

Intensive Step Study - Step 1

(October 2017, VSB Website Resources Sub-Committee: The readings are from the AA 'Big Book' 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 Step 1. Write for 10 -15 minutes on your reaction to what you have read. (Keep this assignment.)

2. Read the first four paragraphs of Step 1. D&R on: "We admitted we were powerless over alcohol – that our lives had become unmanageable.", page 21. Include in your discussion:
 - a) The definition of the word "powerless";
 - b) The many ways and methods that you have tried to exert power (control) over food;
 - c) The length of time that you have been engaged in this struggle;
 - d) What other methods do you want to experiment with regarding controlling food; and,
 - e) How much longer (days, weeks, months, years) do you want to continue to struggle.

3. Read pg. 379 in the Big Book, 3rd edition [pg. 354, BB 4th edition], starting with "Could I be an alcoholic..." and ending on pg. 380, BB 3rd edition [pg. 355, BB, 4th edition] with "... living for oneself." D&R on: "Most certainly I was powerless over alcohol, and for me, my life had become unmanageable. It wasn't how far I had gone, but where I was headed.", page 379, BB, 3rd edition [pg. 354, BB, 4th edition]. Include in your discussion:
 - a) The definition of the word "unmanageable", and
 - b) How your life was unmanageable due to your obsession with food.

4. Read the first six paragraphs of Step 1. Discuss and reflect on: "We perceive that only through utter defeat are we able to take our first steps toward liberation and strength. Our admission of personal powerlessness finally turns out to be firm bedrock upon which happy and purposeful lives may be built.", page 21. Include in your discussion:

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- a) The definition of the word “defeat”;
 - b) The ways you have tried to avoid admitting defeat with regard to your compulsive overeating;
 - c) How admitting defeat leads to liberation and strength; and
 - d) What is the new foundation upon which you can build your life?
5. Re-read the first six paragraphs of Step 1, ending with the words: “...make the admission of hopelessness.”, page 23. D&R on: “Our sponsors declared that we were the victims of a mental obsession so subtly powerful that no amount of willpower could break it . . .our sponsors pointed out our increasing sensitivity to alcohol—an allergy they called it.”, page 22. Include in your discussion:
- a) Your obsession with food;
 - b) Your attempts to exert willpower over this obsession;
 - c) What outside aids and methods have you used to assist you and what has been the outcome of these efforts; and
 - d) How the concept of an allergy relates to your experience.
6. Read “The Doctor’s Opinion” starting with the last paragraph on pg. xxvi (26), BB 3rd edition, [xxviii (28), BB 4th edition] “Men and women...” and ending on pg. xxviii (28), BB 3rd edition, [xxx (30), BB 4th edition] with the last paragraph, “...have to suggest is entire abstinence.” D&R on: “The only relief we have to suggest is entire abstinence.” Include in your discussion:
- a) The definition of the word “crave” and relate how craving was part of your compulsive overeating; and
 - b) What do you think would happen if you tried some controlled eating of your old binge foods?
7. Read pages 380 and 381 in the Big Book, 3rd edition, [pp. 355-356, BB 4th edition] starting with “From the start...” and ending with “...with whom I come in contact.” D&R on: “...one drink is too much and 100 drinks are not enough.”, pg. 380, BB 3rd edition, [pg. 355, BB 4th edition] as it relates to your compulsive overeating. Include in your discussion:

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- a) The three-fold aspect of the disease; and
 - b) How the disease has affected your physical, emotional, and spiritual life.
8. Read pages 22 to 24 in the 12 & 12. D&R on: “The answer is that few people will sincerely try to practice the AA program unless they have hit bottom. For practicing AA’s remaining eleven Steps means the adoption of attitudes and actions that almost no alcoholic who is still drinking can dream of taking.”, pg. 24. In your discussion include:
- a) What do the terms “high bottom” and “low bottom” food addicts mean and how do you identify yourself;
 - b) What price did you have to pay for your addiction; and
 - c) What price are you now willing to pay to remain in recovery?
9. Read pp. 30—32 in “More About Alcoholism” (Chapter 3). D&R on: “We are convinced to a man that alcoholics of our type are in a grip of a progressive illness. Over any considerable amount of time we get worse, never better.”, pg. 30, as it relates to your compulsive overeating. Include in your discussion what your experience has been with the progressive nature of this disease.
10. Read pg. 24 in the 12 & 12. D&R on “Under the lash of alcoholism we are driven to A.A., and there we discover the fatal nature of our situation. Then, and only then, do we become as open-minded to conviction and as willing to listen as the dying can be. We stand ready to do anything which will lift the merciless obsession from us.”, pg. 24, as it relates to your food addiction. Include in your discussion:
- a) The fatal nature of your situation; and
 - b) What part honesty, open-mindedness and willingness have played in your recovery.
11. Re-read Step 1. Write for 15 minutes on your reaction to what you have read. (Keep this assignment.)
12. Re-read your answers to question 1 and 11 and relate any differences in these two writings.

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13. Admitting powerlessness allows us to be free. List 5 freedoms you have gained by your admission of powerlessness over food.