

The Twelve Traditions—Illustrated

Tradition One: Unity



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

Tradition Two: Trust



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.

Tradition Three: Identity



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

Tradition Four: Autonomy



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

Tradition Five: Purpose



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

Tradition Six: Solidarity



An OA group ought never endorse, finance or lend the OA name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property or prestige divert us from our primary purpose.



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

Overeaters Anonymous should remain forever non-professional, but our service centers may employ special workers.

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

Overeaters Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the OA name ought never be drawn into public controversy.

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.

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



Tradition Seven: Responsibility



Tradition Eight: Fellowship



Tradition Nine: Structure



Tradition Ten: Neutrality



Tradition Eleven: Anonymity



Tradition Twelve: Spirituality

Tradition One: Unity

No:



Isolated compulsive
overeater and
isolated group

Yes:



OA group with other
groups

Together we can do what we cannot do alone!

Tradition Two: Trust

No:



**“Follow me. Do it my way.
I have all the answers.”**

Yes:



**“I’m willing to serve.
Tell me how
I can help.”**

Our leaders are trusted servants. They don’t give orders.

Tradition Three: Identity

No:



“You aren’t working the program the right way—you don’t belong.”

Yes:



“You want to stop eating compulsively? Welcome to OA!”

The only membership requirement is the desire to stop eating compulsively.

Tradition Four: Autonomy

No:



“If we want to do yoga and sell recipes at our meetings, we will. After all, aren't we autonomous?”

Yes:

“Our group reads from *Lifeline*.”



“Our group sits in a circle.”

Groups call their own shots—as long as their actions don't affect other parts of the Fellowship.

Tradition Five: Purpose

No:



“We have talks
about nutrition at
our meeting.”

Yes:



“We share how the
Twelve Steps have
helped us in our
recovery.”

**Each group's primary purpose is to carry the
OA message of recovery.**

Tradition Six: Solidarity

No:



“At our meeting, we recommend XYZ Treatment Center, Dr. Jones’ diet and John Doe’s book.”

Yes:



“We only use OA and AA Conference-approved literature, so that we don’t vary from OA’s message.”

We don’t endorse, finance or lend the OA name to other enterprises.

Tradition Seven: Responsibility

No:



“Our meeting pays the room
rent and we buy our own coffee.
Aren't we self-supporting?”

Yes:



“Our group supports the ser-
vice work of intergroup or
national/language service
board, region and
world service.”

Every OA group ought to support itself.

Tradition Eight: Fellowship

No:



“I’m an authority on the Twelve Steps. It will cost you if you want me to share my knowledge with you.”

Yes:



“I’ll be glad to help.
It’s Twelfth-Step work.”

Freely give what we have been so generously given.

Tradition Nine: Structure

No:



“We’re in charge here and this is how it will be done.”

Yes:



“Our committee is here to carry out the will of those we serve.”

**No membership rules. No governing authority.
The power flows from the groups to the service bodies.**

Tradition Ten: Neutrality

No:



“Let’s lobby Congress!
We want sugar banned!”

Yes:



“We have only one message.
Let’s not enter
into public debate.”

Survival and spread of OA are our primary aims.

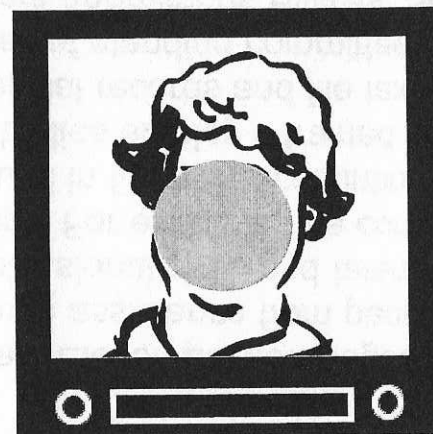
Tradition Eleven: Anonymity

No:



“My name is gorgeous Gloria Smith. I lost 500 pounds in OA and so can you, with my help.”

Yes:



“I’m Mary and I am a member of OA. The program works if you work it.”

No sensational advertising; the program is the attraction.

Tradition Twelve: Spirituality

No:



“I’m Jane Jones, famous,
wealthy and educated.
I’m a much better
person than you are,
so follow me.”

Yes:



“I’m Jane—and I’m
a compulsive
overeater.”

Place principles before personalities.

What traditions might you refer to in order to resolve these issues?

1. A group votes to start each meeting with a reading from the bible.

2. Debbie has served 2 terms as intergroup chair. The bylaws state the limit is 2 two year terms. No one is stepping up to run.

3. A member requests a group conscience to discuss asking another member to stop attending meetings because she is always late and causes a commotion.

4. A local restaurant offers to serve "OA- approved" meals to members at a 20% discount if the intergroup newsletter will run a free ad for the restaurant.

5. A prominent sports figure who has been in program for 7 years offers to represent OA on a local talk show.

6. At a meeting a member shares "I know there's no advice giving but I just have to tell Bernice how to solve her problem."

7. A member shares often on her fabulous name brand food plan, her specific gym, her very spiritual non OA approved literature and her life saving doctor.