

## OA/HOW Pre-Commitment Assignments-Series 1 Qs 1-30

*(January 2018, VSB Website Resources Sub-Committee: The readings are from the AA 'Big Book', 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition and/or the 'Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions'. "D & R" mean discuss and reflect. Quotes from AA material have been updated to reflect alcohol, as written. OA only has permission to change the wording to "compulsive overeater" in OA Steps and OA Traditions. In one's private reading and writing, one can substitute the words "food" and "compulsive overeater" for "alcohol" and "alcoholism.")*

1. Read "Doctor's Opinion" in the AA Big Book. Write a history of your compulsive eating beginning with the first time you can remember food-related events. Discuss how much weight you've gained and lost, what medical attention you've sought for the problem, and your attempts at maintaining your weight losses.
2. Read Step One. Discuss and reflect upon the effect food has had upon you over the years. Do you truly see yourself as a "compulsive overeater?"
3. Re-read Step One. Discuss and reflect upon the following ideas found in Step One:
  - a) The critical nature of our disease
  - b) The progressive nature of our disease
  - c) The need not to push someone until they are ready.
4. Re-read Step 1. Discuss and reflect upon the fatal nature of our disease as seen on page 24, paragraph 2 in the AA 12 & 12. In this discussion reflect on how, at the very least, the disease has diminished your life.
5. Read Chapter 2 of the AA Big Book ("There is a Solution"). Discuss and reflect upon the idea that your discipline or lack of it has played an important part in your life.
6. Re-read AA Big Book Chapter 2. Discuss and reflect upon the idea that "I have no control when it comes to food."
7. Read AA Big Book Chapter 3. Discuss the following ideas:
  - a) The deception of others is nearly always rooted in the deception of ourselves. How does this relate to your eating history?
  - b) What have we done in the past due to compulsive eating that reaffirms this idea?

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8. Re-read Step One. Discuss and reflect upon what the knowledge of Step One can do for you. During your reading underline and note words and passages that are meaningful to you. Why are they important?
9. Read Step 2 in the AA 12 & 12. How is the taking of Step One a necessity before taking Step Two?
10. Re-read Step 2. Discuss and reflect upon the effectiveness of OA from your personal experience and from what you have observed in others. Could what you have experienced emanated solely from you? If so, why had it not happened before?
11. Read Chapter 4 of the AA Big Book. Discuss and reflect upon the concepts of Honesty, Open mindedness, and Willingness. How are these tools of growth in the OA program?
12. Read Step 2. Discuss and reflect upon the concept of insanity as it applies to us in OA.
13. Read AA Big Book Chapter 4. Discuss and reflect upon how we use the substitution method of accepting the presence of a higher power. How have you looked for substitutes all of your life? Are you still looking?
14. Re-read Step 2. Discuss and reflect upon the following concepts available in Step Two:
  - a) Belief means reliance, not defiance.
  - b) Defiance is an outstanding characteristic of every compulsive overeater. (p. 31 of the AA 12 & 12).
  - c) The hoop you have to jump through is a lot wider than you think.
15. Re-read Step 2. Discuss and reflect upon your childhood exposure to any religious concept. On a two-column balance sheet list on one side your negative feelings and on the other your positive feelings as they relate to your early religious experience. What conclusion do you reach when you reflect upon this balance sheet? (Save this balance sheet).

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16. Read Step 3. Create another balance sheet. On one side list all the reasons you can for believing in God. On the other side list all the reasons for disbelieving. (Save this balance sheet).
17. Re-read Step 3. Discuss and reflect upon the following quote: "...but faith alone can avail us nothing." 12 & 12, p. 34
18. Read Chapter 5 in the AA Big Book ("How It Works"). Write on dependence as you understand it in OA. How can dependence lead to greater independence?
19. Read AA Big Book Chapter 2. Are you a "grateful compulsive overeater?" Why are you grateful?
20. Re-read Step 3. I am responsible for only one person's actions...whose? Why?
21. Read AA Big Book Chapter 3. Discuss and reflect upon the idea that "Abstinence is the most important thing in my life...without exception."
22. Read Step 3. Discuss the idea of calling a H.A.L.T. when your life gets unmanageable. (Do not allow yourself to get hungry, angry, lonely, or tired).
23. Read "A Vision For You" in the AA Big Book. Discuss and reflect upon the idea: "The more you give the more you shall receive."
24. Read AA Big Book Chapter 6. OA teaches us a sense of dignity. How have I utilized my newfound dignity in relationship to myself, my family, and my friends?
25. Read AA Big Book Chapter 7. What is the importance of giving service in OA? What is the importance of meetings? How are they both part of my road of recovery?
26. Read Step 1. What is the importance of the telephone in OA? What is the importance of anonymity? How are they both intertwined?
27. Read Step 2. Discuss and reflect on reading and writing as a tool of program. Why is it essential to my recovery?

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28. Read pp. 569-570, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, [pp. 567-568, 4<sup>th</sup> edition] in the AA Big Book ("Spiritual Experiences"). Discuss and reflect on the following: Spiritual growth is a daily commitment. How can I grow daily?
29. Re-read Step 3. Write on the idea that having taken Steps One and Two, the degree of our success in the whole program depends on how far we take Step 3.
30. Re-read Step One in the morning. Review your two balance sheets from reflections 15 and 16. Make a sincere commitment to your Higher Power to turn your will and your live over to His care. Then, read the following article (on next page) and write on the idea that submission is not the same thing as surrender. Discuss the differences. Discuss and reflect on your own personal surrender.

*The following reading for question 30 is NOT a not direct quote, but based on Dr. Harry Tiebout's article*

### **"THE ACT OF SURRENDERING TO THE THERAPEUTIC PROCESS"**

In the compulsive overeater, there are two qualities which are characteristic of their personality: Defiant Individuality and Grandiosity. This may very well explain the well known fact the overeater is, among the not-so sick, the most UNREASONABLE and STUBBORN about seeking help or being able to take it even when she seeks it. Both of these qualities operate in unconscious layers of the mind and the influence of both must be defined as: That quality which permits the individual who has it to snap her fingers in the face of reality and live on unperturbed. It has two special values for handling life situations. In the first place, Defiance, certainly with overeaters, is a surprisingly effective tool for managing anxiety of a bit of reality that is so often a source of anxiety. If you DEFY A FACT AND SAY IT IS NOT SO, and you can succeed in doing so unconsciously, you CAN EAT TO THE DAY OF YOUR DEATH, forever denying the imminence of that fate. It is a trustworthy shield against truth and all its pressures. In the second place, defiance masquerades as a very real and reliable source of inner strength and self-confidence because it says, in essence: "Nothing can happen to me because I can and do defy it."

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Grandiosity, as structured in the psyche of the overeater, springs from the persisting infantile ego which, as in other neurotic states, characteristically is filled with feelings of omnipotence, demands for direct gratification of wished and a proneness to interpret frustrations as evidence of rejection and lack of love.

On the one side, the defiance says it is not true that I CAN'T MANAGE EATING. On the other side, the facts speak loudly and with increasing insistence to the contrary. Again, on the one side, grandiosity claims there is nothing it cannot master and control; on the other side, the facts demonstrate unmistakably the opposite. The dilemma of the overeater is not obvious. Her unconscious mind rejects, through its capacity for defiance and grandiosity, what its conscious mind perceives. Hence, realistically, the individual is frightened by her eating and at the same time is prevented from doing anything about it by the unconscious activity which can and does ignore or override the conscious mind.

With submission to a diet, which at best is a superficial yielding, tension still continues: "There'll come a day when I lose the weight, then i can eat..." With surrender, on the other hand, when the ability to accept reality functions on the unconscious level, there is no residual of battle, and relaxation with freedom from strain and conflict occurs. THE TOOLS OF THE OA/HOW PROGRAM are therefore designed to induce surrender to the fullest degree possible so that defiance and grandiosity actually cease effectively to function. When that happens, the individual is wide open to reality: She can listen and learn without conflict and fighting back. She is receptive to life, not antagonistic. She senses a serenity, the possession of which frees the individual from the compulsion to eat. In other words, an act of surrender is an occasion wherein the individual no longer fights life, but accepts it. WITH SOME INDIVIDUALS, THE SURRENDER EXPERIENCE IS THE START OF GENUINE GROWTH AND MATURATION. With others, the surrender phase is the only one ever reached, so that they never lose the need to attend meetings and rely on outside reminders in their daily existence to supply necessary impetus to the surrender feeling as far as food is concerned.