

## Tuesday 2-Hour OA HOW Phone Meeting Leader Script & Readings

VSB website is [oahowphonemeetings.com](http://oahowphonemeetings.com)

To sign up for service, anniversaries, or step-ups, please use our SignUp Genius Web Page: [SignUp Genius](#)

Leader, please check the above SignUp Genius web page for the meeting volunteers and possible anniversary and step-up celebrants. Also, there is a form (Leader's Optional Worksheet) located on the second to last page of this document which you may want to print out and use to help you keep track of the meeting.

**1. (Leader Begins Here):** Hello! Welcome to the Tuesday 2-Hour OA HOW Phone Meeting of Overeaters Anonymous. This meeting adheres to the HOW concepts of recovery. We have found that consistent use of this format keeps our meeting focused on OA recovery, reinforces our program and encourages unity.

**2.** My name is \_\_\_\_\_. I am a compulsive overeater and your leader for this meeting. [Group responds: "Hi, welcome."] We encourage you to have paper and pen. Throughout the meeting you may hear information you will need. Information will not be repeated until after the meeting ends. Please stay until the end of the meeting for open discussion.

**3.** To open the meeting, let us have a moment of quiet meditation, followed by the Serenity Prayer: "God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and wisdom to know the difference. Thy will, not mine, be done."

**4.** As we extend the heart and hand of fellowship to those who still suffer, let us be mindful of OA's Unity with Diversity Policy, which respects our differences, yet unites us in the solution to our common problem. Whatever problem you may have with food, you are welcome at this meeting. Are there any compulsive eaters here besides myself?

**5.** Moderator, would you please now mute the phone line. Thank you.

Just a reminder about phone meeting etiquette: Press \*6 on your phone key pad to mute your phone. Unless you are the one scheduled to speak, please make sure your phone is muted. Please do not assume you came into the meeting with your phone automatically muted. You can check this at any time by pressing \*6 on your phone key pad. The message will tell you either “muted” or “unmuted”. If you are going to read or share on a tool, please unmute as you hear the person before you begin to wrap up for a smooth flow to the meeting. Thank you for helping the meeting to have the telephone line clear and quiet.

**6.** We Care List. A We Care List is made up of members of HOW Phone Meetings who want to be contacted by other members. Our group has joined with other 2-Hour OA HOW format phone meetings in a shared We Care List. To access the list, go to the OA HOW website. On the home page menu bar, click on the We Care List. Then follow the instructions.

**7.** Overeaters Anonymous is a Fellowship of individuals who, through shared experience and mutual support, are recovering from compulsive overeating. We welcome everyone who wants to stop eating compulsively. There are no dues or fees for members; we are self-supporting through our own contributions, neither soliciting nor accepting outside donations. OA is not affiliated with any public or private organization, political movement, ideology or religious doctrine; we take no position on outside issues. Our primary purpose is to abstain from compulsive overeating and to carry this message of recovery to those who still suffer.

**8.** Please help this meeting to carry the message of recovery. To sign up for service, please use the SignUp Genius link at the top of this meeting format page.

You do not need to be a sponsor to do service for the first eight readings.

9. Would \_\_\_\_\_ (someone) please read What is HOW?

### **WHAT IS HOW?**

HOW is a movement within Overeaters Anonymous whose basic principle is that abstinence is the only means to freedom from compulsive overeating and the beginning of a spiritual life.

Where and why did HOW Begin? HOW began in Phoenix in 1981, as a means of reviving a group called OA VICTORIOUS. Its meeting format is taken from Rozanne's book, *I Put My Hand in Yours*, and centers around the concept of service. Many of the questions used in HOW sponsoring stem from OA Plus and Westminster groups. The outline of service came from the OA Suffolk County, New York sponsor's guide.

10. Would \_\_\_\_\_ (someone) please read The Only Requirement.

### **THE ONLY REQUIREMENT**

Overeaters Anonymous respects the autonomy of each OA group. We do suggest, however, that any group that has requirements in addition to the suggested twelve steps and twelve traditions inform its members that these requirements are what that particular group has found effective in working the program and do not represent OA as a whole.

The members of this group have found the HOW concept to be effective in working the OA program. The opinions expressed here today by those who share are their own and not necessarily those of OA. The Board of Trustees states: "We understand the third tradition to mean that individual ways of working one's program should not exclude any compulsive overeater from attendance and participation at OA meetings anywhere, anytime."

“The only requirement for membership is the desire to stop eating compulsively. Anyone who says he/she is a member; is a member. We of Overeaters Anonymous welcome all members with open arms.”

11. Would \_\_\_\_\_ (someone) please read The HOW Concept.

### **THE HOW CONCEPT**

The Overeaters Anonymous HOW meetings have been formed to offer the compulsive overeater, who accepts the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions as a program of recovery, a disciplined and structured approach. HOW groups are formed in the belief that our disease is absolute, and that only absolute acceptance of the OA program will offer any sustained abstinence to those of us whose compulsion has reached a critical level. Therefore, we accept the nine tools of program and the Twelve Steps and the Twelve Traditions as necessary for our recovery. **In OA HOW, our daily Action Plan is outlined in the structured use of each of the other tools.**

Our meetings are dedicated to the concept of remaining honest, open-minded and willing to listen. This is the HOW of the program. We pray that the collective group conscience and love that these ideals offer us will promote a strong sense of security that will enable us to experience a new unity and wholeness with all those around us; and that the HOW ideals will help us to progress in our program of recovery on a daily basis.

To be certain, much of our strength is found in the structure of meetings and in the daily adherence to the program as it is written in our literature.

The Tuesday phone meeting also firmly understands that, after our recovery has begun through abstinence and the taking of the first three steps, our further surrender to the additional steps of recovery offers us a promise of happiness, contentment and achievement in all areas of our lives.

We ensure our continued and sustained abstinence from compulsive overeating by being forever aware that God is doing for us what we have never been able to

do for ourselves. May God, as each of us understands Him, open our minds and our hearts to the love which is manifested on this telephone meeting. Amen.

12. Would \_\_\_\_\_ (someone) please read Reflections for the Newcomer.

### **REFLECTIONS FOR THE NEWCOMER**

Welcome to OA HOW. We are all so glad that you have decided to become a part of our fellowship. You know that the HOW concept is a disciplined program. We believe that the discipline of weighing and measuring, of telephoning your sponsor at a particular time, of attending meetings and making phone calls, all lead to a life based on the Universal Discipline, which is accord rather than discord even with many things going on around us. Therefore, if there is a breakdown in any of these areas, the concept is threatened (as is the individual's abstinence).

We have found that the discipline must remain as constant for the beginner as for the sponsor. If the newcomer shies away from this life's responsibility, the sponsor may give the newcomer's time slot to someone more committed to recovery. This is not a personal affront, but a matter of necessity. So many who think they should recover, in fact, are not ready. If the newcomer should show lack of commitment, the sponsor may then offer the newcomer assistance in finding a new sponsor. The rationale here is, if the newcomer insists on picking up the food before the phone, then there is a breakdown in the level of communication between the sponsor and the newcomer. "Frothy emotional appeal seldom suffices." That's from the book *Alcoholics Anonymous, Doctor's Opinion*.

If a sponsor slips, get a new one. The pitfalls of self-deception cannot be overstressed if you are to recover; therefore, a sponsor, in all self-honesty, must release all sponsees to continue his own recovery. A sponsor cannot give what he does not experience. Finally, you must believe that we need each other. All problems that arise can be worked on via the phone, or person-to-person contact. Only positive, upbeat recovery belongs at our meetings.

“A body badly burned by food does not often recover overnight, nor do twisted thinking and depression vanish in a twinkling. We are convinced that a spiritual mode of living is a most powerful restorative.” That’s from the book *Alcoholics Anonymous, The Family Afterward*.

Good luck. Everyone in the fellowship is praying that you find the release from the obsession so many of us have.

God bless. And no matter what, KEEP COMING BACK!! WE’LL ALWAYS BE HERE FOR YOU!

**13.** Would \_\_\_\_\_ (someone) please read an excerpt from Chapter Two page 9 of the book, *The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous*.

## **CHAPTER 2**

When we look with complete honesty at our lives, we see that where eating is concerned we have acted in an extremely irrational and self-destructive manner. Under the compulsion to overeat, many of us have done things no sane person would think of doing. We have driven miles in the dead of night to satisfy a craving for food. We have eaten food that was frozen, burnt, stale, or even dangerously spoiled. We have eaten food off of other people's plates, off the floor, off the ground. We have dug food out of the garbage and eaten it.

We have frequently lied about what we have eaten—lied to others because we didn't want to face the truth about ourselves. We have stolen food from our friends, family, and employers, as well as from the grocery store. We have also stolen money to buy food. We have eaten beyond the point of being full, beyond the point of being sick of eating. We have continued to overeat, knowing all the while we were disfiguring and maiming our bodies. We have isolated ourselves to eat, damaging our relationships and denying ourselves a full social life. For the sake of our compulsive eating, we have turned ourselves into objects of ridicule and we have destroyed our health.

Then, horrified by what we were doing to ourselves with food, we became obsessed with diets. We spent hundreds of dollars on weight-loss schemes, we bought all sorts of appetite-control drugs, we joined diet clubs and spas, we had ourselves hypnotized and analyzed, we had major surgery on our digestive systems, we had our ears stapled or our jaws wired shut. All of this we did willingly, hoping we could someday "have our cake and eat it too."

Some of us went from doctor to doctor looking for a cure. The doctors gave us diets, but we had no better success with those than with the other diets we'd been on. The doctors gave us shots and pills. Those worked for a while, but we inevitably lost control and overate again, putting back on the weight we had worked so hard to lose.

Many of us tried fasting, with and without a doctor's supervision. Usually we lost weight, but as soon as we started eating again, the compulsive eating behavior returned, along with the weight. Some of us learned to purge ourselves with vomiting, laxatives, or excessive exercise. We'd stuff food in our mouths until we were in physical pain, then we'd "get rid of it." We damaged our digestive systems and our teeth while we starved our bodies of nutrients needed to live.

Those of us who were overweight got plenty of advice from others about how to get to our "ideal" size, but nothing permanently solved our problem. We found that no matter what we did to ease our turmoil, our compulsive eating eventually returned. Over the long haul, our weight went up and our self-esteem went down. After a while we became battle-weary and discouraged. Still we could never accept our powerlessness. . . .

Our true insanity could be seen in the fact that we kept right on trying to find comfort in excess food, long after it began to cause us misery.

Once we honestly looked at our lives, it became easy for us to admit we had acted insanely where food and weight were concerned.

**14.** Would \_\_\_\_\_ (someone) please read from Chapter Five of the book *Alcoholics Anonymous*, “How It Works.” Adapted to reflect the disease of compulsive overeating.

### **CHAPTER 5: HOW IT WORKS**

Rarely have we seen a person fail who has thoroughly followed our path. Those who do not recover are people who cannot or will not completely give themselves to this simple program, usually men and women who are constitutionally incapable of being honest with themselves. There are such unfortunates. They are not at fault; they seem to have been born that way. They are naturally incapable of grasping and developing a manner of living which demands rigorous honesty. Their chances are less than average. There are those, too, who suffer from grave emotional and mental disorders, but many of them do recover if they have the capacity to be honest.

Our stories disclose in a general way what we used to be like, what happened, and what we are like now. If you have decided you want what we have and are willing to go to any length to get it—then you are ready to take certain steps.

At some of these we balked. We thought we could find an easier, softer way. But we could not. With all the earnestness at our command, we beg of you to be fearless and thorough from the very start. Some of us have tried to hold on to our old ideas and the result was nil until we let go absolutely.

Remember that we deal with food—cunning, baffling, powerful. Without help it is too much for us. But there is One who has all power—that One is God. May you find Him now!

Half measures availed us nothing. We stood at the turning point. We asked His protection and care with complete abandon.

Here are the steps we took, which are suggested as a program of recovery:

**15.** Would \_\_\_\_\_ (someone) please read the Twelve Steps.

## **THE TWELVE STEPS**

1. We admitted we were powerless over food—that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God *as we understood him*.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong, promptly admitted it.
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.
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.

Many of us exclaimed, “What an order! I can't go through with it.” Do not be discouraged. No one among us has been able to maintain anything like perfect adherence to these principles. We are not saints. The point is, that we are willing

to grow along spiritual lines. The principles we have set down are guides to progress. We claim spiritual progress rather than spiritual perfection.

16. Would \_\_\_\_\_ (someone) please read the Twelve Traditions.

### **THE TWELVE TRADITIONS**

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon OA unity.
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.
3. The only requirement for OA membership is a desire to stop eating compulsively.
4. Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or OA as a whole.
5. Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry its message to the compulsive overeater who still suffers.
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.
7. Every OA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
8. Overeaters Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers.
9. OA, as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.

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

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.

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

**17. The Tools of Recovery:** The Twelve Steps of Overeaters Anonymous is a program of recovery. Webster's dictionary defines "tool" as "any person or thing used to get something done." We have many tools of the program which will help us recover on a daily basis. Tools are essential to get the job done and they work for us. In order for a tool to work, it must be used. So, too, with our tools of recovery.

I will call on seven sponsors who follow this meeting's HOW format to explain eight of the tools.

This meeting allows the mention of specific food items by vote of our group conscience.

There is a limit of three minutes of sharing after reading each tool and a limit of 2 minutes to describe your abstinence kit.

Do we have someone wishing to do service and be our timekeeper?

**18.** (If no one signed up in advance to be our speaker): We still need a speaker for this meeting. Do we have a 2-Hour OA HOW Sponsor wishing to do service and be our speaker later in the meeting?

**19.** Would \_\_\_\_\_ (a 2-Hour OA HOW Sponsor) please read and share on Plan of Eating?

## **PLAN OF EATING**

A food plan is a commitment to recovery. The HOW disciplines were designed for food addicted people. We believe in a disciplined and structured approach. HOW abstainers do not modify their food plan to suit themselves and commit themselves to black and white abstinence. Deviations invite the return of many other problems.

A food plan is not a personal thing in HOW. This means that we depend upon each other for the strength and growth that we need to remain abstinent. We join together in an effort to free the compulsive overeater from the bondage of food through the use of a food plan, positive thinking, and the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous. We eat weighed and measured meals with nothing in between except sugar free beverages and sugar free gum. Food is written down, called in to our sponsor and committed so that we can get on with our recovery and out of the food. We also believe that negative thinking is a large part of our disease, so we abstain from negative thinking.

Those of us who work the HOW program concepts use the following guidelines for food plans:

1. We do not write our own food plan. We use a food plan given to us by a doctor, nutritionist or dietician. We discuss it with our sponsor. We do not pick one that allows any of our binge foods. If some food on our plan becomes a problem, we avoid it.
2. We do not skip meals, switch meals or combine meals. We do not deviate or manipulate our food plan in any way. If we need to change our committed food during the day, we call a sponsor.
3. We weigh and measure all our portions so that there is no guess work. We do not measure by eye. We use a measuring cup, spoon, and a scale. (Verbally describe what you do with your abstinence kit within 2 minutes.)

4. We weigh ourselves once a month until we reach goal weight and once a week on maintenance.
  5. Unless advised otherwise by your doctor, we take a multi-vitamin and drink 64 oz. of water a day.
  6. We do not drink alcohol.
  7. We do not use foods containing sugar, except if sugar is listed 5th or beyond on the ingredients label.
  8. Above all, we do not vacillate or water down the disciplined nature of the HOW program. It is not the extra string bean that counts; it is the decision to take it.
- 20.** Would \_\_\_\_\_ (a 2-Hour OA HOW Sponsor) please read and share on Sponsorship?

### **SPONSORSHIP**

Sponsors are OA members who are committed to abstinence and to living the twelve steps and twelve traditions to the best of their ability.

We ask a sponsor to guide us through our program of recovery on all three levels: physical, emotional and spiritual. In working with other members of OA and sharing their experience, strength and hope, sponsors continually renew and reaffirm their own sobriety. Sponsors share their program up to the level of their own experience. Ours is a program of attraction; find a sponsor who has what you want and ask how it was achieved. A member may work with more than one sponsor and may change sponsors at will.

A HOW sponsor is a compulsive overeater who has completed at least 70 days of back-to-back abstinence and who has taken the first three steps of the program. Sponsors have also completed at least 70 days of assignments.

REFLECTIONS TO THE SPONSOR - SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION: No list of reflections and meditations are end-alls and be-alls for the newcomer. A sponsor

must be attentive not only to what the new person is saying, but also to what the newcomer is not saying. There are many newcomers who are reticent to purchase books, and who are hesitant to throw themselves headlong into the program. Therefore, we have a list of pre-commitment assignments.

Above all, DO NOT VACILLATE OR WATER DOWN THE DISCIPLINED NATURE OF THE HOW PROGRAM. It is not the extra string bean that is the problem. It is the DECISION to have it that results in some trouble.

The HOW concept is an alternative for people who have tried everything else. Therefore, the program is an immutable triumvirate of tools, steps, and traditions. Using the tools of weighing and measuring our food, sponsors, meetings, phone calls, reading and writing, service, and anonymity, we follow the 12 Steps and the 12 Traditions of OA in order to free ourselves from the bondage of food addiction.

SPONSORS DO NOT HAVE THE RIGHT TO PLAY GOD.... WE HELP EACH OTHER.

**21.** We now ask that all 2-Hour OA HOW Sponsors please un-mute your phone by pressing \*6 and share:

1. Your current abstinent date.
2. Your current weight loss or gain.
3. If you have an opening for a sponsee, slowly give your phone number and time zone. Please do not give your number unless you have an opening. Please repeat your name at the end of your share in case it was not heard at the beginning due to muting and unmuting.

Sponsors, thank you, for sharing these items only. Those looking for sponsors can stay on the line after the meeting for open discussion and to exchange numbers.

Would \_\_\_\_\_ (the person who just shared on Sponsorship) please go first, and I will go last.

**22.** Are there any other 2-Hour OA HOW Sponsors?

**23.** Moderator, would you please now mute the phone line. Thank you.

**24.** Clay Feet: We should remember that all OAs have Clay Feet. We should not set any member upon a pedestal and mark her or him out as a perfect OA. It is not fair to the person to be singled out in this fashion and, if the person is wise, she or he will not wish it. If the person we single out as an ideal OA has a fall, we are in danger of falling too. Without exception, we are all only one bite away from a binge, no matter how long we have been in OA. Nobody is entirely safe. OA itself should be our ideal, not any particular member of it.

**25.** Would \_\_\_\_\_ (a 2-Hour OA HOW Sponsor) please read and share on Anonymity?

### **ANONYMITY**

Anonymity is a tool as well as a tradition because it guarantees that we will place principles before personalities. It offers each of us freedom of expression and protection against gossip. Anonymity assures us that only we as individual OA members have the right to make our membership known within our community.

Anonymity at the level of press, radio, films and television means that we never allow our last names or faces to be used once we identify ourselves as OA members.

Within the fellowship, anonymity means that whatever we share with another OA member will be held in respect and confidence. What we hear at meetings should remain there. It should be understood, however, that anonymity must not be used to limit our effectiveness within the fellowship. It is not a break of anonymity to give our names and addresses to the secretary of our group or to other service offices of OA for the purpose of conducting OA business, which is primarily twelfth-step work. It is likewise not a break of anonymity to enlist twelfth-step

help for group members in trouble, provided we are careful to omit specific personal information. If their disease has reactivated and we persist in protecting their anonymity, we may, in effect, help kill them and their anonymity.

Anonymity is the part of the program that allows each of us to stand in front of our fellows and share for the first time honestly who we are, where we have been, and where we hope to go without fear that our story will be told outside these rooms. For many of us, the OA rooms are the first place where we have no fear being judged or criticized. We are accepted as we are at that moment. This is the first time for most of us that we experience sharing where we are not told what we did wrong. We come into OA at rock bottom, mangled emotionally, physically and spiritually. We are supported back to health with honesty, open-mindedness, and willingness. We are encouraged to speak of our pain and we are lovingly told “your secrets are safe.”

Come share our recovery—recovery on a three-fold level: physical, emotional, and spiritual.

Lastly, a word to Newcomers: Please join us. However, if you decide that our program is not for you, please remember that our anonymity allows us to grow and recover from a very serious disease.

WHOM YOU SEE HERE, WHAT YOU HEAR HERE, WHEN YOU LEAVE HERE, LET IT STAY HERE.

**26.** Would \_\_\_\_\_ (a 2-Hour OA HOW Sponsor) please read and share on Telephone Calls?

### **TELEPHONE**

Compulsive overeating is a disease of isolation. The telephone is a means of communicating with another compulsive overeater between meetings. It provides an immediate outlet for those hard-to-handle highs and lows we all experience. The telephone is also a daily link to our sponsors and, as part of the surrender

process, is a tool by which we learn to ask for help, reach out and extend that same help to others.

In HOW we are asked to make at least 4 telephone calls a day: one to our sponsor and 3 more to other OA members. These calls give us an opportunity to “talk program” on a daily basis. The telephone is our “lifeline.”

**27.** Would \_\_\_\_\_ (a 2-Hour OA HOW Sponsor) please read and share on Meetings?

### **MEETINGS**

Meetings are gatherings of two or more compulsive eaters who come together to share their experience before and after recovery and to share their strength and hope OA has given them. Meetings are an opportunity for us to identify and confirm our common problem by relating to one another and by sharing the gifts we receive through this program. We find that being on time for meetings enhances our recovery and provides service to the meeting. Though there are many kinds of meetings, fellowship is the basis of them all. As HOW members we attend at least one HOW meeting a week.

**28.** Would \_\_\_\_\_ (a 2-Hour OA HOW Sponsor) please read and share on Literature and Writing?

### **LITERATURE**

We study the text book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, referred to as the Big Book, and *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, another AA book, to reinforce our program. By substituting the words, “food” and “compulsive eating” for the words, “alcohol” and “alcoholism”, we can identify closely. We also read OA literature: the OA book, *Overeaters Anonymous*, referred to as the Brown Book; the OA *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions; For Today*, for daily meditation; and *Lifeline*, our journal of recovery. Read on a daily basis, our literature impresses on us

certain basic truths that we have found vital to our growth. Our literature and the AA books are an ever-available tool that gives insight into our problem, as well as the strength to deal with it and the very real hope that there is a solution for us.

### **WRITING**

In addition to writing our inventories and the list of people we have harmed, most of us have found that writing has been an indispensable tool for working the steps. Further, putting our thoughts and feelings down on paper or describing a troubling incident, helps us to better understand our actions and reactions in a way that is often not revealed to us by simply thinking or talking about them. In the past, compulsive eating was our most common reaction to life. When we put our difficulties down on paper, it becomes easier to see situations more clearly and perhaps better discern any necessary action.

**29.** Would \_\_\_\_\_ (a 2-Hour OA HOW Sponsor) please read and share on Service?

### **SERVICE**

Carrying the message to the compulsive overeater who still suffers is the basic purpose of our Fellowship and therefore the most fundamental form of service. Any service, no matter how small, that will help reach a fellow sufferer adds to the quality of our own recovery. Volunteering at a meeting, talking to newcomers, doing whatever needs to be done in a group or for OA as a whole are ways in which we give back what we have so generously been given. Do what you can when you can. “A life of sane and happy usefulness” is what we are promised as the result of working the twelve steps. Service fulfills that promise.

Always to extend the hand and heart of OA to all who share my compulsion; for this I am responsible. Those of us working the HOW concept also believe that our greatest service is abstinence.

**30.** Thank you for the reading and sharing on the tools. I will now read The Promises or We've Got Some Bad News. (Leader's choice):

**The Promises**

"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 experience 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 which used to baffle us. We will suddenly realize that God is doing for us what we could not do for ourselves. Are these extravagant promises? We think not. They are being fulfilled among us—sometimes quickly, sometimes slowly. They will always materialize if we work for them." That's from the book *Alcoholics Anonymous*, pages 83 to 84.

OR

**We've Got Some Bad News**

"We've got some bad news for you. It was bad news for us, and it will probably be bad news for you. Whether you quit six days, months, or years, if you go out and take that first compulsive bite of food, you'll end up ... just like you have been in the past. You are a compulsive overeater." That's from the book *Alcoholics Anonymous*, page 187; revised for OA.

**31.** The Tuesday phone meeting is a friendly place. We want to get to know each other. If you are here with us today for the first time ever, will you please unmute by pressing \*6 and introduce yourself by first name only and where you are from? If you would like to receive phone calls, please give us your phone number, time zone, and best time to call. Do we have any Newcomers today?

**32.** Would a 2-Hour OA HOW Sponsor please volunteer to be the newcomer greeter for the week? Please provide your phone number, time zone and best time to call.

**33.** Newcomers, please feel free to contact (Newcomer Greeter) with any questions you may have. There will also be someone on the line after the meeting for discussion.

**34.** Our 7th tradition tells us we are self-supporting by our own contributions. When contributing to the WSO, please include our group number 55065.

This meeting relies on the Overeaters Anonymous World Service Office (abbreviated WSO) to publicize our meeting information on the OA website; we rely on the OA HOW Virtual Service Board (abbreviated VSB) to pay for the website where we have our meeting information and to represent us at the World Service Business Conference.

Please contribute to the WSO and VSB directly on the OA and OA HOW websites.

**35.** There is a monthly business meeting the last Tuesday of each month immediately after the phone meeting. Are there any other announcements?

**36.** Literature and books are available at [oa.org](http://oa.org), [aa.org](http://aa.org), or at your local OA meetings.

**37.** It is now time to celebrate abstinence. At HOW meetings we recognize milestones of recovery for those working the HOW program. At face to face meetings this is the time that medallions would be presented. All other OA abstinence is given a round of applause.

Is there anyone celebrating a yearly anniversary of back-to-back OA HOW abstinence? Is there anyone celebrating 9 months? 6 months? 3 months? 60 days? 30 days?

Now comes the most important part, the 24-Hour Chip. We refer to it as the Chip of Desire. This does not mean that you are abstinent, but something you have heard in this meeting has encouraged you to commit to abstinence. Would anyone like to receive the virtual Chip of Desire? (Allow time for applause.)

**38. Step-Ups:** At this point in our meeting, we ask the group to join us as we celebrate another example of the miracles that abound in OA. The stepping-up portion of the meeting asks a sponsor to introduce a newcomer who has at least 70 days of back-to-back abstinence, who has completed the first three steps of the program and is now ready to become a sponsor.

We ask you to sign up using the SignUp Genius link at the top of this meeting format page or contact our service coordinator ahead of time so that the meeting leader receives notification.

At 2-Hour OA HOW Phone Meetings, new sponsors are presented with a virtual cactus plant to signify the tough love of the program: stick with the stickers, a reminder to drink water and a reminder that we don't water down the program.

Are there any step-ups?

(If yes, Leader continues reading at #39. If no, Leader continues with reading at #41, page 24, Anniversaries.)

**39.** (Step-Up Person), do you have your Candle Readers, or would you like me ask for 2-Hour OA HOW Sponsor volunteers?

**40. Step-Up Ceremony**

(Step-Up Person), before you, you have five candles: Truth, Reality, Surrender, Acceptance and Knowledge.

OA offers each of us a wonderful opportunity to develop and hasten an attitude of change known as ego reduction. The use of these disciplines of weighing and measuring, phone calls, reporting to sponsors and attending meetings, all

combine to reinforce our growth in OA. Action is the magic word. Until we so humble ourselves through these acts, there is no evidence of our ego reduction or our surrender to anyone or anything outside of ourselves.

Each candle signifies a step toward arresting the progression of our disease. The first two represent Truth and Reality. Without these two qualities, we would not be recovering compulsive overeaters.

Candle Readers, please begin now starting with Candle 1.

### **CANDLE 1**

(Step-Up Person), please light Candle 1 now.

The candle of truth is the keynote of those who strive to stop the advancement of compulsive overeating. It is the unrelenting force that permits no double standard. Its attainment brings the satisfaction of inward peace. We must fearlessly face the truth to avoid the ever-present pitfall of self-deception.

### **CANDLE 2**

(Step-Up Person), please light Candle 2 now.

This is the candle of reality and it is a new light. It opens the door to a new life. It holds a promise of new understanding. It offers a chance for personal renewal. It makes a statement that goes beyond fantasy and it holds the dream of a better tomorrow. Without the light of reality, we are destined to remain in that sick, shadowy world of past mistakes and unrealistic dreams of false tomorrows.

### **CANDLE 3**

(Step-Up Person), please light Candle 3 now.

This is the candle of surrender. In OA surrender is the first and most important act necessary to launching you into the other steps. Without the surrender of your food, your ego, and your will, all else is hopeless. When you surrender, you

suspend such negative emotions as disbelief and grandiosity, and you open yourself up to the process of learning who you are and where you fit into the scheme of things.

#### **CANDLE 4**

(Step-Up Person), please light Candle 4 now.

This is the candle of acceptance. Without acceptance you could not have come this far. Acceptance is seeing things as they really are. Acceptance is understanding that we have spent our lives denouncing everything and now we must open up our hearts, as well as our minds and accept. We must accept the will of God. Accept that only He can restore us to sanity.

#### **CANDLE 5**

(Step-Up Person), please light Candle 5 now.

This is the candle of knowledge and it opens the door wide. We now know that God is on our side. We can see and hear his pronouncements in our lives. We recognize what it is that we may do and what only he can do. We acknowledge that the greatest gift he has given us is knowing ourselves.

**(Leader reads after Candle 5):** Even the newest of newcomers finds undreamed rewards as he tries to help his brother alcoholic, the one who is even blinder than he. This is indeed the kind of giving that actually demands nothing. He does not expect his brother sufferer to pay him, or even to love him. And then he discovers that by the divine paradox of this kind of giving he has found his own reward, whether his brother has yet received anything or not. His own character may still be gravely defective, but he somehow knows that God has enabled him to make a mighty beginning, and he senses that he stands at the edge of new mysteries, joys, and experiences of which he had never even dreamed.

Practically every AA member declares that no satisfaction has been deeper and no joy greater than in a Twelfth Step job well done. To watch the eyes of men and

women with wonder as they move from darkness into light, to see their lives quickly fill with new purpose and meaning, to see whole families reassembled, to see the alcoholic outcast received back into his community in full citizenship, and above all to watch these people awaken to the presence of a loving God in their lives—these things are the substance of what we receive as we carry the message to the next alcoholic. That’s from the book *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of AA*, pages 109 to 110.

Congratulations, (Step-Up Person)! (Allow time for applause.)

**41. Anniversaries:** “Anniversaries are celebrated for each year of continuous abstinence.” That’s from the OA Group Handbook, page 10. Does anyone want to celebrate their anniversary with us today?

(If yes, Leader continues reading at #42, Anniversary Reading. If no, Leader continues reading at #43.)

**42. Anniversary Reading**

We who once suffered from complete powerlessness to control our eating and our lives have now discovered the saving strength of a Power greater than ourselves. We have experienced the miracle of physical, emotional and spiritual healing, just as we were promised when we began these steps.

For most of us, the central factor in this spiritual awakening has been our decision to trust a Higher Power with every aspect of our lives. In acting on that decision one day at a time, we have learned a whole new set of skills for living, skills which enable us to clear from our lives everything which might interfere with our trust in this Higher Power. Now we know we don’t have to fear anything that comes to us. Even when things happen to us which we don’t like, we know we have a way of facing each situation squarely and sanely. We have seen that our Higher Power will reveal something of value to us with every experience as long as we continue practicing this new way of life.

For years we've looked for gratification in unbridled eating; in material possessions; in careers; in our many attempts to have perfect bodies; and in money, sex and social status. Although most of us have received and enjoyed some of these things, the satisfaction we felt in them was small compared with the joy we have found in sharing this program with other compulsive overeaters.

We who began working the steps in order to recover from compulsive eating now find that through them we have embarked on a lifelong journey of spiritual growth. From the isolation of food obsession we have emerged into a new world. Walking hand in hand with our friends and our Higher Power, we are now exploring this world, using the great spiritual principles embodied in the twelve steps as the map to guide our way. We gratefully follow in the footsteps of many others who have walked this way before us, and we're gratified to be making footprints of our own for others to follow.

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 which attracts others who want what we've found in OA. We're always happy to share our secret: the Twelve Steps of Overeaters Anonymous, which empower each of us to live well and be well, one day at a time. That's from the book *The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous*, pages 99 to 106.

Congratulations, (Anniversary Person)! (Allow time for applause.)

**43.** I would like to introduce our guest speaker, \_\_\_\_\_, who qualifies for 20 minutes. Would you like to be timed?

**44.** (When the Speaker has finished): Thank you, (Speaker). Would you like to share your phone number with the group?

**45.** This meeting ends at 2:30 pm EST when at 2:25 someone reads the "Just for Today" reading.

**46.** The floor is now open for three-minute positive pitches. A pitch is an experience that has helped us to grow through the action of putting down the food and picking up the Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions and nine tools of recovery in our daily 24-hour experience, thus giving us sobriety rich with new levels of awareness.

All pitches should be of a positive nature in which you share your growth and recovery. As you share your experience and strength in OA, please also share your hope. Please confine your sharing to your experience with the disease of compulsive eating, the solution offered by OA and your own recovery from the disease, rather than just the events of the day or week. If you are having difficulties, share how you use the program to deal with them. If you need to talk more about your difficulties and seek solutions, we suggest you speak to your sponsor and other members after the meeting.

Feedback, cross talk and advice-giving are discouraged here. Cross talk during an OA meeting is giving advice to others who have already shared, speaking directly to another person rather than to the group and questioning or interrupting the person speaking or sharing at the time.

Would someone care to pitch? Please un-mute by pressing \*6 on your phone key pad and introduce yourself.

**47.** I want to thank you for allowing me to be your leader for this meeting. I also thank all of those who participated, especially our speaker, \_\_\_\_\_, who offered so much of (her/him) self.

**48.** (At 2:25 pm): This meeting ends at 2:30 pm EST. May we have the reading “Just For Today”?

**JUST FOR TODAY**

Just for Today I will try to live through this day only, and not tackle my whole life problem at once. I can do something for one day that would appall me if I felt I had to keep it up for a lifetime.

Just for Today I will be happy. This assumes to be true what Abraham Lincoln said, that, "Most folks are as happy as they make up their minds to be."

Just for Today I will adjust myself to what is and not try to adjust everything to my own desires. I will take my "luck" as it comes and fit myself to it.

Just for Today I will try to strengthen my mind. I will study. I will learn something useful. I will not be a mental loafer. I will read something that requires effort, thought, and concentration.

Just for Today I will exercise my soul in three ways. I will do somebody a good turn and not get found out; if anyone knows of it, it will not count. I will do at least two things I don't want to do, just for exercise. I will not show anyone that my feelings are hurt; they may be hurt, but today, I will not show it.

Just for Today I will be agreeable. I will look as well as I can, dress becomingly, talk low, act courteously, criticize not one bit, not find fault with anything, and not try to improve or regulate anybody except myself.

Just for Today I will have a program. I may not follow it exactly, but I will have it. I will save myself from two pests: hurry and indecision.

Just for Today I will have a quiet half-hour all by myself and relax. During this half-hour, sometime, I will try to get a better perspective of my life.

Just for Today I will be unafraid. Especially, 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.

**49. Closing Statement:** To those who are still new to the program, we remind you that all that was said here today should safely remain here, as we respect and cherish our tradition of anonymity. We also assure you that following the program will get your weight off. Abstinence will remove the craving. Our way of

life will remove the compulsion in time and give you contentment and fullness in all areas.

After a moment of meditation, would you please unmute by pressing \*6 and join me in saying the Serenity Prayer.

Let's pray for those still suffering: "God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and wisdom to know the difference. Thy will, not mine, be done." Keep coming back. It works when you work it and give a lot of love!

Leader's Optional Worksheet (to print out and fill in)

Date:

Moderator:	Newcomers & Phone #: _____ _____
<b>Volunteers for Readings &amp; Tools</b>	
What is HOW:	_____
The Only Requirement:	_____
The HOW Concept:	_____
Reflections 4 Newcomer:	_____
Chapter 2:	Newcomer Greeter & Phone #: _____
Chapter 5:	
The 12 Steps:	Speaker & Phone #: _____
The 12 Traditions:	
Time Keeper:	Anniversary:
Plan of Eating:	Step Up:
Sponsorship:	Candle #1:
(List available sponsors & #s on back.)	Candle #2:
Anonymity:	Candle #3:
Telephone:	Candle #4:
Meetings:	Candle #5:
Literature & Writing:	Just for Today:
Service:	

## Revision History

(Include updates here)

Revised 2/23/2016 per group conscience by Cat C. 530-355-9456,

[cathgrace.cc@gmail.com](mailto:cathgrace.cc@gmail.com)

Revised 11/29/2016 & 12/27/16 per group conscience by Cat C. 530-355-9456,

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Revised 5/30/2016 by group vote and updated by Cat C. 530-355-9456,

[cathgrace.cc@gmail.com](mailto:cathgrace.cc@gmail.com)

Revised 8/10/2017 Resubmitted format with corrected SignUp Genius link. No other changes were made. Cat C. 530-355-9456,

[cathgrace.cc@gmail.com](mailto:cathgrace.cc@gmail.com)

Revised 9/15/2017 Resubmitted format with new website link. Fixed typo where it read, “virtual the” instead of “the virtual” referring to Chip of Desire. Cat C. 530-355-9456, [cathgrace.cc@gmail.com](mailto:cathgrace.cc@gmail.com)

Revised 2/27/18 Resubmitted format with new website link. Revision made in Leader’s script #5 to reflect new VSB web site. Maggie F. 252-441-4964,

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Revised 4/24/18 Resubmitted format with edits approved by vote of group conscience, by Maggie F. 252-441-4964, [maddiecat511@gmail.com](mailto:maddiecat511@gmail.com), Ari 559-213-6851, [arizephyr123@gmail.com](mailto:arizephyr123@gmail.com) and Cat C. 530-355-9456,

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Revised 6/6/18 Resubmitted format with edits approved by vote of group

conscience on 5/29/18, by Maggie F. 252-441-4964, [maddiecat511@gmail.com](mailto:maddiecat511@gmail.com)