

This document includes all the materials provided and presented at the Northern Colorado Intergroup of OA workshop, “Dealing with Relationships Using the 12 Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous”, on Oct. 3 and 4, 2020.

Note: NONE of the materials presented at the workshop are conference approved; The questions or wording have been modified for the purpose of this workshop based on the Experience, Strength, and Hope of the speakers. They are provided only for the participants in the workshop, and MAY NOT be distributed to groups, intergroups, or regions for their use without the written consent of the authors (Mike K and Tawna W).

Mike K's Biography

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.

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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Tawna W.'s Biography

I've been in Overeater's Anonymous for nearly 31 years. As of tonight, I've been abstinent for 27.9 years, 334.89 months, 10,194 days, or 244,629 hours... but who's counting, right? LOL. When I came into OA, we didn't have an OA 12x12. We used the AA 12x12 and the Big Book. We had the Brown Book and a Lifeline Sampler. So much has changed over the years! We eventually produced the OA 12 Steps. Then later the OA 12 Steps and 12 Traditions. We are now on the 2nd edition of the OA 12x12.

I'm a firm believer in service. I have a sponsor and I sponsor others. Over the years, I've given service at the meeting, Intergroup, Region and World Service level (conference delegate). I'm a firm believer in the 12 Steps and 12 Traditions. I believe we need to study and live the 12 Traditions, just as we need to study and live the 12 Steps ...OA World Service Business Conference didn't put the 12 Traditions in the back of the 12x12 to make it twice as thick so they could charge double the price. <grin>

Mike K. has already written a very nice introduction and I don't see the need to repeat him. I did want to let you know that the attached document are worksheets that Mike and I originally developed for a Traditions in Relationship workshop for the Silicon Valley Intergroup a number of years ago. I've recently updated it for the 2nd edition of the Overeater's Anonymous 12 Steps and 12 Traditions book. This is not OA Conference Approved literature and may not be distributed to groups, Intergroup, or Regions for their use without written consent of the authors (Mike K. and/or me). All errors in quoting the OA 12x12 are mine (I'm very imperfect and much of this was done with limited sleep and not nearly enough coffee).

The first time I walked through the Traditions and applied them to relationships outside of OA, a whole new world opened before my eyes. In studying the Traditions, I wrote on each question at the end of each Tradition and applied it to my marriage, family, work, with friends, and organizations which I was involved in. I began to practice these 12 Traditions in all of my

affairs, similar to how I practice the Steps. It has been immensely helpful. I sincerely hope that you find the information to be interesting and helpful as well.

In loving service,

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Additional note: Most of the questions in my handout are loosely paraphrased from the questions at the end of each Tradition in the OA 12x12. There are even more questions in the OA 12x12 book!

12 Steps & 12 Traditions Comparison Writing Questions

(not conference approved-see first page)

| The Twelve Steps of OA | The Twelve Traditions of OA |
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| Question Comparing the Step and the Traditions | |
| <p>1. We admitted we were powerless over food and that our lives had become unmanageable</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Spiritual Principle: Honesty</i></p> | <p>1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon OA unity.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Spiritual Principle: Unity</i></p> |
| <p>How has dishonesty caused unmanageability and disunity in your personal relationships at home/work/OA/social situations due to your compulsive overeating or unhealthy food behaviors? In what ways have you changed since realizing the unmanageable and dishonest aspect in your life? How has that realization caused more unity in your work, personal relationships and in OA?</p> | |
| <p>2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Spiritual Principle: Hope</i></p> | <p>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.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Spiritual Principle: Trust</i></p> |
| <p>In what ways have you become a more “sane” trusted servant in your personal relationships at home/work/OA/social life work due to the hope you have received and the trust you have earned by working Step 2/Tradition 2?</p> | |
| <p>3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Spiritual Principle: Faith</i></p> | <p>3. The only requirement for OA membership is a desire to stop eating compulsively.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Spiritual Principle: Identity</i></p> |
| <p>Do you have the desire to stop eating compulsively by having turned your will and life over to the care of a Higher Power, as you understand a Higher Power? Has the faith you have gained in OA helped you to identify with other family members/work associates/OA members/social situations regardless of their age, gender, national origin, race, sexual orientation, or socio-economic status?</p> | |

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| <p>4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.</p> <p><i>Spiritual Principle: Courage</i></p> | <p>4. Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or OA as a whole.</p> <p><i>Spiritual Principle: Autonomy</i></p> |
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How has completing the 4th Step inventory allowed you to become more courageous and more autonomous in your life and how has it affected your home/work/OA/social life?

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| <p>5. Admitted to God, to ourselves and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.</p> <p><i>Spiritual Principle: Integrity</i></p> | <p>5. Each group has but one primary purpose — to carry its message to the compulsive overeater who still suffers.</p> <p><i>Spiritual Principle: Purpose</i></p> |
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How has the integrity you have gained by completing Step 5 allowed you: 1) become more aware of carrying the message to the still suffering compulsive overeater? 2) live your specific personal purposes (goals) in your home/work/social life?

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| <p>6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.</p> <p><i>Spiritual Principle: Willingness</i></p> | <p>6. 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.</p> <p><i>Spiritual Principle: Solidarity</i></p> |
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How has the willingness to understand your character defects led you to solidarity with family members/work associates/social gatherings and carrying the OA message of recovery to others? How have your defects of character created problems with money, property and prestige causing the lack of solidarity in your home/work/social life?

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| <p>7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.</p> <p><i>Spiritual Principle: Humility</i></p> | <p>7. Every OA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.</p> <p><i>Spiritual Principle: Responsibility</i></p> |
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In what ways has your understanding of humility allowed you to be more generous and responsible to your family/work/OA and favorite charitable organizations with your time, treasure, and talent?

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| <p>8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.</p> <p><i>Spiritual Principle: Self-discipline</i></p> | <p>8. Overeaters Anonymous should remain forever non-professional, but our service centers may employ special workers.</p> <p><i>Spiritual Principle: Fellowship</i></p> |
| <p>By having the self-discipline to make amends, do you owe an amends to the OA fellowship for holding yourself out to be a professional "OA-er" due to length of time in program, professional skills used in performing OA service work, and personal knowledge/understanding of the 12 Steps, 12 Traditions, and 12 Concepts of Overeaters Anonymous? Have you allowed other OA members to take the lead and then held them out as OA "professionals" though they are not special workers for the OA fellowship? How have you harbored ill will to professionals and other special workers in your home/work/social life?</p> | |
| <p>9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.</p> <p><i>Spiritual Principle: Love</i></p> | <p>9. OA, as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.</p> <p><i>Spiritual Principle: Structure</i></p> |
| <p>While doing the actual amends as suggested by the 9th Step, are there organizations besides OA, your home/work/social organizations in which you have been suspicious of those chosen to be trusted servants? How do you make amends to those individuals? How have you shown lack of "love" for structure at home/work/social/civic groups, and OA as a whole?</p> | |
| <p>10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong, promptly admitted it.</p> <p><i>Spiritual Principle: Perseverance</i></p> | <p>10.Overeaters Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the OA name ought never be drawn into public controversy.</p> <p><i>Spiritual Principle: Neutrality</i></p> |
| <p>In the perseverance of taking your 10th Step inventory and admitting your defects of character how have you have allowed yourself to ignore neutrality and have drawn yourself and others into public controversy at home/work/OA/social life?</p> | |

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| <p>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.</p> <p><i>Spiritual Principle: Spiritual Awareness</i></p> | <p>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.</p> <p><i>Spiritual Principle: Anonymity</i></p> |
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How has prayer and meditation increased your spiritual awareness in your home/work/OA/social situations? How has spiritual awareness led you to a greater understanding of anonymity, particularly in regards to the use of social media at home/work/OA/social life?

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| <p>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.</p> <p><i>Spiritual Principle: Service</i></p> | <p>12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all these Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.</p> <p><i>Spiritual Principle: Spirituality</i></p> |
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How are you able to be of service at home/work/OA/social situations while practicing these principles in all your affairs? How are you able to put these spiritual principles before personalities at home/work/OA/social situations on a daily basis?

Personal Relationships and the 12 Traditions Overeaters Anonymous, **October 3-4 2020**

(not conference approved-see first page)

Tradition 1 - Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon OA unity.

Spiritual Principle: Unity

"We are not the Stepford Wives....Unity does not mean Uniformity"

As applied to relationships: Our common welfare should come first; a healthy relationship depends upon unity.

Questions: How well do I live by the 1st Tradition in all my affairs?

1. Are my friends, family, or group at work divided into cliques? Are we indifferent to others in the workplace, family, or social setting?
2. Do I seek to pull together as a couple (or as a group), or am I divisive? Do I discourage gossip? Do I refrain from taking other's inventory?
3. Do I focus on what we have in common, or do I bring up our differences just for the sake of argument?
4. Am I kind to those in my family, at work, in my relationships whose personalities I dislike? Or do I talk about the love of my Higher Power, family, or group while acting hostile to someone? Do I belittle others whose approaches to issues are different than mine?
5. Do I give my full attention to whomever is talking, or do I carry one-sided conversations (so that others can't get or have poor listening/communication skills? Am I listening to hear? Or listening to respond?
6. Do I encourage all in my family, work environment, social etc. to share their feelings honestly, even though they may be going through rough times? Or do I take the attitude that "those who are having trouble should just suck it up and deal with it?"
7. Do I discuss what we can do to better embrace diversity and unity at work, with family, with friends?

Thoughts on which to meditate: (Pages from the OA 12x12, 2nd Edition)

- Relationships – page 92
- Respect – page 92
- Responsibility – page 92
- Resolving differences – page 93
- Unity does not mean uniformity – page 95

The first Tradition of unity reminds us of an important truth: we are not alone. We are connected to our fellow human beings. Our emotional and spiritual health depends on the health of our relationships. The disease of compulsive overeating which once isolated us has now led us to OA. Here, we are learning to connect with other people in ways that will nurture them and nurture us as we recover together. (Page 97 of OA 12x12, 2nd edition)

Tradition 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.

Spiritual Principle: Trust Tradition 2 is our **guiding principle** – where we get our direction.

"There is a God and it's not me."

As applied to relationships: For our family, work, or relationship purpose, there is but one ultimate authority - a loving God as He may express Himself in our informed family, work, or group conscience. Each member is God's trusted servant and no one governs.

Questions: How well do I live by the 2nd Tradition in all my affairs?

1. Do I (in my group, work environment, family, etc.) encourage everyone to take an active part in work meetings, family discussions, etc. and decision making?
2. Before voting on or making decisions, do I take the time to find out as much as I can about the matter and discuss it fully? Do I listen with open minds to everyone's point of view?
3. Do I/we ever put pressure on the group to accept the ideas of certain individuals simply because they're "experts" or have been around for a long time?
4. Do I argue my point and feel like I have to save face in group discussions? Or can I go along in good spirit with the group conscience, even if I differ with it in the beginning?
5. Do I criticize others (in my family, work, relationships) or do I support their efforts?
6. Do I pitch in and help set up, clean up, or do tasks, regardless of if I'm new to a group or a longtimer?

Thoughts on which to meditate:

Many of us come to OA with years of experience trying to operate our families, friendships, or work relationships by power or manipulation. We have been amazed how well the second tradition works in OA, by what happens when we become willing simply to serve the group and let our Higher Power govern through group conscience. We find that most people are willing to cooperate cheerfully with decisions that they help to make. Instead of arguing, sulking, nagging, or commanding, we learn in OA to state our needs and desires in an adult way and to let others tell us theirs, expressing our willingness to go along with any decision which takes everyone's needs into account. Anger and bitterness are often replaced by harmony and peace when we treat each person as important and really listen to what everyone has to say. When this happens, a loving God's will is expressing itself through us and through our OA groups. (Page 104 and 105 of OA 12x12, 2nd Edition)

- Who is the head of OA (and of the family)? - Page 99
- Power structure vs. service structure – Page 100
- How decisions are made - Page 100 (Group conscience is not the same as "majority rules...")
- Responsibility – page 101, 103
- Nine Miracle Words: I'm sorry. I was wrong. Would you forgive me?

Tradition 3: The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop eating compulsively

Spiritual Principle: Identity Inclusion, membership requirements

*"When I walked into the doors of OA, I knew I'd found my "lost tribe" ...Okay so who let **THEM** in?"*

As applied to relationships: The only basic requirements for a good marriage (or relationship, or family, or good working environment) are a mutual desire to be in the relationship and a willingness to make the relationship work.

Questions: How well do I live by the 3rd Tradition in all my affairs?

1. Do my actions say that I have a sincere desire to be in this relationship?
2. Do I share my feelings honestly with my partner (family members, coworkers, and friends)? Do I encourage them to do the same and take part in the discussion? And do I listen to them with an open mind?
3. Do I make everyone welcome in my groups, family, relationships? Or are there some people I'd rather or try to exclude?

4. Do I focus my discussions and conversations on things we have in common? Do I let people's age, race, religion, education, manner of dress, weight, religion (or lack thereof), political beliefs, language, sexual identity or gender, or other such factors determine whether I will reach out to them?
5. Am I too greatly impressed by someone's celebrity? By professional status? By his or her experience? Or can I treat each person just as I'd treat any other person in my family, work, life, etc.

Thoughts on which to meditate:

Before OA, we may have placed special requirements on our friends, coworkers, or family members, "I will love you if...." often characterized our attitude toward them. Perhaps we demanded that others live up to our standards or we placed conditions on friendships: "If you disagree with me, you have betrayed me." In OA we've learned that people can differ with us on important matters and still be loving, supportive friends.

When we apply OA's Tradition 3, we find the treasure of friendship often where we least expect it, with people we once would have excluded from our lives. Such treasure is all around us, and all we have to do is open our hearts to receive it. OA is where we learn to open our hearts, because it is here that most of us first experienced unconditional acceptance. "We have a home if we want it" is how "Our invitation to you" in the OA book expresses Tradition three. "Welcome to OA, Welcome home." (Page 111-112 of OA 12x12, 2nd ed.)

- Membership requirements – page 107
- Purpose of Tradition 3 – page 108.
- How to handle a situation where another person is behaving inappropriately – page 109.
- When every person is respected and treated lovingly, the relationship survives and emerges stronger than ever from the experience.
- What is autonomy and how to handle special requirements? – Pages 110 and 111.

Tradition 4 – Each group should be autonomous, except in matters affecting other groups of OA as a whole

Spiritual Principle: Autonomy with responsibility

"You're not wrong ... it is just that I am more 'right'." I am an individual, yet my behavior has a ripple effect in the world.

As applied to relationships: Each individual should be autonomous except in matters affecting the other partner, the family or society as a whole.

Questions: How well do I live by the 4th Tradition in all my affairs?

1. Do I feel that there are only a few right ways of doing things in my family, group, or relationship? Do I respect the rights of other groups, family, etc. to have practices different from ours?
2. Do I always consider the welfare of all in my group, family, relationship, etc. in making decisions? In deciding how to spend the group's (family's, work department's, etc.) money? In planning family, department, group, etc. activities? In the way I conduct myself in meetings?
3. Do I consider how my actions may affect the public's opinion of my family, organization, church, etc. as a whole?
4. Do I take time to discuss the Traditions, family rules, etc? Do I take all 12 Traditions into consideration when making collective group decisions?
5. Do I practice the principle of autonomy by taking responsibility for my own actions and avoiding attempts to control the actions of others?

Thoughts on which to meditate:

Tradition 4 challenges us as individuals, as OA groups, and as a Fellowship to strike a healthy balance between our responsibility for ourselves and our responsibility to each other, while we grow together and work together as companions in recovery. (Page 118 of OA 12 x 12, 2nd ed.)

Every family, group, relationship, etc. can manage its affairs as it pleases, EXCEPT when it affects/threatens others or the family or relationship as a whole. The 4th Tradition suggests that we take an honest look at our relationships and question our independently planned actions. Will our actions in any way subvert or compromise the relationship(s) we have worked so hard on?

- Autonomy with responsibility – page 113, page 116.
- Things that affect the entire OA fellowship, and what are the consequences when Traditions are not honored - page 114 and 115
- How to meet our unique individual needs but still operate within the Traditions – page 117
- Living by the 4th Tradition means learning to act autonomously, even as we live in harmony with others. Setting boundaries - page 117

Tradition 5 – Each Group has but one primary purpose – to carry its message to the compulsive overeater who still suffers.

Spiritual Principle: Primary Purpose. Keep it simple, pass it on.

“KISS – Keep it Simple Sweetie.” -- “Freely ye have received, freely give”.... (And we aren’t talking Halloween candy, folks)

As applied to relationships: Each relationship has but one primary purpose – to love and serve others in our relationships as an expression of our Higher Power’s love.

Questions: How well do I live by the 5th Tradition in all my affairs?

1. Do I concentrate sufficiently on my relationship’s primary purpose? For example at work, do I focus on the primary purpose of the group (e.g. to complete a project)? Do I focus my discussions on the goals, methods of achieving our primary purpose?
2. Do I welcome new people to my work group, family, or circle of friends and give them individual attention? Do I make it a point to talk with them, give them my email address or phone number (as appropriate)? Do I ever volunteer to help them?
3. Am I a mentor to others in my community, church, work environment, etc.?
4. Do I remember that my elders, experienced long-timers, parents, etc. may also suffer or be lonely? How do I treat family, community members, coworkers, etc. who are facing difficulties in their lives? Do I make a point to call/contact them when they haven’t been seen or heard from in awhile?
5. Can I see my partner (coworker, family member, etc.) through Higher Power’s eyes or hear them through Higher Power’s ears?

Thoughts on which to meditate:

For OA groups and OA individuals alike, the fifth Tradition helps us to keep it simple. We find that when we focus on our primary objective of carrying the message of recovery, we are empowered to use our talents in ways that are truly useful to others. The result is better than any outcome we could have planned for ourselves for we find a deep satisfaction in service as we join forces to share recovery in OA. (Pages 123 from the OA 12x12, 2nd ed.)

- How is OA unique and why do we need to stick to our primary purpose? - page 120
- What are the principles behind the Steps and Traditions? – page 121
- A key principle of Tradition 5 – page 120
- How/why does recovery happen? And what should be the focus of every meeting? – page 121
- To whom should we carry the message? Why should we look beyond our own group? - page 122

Tradition 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.

Spiritual Principle: Solidarity. Stay focused!

“First Things First” (and no, we do not mean “Life is short, eat dessert first”)

As applied to relationships: We ought never single-handedly endorse, finance, or lend our name to any outside enterprise lest problems of money, property, or prestige divert us from our commitment to each other (or our family, or group, etc.)

Questions: How well do I live by the 6th Tradition in all my affairs?

1. Do I discourage others from plugging outside enterprises in work, community, family meetings? Or do I rationalize that people need to hear about the outside enterprise being discussed, so it won't hurt if I ignore the tradition this time? Example: Bringing the latest “selling scheme” to work or family members, distributing outside literature at work or OA.
2. When we vote on how to use family, group, work, etc. funds and other resources, am I careful to avoid financing outside enterprises. (quid pro quo)
3. Am I careful to never use my personal (family, work, OA, etc.) contacts for personal financial gain? Do I speak up when I see someone else misusing family, work, OA, etc. resources?
4. When I share in my family, church, friendship circles, at work, etc., am I careful to focus on the needs of the group/family/relationship? Do I overemphasize outside experts and underemphasize my experience, strength, and hope of my OA experience?

Thoughts on which to meditate:

When we find ourselves or our OA groups embroiled in problems of money, property, and prestige, we have a clue that we might have involved ourselves in matters which would be better left alone. We cause these kinds of problems when we take on outside responsibilities or promote outside causes, diverting our group's attention and resources from OA's primary purpose of carrying the OA message.

“First things first” is another slogan which sums up Tradition 6. In OA we learn to focus on our primary purpose and exclude from our groups everything which might interfere with our ability to carry the OA message. (Page 129 of OA 12x12, 2nd ed.)

- What does Tradition 6 caution us to do? - page 125
- How do we handle situations where people bring outside issues into the family, work, OA meetings? – page 126-127.
- Can we supplement our recovery with support outside of OA and still be following Tradition 6? – page 128
- How does Tradition 6 give us “marvelous freedom?” - page 128

Tradition 7: Every OA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.

Spiritual Principle: Responsibility. Self supporting to keep our fellowship pristine.

“TANSTAAFL – there aint no such thing as a free lunch....” -or- “OA is not a spectator sport.”

As applied to relationships: Every person in the relationship (family, work environment, etc.) ought to be fully self-supporting physically, emotionally, and spiritually.

Questions: How well do I live by the 7th Tradition in all my affairs?

1. It has been said that being fully self supporting is contributing our time, talent, and treasure. How do I do this in all areas of my life? Do I really contribute all I can to the OA program, spiritual programs, family, partner, work environment or do I do as little as possible to “just get by.”

2. Am I willing to contribute something to the group, even when I'm afraid of economic insecurity? When in difficult financial times, am I willing to donate my time or talent as a way of being self-supporting?
3. Do I pay attention to my family's finances and make sure they are managed in a responsible manner? Do I listen carefully to the needs of others in my relationships?
4. Do I pay for my own expenses or do I "sponge" off of others? Do I pay the going rate to my employees? Do I contribute my fare share when doing tasks at home? Do I pull my weight at work or do as little as possible to get by, hoping my coworkers will pick up the slack?
5. Do we rotate jobs regularly, or do we have the same person taking out the garbage (or doing the same chores or activities at work) year after year? Or do I take on more responsibility than I can effectively handle at one time? Do I encourage less active family members (or coworkers) to become more involved?
6. Do I take responsibility for my own spiritual, emotional, and physical needs? Do I allow my partner the dignity to grow, even if it means sometimes allowing them to fail? Or do I have an over-developed sense of responsibility?

Thoughts on which to meditate:

The 7th tradition of saying no to outside contributions and yes to our responsibilities as OA groups and individuals is a vital principle. It keeps us and our Fellowship free of the complications that would inevitably arise were we to depend on outside sources, and when we honor this Tradition, we gain the self-respect that comes from being fully self-supporting. (Page 137 of OA 12x12, 2nd Tradition)

- Why do we need to be self supporting? - page 131-132
- Why can't we accept donations from churches, outsiders, and too much from any one person? – page 132
- Why do we need to support Intergroup, Region, and World Service? - Page 132-134
- Are different ways of being self supporting? Or is this all about money? - page 134 - 135
- How does being self supporting help us set clear boundaries in OA and in our relationships? - page 135-136

When we are dependent upon someone else for our well being, we are vulnerable prey for sick relationships.

Being self-supporting is impossible if one of the partners becomes the Higher Power for the other. The same is true when one person in the relationship is overly dependent on the other for their emotional well being. Our self-worth comes from within and from God, not from having to have someone in our life in order to feel to feel okay about ourselves.

When each partner of the relationship understands that they are responsible for their own survival and progress, a greater spiritual strength flows into each and the relationship is made doubly strong. Each partner is able to do their own part without asking or expecting the other to do it for them. We each are able to be responsible for our own growth.

Tradition 8 – OA should remain forever non-professional, but our service centers may employ special workers.

Spiritual Principle: Fellowship. Non-professional

*"Because I'm a codependent, I think I can fix anyone...because I'm an engineer, I **KNOW** I can...."*

As applied to relationships: "Within our relationship(s) we are not professionals, but we may employ special workers, i.e. medical doctors, spiritual advisors, auto repair shops, electrical contractors, counselors, etc."

Our relationship should remain a forever free, giving relationship - each to the other. In a healthy relationship we do not keep score.

Questions: How well do I live by the 8th Tradition in all of my affairs?

1. Do I sometimes try to "fix" other people by giving them my expert advice, or am I content to share my experience, strength, and hope?
2. Do I try to speak as an expert in my relationships? If so, why do I need to do that? Is my security at risk? Is my fear triggered? Does my ego feel threatened?

3. When I'm having trouble, do I try to hide that from those around me because I want to be looked up to as if I am a "professional" or perfect?
4. Do I believe that the other partner/coworker should be in charge of certain chores/tasks based on their gender? Or experience? Or education? Or job?
5. Do I take hostages in my relationships? Do I make other people responsible for my own happiness, abstinence, or recovery?

Thoughts on which to meditate:

When we keep OA's eighth Tradition, we discover a beautiful spirit of caring service which becomes a powerful factor in our healing. We are all non-professionals in our support of each other's recovery from compulsive eating, giving and receiving support and fellowship with no expectations of return. Living by the spirit of this Tradition, we can each turn to the one next to us and say truthfully from the heart, "I put my hand in yours because I care." (Page 143 of OA 12x12, 2nd ed)

- Steering clear of the profit motive – page 139.
- Qualifications to take service positions – page 140.
- Why hire "special workers," either outside or inside the fellowship? – page 140.
- OA meetings are not therapy groups – page 141.
- Giving support vs. fixing others – page 142.

Tradition 9: OA as such ought never be organized, but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.

Spiritual Principle: Structure. Responsible organization, not formally organized.

"If you want to make God laugh, tell Him your plans." -or- "Has anyone ever actually accused OA of being organized??!"

As applied to relationships: A family or relationship should be pliable in its organization but our family group conscience may appoint certain persons to serve various functions and to be directly responsible to those they serve. Or...another way to put it....Our relationship ought never be organized or under the control of only one partner.

Questions: How well do I live by the 9th Tradition in all of my affairs?

1. Do I support my spouses, co-workers, family members? Or am I critical of those who are giving service and suspicious of their motives.
2. Am I mature enough to take personal responsibility for the well-being of my relationships, family, work situation, etc. and for my own recovery? Or do I expect "them" to take care of things for me?
3. Am I afraid to speak up when I see unhealthy behavior in my work, family, relationships, etc.? Am I afraid to speak up when I see Traditions ignored in my OA group?
4. Can I do the footwork in my family, relationships, at work, etc. and trust the results to my Higher Power, even when things don't go the way I think they should? Do I make it a point to learn about the 12 Traditions and how I can apply them in my relationships (family and work)?
5. Do I practice rotation of leadership in my relationships? Or do I try to be "The Boss." Do I understand how sharing and rotating leadership relates to personal humility and the OA foundation of anonymity?

Thoughts on which to meditate:

In OA, we have experienced how things work out for the best when organization is kept at a minimum. The order we once sought in rules and power structures we have found in freedom instead. Trusting our Higher Power rather than any organizational structure, we can now take responsibility for our shared lives and for the OA Fellowship in which we are recovering together. (Pages 150 of OA 12x12, 2nd ed.)

- If the emphasis is on fellowship, are IG, Region, and World Service really necessary? – page 146.
- Our recovery depends on adherence to our spiritual principles, the Traditions – page 178-179.
- How to handle people disregard the Traditions. – page 147-149.

Tradition 9 helps to ensure that God will always remain our ultimate authority in OA.

Tradition 10 – OA has no opinion on outside issues, hence the OA name ought never be drawn into public controversy.

Spiritual Principle: Neutrality. (non-controversial)

“Live and let live....your children are NOT on your plan of eating. (Neither is your spouse or coworkers).”

As applied to relationships: A relationship whether at home or work should avoid heated controversy. We each are entitled to our own opinion on outside issues. Hence our name ought never be drawn into public controversy.

Questions: How well do I live by the 10th Tradition?

1. Can I honestly share my own personal experience without acting like a know-it-all, name dropping, or implying my experience is more valid than others?
2. Do I find relationships more interesting when there’s a spark of controversy in the group? Do I ever bring in outside issues just to get people stirred up? Or am I afraid to speak up when others use controversy to “stir things up” in the family, at work, in relationships?
3. Can I continue to share OA fellowship and even close friendship with people who don’t share my opinions? Do I concentrate on common bonds, rather than our differences?
4. Do I drag my relationships into public controversy?
5. Am I careful about my opinions and rely on the slogan “live and let live?”

Thoughts on which to meditate:

Tradition 10 frees us to concentrate on recovery from compulsive eating without the conflicts which seem to rage in the world around us. Many of us have been drawn to the excitement of conflict. Of course no group or person can live completely free of conflict, but in OA we learn we can live, and even thrive, with a minimum of strife.

OA has excitement enough to offer, as we see hopeless compulsive overeaters recover through the miracle of the 12 steps. This could not happen if we allowed outside issues to turn our fellowship into a platform for debate. For this reason, the 10th Tradition of having no opinion on outside issues is one of our most carefully guarded practices in OA. *(Page 155 of OA 12x12, 2nd ed.)*

- What is an outside issue? – page 153
- Why we avoid outside issues, i.e. issues outside of OA in our meetings. – page 152-153
- Do personal OA members need to sacrifice personal freedom and give up outside concerns and activities? - page 185
- Breaks in Tradition 10 have serious, far reaching consequences – page 152
- Are diets or weight loss plans an outside issue? – page 153 What about outside (non OA Conference approved) literature? - Page 153-154.

Tradition 11: Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, TV, and other public media of communication

Spiritual Principle: Anonymity. Attraction, rather than promotion

“Do we walk the talk...or only talk the talk?” -or- “You catch more flies with honey than vinegar.”

As applied to relationships: Each partner best conveys his or her beliefs and philosophy by attraction rather than promotion. Anonymity is a valuable asset to the relationship.

Questions: How well do I live by the 11th Tradition in all of my affairs?

1. How does my family (organization, department at work) make its family meetings (work meetings, etc) known to others who may want to attend?
2. Can I do good things for my relationships (partner, co-worker, friend, family) anonymously? Do I do good things for my relationships anonymously?
3. Do I proselytize when talking about issues? Am I guilty of promotion rather than attraction?
4. Are my relationships treated with care in public? Is my partner (family, coworker, etc) ever embarrassed or humiliated by my actions or appearances in public?
5. Do I think my relationships are attractive to others (do I lead by example)? Or do I give relationships a “bad name”?

Thoughts on which to meditate:

“Attraction rather than promotion” is good for us and essential for the OA Fellowship. Our individual recovery, as well as group unity and effectiveness, depends upon this unusual type of public relations. The 11th Tradition is based on faith in our program and in that Power greater than ourselves that guides compulsive overeaters to our doors. All we have to do is let the facts about OA and its Principles be known. We can depend upon our Higher Power and this program to attract those who can benefit by what OA has to offer. When we maintain our Tradition of anonymity, we ensure that OA remains a spiritual Fellowship, supporting all of us in our recovery. (Pages 197-198 of OA 12x12)

- How does OA publicize its principles but NOT its individual members? - page 157-160
- Guidelines for carrying OA’s message outside the fellowship – pages 158-159.
- Humility – page 160
- Why anonymity in the public is important: Protecting the fellowship – page 159-160

Tradition 12 – Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all these Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities

Principle: Spirituality

“It’s not all about me....” – or- “Anonymity does not mean putting my lofty principles before my partner’s contaminated personality.”

As applied to relationships: Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of our way of life as marriage partners (or friends or colleagues at work), ever reminding us to place principles before personalities. The spiritual substance of anonymity is sacrifice.

Questions: How well do I live by the 12th Tradition?

1. Do I practice anonymity (humility) in my relationships with others? Do I value each individual’s importance/uniqueness within our relationship, family, work environment?
2. Am I careful to not gossip? Do I repeat personal information that I’ve heard to others?
3. Do I value all in my relationships as equals or do I treat some as stars or gurus?
4. Do I support and trust the collective decisions of my family, organization, work, or do I let one or several strong personalities run everything? Do I speak up for OA principles, even if someone might be displeased?
5. Do I confuse OA Principles with my own personal opinions?

Thoughts on which to meditate:

As we recover in OA, we come to feel that anonymity is one of our most precious possessions. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of our transformed lives, as well as of OA's Traditions. We are compulsive eaters, living in recovery, no longer in bondage to food. We know that support for our recovery will always be here for us, as long as we remember "to place principles before personalities," respecting these vital 12 Traditions which bind us together in the Fellowship of Overeater's Anonymous. (Page 168 of OA 12x12, 2nd ed.)

Living by the 12 Traditions of OA requires that we adopt attitudes that seem strange at first to many of us. For instance, we place the welfare of the OA group above our own desires (Tradition 1). We give up aspirations to govern our fellow members (Tradition 2). We welcome to our meetings all with a desire to stop eating compulsively, no matter what we think or feel about them (Tradition 3). We give up dependence on authorities and power structures, along with our ambitions to climb to the top of some imagined OA ladder (Traditions 4 and 9). We cease all attempts to use OA to promote our favorite outside issues and enterprises (Traditions 5, 6, and 10). We pay our own way and quit expecting others to keep OA going without our help. (Tradition 7). We give up all aspirations to gain status as special OA members (Tradition 8). We give up all ambitions that we might someday be acclaimed for our OA recovery or service (Tradition 11.) Behind all of these self-sacrificing attitudes is a single spiritual foundation, so important to our Fellowship, it is part of our name: anonymity (Tradition 12.) (Page 163-164 of OA 12x12, 2nd ed.)

- Anonymity is a spiritual principle, our foundation. Page 164.
- Anonymity is not secrecy. - Page 165
- At meetings we share in a general way and share the intimate details with our sponsor. - Page 165
- Do long-timers have special status? - Page 166.
- Principles before personalities. - Page 166.
- Why we don't list speaker's names on retreats, Days in OA, workshops. - Page 167.
- How anonymity helps us stay abstinent. - Page 167.

"You too can have recovery like this if you stick around long enough and work the 12 steps **and** 12 Traditions....*now doesn't that just scare the hell out of you?*" (If it doesn't, maybe it should!!!).