



The 12 Freedoms of OA

- 1:00 Opening Serenity Prayer & Intro
- 1:10 **Speaker** & Open Share “Freedom FROM...”
 Small Group Sharing
 (break at 2:00)
- 2:15 **Speaker** & Open Share- “Freedom TO...”
 Journal Exercise & Sharing
 (break at 3:05)
- 3:15 Journal Exercise & Small Group 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



Freedom FROM...

“For many of us, this freedom came when we took Step Three and turned the entire problem over to our Higher Power.” — OA 12&12, p. 20

The Twelfth Step of Overeaters Anonymous talks about the qualities we gain as a result of working the Twelve Steps, but the word freedom appears so many times in all of our literature, I began to think about the freedoms from my disease I gained by working each of the Steps of Overeaters Anonymous:

One: Freedom from the obsession with food

Two: Freedom from insanity and hopelessness

Three: Freedom from the bondage of self

Four: Freedom from dishonesty

Five: Freedom from isolation

Six: Freedom from running the show

Seven: Freedom from self-reliance

Eight: Freedom from blame

Nine: Freedom from fear of people

Ten: Freedom from complacency

Eleven: Freedom from loneliness

Twelve: Freedom from lack of purpose

Voices of Recovery, Pg 205 (July 23)

Step One: Freedom from the obsession with food

VOR, pg 69 (Obsession with food)

“Recovery is the result of living the Overeaters Anonymous Twelve-Step program.” — A Commitment to Abstinence, p. 1

Abstinence, to me, is very simple. It is refraining from compulsive overeating and continuing to work my program. Compulsive overeating is when I wander around my kitchen shoveling food into my mouth unthinkingly. Compulsiveness is when I am not reading, writing, calling, and using the other tools. Compulsiveness is when I do not the Steps or talk to my Higher Power.

Abstinence is eating balanced meals, using the OA tools, practicing the Steps and Traditions, sponsoring and doing other service. I can binge on veggies, so I do not have a food list that determines my abstinence. Instead, it is an action that undermines my abstinence: eating compulsively—feeding feelings, bingeing, stuffing my face. Recovery is three-fold— physical, spiritual, and emotional. If I only count the physical (adhering to a food plan), I miss out on two important parts of recovery.

VOR, pg 225 (Obsession with food)

“Just staying abstinent—if it’s all I can do today—is reaching for recovery.” — For Today, p. 167

Abstinence is where my recovery begins. That is the “food” I need to reach for. That is where insanity ends and serenity begins. Once I got a “taste” of serenity, I wanted more and more. The feeling of freedom from food is incredible. I have learned to ask for help from God, my sponsor, and my group. I have learned to tackle new problem foods in order to get more recovery. What I want to reach for now is not more food, but more recovery. Am I calling someone? Am I getting to meetings? Am I praying daily? Am I being grateful in prayer? Am I reading? Am I working the Steps? Am I asking God to make me willing? When tempted, I ask God to help me reach for more recovery instead of more food.

For Today, pg 185 (Obsession)

... I will not be afraid to enjoy what is beautiful, and to believe that as I give to the world, so the world will give to me. — Just for Today

How is it possible to be afraid to enjoy what is beautiful? There is surely no threat in beauty.

It was a fear of living, actually, that made me hide in food. To be afraid to live is to be afraid of everything—good as well as bad, beautiful as well as ugly.

In giving to the world, it is I who must make the first move, I who must run to meet life with a smile that says, “I’m happy to be here.” To like oneself, to enjoy life and to have enthusiasm for its precious gifts is to give to the world.

For today: Freedom from food obsession restores to me my God-given right to enjoy the beauty of this world and not to be afraid to show it.

For Today, pg 186 (Obsession)

Freedom has a thousand charms to show that slaves howe ‘er contented never know. – William Cowper

Freedom from compulsive overeating, and all that goes with it, feels better than any food tastes; this I know. But am I still locked into some patterns that keep my life from being as good as it might be? Am I a slave to others’ approval? To perfection? To the scale? I want to be aware of my shortcomings, but I also know that being too critical and expecting too much of myself can be discouraging. “Easy does it” is a better approach to the personal inventory suggested in steps four and ten than taking myself too seriously.

For today: I am satisfied with the progress I have made so far; it is giving me freedom from obsession and a new joy in living.

VOR, pg 150 (Powerlessness)

“When the individual accepts, on an unconscious level, the reality of not being able to handle compulsive overeating, there is no residual battle.” — Overeaters Anonymous, Second Edition, p. 238

I have found this to be true. When I totally accept Step One, my compliance with the program and my abstinence are easy. The difficulty is that it is not easy to accept such total powerlessness. A corner of my mind will start to fear the utter helplessness and resist. Then there is a battle in own mind. The battle opens up a breach through which the disease may enter.

I have found it useful to have a standard of total acceptance at an unconscious level, and I compare my acceptance of Step One with this standard. I know I cannot walk through a brick wall, and I’ve totally accepted this fact, so I don’t try. I don’t even resent the fact that I can’t do it. When I accept Step One as completely as this, I am easily abstinent. I am free.

OA 12&12, pg 2-3 (Step 1)

Clearly, if we are to live free of the bondage of compulsive eating, we must abstain from all foods and eating behaviors which cause us problems.

Step Two: Freedom from insanity and hopelessness

VOR, pg 77 (Insanity)

“For the sake of our compulsive eating, we have turned ourselves into objects of ridicule and we have destroyed our health.” — OA 12&12, p. 10

I was my compulsive overeating. I had lost my identity and all direction in my life. The insanity of trying to fill the emotional emptiness and the spiritual void with food consumed me. I lost my health, my ability to work, and my marriage to this disease. I am yet without but I see the joy and freedom of recovery. I feel neither regret nor “if only,” but simply a humble thankfulness that the craziness of my life managed to take the path that led me to God and to my daily recovery.

VOR, pg 345 (Hopelessness/Despair)

“As we repeatedly act on Step Ten, we begin to see the remarkable way the Steps will, from now on, continue to remove unnecessary turmoil and pain from our lives... 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.” — OA 12&12, pp. 89–90

Ours is a disease of the attitudes. However, the years I've spent in OA have shown me that although my disease is progressive, so is my recovery. When I was active in my eating disorder, I hated everything about my life. My world consisted of binges, blame, fear, shame, jealousy, and rage. I was imprisoned by unrealistic expectations of people, bitterly resenting their imperfections. I also hated myself because I couldn't stop eating. Negativity breeds hopelessness, and I was trapped.

Recovery teaches me that my gratitude and serenity snowball, just like my negative attitudes did. As I work the Twelve Steps of this program, it becomes fulfilling to focus on the good in my life. It doesn't always come easily; sometimes I struggle to think positively. But when my attitudes slip, I know there's hope. Now my world consists of daily miracles, both large and small, that keep the light in my eyes and lightness in my heart. Positive thinking breeds acceptance, and today I am free.

VOR, pg 158 (Despair)

“We then find that, to deal with our inner turmoil, we have to have a new way of thinking, of acting on life rather than reacting to it...” — Overeaters Anonymous, Second Edition, pp. 2-3

It seems that all my life had been a series of reactions from fear, anger, or resentment toward others or situations, or from my own negativity or shame. To deal with my despair and inner turmoil I had to stop blaming life and find a new way of thinking.

With help from the OA program and my Higher Power, I learned that I can accept others as they are. I learned that I am not a victim to life. I can care for and be responsible for myself and my thinking. I can consciously choose positive thoughts and decisions that enable me to act on life one day at a time.

Any time that my food obsession returns, it is a sign for me that I need to look at my reactions to people and things. I need to willingly take responsibility for my part, and for my happiness. I need to own my own power to take action.

Today I follow the Twelve Steps and act on life.

OA 12&12, pg 100

Freedom of the obsession and restored to sanity, today we choose not to eat self-destructively.

Step Three: Freedom from the bondage of self

VOR, pg 284 (Bondage of self)

“As OA members we may donate many hours of service to each other,...” — OA 12&12, p. 171

I have noticed in my home groups that people who remain in recovery are people who continue to give service. Service gives me practice at freeing myself from the bondage of self. I am gaining this freedom by concentrating on things outside myself. Every time I concentrate on what a fellow OAer is saying, I am breaking one of the strands that binds me to myself. Every time I go to a service meeting and try to speak about what is best for OA as a whole, rather than what is best for me, I am breaking one of the strands that binds me to myself.

Every time I listen to a fellow compulsive overeater and encourage her recovery, I am breaking one of the strands that binds me to myself. Every time I give service without counting the hours I give or looking for any reward, I am filled with freedom, friendship, joy, and abstinent recovery.

OA 12&12, pg 30 (bondage to self)

This step (four) continues a process of transformation which began with our admission of powerlessness in step one, a process of increasing honesty and self-awareness that will gradually free us from our bondage to self.

Bonus Reading! AA Big Book, pg 543 (3rd Ed)

Those promises I thought were impossible are a viable force in my life. I am free to laugh all of my laughter, free to trust and be trusted, free to both give and receive help. I am free from shame and regret, free to learn and grow and work...

Step Four: Freedom from dishonesty (Also truth and honesty readings)

VOR, pg 89, (Dishonesty)

“Honesty is a key factor in our recovery from compulsive eating, and so we will want to develop this trait.” — OA 12&12, p. 51

It's one thing to be honest about what I did in the past or what I ate yesterday, but continuing this honesty in everything I do or say is another. I have found that as my growth in recovery continues, it becomes difficult for me to lie to myself, my Higher Power, my sponsor, or those in my circle of loving witnesses.

“The truth shall set you free” are words to live by. Maybe once I could lie about my weight on my driver's license or on some medical application, but today I do not hedge the truth.

Today, people can look at me and know that I am a person of my word. My integrity is important, and it comes from my truthfulness, harmlessness, and honesty.

For Today, pg 46 (Honesty)

Only God can fully know what absolute honesty is. Therefore each of us has to conceive what this great ideal may be—to the best of our ability. — Bill W.

Truth is always the same; honesty changes with my awareness. Honesty has many facets. There is cash-register honesty, usually accompanied by making sure other people know about it. There is let-me-tell-you-for-your-own-good honesty, which is hurtful, perhaps dominating. There is one-sided honesty, which is a recitation of my spouse's or lover's or friend's wrongdoings, sometimes dumped on a hapless OA meeting.

And there is self-honesty, which serves the purpose of keeping my life in order, and personal honesty, which is a sharing of feelings, experiences and strengths without egotism, self-pity or exaggeration.

For today: A fundamental principle of this program is to be as honest as possible with myself and everyone my life touches.

Step Five: Freedom from isolation

VOR, pg 191 (Ending isolation)

“Being a part of the group is essential to recovery from our disease of isolation. It means supporting and being supported by our fellow OA members.” — OA 12&12, p. 205

This passage tells me I have a disease of isolation, and the solution is to be part of the group. It also tells me that being part of the group means I support my fellow OA members, and they support me. When I first came to OA, I didn't feel “part of ” anything in my life. I never felt that I belonged or fit in anywhere. OA tells me that I do belong because I am a compulsive overeater. It doesn't matter how much I weigh, how much money I earn, what color my hair is, or anything else. I belong and am equal in OA. I isolated because I was afraid to let anyone know me. Being a part of the group allowed me to open up a little at a time. As I felt more a part of the group, I felt more of the support available to me. From that, I learned to support others. Together we can do what we could never do alone.

VOR, pg 25 (Fellowship)

“Before we joined the OA Fellowship our prayers for help might have gone unanswered simply because we were never meant to face this disease in isolation.” — OA 12&12, pp. 15-16

I was one of those people who prayed regularly for God to remove the fat and allow me to continue overeating. I prayed for the day to be different, not understanding the concept that taking the first bite triggered the disease. I also ate secretly, making sure everyone was out of the house so that I could eat. Today OA offers me the opportunity to be with fellow sufferers who know the pain that excess food has caused. OA offers me recovery from compulsive overeating. I do not need to live in isolation any longer because there are people who understand my disease. What a miracle! I no longer need to isolate myself, as I have come to believe in a power greater than myself, and I share the camaraderie of fellow compulsive overeaters.

For Today, pg 60 (Ending isolation)

A single arrow is easily broken, but not ten in a bundle. – Japanese proverb

Compulsive overeating is largely a solitary pursuit. When I was out there eating, I scorned the idea that I needed people. I ate alone and thought I was ruggedly independent. In truth, I was pathetically deluded and seriously ill. The relief of finding OA can hardly be described. Here is strength that does not threaten or demand or pat me on the head. In the instant I made myself part of that strength, I became whole.

For today: The quality of my recovery, and my life, depends on something I can find only at OA meetings: contact with other recovering compulsive overeaters.

OA 12&12, pg 51

...Having taken step five, we are free at last...

Step Six: Freedom from running the show (Self-will readings also)

OA 12&12, pg 95

Our energies are no longer bound up in our worries and resentments, and we are free to move forward again, to do God's will.

VOR, pg 207 (Self-will)

"We have what we need any time we are willing to let go of self-will and humbly ask for help."
— OA 12&12, p. 27

This seems to be the key to the program and to life: being able to let go of self-will and to reach out to a power greater than myself for help. It took me many years in the program to feel that this is how it works. Self-will always seemed such a source of energy. Yet I couldn't see that this type of energy resulted in a lot of restlessness. There is much more peace in doing the things my Higher Power wants me to do. And, to my surprise, this doesn't mean things don't get done. I still do the laundry, have a job, cook a healthy meal. It's just my frame of mind that has changed.

VOR, pg 334 (Self-will vs God's will and control and boundaries)

"...immature love tries to possess and control." — Overeaters Anonymous, Second Edition, p. 245

How many times have I become a controlling person? My life revolved around demanding that everyone do things my way and becoming obsessed with the "right" way. Then when that didn't

work, I would become so submissive that others could easily victimize me. I was led into many intolerable events just to please someone else.

This program of recovery helps me to discover myself. As I have learned my own real needs, I have been able to enter into true, sharing relationships. By developing a mature love with my Higher Power and becoming a friend to myself, I can distinguish the boundaries between my will and God's will. Now choices are more blended into the question of "How important is it to my recovery?" The action of the program principles keeps me focused on what is vital for each moment.

For Today, pg 63 (Self-will)

It is when we try to make our will conform with God's that we begin to use it rightly. – Bill W.

It is easy to confuse certain desirable attributes with undesirable ones. To have humility, for example, does not mean to feel inferior. On the contrary, it means feeling equal—neither less nor more worthy than anyone.

The same is true of willfulness, which I have often confused with determination, perseverance and individualism. The latter are qualities belonging to people who think and act in a balanced, rational, adult manner. Self-will is an infantile expression of omnipotence, the delusion that I can force life to be exactly as I want it to be. That is the insanity of compulsive overeating.

Seeking to conform my will with God's is what restores me to sanity. It gives me abstinence, peace of mind and freedom from obsession.

For today: To know what God would have me do is my first priority, for that knowledge smoothes my path and frees me to live with energy and love.

Step Seven: Freedom from self-reliance

OA 12&12, pg 65&66 (Step 7)

As we gain humility and ever greater freedom from our character defects, God's power flow more surely and freely through us, bringing healing to others as well as ourselves, and drawing to us all the things we once fought so hard to attain: self-esteem, a feeling of usefulness, joy, strength to surmount difficulties, fellowship, and love.

VOR, pg 36 (Self-reliance)

*"Clearly a power greater than ourselves had to be found if we were to be restored to sanity." —
OA 12&12, p. 12*

For someone as impulsive and driven to find relief as I was, sanity took many forms: waiting instead of acting, looking for the positive in a situation, feelings of satisfaction when the action fell short of the intention, and learning to be aware of my compulsion and think it through.

When I relied on my wits alone, I used all my energy to make things happen. Too often I met with frustration, disappointment, and feelings of failure or self-pity, which led me back to the food.

The Higher Power I found in Overeaters Anonymous revealed a more peaceful approach to living. He enabled me to begin asking for help, contemplate my options, and anticipate the effect of my actions on others.

I began to trust in this Higher Power, trust my instincts, and, ultimately, trust other people. Now my faith in that power reveals itself in the smallest decisions during my day.

I feel a calmness and a confidence that produce realistic expectations under adversity. Now that's sanity.

Step Eight: Freedom from blame

OA 12&12, pg 43

When we face the guilt that truthfully tells us, 'You made a mistake,' we're freed of the shame that falsely tell us, 'you *are* a mistake.'

OA 12&12, pg 75

This step (nine) has freed us from the shackles of our past mistakes in a miraculous way.

VOR, pg 56 (Blame)

"We realize the futility of continuing to blame others for our compulsive overeating and our unmanageable lives." — OA 12&12, p. 46

Ouch! This idea hits hard. For many years, I transferred blame for my uncontrolled eating and unmanageable life to the villain of the day. Depending on the situation that resulted in my overeating, the villain could be my parents, sister, husband, children, employer, coworkers, friends, enemies. In other words, anyone or anything that stood between me and my desires could cause me to eat. Today, I acknowledge that eating compulsively is my choice, not an outcome imposed on me by some external force.

I know today that my Higher Power will help me make reasonable choices about all aspects of my life if I only ask. Thanks to the presence of a Higher Power in my life, I am no longer at the mercy of multiple dictators.

VOR, pg 245 (Guilt)

“When we finish our amends most of us feel closer to our Higher Power than ever before.” — OA 12&12, pp. 80-81

Wreckage from my past keeps me focused on others. This provides a distraction from my side of the street and my part of the story. Focusing outward means I am still driven by guilt, resentment, or shame. None of these emotions permit me to be centered or to stay in the moment. They distract me as much as compulsive overeating does.

When I do a Ninth Step, I am facing my relationship problems head on. I can then say I have done what I can to right whatever wrongs I caused in the past and have changed my behavior towards people in the present. By doing this, I slowly bulldoze out the debris of shame, resentment, and guilt. I then have space to let lightness in. Spirituality is the essence of lightness.

Bonus Reading! AA Big Book, pg 552 (4th Ed)

He said, in effect: “if you have a resentment you want to be free of, if you will pray for the person or the thing that you resent, you will be free. If you will ask in prayer for everything you want for yourself to be given to them, you will be free. Even when you don’t really want it for them and your prayers are only words and you don’t mean it, go ahead and do it anyway. Do it every day for two weeks, and you will find you have come to mean it and to want it for them, and you will realize that where you used to feel bitterness and resentment and hatred, you now feel compassionate understanding and love.”

Step Nine: Freedom from fear of people

VOR, pg 81 (Freedom)

“My life consists of single moments. I occupy them one at a time, savoring the fullness of each, and find that there is no room for fear.” — For Today, p. 293

The joy of no fear. The joy of living and enjoying each moment as it comes. I am calm. I am worry-free and I don’t have to jam too much of life into now. My moments are full but not overcrowded. I do one thing at a time. There is time in God’s world to experience life. I am enough. I will do enough today to get the job done. There may not be any extra, but I don’t need that. I am full.

Life is to be savored. Life is to be lived in small breaths, not huge gulps of air. Life can be tasted in small portions. God teaches me this, and He is my compass, my guide. I turn to Him when I need a gentle reminder that He is in charge, and He has given us time today to do what we need to do to live happily, joyfully, freely whole.

VOR, pg 82 (Freedom)

“Getting out of my own way gives me the freedom to rise to the highest level of which I am capable.” — For Today, p. 280

I see the details and fret over them; my Higher Power sees the big picture. This is my Higher Power’s plan for me:

- To be free of fear;
- To march after every single dream;
- To recognize where my passion is;
- To let my passion loose;
- To be strong of mind, body, and spirit;
- To grasp for all the good things that could be mine;
- To love unreservedly;
- To keep the real priorities in front of me;
- To experience joy without limits.

When I am able to accept that this is my Higher Power’s will for me, I see the need to stay out of the picture. My plan wasn’t nearly as good.

For Today, pg 99 (Fear)

To win without risk is to triumph without glory. — Pierre Corneille

Never risking is never growing beyond fear or ridding myself of it. To explore a cave, confront a friend, dial a number, ask for a raise, change jobs or just say No—all of these can be acts of

heroism, leaps into freedom. To do what others expect, so they'll love me, is to play it safe. To throw imagination into the ring is an act of courage.

It is not easy to risk failure in plain view of those who wait smugly on the sidelines. To be thought foolish or insane could well start an avalanche of negative self-judgments. But as I grow, I become more willing to venture out of my safe cocoon.

For today: I have the strength to walk through my fears, to take a chance on a new way of life.

For Today, pg 293 (Fear)

Only in a hut built for the moment can one live without fear. – Kamo no Chomei

Fear comes from projection. My mind does not say, "This is a fine, pain-free, worry-free moment in which there is nothing to fear. Therefore, enjoy it." Instead, it leaps ahead, conjuring up all sorts of mishaps and calamities. As difficult as it is to shed old habits, I keep remembering the relief and freedom and joy that came the first time I tried abstaining one day at a time and not worrying about what would happen tomorrow.

For today: My life consists of single moments. I occupy them one at a time, savoring the fullness of each, and find there is no room for fear.

AA 12&12, pg 122

We found that freedom from fear was more important than freedom from want.

Step Ten: Freedom from complacency

VOR, pg 347 (Self-examination)

"The Twelfth Step invites us to continue the journey one day at a time for the rest of our lives. We need to keep moving forward in recovery, keep developing our spiritual consciousness, if we are to remain spiritually awake and fully alive." — OA 12&12, p. 100

There is one fear that I hope my Higher Power never relieves me of: the fear of complacency. Several times I've come into this program full of pain and despair. And then later I've left cocky, convinced I was cured. Two things have led to my downfalls: the refusal to surrender to Step One and complacency.

Today I'm convinced that I'm powerless over food, and if I allow complacency in my program, my life will become unmanageable. When I don't take time to read the literature, make phone calls, provide service, or talk to my Higher Power, I have stopped moving forward in recovery.

My disease has won a battle, and it doesn't take many battles for my disease to declare victory. Complacency is a powerful, frightening aspect of my disease. Each day I need to remember that this journey I'm on is full of hope and life. If I stay on its path, my Higher Power will lead me forward.

For Today, pg 105 (Self-knowledge)

There is no ache more Deadly than the striving to be oneself.

– Yevgeniy Vinokurov

I want to be myself, but what is myself? It is being my own person, not the person for another, all the time smiling, joining in, going along and not wanting to at all. That is not being my own person.

Some days I do not know much about myself, but I am aware of my efforts to find out, to grow. I know that growth has the power of a blade of grass pushing through a crack in cement. I also know that growth comes on its own terms and in its own time. I will be patient. There is nothing else to do.

For today: To be myself is to say what I mean, make decisions without fear, and give up pleasing people just to gain approval.

Step Eleven: Freedom from loneliness

VOR, pg 359 (Loneliness)

“Alas, it is not enough to want to be rid of the unpleasant side effects of my illness. I need to be willing to give up that which attracts me in the first place: the gratification, sedation, or whatever other payoff I get for practicing my compulsion.” — For Today, p. 132

The main payoff I get from compulsive eating is relief from loneliness. As a small child, I sought friendship in food. For as long as I can remember, food has been a companion to console me when I had no one else to turn to, to look after me when I thought no one else cared. My loneliness has decreased since I came to OA. I feel at home here. I am one among many.

I was ready to give up being overweight, but not to give up the friendship I found in food. In OA I learned to replace food with love of myself and of others. I've let go of compulsive eating, one day at a time, for more than nine years. God has replaced food with something incomparably better: a happy, joyous life.

For Today, pg 141 (Isolation)

The profoundest affinities are those most readily felt.

– George Santayana

How well I know that feeling of being “at home” in an OA meeting! No matter how far I may be from my own home group, the warm welcome, the nods of understanding tell me I am in the company of people with whom I have more in common than many friends and associates.

Being a compulsive overeater who is recovering in OA means that I never need to feel alone with my disease. I have only to pick up a telephone, go to a meeting and reach out to someone who shares the same illness, the same physical, emotional and spiritual symptoms. Only another OA member knows what it took to get us here.

For today: My joy in recovery is multiplied in direct proportion to the extent to which I share it with other compulsive overeaters.

OA12&12, pg 91

“...the term ‘Higher Power’ signals a freedom we’ve come to appreciate and even treasure—the freedom to encounter this healing force directly...”

Step Twelve: Freedom from lack of purpose (Service readings also)

VOR, pg 16 (Message of OA)

“Those of us who live this program don’t simply carry the message; we are the message. Each day that we live well, we are well, and we embody the joy of recovery.” — OA 12&12, p. 106

When I first walked into the rooms of Overeaters Anonymous, I was like the candle whose light is flickering and close to going out. I was sick in mind, body, and spirit; I was hopeless.

Many OA members describe OA as the last house on the block. I do not know if that is true since I do not know where the block begins or ends. I do know that what I found in OA can be found only in the heart and mind of another recovering compulsive overeater. The flickering light that I came in with became stronger, and the hopelessness turned into hopefulness.

I can be a living example or a dying example of how the program works. My courage to recover and my experiences in OA serve as an example to those who know me. I represent and carry the message of hope.

VOR, pg 227 (Service)

“Here we experience the great truth that when we let go of our need to control people and simply allow our Higher Power to serve others through us, we receive an abundance of joy and strength.” — OA 12&12, p. 106

Allowing God to serve others through me has become the central purpose of my life. Practicing these principles in all my affairs has not always been easy. I practiced first in OA meetings, then with OA friends, and then at work. The hardest place to practice these principles has been at home, with my family. When I remember that my purpose is to allow God to serve others through me, my relationships are easier, my work life is a pleasure, and my home life is a joy. I no longer have to control people or situations. I trust God and focus on service.

If we are painstaking about this phase of our development, we will be amazed before we are half way through. We are going to know a new freedom and a new happiness. We will not regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it. We will comprehend the word serenity and we will know peace. No matter how far down the scale we have gone, we will see how our experiences can benefit others. That feeling of uselessness and self-pity will disappear. We will lose interest in selfish things and gain interest in our fellows. Self-seeking will slip away. Our whole attitude and outlook upon life will change. Fear of people and of economic insecurity will leave us. We will intuitively know how to handle situations that used to baffle us. We will suddenly realize that God is doing for us what we could not do for ourselves...AA Big Book Pg 84 “The Promises”

Journal Ideas:

The theme of this Workshop is Freedom. The main Voices of Recovery reading, pg 205 July 23rd, is based on the fact that Freedom comes from working the Steps and, then, eventually living the Steps on a daily basis. Let's think about how many times someone sitting next to us at a meeting, or sharing, etc. says something to the effect that they are having a difficult time with a feeling, or are troubled with a life issue, etc. Do we ever ask that person – privately of course – what step they are working on? If we don't, journal on what stops you: Fear of embarrassing the other person or yourself? Possible guilt that you are not working on a particular step at that moment? Fear of implying guilt or shame? What possible actions could you take that would show unconditional acceptance, an offer to listen, etc.?



Freedom TO

Bill D (Alcoholic #3) walked out of that hospital a free man... AA Big Book pg 189

Bonus Reading!

May 6, VOR, pg 127 (Another Freedom Reading) (Freedom TO)

"Abstinence means freedom from the bondage of compulsive overeating." — Overeaters Anonymous, Second Edition, p. 3

This statement is a profound revelation to me. It helps me remember when my disease wants me to forget that overeating enslaved me for nearly four decades before I came to OA. Hearing these words early in recovery gave me a positive perspective when I felt deprived by abstinence or different from other people. Through ten years of abstinence, my appreciation of "freedom from bondage" has deepened physically, emotionally, and spiritually.

I cherish the precious independence OA has given me:

- Freedom to look in the mirror and like what I see.
- Freedom to purchase clothes I want, not just clothes that fit.
- Freedom to move my body in ways that morbid obesity prevented.
- Freedom to know all my feelings and to feel them fully.
- Freedom to become a life-managing adult.
- Freedom to connect with my loving Higher Power.

Journal Ideas -

1. How limited were your physical movements when you began recovery? What freedoms have you received regarding those limits or improvements, if any, now? If this is an area where you have not realized recovery yet, what incremental actions can you include in an action plan to help you see some recovery in this area?
2. Think about and journal on how you now identify and feel your feelings. What tools of the program have helped you with this progress and how have you used them? If you have not received the freedoms with regard to identifying, feeling and stating your feelings, can you identify the two or three most troublesome stumbling blocks? What are they? Possibly brainstorm with your sharing partner an approach to begin recovery work in this area.
3. Journal on how much you have grown up while in program. Specifically, what adult-like traits do you see in your interpersonal relationships that you did not have prior to program? What other adult living skills would you like to develop or enhance – such as, not losing your temper so quickly, applying program principles at home as easily as you do with program people, etc.? How might you accomplish this task?
4. Think about how you felt about your body image when you began your journey in recovery. Then think about how you honestly feel now about how you look, how you think your body has changed or how your views and perceptions have changed. What freedoms do you think have resulted in your healthier thinking about this? Can you like what you see? If you cannot like what you see – or what you think you see – what program tools can you incorporate into your journey that may help you recover in this area? Can you be neutral about it all?
5. Are you free to really view how isolation has hurt you, your family relations, and your emotional, physical and spiritual health? Or, are you locked into doing what you think is expected and hope it appears that you are not ‘isolating’? If your response to these questions raises uncomfortable feelings within you, what one or two tools or actions can you employ or take to begin to face this prison and work toward freedom?
6. How free are you today to (a) detach yourself from what you believe happened in the past that has hindered your achieving freedom as an adult, (b) accept what is true, and (c) stay in the moment? If you are not satisfied or comfortable with your response to these questions, what one or two program tools can you employ to begin to gain freedom from the past, from denying the truth of your disease, etc., or to stay in the Now?



<p>Please Join us for this 3-hour workshop on Slogan Pictionary July 28th 1PM – 4PM</p>	<p>Ever wonder where our slogans come from? Curious about how people use slogans to support their recovery? Are you a good artist? A great Guesser? We will play some <i>Pictionary!</i> Let’s have some fun during this summer of recovery! Is there a slogan that has really helped your recovery? Bring your favorite slogan to share.</p>
<p>What:</p>	<p>Slogan Pictionary</p>
<p>Who:</p>	<p>Everyone!!</p>
<p>When:</p>	<p>August 25th – 1:00 to 4:00 pm</p>
<p>Where:</p>	<p>7150 Campus Drive, Colorado Springs, in the lower level. Greeters will direct you to the room. (I-25 & Woodmen Area)</p>
<p>Why:</p>	<p>To Listen & Discuss different OA slogans</p>
<p>How:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enjoy an informal atmosphere while we still adhere to meeting format elements such as No Cross Talk, etc. • Will include: individual work, small group work, & large group sharing. <p>*****We can eat our lunch during this workshop, so bring your lunch. Fruit, Water and some veggies will be provided. We will have two breaks (about 15 minutes each).</p> <p>*****Location too far? Don’t be discouraged. We will help facilitate carpooling. Contact Rachel via email soccer28_28@hotmail.com or phone 719.244.6892 to offer if you need a ride (or to pick someone up).</p> <p>\$5 Suggested Donation – Remember- we want you to share in this recovery experience so “Never Stay Away Because You Cannot Pay!”</p>

