The Promises of The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous

Using the Steps and Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous gives us a daily reprieve from the serious disease of compulsive eating. This Twelve-Step process, however, is not an easy one. Staying on the road of recovery requires hard work, support from our fellow members, and guidance from our Higher Power. Although it is often challenging, we receive wonderful gifts by working the Steps and practicing the Traditions of the program.

This pamphlet sets forth the exciting benefits of our program of recovery. We have listed many of the gifts we are promised in the book The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous. We of Overeaters Anonymous do not claim this list is exhaustive—in fact, we challenge you to read this book for yourselves. You might be surprised at all the promises you find!

Step One
We admitted we were powerless over food—that our lives had become unmanageable.

- We can now cease blaming ourselves or others for our compulsive eating.
- If we never overeat, we won’t trigger the reaction that makes us crave more.
- We receive an amazing, newfound power when we admit our powerlessness over food.
- We can give up old thought and behavior patterns that have failed us in the past, beginning with our attempts to control our eating and weight.

Step Two
Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.

- We can more easily admit that we had acted insanely where food and weight were concerned.
- We find that atheists, agnostics and believers are welcome in the program and have found recovery here.
- As we develop personal relationships with our sponsors, the love of our groups comes to us in a deeper way.
- We feel, for the first time ever, the relief of not having to face our problems alone.
- We begin to act as if a Higher Power exists and find good things happening to us as a result.

Step Three
Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.

- We enjoy freedom from the obsession with food and the compulsion to overeat.
- We receive the willingness and ability to live within our eating guidelines.
- We find it is possible for us to continue eating moderate, nutritious meals, one day at a time.
- We are relieved from feelings of food obsession when we trust in our Higher Power.
- We experience new reactions when faced with food, life or our emotions.
- Once we truly take the Third Step, we cannot fail to recover.
Step Four

Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.

- We no longer must eat over our problems; they have lost their power over us.
- We develop a new ability to see our own dishonesty and a greater willingness to live by truth.
- We more easily become abstinent.
- We experience life more fully.

Step Five

Admitted to God, to ourselves and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.

- We leave behind rationalization and now practice integrity.
- We begin to gain hope and start life anew.
- We come to see reality.
- We gain a new perspective.
- We feel a sense of relief.
- We start forgiving ourselves and seeing ourselves as capable, strong and honest.
- We find we can change and recover.
- We start to accept ourselves unconditionally.

Step Six

Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.

- We become ready for our Higher Power to bring about change in us.
- We become wiser, saner, more effective people as we recover.
- We learn we can cope with good times and bad.

Step Seven

Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.

- We trust that our Higher Power will grant us the gift of humility to a greater and greater degree.
- We are given new insights into our true defects of character.
- Our Higher Power’s strength flows more surely and freely through us.
- We find that our simple prayers are answered in wonderful ways.
- Our Higher Power does for us what we could never do for ourselves.

Step Eight

Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.

- We meet guilt head-on and are able to be rid of it.
- We learn about the healing power of forgiveness.
- We become willing to make changes in the way we deal with the people who share our lives.
- We can be freed of our resentments and unforgiveness.
Step Nine

*Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.*

- Our lives are changed, our broken relationships are mended, and the ill will that poisoned our hearts is washed away.
- We are freed from the shackles of our past mistakes.
- We feel closer to our Higher Power than ever before.
- Our spiritual awakening becomes a reality.
- We have discovered a way of life that nourishes us physically, emotionally and spiritually.

Step Ten

*Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong, promptly admitted it.*

- We habitually use spot-check inventories, which help us grow and thrive.
- We are able to let go of our defects with the help of our Higher Power.
- We begin to recover from this baffling malady.
- We find that working the Steps removes unnecessary turmoil and pain from our lives.

Step Eleven

*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.*

- We are rewarded with direction and strength.
- We find comfort in regular prayer and meditation that we never found in food.
- Our Higher Power gives us everything we need to live to our fullest potential.

Step Twelve

*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.*

- We become the bearers of hope to other compulsive overeaters.
- We feel great joy in sharing our program with others.
- We are able to have the best possible relationship with each person we know by practicing the principles of the program.
- We let go of our need to control people.

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Tradition One

*Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon OA unity.*

- As we open our hearts to other compulsive eaters, we find acceptance, a sense of belonging, and unity with other compulsive overeaters that satisfies us in ways food never could.
- We resolve our differences of opinion by considering the welfare of the group as a whole.
We listen to others with open minds, and we learn to express ourselves without insisting that everyone must do things our way.

We find ways of doing things that meet everybody’s needs.

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.

- We are never prevented from speaking or voting at meetings.
- Nobody ever “loses” a group conscience vote in OA.
- We all win when our Higher Power’s will is done, even if we do not agree with a group decision.
- We learn “they” and “them” do not exist in OA, only we and us.

Tradition Three

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

- We find that we who have experienced the pain of compulsive eating and want to stop are welcome at meetings.
- We find security in OA and never have to worry that we’ll be expelled for failing to work the program in a certain way.
- We are always welcome at meetings, whether we are newcomers, regular attendees or those who have been in relapse.
- We feel acceptance and belonging at our meetings.

Tradition Four

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

- We learn that no OA group or service body can dictate the actions of another OA group.
- We are allowed at our meetings to make our own decisions without interference from any governing body.
- We are given the opportunity to operate in an atmosphere that promotes recovery from compulsive eating through the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions.
- We learn to act autonomously, even as we live in harmony with others.

Tradition Five

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

- We are blessed to be able to carry the message of strength and hope to our fellow compulsive overeaters.
- We avoid unnecessary concerns as we focus on serving others.
- We are able to serve our fellow compulsive eaters and find deep satisfaction in doing so.

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.
• We are given a unique purpose to fulfill: to provide a Twelve-Step-and-Twelve-Tradition fellowship for compulsive overeaters.
• We are granted a marvelous freedom.
• Our groups focus almost exclusively on recovery from compulsive eating.

Tradition Seven
Every OA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
• We learn to depend on God for our security.
• We begin to see more clearly what our boundaries need to be.
• We learn to do the things necessary to take care of ourselves and our groups, materially and emotionally.
• We begin to share our vulnerability with others in OA without expecting them to shoulder our responsibility.

Tradition Eight
Overeaters Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers.
• We learn to give our loving support freely to others, without trying to advise people or change them.
• We willingly share and listen to our fellow compulsive overeaters.
• We discover a beautiful spirit of caring service that becomes a powerful factor in our healing.

Tradition Nine
OA, as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.
• We can relax, trust our Higher Power, and appreciate the wisdom of the Ninth Tradition.
• We begin to trust that there really is a Higher Power guiding the OA Fellowship through our group conscience.
• We can now take responsibility for our shared lives and the OA Fellowship in which we are recovering together.

Tradition Ten
Overeaters Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the OA name ought never be drawn into public controversy.
• Our experience offers hope and strength to the suffering compulsive overeater.
• We live happier and more effective lives as we focus on doing our Higher Power’s will.
• We concentrate on recovery and live with a minimum of strife.

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.
• We have the opportunity to take advantage of the program when we are ready to accept what OA has to offer.
• We become more humble by maintaining public anonymity.
• We earn respect and appreciation when we give up self-promotion and do the will of our Higher Power.

Tradition Twelve

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

• We can share our feelings and experiences honestly, as we experience unconditional acceptance through anonymity.
• We trust that nobody outside these rooms will know we are in OA unless we tell them ourselves.
• We find that the principles of the program are failure-proof.

We have received these joyous promises by living in accordance with the Steps and Traditions. As The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous says in Step Ten (p. 90), “More gifts are in store for us as we continue working the program and experiencing the miracle of permanent recovery, one day at a time.”