

Personal Relationships and the 12 Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous

Having been around OA since April 6, 1976 and given the gift of abstinence on August 8, 1979, I guess one might conclude I could be considered a “long time member” of the fellowship. I was fortunate enough to have been 12th Stepped by my dearly departed Mom and have never stopped going to meetings ever since.

I have given (and still give) service at the personal level, and have served in group, intergroup, region, and World Service positions during my tenure in OA. The Big Book and the AA 12 & 12 was our “official literature” at the time. In the early 1990’s the OA 12 (only the steps) was adopted by the OA World Service Business Conference and later came the adoption of the OA 12 Traditions in an expanded format which in turn gave rise to the OA 12 & 12.

There are many sayings I have heard over the years, but one of my favorites is “the 12 Steps prevent suicide, the 12 Traditions prevent homicide, and the 12 Concepts prevent genocide.” One misperception I have noticed in all the years of being involved in OA is that the 12 Traditions are really just for the group and the majority of recovery is due to an intense study of the 12 Steps. However, I believe in the depths of my soul that if your sponsor has not taken you through the 12 Traditions, you are only getting half a program. You see, I have come to realize and understand that the 12 Traditions are really just as important at the personal level and here is why: groups are made up of individual members and the 12 Traditions give time tested suggestions as to how to be a functional group member. Once understanding that concept, OA members can then live the 12 Steps AND 12 Traditions on a daily basis, not just in OA but in personal relationships.

Tawna and I were most fortunate a few years ago to lead a retreat on this very topic in California. It was most evident at the beginning of the retreat most folks were not quite sure how personal relationships and the 12 Traditions could be a viable topic. Lo and behold, once we shared our understanding of the Traditions and how they had a major impact on our lives, any previous concerns dissipated. And folks had a really good time once they “got it.”

Thank you for your interest in this topic. A fellow OA member in Colorado has been hankering to do this type of retreat/workshop for quite some time and now it is coming to fruition due to the efforts of many OA members in Colorado.

Attached is a worksheet I developed as how each Step and Tradition are “tied” to each other (Step 1/Tradition 1, etc.). This worksheet will be used during this event

and hopefully will be educational, thought provoking, and helpful. The worksheet ***IS NOT*** OA approved literature and ***MAY NOT*** be distributed to groups, intergroups, or regions for their use without written consent of the author (that would be me).

Yep, this is something new for many members and it is my experience that many folks are already doing this in their daily life...and they don't even know it!

In loving service,

Mike K.

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