeaters Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the OA name ought never be drawn into public controversy.
11. Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, films, television, and other public media of communication.
12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all these Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

Permission to use the Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous for adaptation granted by AA World Services, Inc.

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