

Carrying The Message



Susan, Region 9 Chair

Carrying the Message

What is “Carrying the message” for me? If I’m talking about within our Fellowship, then it starts with a smile at my meeting. To share in a positive way about the benefits of the program. To telephone to others to pass on my experience, strength, and hope. To be a sponsor, and listen. To give my time. To do service.

“Carrying the message” to those who have not made it to our rooms yet? I can approach someone, and with kind words coming from my heart, let them know of this amazing program of ours. To let them be aware that it works – there is a solution – there is hope.

Most important – I can show by example. That I am abstinent and at a normal body weight – this is carrying the message (physically). To be working the Steps in my everyday life – this is carrying the message (emotionally). And to practice turning it over to my Higher Power – this is carrying the message (spiritually).

“Carrying the message” is something I have to do in order to hold on to this precious gift that I have received from Overeaters Anonymous!

Susan
Region 9 Chair

Esti, Region 9 Trustee

From our Trustee's desk

When I first came to OA 19.5 years ago, I felt as if I am finally at home, I can talk about everything, I am accepted as I am, I am loved and that I have found a solution.

On one hand I wanted to run out to share those feelings with everybody but on the other hand I felt embarrassed to share about the disease that I have learnt about. I remember that at that stage, I only shared with friends that I trusted and was sure they wouldn't be judgmental. This was the beginning of carrying the message of OA.

In time I understood that I myself am the message. My abstinence, losing weight, working the Steps, using the tools and working the program changed me a lot. I became a better person to myself and to others and it appealed to others. As my confidence and self-love grew stronger I was able to tell more and more people about myself and about the program. I was not embarrassed to tell others about the nature of my disease and about the solution that I have finally found in OA The changes that I went through attracted other people who wanted to know what I have done and triggered me to tell them about the program.

Being the message means to me to keep my abstinence no matter what. All those 19.5 years I have a sponsor I call every day and to whom I give my food plan. Loosing weight and maintaining a healthy body weight are very important to me and even more important is to be sane. I have my food plan, all is weighed and measured and I don't worry about my food anymore. All the energy I was using to struggle with the food is now free to do other positive things.

I work the Steps on a daily basis and have a special relationship with my Higher Power who stands next to me all day long, every day, and helps me with everything, big or small, whatever it is. I implement the principles of the 12 Steps and 12 Traditions in my everyday life and as a result of it I live a better life, a spiritual life with peace and serenity.

The service I do in OA helped me in many ways. As a Trustee I am meeting a lot of people while I travel and always tell them about OA and what OA did for me. Even if they are not compulsive eaters they still can carry the message of OA to others who suffer from this disease. By doing workshops and sharing my experience, strength and hope I carry the message to the members of OA and encourage them to carry the message as well and be the message.

We have to remember that we are not a secret society and that there are so many suffering people who do not know about OA yet. Let's carry the message of OA a message of hope for a better life.

Love in service,

Esti

Mette, Region 9 Secretary

Carrying The Message

I often think about service and service structure. To me, it is very important to explain to people who might not know about our service structure, how our meetings, and business meeting, are held. That we have a group conscience at our business meetings, and that all decisions will be made there.

When I first came in, I couldn't understand why they replaced the leader of the meeting, this person was perfect! I thought they were crazy! What they actually told me, was rotation of service, I just didn't know at the time.

I attended World Service Business Conference 2014, and after all the business meetings ended, I had four hours before there was a wrap-up session with Bylaws Committee. I had been so busy all week, that I needed to leave the hotel, to see something else. I headed for Old Town, Albuquerque, and the weather was beautiful.

My meeting was to start on 3:30 PM, and round 45 minutes before, I tried to get a taxi back to the hotel. It was absolutely impossible. I went into a jewellery shop, and the lady was so kind to call a cab for me. At this point the time was way over the start of the meeting, but I got out in the sun, and then the driver came.

I told him where I would like to go, and he asked what was happening at the hotel since there were all those people there. He was obese, but had never heard about OA. I told him about the disease and the food, and I'm sure he knew what I was talking about. He talked about the health issues he had been fighting, and I said that there were plenty of meetings in the US, and that there might be one in his area, and he said: "That is worth considering" with a deep kind of understanding. Later on when we reached the hotel, he and I were both very happy about the trip, and he repeated the sentence. THIS trip was to me the essence of my participation in Conference, everything melted together, I was at the right place at the right time!! I was given an amazing gift, and opportunity, from my Higher Power to bring on the message. Maybe one day I will meet the driver at a meeting...

Love in Service

Mette

Region 9 Secretary

STEPS/TRADITIONS/CONCEPTS/GOODTOKNOW

Steps

- 6) Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
- 7) Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.

Traditions

- 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

Concepts

- 6) The World Service Business Conference has entrusted the Board of Trustees with the primary responsibility for the administration of Overeaters Anonymous.
- 7) The Board of Trustees has legal rights and responsibilities accorded to them by OA Bylaws, Subpart A; the rights and responsibilities of the World Service Business Conference are accorded to it by Tradition and by OA Bylaws, Subpart B.



Tips

1. *Abstinence, Working All 12 Steps, and Individual's Responsibilities to Carry the Message - OA's focus for 2014 - 2016*
2. *Come to R9 A&C 2014 in Greece to be a Representative or a Visitor of your Service Body*
3. *The OA Basics Glossary of R9 now in the R9 Website*
4. *Now to be found on the R9 Website – "Welcome to Overeaters Anonymous", the OA Newcomer Orientation Video. Found on the home page, in the newcomer's section, and under r9 committees – tsw.*

5. *New Getting & Giving Help Workshop (Sponsorship) and New Sponsorship Workshop 2014 in the R9 Website*
6. *Strong Abstinence Checklist and Unity with Diversity Checklist on the OA Website – NEW*
7. *Overeaters Anonymous, 3rd Edition to be available in October (approved at WSBC 2014)*

WHAT'S NEW!?

- OA Basic Glossary
- Getting & Giving Help Workshop
- R9 Newsletter, May 2014: Our primary purpose
- Welcome to OA: video
- Sponsorship Workshop 2014
- What are Assembly & Convention? (17-21/9/2014 in Greece)

Dates to Remember:

- ASAP – R9 Assembly Registration Form in to R9 Secretary
- ASAP – R9 A&C 2014 Hotel Registration Form deadline
- ASAP – R9 Convention Registration Form deadline
- August 1, 2014 - applications for translations fund sent in to the World Service Office (information in OA Website)
- September 1, 2014 – trustee nominee applications to R9 Chair
- September 1 – 8, 2014 – Region 9 Week
- September 2014 - Contributions to Region & World Service, to R9 Treasurer
- September 17 - 21, 2014 – Region 9 Assembly & Convention
- Host 2016 R9 A&C... let r9 chair know before r9 a&c 2014



2nd Reading on Sponsorship (ANSWER TO WHICH PIECE OF LITERATURE THIS IS COMING FROM ON PAGE 13)

Sponsorship is one of the vital keys to recovery in OA. Sponsors are abstinent OA members who are committed to refraining from compulsive eating and compulsive food behaviors. They are practicing the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions to the best of their ability, and are willing to share their experience, strength and hope with other compulsive eaters. Sharing with others is one way sponsors maintain their recovery; thus, both sponsor and sponsee benefit from the relationship.

By reaching out for help from a sponsor, a sponsee is putting into action the words of the OA Promise: "I put my hand in yours, and together we can do what we could never do alone". Reaching out for help involves a degree of surrender. The sponsoring relationship involves commitment from both individuals.

At certain point in the sponsoring relationship, it is appropriate to encourage your sponsees to indicate at meetings that they are qualified sponsors. By sharing up to their level of experience, they can start giving back what they have received in order to maintain spiritual recovery and abstinence.

MESSAGES FROM OUR TWELFTH STEP WITHIN COMMITTEE

REGION 9 WEEK

The first week of September, while preparing our luggage for Assembly and Convention in Greece, Region 9 Week will be celebrated!



Let's use this time to think of our members and the still suffering compulsive overeater. Also in view of our geography, countries, states and language barriers within our Region to think about OA'ers who may be living in troubled or poor areas. We can help. We can make a difference!

WHAT COULD YOU DO TO CELEBRATE REGION 9 WEEK?



Read and share ab the pamphlet *A Common Solution: Diversity and Recovery* to be more aware of the difficulties of OAers in other countries, facing other realities.



Write to a friend who comes from a Region 9 country. If you don't know anybody you could have a look on the website of one of the 43 nations represented by OA Region 9.

<http://www.oaregion9.org/about-region-9/oa-region-9s-websites/>

You could also make a search through the WSO website

<http://www.oa.org/membersgroups/find-a-meeting/>



**And how about writing an article for the newsletter and telling us how YOU celebrated the Region 9 Week!?!?!
Have a nice Summer and good**

Lovingly and gratefully,

Catherine, Italy
Twelfth-Step-Within Committee Chair

ASK IT BASKET



ASK-IT BASKET QUESTIONS from World Service Business Conference (WSBC) 2014

Answers provided by members of the Board of Trustees

Those delegate questions and the trustee responses are available on the OA website under World Service Events. Here is the link: http://www.oa.org/pdfs/AskItBasket_WSBC2014.pdf

Q. In Italy, groups must have insurance for meetings to cover such things as possible accidents. Is this necessary in the USA?

A. It is up to the meeting place to determine whether or not a group needs insurance. It is becoming more common for groups to purchase insurance, but there is no US law requiring groups to be insured.

Q. Can the additional costs of formatting translated books and pamphlets so that they appear the same as the original, English version be included in fund allocations?

A. I have the privilege of serving on the International Publications and Translations Committee. Twice each year service bodies that are in the process of translating OA books or pamphlets and need financial assistance can apply for funds from the Translation Fund. The deadlines for Translation Fund applications are Feb 1st and Aug 1st. The translation fund is allocated to help with the costs of translations, including printing, formatting and publishing of OA translated material, as funds allow. It is hoped that, as much as service bodies are able, the translated documents look similar to the English originals. See further information regarding the translation and licensing process at www.oa.org/membersgroups/service-body-support/oa-literature-translations.

Q. I'm visiting from Europe and wondering how special interest groups in the USA run their meetings?

A. Tradition Four states, "Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or OA as a whole." Each group is free to find the meeting format that best suits the needs of the group. Most OA groups use or adapt the *Suggested Meeting Format* found on oa.org. In addition to the *Suggested Meeting Format*, other meeting formats in the documents section, that are likewise used and adapted as needed, include *Lifeline Meeting Format*, *Newcomer Meeting Guidelines and Format*, *Recovery From Relapse Meeting Format*, *Suggested Meeting Format for Young People*, *Suggested Step-Study Meeting Format*, and *Suggested Telephone Meeting Format*.

Q. In my country, Italy, the last time bylaws were sent to WSO for approval was in 2006. Do we have to update the English translation and send them for approval, and how often?

A. Updated bylaws are to be submitted when they are amended so that the World Service Office has an up-to-date version, as covered in OA Inc. Bylaws, Subpart B, Article VI, Section 2B. The requirement for bylaws to be in compliance in order for a service body to register WSBC delegates was rescinded in 2014 because it proved to be burdensome for service bodies, staff and trustees. Therefore resubmitting bylaws annually for trustee review, even if no changes were made in order to register delegates, is no longer needed. There is no set requirement for bylaws to be amended in a certain time period per Tradition Four. And bylaws can be submitted in their native language. Many service bodies review bylaws on a regular basis, but changes may not be necessary. If bylaws need to be frequently amended, I suspect those bylaws might contain unnecessary detail that would be better included in a policy manual. For example, bylaws that specify that an intergroup meets once a month on Sunday at 7:30 p.m. would have to go through a full bylaws amendment procedure to change the day or time. It would be more appropriate for the details of meeting day and time to be placed in a policy manual that can be easily changed as needed and that the bylaws make a more general statement that the service body meets on a regular basis. Members with bylaws questions may consult with their regional or virtual services trustee. In addition, the Sample Intergroup Bylaws and Sample Service Board Bylaws on the Service Body Support page on oa.org are intended to be helpful guides for service bodies to follow in revising or creating bylaws.

STORIES REGION 9 MEMBERS

Marieke, The Netherlands

Carrying the message

Early in my recovery I was caught by the slogan a long timer shared: “carry the message, not the mess“. I immediately started to hide the mess en tried to sell the program to any soul that I believed needed to hear about it. My style was a convincing provocative one and it was very frustrating for me that no one was really interested or seemed to be touched by what I was saying. What was wrong with me?

I started to work the steps together with my sponsor, practiced the principles to the best of my ability and a slow recovery process with many ups and downs is manifesting. I kept my abstinence from binging and purchasing from the beginning and slowly, slowly the obsession with food has been taken away.

I am blessed with enthusiasm and perseverance and I easily commit to things that has to be done, so I have been doing service from the very beginning and entered the intergroup after 7 months of program (just before I started working the steps with my sponsor ;-)). The good thing about all this was that for the first time in my life I started doing things together with other people. Together with an OA friend we set up the literature committee for the intergroup again (after it had fallen apart). I could have never done that alone, but together we succeeded. This for me is part of the OA message. Doing service, doing it together, be a part of and do it for fun and for free. I have always seen service in OA as a great opportunity to practice and get experience in ways that I never would have been able to get outside OA. I benefit from it in many ways: for my personal recovery (which makes the message visible, without me having to do anything), in my private life and in my work.

By continuing with being committed to my recovery I am taking care of the mess bit by bit. And although I have a very good life nowadays and I cleaned up a lot there are still unattended corners where some mess has been hidden away. Life throws me a curve over and over again but I can persevere through bigger and smaller storms with me being grounded in OA. Through the years the message has become more and more visible.

It also shows in the way I am able to work with sponsees. In the beginning I couldn't keep them. They weren't willing I thought back then. I pushed my way on to them, I know now. I was very frustrated with this, because I so much wanted to help and be of service. But in the back of my head I knew, there is a time for everything and I kept on trying to do the best I could. Nowadays I am milder, much more patient and able to be assertive in a loving way. It is not so much about me anymore. I have more confidence. This makes me very grateful.

I am also grateful for my God given willingness to continuously do service in the Intergroup. After 12 years I keep on learning there and I have a great deal of experience which can help OA in the Netherlands. For a very long time I desire the position of chair, but I knew I wasn't ready. Last year I felt I become more and more ready for it and after some hesitation I applied for vice chair. A few months ago I could replace the chair for the first time and it went very well. I felt my heart singing that God made me ready to have this experience of facilitating and being present and clear minded. In 1,5 year the function of chair will be available and I can guarantee I will apply for it.

The same counts for applying for second representative for the Netherlands at the region 9 convention. Last year I didn't feel fit for it, but now I had the feeling that my mind is clear enough and that I have enough energy to go for it and give it my best. To share my recovery and experience and also benefit from the recovery and experience from other OA members. Again my heart starts to sing and fills up with love to be able to do this.

In gratitude,
Marieke W.
The Hague
The Netherlands

Vassiliki, Greece

Carrying the message: the OA traditions principles and every day service for an easier life

I came to OA in spring 2002. I was overweight, desperate and I had begun my last diet a couple of weeks earlier. I had a family, a job, friends, health care practitioners, but when it came to my weight and to my eating I felt terribly alone. At every good advice, I thought "He /she is right but this couldn't work for me. He /she does not live my situation". I had the problem. The others had only the solutions.

I knew that I needed to take new ACTION, to do something different. But I had no idea what and how. In OA, I met people like me who lived in solutions better than me and who seemed like the person that I desired to become. Sharing their experience and hope they showed me a new frame of action for recovery: What I needed to do in order not to eat compulsively any more was not to be alone any more, to be connected (tr 1 Unity) with people who desire to stop eating compulsively like me (tr 3 Identity), in order to become and carry the message of recovery (tr 5 Purpose). For this I should act with responsibility (tr 7), following the OA service structure (tr 9) and respecting anonymity (tr 11).

This simple initiation into the OA Traditions 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11 (Unity, Identity, Purpose, Responsibility, Structure, Anonymity), offered me an unexpected perspective for my eating behaviour (applicable also to many other problems). Not only should my problem be seen as the symptom of a three-fold disease (physical, emotional, spiritual), but it should be treated in conjunction with other persons. Beyond a new plan of eating I should develop also new RELATIONSHIPS, based on new ATTITUDES: I needed to trust more an HP and people, that I didn't know, such as OA sponsors, officers or members (tr 2 Trust), to search for balance and sane boundaries between my personal or my group's goals and the common welfare of larger groups of which I am a member (tr 4 Autonomy) and to work with others who desire not to eat compulsively (tr 6 Solidarity). For this, I had to help to the best of my abilities, giving and receiving service, with humility, love and compassion, like it happens in a family unified by a common cause (tr 8 Fellowship), focusing only on the similarities and the required action for this purpose (tr 10 Neutrality). And of course, I should remember that these new actions and attitudes, placing spiritual principles before personalities (tr 12 Spirituality) lead me easier to serenity and sanity not only in my eating but in all my affairs. Traditions 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12 (Trust, Autonomy, Solidarity, Fellowship, Neutrality, Spirituality) completed my new guidelines for a better life, within and outside OA.

Six months after attending my first OA meeting I was at a healthy weight (maintained until now), having lost 20 kilos, working the steps with a sponsor, having a new relationship with my HP and enjoying an easier way of life where I experience more creative solutions in my relationships with others. Receiving and carrying the message became an essential part of these solutions. During my 12

years in OA I received inspiring messages at more than 1200 hours of meetings and many more hours of reading and sponsoring. My recovery and growth would be impossible without them. I enjoy being part of this amazing net of support. A flexible action plan to carry the message became for my recovery as important as a flexible plan of eating is for my abstinence.

Every day I always have many opportunities to do service and help others recover.

Within the fellowship: Sharing at meetings, at special local or national events or on the Greek OA loop. Leading meetings. Sponsoring. Translating and transmitting announcements/ newsletters / materials. Producing literature and handouts in Greek. Answering calls. Writing e-mails. Coordinating / creating workshops. Serving as downloader, group secretary, member or chair of local, national or regional committees. Serving as NSB representative at R9.

Outside the fellowship: Providing phone answering service. Speaking to friends and family. Writing announcements and articles. Participating in interviews. Giving out cards, hanging up posters. Speaking or writing to health care professionals, journalists, educators, libraries, everywhere that the OA message might reach a still suffering compulsive overeater.

My short, five question, 10th step daily inventory has been extended to seven questions:

- *How was my abstinence?*
- *How did I feel about my eating?*
- *Which step/s did I practice?*
- *Which tools did I use?*
- *What is my gratitude list?*
- *How did I carry the message within OA?*
- *How did I carry the message outside OA?*

This last question doesn't have an answer every day. But very often I do a small something (such as leave some cards at my dentist or a poster at my hairdresser's, say a few words to a mother waiting for her children outside school, call a person I spoke to before). Often I do these things because I want to be able to answer this seventh question.

Remaining open minded, I am always fascinated by new opportunities for service and challenges to carry the message. Sometimes I am a little afraid (am I sufficiently qualified and available?). In this case my HP, my sponsor and other experienced members usually have a more lucid view than I do. And they are always willing to help me!

My plan of eating keeps me free of destructive food behaviours and gives me new ways of enjoying food. My action plan for carrying the message keeps me away from selfish obsessions, leads me to acquiring new skills and offers me awareness for practicing an easier and more satisfying way of life.

Thank you OA!

Vassiliki, Geece

R.J, South Africa

One of the reasons that I get the urge to compulsively overeat is because of an inability to control other people/situations or my own thought and behavioral patterns. The big book of Alcoholics Anonymous says: 'A lack of power was our dilemma'.

In Overeaters Anonymous, I am practicing detachment with love or letting go.

Detachment with love or letting go:

- Allows people the freedom to be themselves, rather than who I want them to be.
- It enables me to maintain an emotional bond of love, concern and caring, without the urge to fix, enable, control and rescue.
- Detachment is the ability to let people take responsibility for themselves and not do for them what they can do for themselves. This sets me free to learn to focus on myself. I have enough unbalanced character traits to work on, without focusing on those of others. I need to be the best person I can be.
- Assists me in setting emotional boundaries, which help me not to be manipulated or emotionally blackmailed with guilt. Boundaries keep me safe from other people's emotional hooks, while simultaneously protecting others from me. Boundaries provide both parties with definition. They illuminate where I end and you begin.
- Enables me to mind my own business.

When I am unwilling to let go and detach with love, my most powerful tool to assist me is prayer: Please G-d help me to do what is good and appropriate to do in any given situation.

With prayer I say I am willing to be helped. As step 11 states 'Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understand Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry it out.' Prayer helps me detach from my old way of doing and acting. I get the strength to leave my loved ones in the hands of their own Higher Power and affect their own destinies.

I like the action of taking my hands off another's shoulders and placing them firmly on my own!
Letting go and Letting G-d!

Submitted by R.J. Johannesburg South Africa



ANSWER & IN SERVICE

Answer to 2nd reading on Sponsorship - "'Sponsoring Through the Twelve Steps", page 1 & 3

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