

**I.**  
**GUIDELINES**  
**FOR**  
**SPONSORSHIP**

**OA-HOW HOUSTON INTERGROUP INC.**  
**SUGGESTED GUIDELINES FOR SPONSORS**

We accept the fact that our problem with eating is a threefold illness: emotional, spiritual, and physical, and recognize that our successful recovery depends on our full commitment and our daily adherence to the guiding principles as set forth by the OA-HOW Program to reach additional levels of recovery. We know from past experience ABSTINENCE AND WORKING OF THE 12 STEPS will bring us happiness, contentment, and a sense of achievement in all areas of our lives as we continue with our recovery "ONE DAY AT A TIME."

Our primary guidelines are found in the Alcoholics Anonymous Big Book and the Alcoholics Anonymous Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions.

The purpose of the OA-HOW HOUSTON INTERGROUP INC. Sponsor's Guide (this "Guide") is to:

1. Provide guidelines for abstinence and following a food plan.
2. Define the five different levels of OA-HOW sponsorship and the required qualifications for each type of sponsor.
3. Provide guidelines for effective sponsorship.

These abstinence and sponsorship guidelines support working the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, and to provide a structured and disciplined environment for working the OA-HOW program.

Materials to be included in this Guide include the following: (listed below):

Part I- Guidelines for Sponsorship

Part II- Newcomer packet (Includes Basic Food Plan)

Part III- Third Step Ceremony

Part IV- Inventory Questions

Part V- Fifth Step Ceremony

Part VI- Maintenance Food Plan

Part VII- Step Questions (6-9)

Part VIII- Maintenance Questions

Part IX- Recommitment Questions

Part X Appendix (includes Suggested Meeting Format and Readings, additional questions, and more)

NOTE: Current OA-HOW meeting lists are not included in the Guide, but are available at most meetings.

## Part I: Guidelines for Sponsorship

### A. Following a Food Plan

1. OA-HOW members are committed to eating weighed and measured meals and abstaining from sugar, white flour, and individual binge foods. To be considered an abstinent food, flour and sugar should be fifth or lower in the list of ingredients. When reading labels, remember that sugar goes by many other names. For example: corn starch, corn syrup, dextrose, fructose, honey, lactose, maltose, modified food starch, molasses, and sucrose are all different names for sugar (Please see Part 1, Section C "Sugar by any other Name" for further information on reading food labels).
2. OA-HOW members are encouraged to work closely with their doctor or other health care professionals (such as a Certified Dietician) to modify the OA-HOW food plan to accommodate specific health needs. Any suggestions made by an individual's health care professional should be incorporated into their food plan.
3. OA-HOW members should not eat any food that is not on their food plan; **when in doubt, leave it out**. Also, if an OA-HOW member becomes aware that eating a certain abstinent food may lead them back to bingeing, they are encouraged to eliminate that food from their food plan to protect their abstinence.
4. Keeping in mind that individual food plans will evolve over time, a slip is defined as a break in abstinence caused by the following:
  - ☐ Knowingly eating more or less food than is on one's food plan (eating extra meals or snacks, significantly enlarging portions, skipping meals, etc.).
  - ☐ Knowingly eating something that is not on an individual's food plan.
  - ☐ Overeating or bingeing on food that is on an individual's food plan.
  - ☐ Failing to contact one's sponsor in agreed upon manner without prior notice for three consecutive days during the first thirty days of abstinence.
5. If a person is having difficulty deciding if they have slipped or not, they are to get feedback and guidance from their OA-HOW food sponsor. OA-HOW food sponsors are asked to share their own experience, strength, and hope regarding slips to help the sponsee determine whether they have slipped or not. A sponsee may need guidance in the uncertain areas of abstinence to maintain balance between the extremes of being very rigid with food or having no structure with food.

The following questions illustrate some of the uncertain areas of abstinence:

- Is one green bean too many a slip?
- Is a rounded measuring cup of vegetables a slip?
- Is eating two servings of an abstinent food a slip, when an individual's food plan indicates one serving is appropriate? What about eating 3 or 4 servings of an abstinent food?
- If a person does not weigh and measure their food when eating out or traveling, is that a slip?
- If someone eats a non-abstinent food when traveling, is that a slip?
- Is bingeing on an abstinent food a slip?

The answers to the above questions, and other questions like them, will vary according to the sponsor, sponsee, and situation. A food plan needs to be structured enough to eliminate compulsive overeating and bingeing, but flexible enough:

- to be livable.
- to accommodate changes in physical activity.
- to accommodate individual health needs.
- to accommodate lifestyle changes such as traveling.

It is important to maintain an ongoing relationship with a food sponsor as one's food plan evolves over time in response to the circumstances of daily living.

### **B. Handling Slips**

Knowing that our disease is incurable, we're always aware that we might "slip," by going off our food plan or going on a compulsive overeating binge. A slip is when an OA-HOW member has a break in their food plan as determined by the member and their sponsor. The following are suggested plans of action for resuming abstinence after a slip.

1. When a OA-HOW member slips and breaks their abstinence prior to stepping up and becoming an OA-HOW sponsor, they need to:

- ☐ Call their sponsor and begin eating abstinently.
- ☐ Commit food to their food sponsor for thirty days.
- ☐ Answer a specific number of recommitment questions as required by their sponsor.
- ☐ Give away answers to the recommitment questions to their sponsor.
- ☐ After giving away the answers to recommitment questions, resume answering the newcomer questions.
- ☐ Sponsors may encourage sponsees to listen in meetings rather than share for fourteen days following a break in abstinence.

2. When an OA-HOW sponsor slips, they need to:

- ☐ Call their food sponsor and start eating abstinently.
- ☐ Notify their sponsees of their slip and offer sponsees the option to change sponsors if they wish.
- ☐ Commit food to their food sponsor for fourteen days.
- ☐ Answer a specific number of recommitment questions as required by their food sponsor.
- ☐ Give away answers to recommitment questions to their food sponsor.
- ☐ Refrain from leading an OA-HOW meeting or standing up as an OA-HOW sponsor until fourteen days of continuous abstinence.
- ☐ Refrain from accepting new sponsees until they have fourteen days of continuous abstinence.

- ☐ After giving away answers to questions, resume answering OA-HOW questions.
- 3. If an OA-HOW member slips while holding a service position (such as secretary, treasurer, literature person of a meeting, an intergroup position, or chairing the retreat or a workshop), the member, with the help of a sponsor, should evaluate whether they need to step down from the position to focus on regaining their abstinence. It is suggested that the member and their sponsor make this decision together during the thirty-day period following the slip. If the member decides to step down from their service position, the appropriate people should be promptly notified so that the position can be filled by an abstaining OA-HOW member.
- 4. When a person returns to OA-HOW after an extended period of slipping or bingeing they need to:
  - ☐ Get a food sponsor and begin eating abstinently according to the food plan.
  - ☐ Commit food to their food sponsor for at least thirty days.
  - ☐ Answer a slip question (or recommitment question from the appendix) as directed by their food sponsor each day for thirty days.
  - ☐ Give away answers to slip questions (or recommitment questions from appendix).
  - ☐ Determine, with their food sponsor's help, where to resume their program, including the option of answering questions contained in the Recommitment Inventory.

### **C. Information on Sugar Substitutes and other Forms of Sugar**

This section is intended to educate and inform OA HOW members regarding sugars, sugar substitutes, and the risks associated therewith. If a member is having difficulty with sugar substitutes in their food plan, it is strongly suggested that they refer to this section and discuss their issues with the sponsor and health care professional such as a Certified Dietitian or Nutritionist. For some members, none of these substances will trigger cravings or binges. For others, craving may increase dramatically if they use some or all of these substances. Some may have varying reactions. As noted in the Guidelines for Implementing Abstinence, "when in doubt, leave it out." It is of the utmost importance that the sponsee discuss any and all details and concerns about their food plan with their sponsor.

#### **SUGAR BY ANY OTHER NAME**

The following information is meant to be helpful only and should not be considered complete. Please contact your health care professional(s) for additional information about reading food labels.

- All foods contain glucose; it is the basic unit of energy in all living systems. Our bodies cannot function without it. So it is impossible to eliminate all "sugars" from one's diet. The important thing to watch for is "added sugars"—substances added to natural foods to make them tastier. The best we can do is to eat whole, natural, non-processed foods as often as possible. Amount is also very important, because excess glucose causes a rise in insulin in the bloodstream. Insulin is a hormone that causes excess glucose to be stored as fat. This is necessary for animals that do not eat on a regular basis and must store fat for lean times. Humans today generally eat on a regular schedule and do not need to store fat, but the system that stores excess glucose as fat continues to function anyway.
- "Carbohydrate" is a generic term for any sugar or starch. A starch is just a large and complex sugar molecule. The ability of the body to digest a particular starch or sugar depends on whether or not we produce the proper enzyme needed. For example, "amylose" is the main starch in potatoes, and our bodies produce "amylase", the enzyme that breaks it into digestible glucose units.

- Read labels carefully to determine the sugar content of foods. Be on the lookout for words like those listed below. These other names for sugar should be fifth or lower on the list of ingredients.
- Any substance that ends in “-ose”, e.g. sucrose—table sugar, fructose—fruit sugar, lactose—milk sugar, etc.
- Any substance that ends in “-extrin”, e.g., maltodextrin.
- The word “saccharide” is a chemical term that means sugar. There is a sweetener on the market that supposedly has no sugars but has a compound called fructooligosaccharide, which simply means several individual fructose units combined into a larger molecule, but it is still, by definition, a sugar. “Saccharine” is an artificial sweetener based on a sugar structure.
- Any substance that ends in “-ol” is an alcohol. Alcohols are formed by the fermentation of sugar; the type of alcohol is determined by the type of sugar. “Sorbitol” is a frequently used artificial sweetener, which can cause severe gas and diarrhea.
- A main ingredient of Sweet and Low and Equal and all their clones is “dextrose” even though the package claims it contains no nutritive carbohydrates. Companies can claim this because the dextrose molecule cannot be broken down by the human digestive system and is therefore considered non-nutritive.
- Cellulose also, though technically a sugar, is considered non-nutritive. It is the substance that gives structure to plants. The human body is not capable of digesting cellulose and it passes through the body intact. This is the “roughage” we get from the plants we consume.

#### **WATCH OUT FOR ARTIFICIAL SWEETENERS**

A sugar substitute is a food additive that provides a sweet taste like that of sugar while containing significantly less food energy than other sweeteners, making it a zero-calorie or low-calorie sweetener. Many artificial sweeteners contain some form of sugar or highly refined carbohydrate derivative. They are called “nutritive” sweeteners. Saccharin tablets and saccharin liquids are “non-nutritive” and do not contain any sugar or highly refined carbohydrates at all. They are the safest form of artificial sweetener for those members who find their craving increasing with the use of artificial sweeteners. Also, moderation is vital in all aspects of an OA-HOW food plan. It is recommended that, even if the use of artificial sweeteners does not trigger cravings, a member use only a moderate amount in their food plan. As an example, an abstaining member and their sponsor may determine that 6 packets of artificial sweetener per day is an appropriate amount as a daily limit.

#### **D. Five Levels of OA-HOW Sponsorship**

For purposes of this Guide, it is assumed that all sponsors referred to are OA-HOW sponsors specifically working the OA-HOW program. There are five different levels of OA-HOW sponsorship: food sponsor, inventory sponsor, food maintenance sponsor, step sponsor, and question maintenance sponsor. An OA-HOW member may use separate individuals as their sponsor for each sponsorship level, and members are strongly encouraged to continue their work with a food sponsor no matter what level of sponsorship they are working on.

#### **FOOD SPONSOR**

A food sponsor is the first level of sponsorship in the OA-HOW program. To be a food sponsor, a member may still be using the basic food plan, and be releasing weight. They need not have reached goal weight.

To qualify as a food sponsor, a person must:

- have thirty days of continuous abstinence (fourteen days following a slip).
- be working the OA-HOW program with a food sponsor or food maintenance sponsor.

- have completed the OA-HOW newcomer questions.
- have given away answers to the newcomer questions to a food sponsor.
- have completed the third step ceremony with a food sponsor.

### **INVENTORY SPONSOR**

An inventory sponsor is a sponsor available to provide support and guidance to HOW members working on their fourth step inventory and the fifth step process of giving away the fourth step inventory. This support may include providing experience, strength, and hope while a sponsee answers the OA-HOW inventory questions and being a resource to answer questions about the inventory process. The inventory sponsor may also be asked to receive the sponsees fifth step, but the sponsee has the option to choose anyone for this purpose. To be an inventory sponsor, a member may still be using the basic food plan, and be releasing weight. They need not have reached goal weight.

To qualify as an inventory sponsor, a person must:

- have at least fourteen days of continuous abstinence.
- be a food sponsor.
- have completed the fifth step by giving away answers to the inventory questions to another person.

### **FOOD MAINTENANCE SPONSOR**

A food maintenance sponsorship level exists for members and sponsors who have reached goal weight before completing the maintenance questions. A food maintenance sponsor is an inventory sponsor who has been at goal weight (or within five pounds) continuously for at least six months and uses a maintenance food plan to maintain their weight. A food maintenance sponsor provides guidance and support to members making the transition from the basic food plan to a maintenance food plan and those individuals already following a maintenance food plan.

To qualify as a food maintenance sponsor, an individual must:

- have fourteen days of continuous abstinence.
- be a food sponsor.
- be an inventory sponsor.
- use a maintenance food plan and be at goal weight (within 5 lbs.)
- have been maintaining their goal weight continuously for at least six months (within 5 lbs.)

### **STEP SPONSOR**

A step sponsor is a sponsor available to provide support and guidance to OA-HOW members working on steps six through twelve. A step sponsor shares experience, strength, and hope while the sponsee answers the related program questions and begins practicing steps six through twelve in daily life. To be a step sponsor, a member may still be using the basic food plan, and be in the process of releasing weight. They need not have reached goal weight.

To qualify as a step sponsor, an individual must:

- have at least fourteen days of continuous abstinence.

- be a food sponsor.
- be an inventory sponsor.
- have completed the step six through twelve questions.
- have given away answers to the above questions to a step sponsor.

### **MAINTENANCE SPONSOR**

A maintenance sponsor is an inventory and step sponsor who has been at goal weight (or within five pounds) continuously for at least six months and uses a maintenance food plan to maintain their weight. A maintenance sponsor is a sponsor available to provide support and guidance to OA-HOW members working on the OA-HOW maintenance questions. The maintenance sponsor shares experience, strength, and hope related to the maintenance questions as well as questions regarding working the OA-HOW program in daily life.

To qualify as a maintenance sponsor, a person must:

- have fourteen days of continuous abstinence.
- have maintained goal weight within three pounds for six months.
- be a food sponsor.
- be an inventory sponsor.
- be a step sponsor.
- have completed the OA-HOW maintenance questions.
- have given away answers to the OA-HOW maintenance questions to a maintenance sponsor.

### **E. Guidelines for Effective Sponsorship**

1. To be a leader at OA-HOW meetings, a person must be a food sponsor and have at least fourteen days of continuous abstinence.
2. It is a food sponsor's responsibility to make sure a new sponsee has a copy of the OA-HOW food plan and newcomer questions to begin the OA-HOW program. It is also the food sponsor's responsibility to make sure a sponsee has a copy of this Guide at the completion of the Third Step "Step Up" Ceremony.
3. When a sponsee uses a food plan provided by a medical professional, the sponsee shall provide a copy of the food plan to the sponsor.
4. When beginning to sponsor a newcomer, a food sponsor and the newcomer should review the newcomer's food plan together, review the guidelines for implementing HOW abstinence, and discuss how to specifically implement the sponsee's food plan (refer to **Part I- Guidelines for Sponsorship, A. Following a Food Plan and Part II- Newcomer Packet, Guidelines for implementing Abstinence**).
5. Food sponsors should make sure that the newcomer understands the importance of using the Tools of the program daily to achieve and maintain abstinence, including the following:



- ☐ Write down food for every meal each day and commit it to their sponsor. If the sponsor is not available, the newcomer may commit their food to another HOW member. If the newcomer sponsee does not contact the sponsor for 3 consecutive days without making prior arrangements, this is considered a slip (refer to below).
  - ☐ Attend three OA-HOW meetings per week.
  - ☐ Make three outreach calls per day to other OA-HOW members.
  - ☐ Answer the newcomer questions as directed by the sponsor.
6. After thirty days of continuous abstinence, the newcomer and sponsor shall decide whether the newcomer will continue to commit their food and how often the newcomer will call their sponsor.
  7. A sponsor may choose to drop a newcomer after three consecutive days of not calling, unless prior arrangements have been made with their sponsor or in the case of exceptional circumstances.
  8. It is a food sponsor's responsibility to inform the sponsee if the sponsor will be out of town or temporarily unavailable, and to make suggestions of alternate means of communicating or other abstaining sponsors to contact.
  9. A sponsor should be mindful of maintaining appropriate boundaries when working with sponsees. A sponsor's time with sponsee is most helpful when spent sharing their own experience, strength, and hope as it relates to the OA-HOW program.
  10. When a sponsee has thirty days of continuous abstinence, has completed the newcomer questions, and has shared the answers with their food sponsor, it is time for the food sponsor and sponsee to meet and complete the Third Step Ceremony. At the completion of the Third Step Ceremony, the sponsee is ready to be a food sponsor and should be encouraged to begin the fourth step inventory.
  11. Anonymity is the spiritual principle that protects the confidentiality of individual OA-HOW members and creates the emotional safety to do the work of recovery. It is very important that sponsors practice anonymity with ALL information shared with them by sponsees.
  12. A person can sponsor up to the level of their program.
  13. A sponsor should not consider themselves to be available unless they are abstinent and actively working the program with a sponsor themselves.
  14. When a sponsee is at or near goal weight, the sponsee should discuss with their sponsor when they should implement the maintenance food plan. If the sponsor has not been at maintenance for at least 6 months continuously, the sponsor should step down as the sponsee's sponsor and encourage the sponsee to find a food maintenance or maintenance sponsor.
  15. It is suggested that after three slips, a sponsee may benefit from finding a new sponsor and recommitting to the OA-HOW program (refer to **Section I – Guidelines for Sponsorship, Section B. Handling Slips**).
  16. A sponsee may use different individuals for each sponsorship level. Sponsees are encouraged to continue their daily work with a food sponsor no matter what level of sponsorship they are working on.

**II.**  
**NEWCOMER**  
**PACKET**

## OA-HOW GUIDELINES FOR IMPLEMENTING H.O.W. ABSTINENCE

1. First, you may not modify it to suit yourself. Any additions or subtractions you make must be with a physician's or certified nutritionist's advice.
2. If you do not consistently follow your food plan, you will find that many of the other problems that brought you to HOW will come back also.
3. You must commit yourself to a black-and-white abstinence so you may deal with the gray areas of living.
4. See your doctor or health care professional. Have him/her completely review this program of eating. Follow all of his/her suggestions concerning this plan. Any recommendations your doctor or health care professional suggests to modify this plan are acceptable.
5. ALL FOOD MUST BE WEIGHED OR MEASURED. Use a digital or kitchen scale, measuring cups, and measuring spoons.
6. Food may be baked, broiled, roasted, pan-broiled, grilled, or oven-broiled. Use a non-stick pan for frying. NO DEEP-FRIED OR BREADED FOODS.
7. FOOD IS TO BE WRITTEN DOWN AND COMMITTED on a daily basis for at least a month. Many successful members continue to write their food down even after they have stopped committing it to a sponsor.
8. DO NOT SKIP MEALS AND DO NOT COMBINE MEALS (e.g., breakfast + lunch = brunch).
9. DO NOT WEIGH YOURSELF more than once per month. After maintenance weight is achieved, do not weigh more than once per week.
10. If something listed on this food plan becomes a problem, avoid it. AVOID ALL INDIVIDUAL BINGE FOODS.
11. If a food item is not listed, check with your sponsor BEFORE having it. When in doubt, leave it out.
12. Sit down for meals. Eat slowly; try to relax and enjoy your food. Eat only your weighed and measure portions. Never have a second helping.
13. Foods we ABSOLUTELY avoid are: anything containing sugar or white flour, alcohol, sweets of any kind, fried foods, sugared soft drinks, and honey.
14. LOOK FOR SUGAR! Sugar must be listed 5th or lower on ingredient lists and should not be in seasonings or soft drinks. Agave, cane juice or evaporated cane juice, concentrated fruit juice, maltodextrin, dextrose, sucrose, fructose, lactose, honey, molasses, and corn syrup are, in fact, SUGAR! Please read "Sugar by Any Other Name" for more information.
15. At the end of the first 30 days, continue to call your sponsor while adjusting to grains.
16. Some artificial sweeteners contain large amounts of sugar, BEWARE!
17. If fresh fruit is not available, use canned or frozen fruit packed in water or its own juice. When mixing fruits, be mindful that if the serving is  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup fruit, then the total mixture must equal  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup.
18. Use mayonnaise rather than Miracle Whip-type salad dressing.
19. If you want milk in your coffee, subtract a portion of protein from your morning meal. That will give you a measure amount of milk all day for coffee.

20. Salad should be measured at all times. A salad can be any combination of listed vegetables.
21. Two pieces of chicken (i.e., thigh and drumstick or breast and wing) or 4oz is a portion.
22. Up to three tablespoons of bran per day may be used if needed for regularity.
23. Check any recipe with a Sponsor before you eat it. All recipes may not be within food plan guidelines.
24. NO ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES.
25. Moderate exercise, 8 glasses of water, and a daily multi-vitamin are suggested daily.
26. Vegetable allowances for lunch or dinner may be reversed so that the larger may be used at lunch and the smaller at dinner.
27. When you are within 10 pounds of your goal weight, you should begin using the OA-HOW Maintenance Food Plan with the help of an OA-HOW Maintenance Sponsor.

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"Carbohydrate" is a generic term for any sugar or starch. A starch is just a large and complex sugar molecule. The ability of the body to digest a particular starch or sugar depends on whether or not we produce the proper enzyme needed. For example, "amylose" is the main starch in potatoes, and our bodies produce "amylase", the enzyme that breaks it into digestible glucose units.

Read labels carefully to determine the sugar content of foods. Be on the lookout for words like those listed below. These other names for sugar should be fifth or lower on the list of ingredients.

Any substance that ends in "-ose", e.g. sucrose—table sugar, fructose—fruit sugar, lactose—milk sugar, etc.

Any substance that ends in "-extrin", e.g., maltodextrin.

The word "saccharide" is a chemical term that means sugar. There is a sweetener on the market that supposedly has no sugars but has a compound called fructooligosaccharide, which simply means several individual fructose units combined into a larger molecule, but it is still, by definition, a sugar. "Saccharine" is an artificial sweetener based on a sugar structure.

Any substance that ends in "-ol" is an alcohol. Alcohols are formed by the fermentation of sugar; the type of alcohol is determined by the type of sugar. "Sorbitol" is a frequently used artificial sweetener, which can cause severe gas and diarrhea.

The main ingredient in Sweet and Low and Equal are all their clones in "dextrose" even though the package claims it contains no nutritive carbohydrates. Companies can claim this because the dextrose molecule cannot be broken down by the human digestive system and is therefore considered non-nutritive. This is true of cellulose also, though technically a sugar; it is the substance that gives structure to plants. The human body is not capable of digesting cellulose and it passes through the body intact. This is the "roughage" we get from the plants we consume.

#### **WATCH OUT FOR ARTIFICIAL SWEETENERS**

Many artificial sweeteners contain some form of sugar or highly refined carbohydrate derivative. They are called "nutritive" sweeteners. Saccharin tablets and saccharin liquids are "non-nutritive" and do not contain any sugar or highly refined carbohydrates at all. They are the safest form of artificial sweetener for those members who find their craving increasing with the use of artificial sweeteners. Also, moderation is vital in all aspects of an OA-, HOW food plan. It is recommended that, even if the use of artificial sweeteners does not trigger cravings, a member use only a moderate amount in their food plan. As an example, an abstaining member and their sponsor may determine that 6 packets of artificial sweetener per day is an appropriate amount as a daily limit.

### OA-HOW Basic Food Plan and Food Choices & Portions

This is a suggested food plan that has been developed by compulsive overeaters over the years. The food plan is weighed and measured to provide a healthy, nutritious balance. Discuss with your sponsor regarding substitutions and variations. It is a guide in achieving physical recovery from compulsive overeating. It is offered as a recommendation in working the First Step, "...admitted we were powerless over food...", on a daily basis.

It is recommended that you work this food plan with a qualified Sponsor, and that you obtain the approval of a health care professional's before beginning your abstinence using the HOW food plan. Any recommendations your health care professional makes will be accepted. Upon discussion and approval from your qualified sponsor, use it daily as you work the 12 Steps of Recovery.

<p><b>WOMEN</b></p> <p><u><b>Breakfast</b></u>  1 selection from Protein choices  1 selection from Fruit choices  1 selection from the Fat choices  1 selection from the Grain choices after the first 30 days</p> <p><u><b>Lunch</b></u>  1 selection from Protein choices  2 selections from Vegetable choices  1 selection from the Fat choices</p> <p><u><b>Dinner</b></u>  1 selection from Protein choices  3 selections from Vegetable choices  1 selection from the Fat choices  1 selection from Grain choices after first 30 days for lunch or dinner or split between</p>	<p><b>MEN</b></p> <p><u><b>Breakfast</b></u>  1 ½ selections from Protein choices  1 selection from Fruit choices  1 selection from the Fat choices  1 selection from the Grain choices after the first 30 days</p> <p><u><b>Lunch</b></u>  1 ½ selections from Protein choices  2 selections from Vegetable choices  1 selection from the Fat choices</p> <p><u><b>Dinner</b></u>  1 ½ selections from Protein choices  3 selections from Vegetable choices  1 selection from the Fat choices  2 selections from Grain choices after first 30 days for lunch or dinner or split between</p>
<p><b>YOUTH</b></p> <p><u><b>Breakfast</b></u>  1 selection from Protein choices  1 selection from Fruit choices  1 selection from the Fat choices  8 oz. lowfat or skim milk  1 slice whole grain bread or 1oz cereal</p> <p><u><b>Lunch</b></u>  1 selection from Protein choices  1 selection from Vegetable or Fruit choices  1 selection from the Fat choices  Finger salad (3 pieces of raw vegetables)  8 oz. lowfat or skim milk  2 slices whole grain bread</p>	<p><u><b>Dinner</b></u>  1 to 1½ selections from Protein choices  1 selection from Vegetable choices  1 selection from the Fat choices  2 cups salad w/ 1 tablespoon dressing  1 selection from Fruit choices  8oz lowfat or skim milk</p> <p><u><b>Midday Snack</b></u>  Up to 8 oz. lowfat/skim milk and/or any fruit not consumed at a meal may be used as a snack</p>

<b>PROTEIN</b> (Proportionate amounts of different proteins may be combined to create one serving)	<b>FRUIT</b>	<b>VEGETABLES</b> (Proportionate amounts of different vegetables may be combined to create one serving)		<b>GRAINS</b>	<b>CONDIMENTS</b> (Sugar 5th or lower on label ingredient list) Use in moderation and discuss with your sponsor
<b>4 oz of:</b> Beef Poultry Fish Shellfish Hot Dogs Cold Cuts Sausage Pork Lamb Veal Cottage Cheese (1/2 cup) Ricotta Cheese (1/2 cup) Tempeh  <b>8oz of:</b> Yogurt (plain only) Tofu  <b>16oz of:</b> Milk Buttermilk  2 Eggs 4 slices Bacon 2oz Hard Cheese 1 cup Legumes, including Black-eyed Peas, Pinto Beans, Black Beans, Edamame, Lima Beans, Field Peas, Chickpeas (not green peas)	Apple – 1 Apricots – 3 med Berries: • Blackberries – ½ cup • Boysenberries – ½ cup • Blueberries – ½ cup • Gooseberries – 1 cup • Huckleberries ½ cup • Raspberries – ½ cup • Strawberries – 1 cup Figs – 2 Grapefruit – ½ Guava – 1 Kiwi – 1 Lemons – 2 Limes – 2 Mango – ½ Melons: • Cantaloupe – ½ • Casaba – 1 cup • Crenshaw – 1 cup • Honeydew – 1 cup • Watermelon – 1 cup Orange – 1 Papaya – ½ med / 1 cup Peach – 1 Pineapple- ½ cup fresh or unsweetened canned Plum – 1 Rhubarb – 1 cup Tangerine – 2 Unsweetened juice – ½ cup	Serving: (1 cup) Alfalfa sprouts Artichokes Asparagus Bamboo shoots Bean sprouts Beets Bok-choy Broccoli Brussels sprouts Cabbage, all types Carrots Cauliflower Celery Chard Chillies (red or green) Cucumbers Eggplant Green Beans Greens (spinach, watercress, mustard, collard, beet, turnip, etc.) Jerusalem artichoke Jicama Kale Kohlrabi Leeks Lettuce Mushrooms Okra Onions Parsley Parsnips Pea pods (snow, snap, etc.) Peppers (all types) Pickles (dill only) Pumpkin, fresh or unsweetened canned Radishes	Rutabaga Sauerkraut Squash (all types) String beans Tomatoes Tomatillos Turnips Water chestnuts Zucchini  <b>FATS</b> (For best nutrition, it is recommended that fat servings be spread out among all three meals. However, fat servings may be combined into two meals upon discussion with your sponsor.)  1 tsp. butter or margarine 1 tsp oil 1 T. mayonnaise 2 T oil-based salad dressing, *see note below 1 oz. avocado  *Salad dressing ingredients vary a great deal. If a salad dressing has NO oil (including mayonnaise) and assuming NO sugar, it is NOT a fat, it is a condiment. For all salad dressings with oil, use 2 tablespoons as one serving of fat unless decided otherwise with your sponsor.	Must always be whole grain – “unbleached flour”, “wheat flour”, or “enriched flour” is not whole grain. All grain choices must have any form of sugar or white flour, listed 5th or lower on the ingredient list. -1/8 cup wheat germ 1oz whole grain bread (incl. pita, tortilla, sprouted grain bread) - ½ cup cooked: amaranth, barley, brown rice, bulgur wheat, faro, kasha (buckwheat), millet, oat groats, quinoa, rye, teff, kasha, whole grain cereal or pasta - 1oz whole grain dry cereal, whole grain crackers, or whole grain rice cakes *Please note that couscous is made with white flour and not approved grain.	* Be sure to read “Sugar by any other name” before using the starred items  Herbs & spices Soy sauce Worcestershire sauce Onion soup mix *Diet or sugar-free catsup* *Sugar-free syrup* *Sugar & oil-free salad Dressing* Mustard Vinegar Salsa ½ cup nonfat broth ½ cup tomato sauce Lemon juice

## My Daily Checklist of OA-HOW Tools

[illegible]



# OA-HOW Menu Planner

	Day _____	Day _____	Day _____	Day _____	Day _____	Day _____	Day _____
	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast
Protein choice							
Fruit choice							
Fat—1 teaspoon							
Optional (Broth, Jello)							
	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
Protein							
Vegetable choice							
Vegetable choice							
Fat / dressing choice							
Optional (Broth, Jello)							
	Dinner	Dinner	Dinner	Dinner	Dinner	Dinner	Dinner
Protein							
Vegetable choice							
Vegetable choice							
Vegetable choice							
Fat / dressing choice							
Optional (Broth, Jello)							
2 Grain choices (after first 30 days)							

**OA-HOW HOUSTON INTERGROUP INC.**  
**NEWCOMER QUESTIONS**

The Houston OA-HOW newcomer questions are designed to acquaint the newcomer with the first three steps of recovery. The reading assignments are taken from the Alcoholics Anonymous Big Book and the Alcoholics Anonymous Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. There are no right or wrong answers to these questions. The goal is to familiarize individuals with the Twelve Step recovery process as it relates to problems with food (compulsive overeating, bulimia, anorexia, or other eating disorders), and to help individuals begin to apply the recovery process to themselves. References to the AA Big Book will include citations to page numbers of 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> editions in that order

1. Write a history of your problems with food beginning with the first time you can remember food related events. If weight is an issue, discuss how much weight you have gained and/or lost, what medical attention you have sought for the problem and your attempts at control your problems with food.
2. Read the doctor's opinion in the Alcoholics Anonymous Big Book (pages xxiii-xxx; xxv-xxxii). Write on how you have experienced the physical allergy/craving for food and the mental obsession for food. How does this set you apart from normal eaters?
3. Read Chapter 2 in the Alcoholics Anonymous Big Book (There is a Solution). After reading "There Is A Solution", write on how you have lost the power of choice over food.
4. Read Chapter 3 in the Alcoholics Anonymous Big Book ("More About Alcoholism").
5. After reading "More About Alcoholism", write on the following ideas from the chapter as they relate to your personal experiences:
  - The belief that after losing the weight or being free of bingeing / purging / starving for a period of time, you can resume your compulsive overeating patterns without your eating problems reoccurring.
  - The mental insanity that precedes the first compulsive bite.
  - The ability to control your eating using self-knowledge.
6. Read Step 1 in the Alcoholics Anonymous Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. Is lack of power over food your problem, why or why not? Do you truly see yourself as a having a compulsion with food, why or why not?
7. Read Chapter 4 (We Agnostics) in the Alcoholics Anonymous Big Book.

8. After reading "We Agnostics", discuss the following ideas from the chapter as they relate to your personal experiences:
  - To be doomed to a death caused by an eating disorder or live on a spiritual basis are not easy alternatives to face.
  - Your own concept of a Higher Power is sufficient to work the Twelve Steps and recover from your eating disorder.
9. Read Step 2 in the Alcoholics Anonymous Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. Write on using the substitution method of accepting the presence of a Higher Power.
10. On a two column balance sheet list on one side your negative feelings and on the other side your positive feelings as they relate to your religious experiences. What conclusion do you reach when you reflect on the balance sheet?

Negative feelings re: religious experiences	Positive feelings re: religious experiences

11. 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. What conclusion do you reach when you reflect on the balance sheet?

Reasons for believing in God	Reasons not to believe in God

12. After examining the balance sheets from question 10 and question 11, write on where you are in the process of coming to believe a High Power can restore you to sanity and remove your food obsession.
13. Read Chapter 5 in the Big Book (How It Works).

14. After reading "How It Works", write on the following ideas from the chapter as they relate to your personal experiences:
  - Selfishness – self-centeredness is at the root of your troubles. Do you agree or disagree with this idea and why?
  - To take step 3 you have to quit playing God and let a Higher Power be your director. Do you agree or disagree with this idea and why?
15. Read Step 3 in the Alcoholics Anonymous Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. The key to practicing is willingness. In what areas of your life are you willing to practice Step 3 and why? In what areas of your life are you unwilling to practice Step 3 and why?
16. Step 3 in the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions indicates that the misuse of willpower is our trouble, because we try to bombard our problems with it instead of trying to bring our will into agreement with our Higher Power's intention for us. How have you used your willpower properly? - How have you misused your willpower? What is your Higher Power's intention for you and your life?
17. Read pages 569-570;567-568 in the Alcoholics Anonymous Big Book (Spiritual Experience). Based on your personal experiences, write on how your awareness of a Higher Power has changed over time.
18. Read the promises that come from practicing the Twelve Steps (Alcoholics Anonymous Big Book page 83-84; start at "If we are painstaking about this..." and stop at "This thought brings us to Step 10"). Do you see these promises happening in the lives of others recovering in OA-HOW when they share at meetings? Do you think these promises can happen in your life; why or why not?
19. Practicing the Twelve Steps changes a person's relationship with food (read in the Alcoholics Anonymous Big Book page 84-85; start at "And we have ceased fighting ..." and stop at "It is easy to let up..."). Do you see this happening in the lives of others recovering in OA-HOW when they share at meetings? - Do you think this can happen to you; why or why not?
20. Read Chapter 11 in the Alcoholics Anonymous Big Book (A Vision For You).
21. After reading "A Vision For You", write on how the fellowship of others recovering in OA-HOW (developed through attending meetings, making telephone calls, and sponsorship) helps your recovery.

22. Read Tradition Twelve in the Alcoholics Anonymous Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. Anonymity is the spiritual principle that protects the confidentiality of individual OA-HOW members. How does anonymity help you recover from problems with food? How does anonymity protect the OA-HOW fellowship as a whole?
23. The OA-HOW program emphasizes cultivating an attitude of gratitude. What are you grateful for today and why? What are you not grateful for and why?
24. Write on the idea that abstinence is the most important thing in your life without exception. Do you agree or disagree with this idea and why?
25. Write on how H.A.L.T. applies to your life; do not allow yourself to get too Hungry, too Angry, too Lonely, or too Tired.
26. A structured food plan is an important tool of the OA-HOW program. For you, what are the advantages and disadvantages of using a food plan?
27. Having a sponsor, making telephone calls, attending meetings, and giving service are tools of the OA-HOW program. How do these tools help your recovery?
28. Reading and writing are tools of the OA-HOW program. Now that you have almost completed the newcomer reading and writing assignments, how is reading and writing helping your recovery?
29. HOW in OA-HOW stands for the principles of honesty, open-mindedness and willingness. How do these principles help your recovery?
30. Read the article entitled "The Act of Surrendering to the Therapeutic Process" by Dr. Harry Tiebout, M.D. Write on the idea that submission is not the same as surrender and discuss the difference. How is participating in the OA-HOW program helping your own personal surrender?

**THE ACT OF SURRENDERING THE THERAPEUTIC PROCESS**  
**BY DR. HENRY TIEBOUT, M.D.**

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 that the overeater is, among the not-so-sick, the most **UNREASONABLE** and **STUBBORN** about seeking help or being able to take it when he 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 his fingers in the face of reality and live on unperturbed. It has two special values for handling life situations. Defiance, certainly with overeaters, is a surprisingly effective tool for managing anxiety or 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."

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 wishes and a proneness to interpret frustration as evidence of rejection and lack of love.

On the other side, the defiance says it is not true that I can't manage eating. On the other 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 now obvious. His unconscious mind rejects, through its capacity for defiance and grandiosity what its conscious mind perceives. Hence, realistically, the individual is frightened by his 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 ensues. The tools of the 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: He can listen and learn without conflict and fighting back. He is receptive to life, not antagonistic. He senses a feeling of relatedness and at-one-ness which becomes the source of inner peace and 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 individual, 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.

**III.**  
**THIRD STEP**  
**CEREMONY**

**OA-HOW HOUSTON INTERGROUP INC.**  
**Newcomer Third Step Ceremony**

*The materials needed to perform the OA-HOW HOUSTON INTERGROUP INC. Third Step ceremony are the Alcoholics Anonymous Big Book, the Alcoholics Anonymous Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, a copy of the OA-HOW HOUSTON INTERGROUP INC. "Suggested Guidelines for Sponsors" booklet that will be given to the newcomer, and three candles.*

**Sponsor reads:** OA-HOW offers each of us a wonderful opportunity to develop and hasten an attitude change known as ego reduction. The use of the disciplines of weighing and measuring, phone calls, reporting to sponsors, and attending meetings all combine to reinforce our growth. In HOW, action is the magic word. Until we so humble ourselves through doing this footwork, there is no assurance of our ego reduction or of our surrender to our Higher Power.

I wish to thank you for asking me to be your sponsor. Please know that my recovery depends as much on working with you as your recovery depends on working with me.

The purpose of the Third Step Ceremony is to:

1. celebrate your completion of 30 days of continuous abstinence and completion of the OA-HOW newcomer questions. Congratulations!
2. make sure that a foundation in the first three steps is in place to support you as you move on to the Fourth Step inventory.
3. review the OA-HOW sponsorship guide, and answer any questions you may have about being a sponsor or participating in the OA-HOW program.
4. renew our commitment to continue recovery and carry the message of recovery to other compulsive overeaters.

Let us now join hands and pray: "Higher Power, help us to commit ourselves to the first three steps in accordance with thy will."

**Sponsor continues reading:** Before we discuss step one, do you have any questions about the OA-HOW program or the newcomer questions you just completed?

You see before you three candles representing the principles behind each step. The principle behind step one is honesty, the principle behind step two is hope, and the principle behind step three is faith. Without taking the first three steps and practicing these principles, we would not be recovering compulsive overeaters. You will light one of these candles after we discuss each step.

**STEP ONE**

I am now going to ask you some questions about step one. Please light the candle of honesty. The candle of honesty is the touchstone of all our endeavors. It is the guiding light of truth for all who undertake the work to stop the advancement of compulsive overeating. With this light we step out of the world of fantasy and into reality. Without honesty, we are doomed to remain in the sick, shadowy world of past mistakes and unrealistic dreams of tomorrow.



What did you think of the OA-How program on your first day of abstinence? Did you think it would work for you and why?

What do you think of the OA-HOW program now? Is the program helping you? How?

What do the words "being powerless over food" mean to you?

Step one talks about having a physical allergy/craving for food combined with a mental obsession for food that sets us apart from normal eaters. Describe how you have experienced the physical allergy to, or craving for, particular foods in your life. Describe how you have experienced the mental obsession for food in your life.

Do you consider yourself to be a normal eater and why?

Compulsive overeating is progressive because the symptoms become more severe over time and, consequently, increasingly drastic measures are necessary to combat it. Based on your personal experience, do you agree or disagree with this idea and why?

How long have you been seeking a solution to your compulsive overeating?

What are some of the remedies you have tried for your compulsive overeating and how effective were they?

Are there other alternatives to the OA-How program you would like to investigate to solve your compulsive overeating and why?

Can you honestly say you are interested in the OA-HOW program as a way of life or are you still "on a diet" and why?

Step one refers to having an unmanageable life due to compulsive overeating. Do you agree or disagree with this idea and why? If you agree, how does compulsive overeating make your life unmanageable?

Please read in the Alcoholics Anonymous Big Book pages 24 and 43:

Page 24 – start at "The fact is...", and stop at "The almost certain consequences...".

Page 43 – last paragraph, start at "Once more: The alcoholic at certain times...", and stop at the end of the page.

Do you agree or disagree with what you just read as it applies to your compulsive overeating and why?

Will you please read page 21 in the Alcoholics Anonymous Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. Start at "Who cares to...", and stop at "Bust upon entering AA...".

Do you identify with what you just read as it applies to your compulsive overeating and why? Do you accept that you are totally powerless over food and that compulsive overeating has made your life unmanageable? Why or why not?

Read page 21 in the Alcoholics Anonymous Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. Start at "But upon entering AA...", and stop at the end of the page.

Do you agree or disagree with what you just read as it applies to your compulsive overeating and why? Do you see the admission of personal powerlessness as an asset or a liability and why? Have you accepted that you are powerless over your addiction? If so, what must you do next? (sponsor -- be sure to reinforce the concepts of willingness and action.)

We have now completed our discussion of step one.

Do you have any questions you would like to ask about step one, before we move on to step two?

## STEP TWO

**Sponsor continues reading:** Please light the candle of hope. In HOW, surrender is the first and most important act in working the twelve steps. You have shown your willingness to surrender calling in your food for thirty days, but without the further surrender to working the steps most of us are not able to maintain our commitment to abstinence. When working the steps we surrender our will and ego. We begin by suspending our disbelief and grandiosity. We surrender to the hope that God can do for us what we have never been able to do for ourselves.

A discussion about step two centers around three ideas:

1. Coming to believe that a Higher Power can be active in our lives.
2. Coming to believe that we are insane when it comes to food.
3. Coming to believe that a Higher Power will restore us to sanity regarding food.

Please read page 12 and 47 in the Alcoholics Anonymous Big Book:

Page 12 -- start at "Despite the living example...", and stop at "The real significance of my experience..."

Page 47 -- start at "When, therefore, we speak to you...", and stop at "Besides a seeming inability..."

Discuss the prejudices and fears you have about developing your own concept of a Higher Power.

Defiance often comes between us and a Higher Power. Will you please read page 31 in the Alcoholics Anonymous Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. Start at "As psychiatrists have often observed..." and stop at "In AA we saw the fruits..."

Can you describe your defiance as it relates to your Higher Power?

Some individuals have difficulty with Step Two because it states we are insane about food. Please read page 32-33 in the Alcoholics Anonymous Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. Start at "Few indeed are the practicing alcoholics...", and stop at "Therefore, Step Two..."

According to what you just read, one definition of insanity is the lack of soundness of mind about food. Do you agree or disagree with this definition of insanity as it applies to your compulsive overeating and why?

Our problems with a Higher Power come in many forms. Some of us are mad at God because we believe God deserted us. Some of us believe God could never forgive us because of our wrongdoings. Some of us refuse to believe in God because of the action of some seemingly religious people. Most of the time the problem boils down to debating the question of whether or not this Higher Power is available to help us. Will you please read page 26-27 in the Alcoholics Anonymous Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. Start at "At this juncture...", and stop at "All of them will tell you...".

Is your God too busy with life's larger problems (for example: wars, natural disasters, and epidemics) to be concerned with your food problem? If so, why?

Now that we have discussed the key points of step two, where are you in the process of taking step two and coming to believe a Higher Power can remove your food obsession? Are you confident your concept of a Higher Power can do this for you? Are you full of doubt but willing to rely on the experience of the OA-HOW groups you attend? Are you somewhere between these two perspectives?

We have now completed our discussion of step two.

Do you have any questions you would like to ask about step two and what we just discussed, before we move on to step three?

### **STEP THREE**

Please light the candle of faith. You have begun the process of spiritual awakening. It is like planting a seed. Growth begins long before you can see the flower breaking through the earth. It takes faith to believe that growth is occurring. Faith is like a muscle – the more you work it, the stronger it becomes. In step three, we consider how to practice our faith.

A discussion about step three focuses on four areas:

1. A life based on self-sufficiency is not enough to recover from compulsive overeating.
2. A person must have a workable concept of a Higher Power to depend on for direction.
3. Depending upon a Higher Power is beneficial.
4. Willingness is the key to taking Step Three.

The first requirement for taking step three is the awareness that a life based on self-will is not enough to bring about recovery from compulsive overeating. This awareness begins as a person takes step one.

To discuss this first requirement please read page 60-61 and page 62 in the Alcoholics Anonymous Big Book:

Page 60-61 -- start at "Being convinced, we were at Step Three...", and stop at "In trying to make these arrangements...".

Page 62 -- start at "This is the how and why of it...", and stop at "Next, we decided...".

Is your life based on self-sufficiency? How has self-sufficiency prevented you from recovering from compulsive overeating?

The second requirement for taking step three is that of depending on a Higher Power to direct your life, a process that begins by taking step two.

To discuss the second requirement please read page 62 in the Alcoholics Anonymous Big Book. Start at "...Next, we decided that...", and stop at the end of the page.

Do you have a concept of a Higher Power that can direct your life? What is your concept and how does it guide you?

Step three in the Alcoholics Anonymous Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions indicates that dependence on a Higher Power results in greater independence. Please read page 36-27 in the Alcoholics Anonymous Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. Start at "yes, respecting alcohol...", and stop at "Should his own image...".

The following are examples of dependence that leads to greater independence:

1. Electricity gives us air conditioning and electric light.
2. Automobiles give us greater mobility.
3. Medical Professionals and scientists give us the opportunity for improved physical health.
4. Non-profit institutions like churches allow us to have a place for OA-HOW meetings.

What are examples of your dependence on people, places, and things that give you greater independence and how do they do so?

Do you believe dependence on a Higher Power can bring you greater independence? If so, how?

Please read page 63 in the Alcoholics Anonymous Big Book. Start at "When we sincerely...", and stop at "We were now at Step Three...". Based on your personal experience, what benefits have you received by having a Higher Power direct your life? If you don't believe you have received any benefits, what benefits do other OA-HOW members talk about when they share in meetings and what benefits would you like to experience?

Please read page 34 and page 40 in Step Three in the Alcoholics Anonymous Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions:

Page 34 -- start at "Practicing Step Three...", and stop at "...In the first two steps...".

Page 40 -- start at "Then it is explained...", and stop at "It is when we try...".

How willing are you to take step three today?

Step Three calls for us to make a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understand God. After our discussion about the first three steps today and your completion of the newcomer questions, do you feel you have developed a sufficient foundation in the OA-HOW program to take step three with me today?

If you are uncomfortable or afraid, remember that all that is needed to take step three is willingness to accept a Higher Power that you are comfortable with.

Please join me in saying the Third Step Prayer together, located in the Alcoholics Anonymous Big Book, page 63, starting at "God, I offer... May I do Thy will always."

We have now completed our discussion of step three. Do you have any questions you would like to ask about Step Three and what we just discussed, before we move on?

**Sponsor continues reading:** To conclude our time together today, let me congratulate you on your continuous abstinence, completion of the newcomer questions, and completion of the Third Step Ceremony. Congratulations! Through your involvement in these activities you have laid a foundation in the OA-HOW program that strengthens your ongoing recovery from compulsive overeating.

Together let us now pray: (*Sponsor may ask the newcomer to kneel if appropriate*): God, I offer myself to Thee - To build with me and to do with me as Thou wilt. Relieve me of the bondage of self, that I may better do Thy will to those I would help of Thy Power, Thy Love, and Thy Way of life.

To sponsor: *At this time, if it is appropriate for this particular sponsoree, you could share some significant reading from a religious tradition to conclude the ceremony. Below is a list of readings that others have found significant. (You may add quotes from St. Paul's letter to the Corinthians, a Judaic piece, a Muslim piece such as a poem by Rumi, a Hindu piece such as a reading from the Bhagavad Gita, or a Buddhist piece, etc.)*

**Sponsor continues reading:** I'd like to plan a time to meet at an OA-HOW meeting to introduce you as a new food sponsor (known as "Stepping Up").

Let me give you the "OA-HOW HOUSTON INTERGROUP INC. Suggested Guidelines for Sponsors" booklet. Let us review the sponsor guidelines together and let me answer any questions you may have about sponsoring, moving on to start the Fourth Step inventory process, or your continued participation in the OA-HOW program. (*Sponsor and newcomer review sponsor guide together.*)

Finally, let me thank you for allowing me to help and support you with your abstinence and the footwork you have done in the first three steps. Thank you for participating in this Third Step Ceremony and your willingness to work with me. Sponsoring you has strengthened my program, just as sponsoring others will strengthen your program. Let me encourage you to continue your

recovery through continued abstinence and involvement in the OA-HOW program. Let me also encourage you to begin sponsoring newcomers, and to obtain an Inventory Sponsor and move forward with the Fourth Step inventory questions to keep your recovery going. *(Newcomer may ask sponsor to be Inventory sponsor if the sponsor can do so, or newcomer may ask someone else.)*

**IV.**  
**INVENTORY**  
**QUESTIONS**

## OA-HOW Fourth Step Inventory Questions

### Childhood

1. In general, how do you define family? What kind of family did you have? Describe what you think your family thought of you. Describe what you thought of your family.
2. What kind of relationship did your mother(s) have with her (their) parents?
3. What kind of relationship did your father(s) have with his (their) parents?
4. Were you wanted at birth? Write out the circumstances of your family at the time of your birth, including things such as family size, age differences, and financial status. Was there laughter, arguing or depression at that time? Were there other relatives or people living with you? How did these things affect you?
5. Did you have siblings? If not, how did you feel about being an only child? If you did have siblings, were you younger or older than your siblings? If older, how old were you at the birth of your brother(s) and/or sister(s)? If you had siblings, describe how you felt about your older sibling(s), and/or younger sibling(s).
6. Was either of your parents sick enough to need hospitalization? If so, describe.
7. Were you separated from any important family members? If so, describe. Did you feel afraid or guilty about this separation? Did you feel responsible? Did you feel abandoned? Describe.
8. Did you experience a divorce in your childhood? Did either of your parents or other close family member die during your childhood? If so, how did these things affect you?
9. Did someone other than your parents raise you? If so, how did this affect you?
10. Were you threatened by an important person in your life if you misbehaved as a child? If so, in what way were you threatened? If so, what were your fears in this regard?
11. A child can be made to feel guilty about normal sexual curiosity. Did this happen to you? Were you scolded for masturbating, playing "Doctor" or participating in group masturbation or sex play? Were you given sex education in school or from a parent? How did it make you feel? Discuss your reactions and experiences related to the above.
12. Were you afraid of the dark? If so, how did you and your family respond?
13. Did you have close friends in school? Were you teased by others in school? Did you tease others in school? Did you have fights in school? Did you feel bullied in school? Do you think you may have been a bully? Were you afraid to fight or were you afraid not to fight, because of pressure from parents, siblings, or others? Discuss.
14. How did your parents discipline you? How did you react to your parents disciplining you?
15. What kind of relationship do you think your parents had? Were they close or distant with one another? Did your parents show affection? Did this affect you? Describe.
16. Did your parents fight? If not, why not? If so, describe their fights and include the following: did you resent it? Did their fighting scare you? Did you break up their fights? Did you take one side or another?
17. What were your parents' religious backgrounds? What were your parents' religious/ spiritual beliefs and practices? How did they affect you?
18. What were your childhood fears (storms, dogs, spiders, people, devil, bogeyman, lack of money etc., include them all).
19. As a child, did you ever steal? If so, discuss.
20. How old were you when you first masturbated? Were you ever caught and made to feel guilty? Did you feel guilty even though you weren't caught? What other sexual curiosities



- did you have or did you observe?
21. Where you named after someone? If so, what were your feelings about that?
  22. How often did you move as a child? How did this affect you?
  23. Do you remember starting school? What were your feelings and reactions? Were you a good student? Or was it hard for you to do your school work? Were your parents helpful or did you receive other's help doing school work? Discuss.
  24. In grammar school, were there one or more particular grades that you remember well? Do you remember it being a good year for you in school? Did that grade give you trouble? Discuss.
  25. Were you proud of your parents for any reason? Were you ashamed of them for any reason? Describe.
  26. Did you ever see your parents nude? If so, describe the context and your reactions.
  27. What did you think about your parents' sexual relationship as a child?
  28. Did you ever see or hear your parents having sex? If so, describe the context and your reactions. Were there any other adult sexual experiences in which you were involved or observed? If so, describe them and your reactions?
  29. How did your ethnic or racial background affect your life as a child? Were you treated differently because of your race or ethnicity? If so, how did this affect you?
  30. Were you treated differently because of where you lived or your financial status? If so, how did this affect you?
  31. Did you have certain regular chores to perform for your family? If so, describe. Did you believe they were fair or too much? How did they compare to other children you knew?
  32. What were your family's values concerning money? What were your reactions? How did these beliefs affect you in relation to your friends and activities?
  33. Did you have any gender identity issues or episodes as a child? Did your family or culture have any strong feelings regarding gender identity and roles? What has been your experience concerning the above?
  34. Did your friends or classmates at school trade gossip about sex, or gender identity issues? Describe.
  35. When children are exposed to adult sex, normal sexual development can be distorted, delayed, or prevented. Often such awareness has been repressed and is not conscious. What are your experiences concerning the above?

## OA-HOW Fourth Step Inventory Questions

### Adolescence

36. As we are all sexual beings. When did you first notice your sexual desires or fantasies? How did you feel about and respond to these feelings?
37. What were your family's attitudes towards sexuality? Was religion or spiritual affiliation a significant factor in yours and your family's attitudes regarding sexuality? How did these attitudes and beliefs affect yours? Did these attitudes affect your sexual development and behavior? If so, how?
38. What were the attitudes of your peers and friends towards sexuality? How did they affect your sexual identity and behavior? Your relationships? Your social life? Your feelings of belonging to your peer group?
39. Some girls are taught that men are interested in sex only and some boys that they must be the greatest of all time. These attitudes are destructive and damaging to the total person. Have you experienced either of these attitudes? If so, how? Is there a pattern? How has it affected you? Did you have experience with other damaging attitudes about sex? If so, describe?
40. Did you have friends? What kind of friend were you?
41. What interest or lack of interest did you have in school? How were your grades? Describe.
42. Describe your social life. Did you participate in extracurricular activities, such as sports, clubs, the arts, etc.? What were the reasons for your participation or lack of it?
43. Would you have described yourself as a troublemaker? If so, what did you do that makes you say you were a troublemaker? (i.e. Did you destroy property? Did you get into trouble frequently, etc.?)
44. Would you have described yourself as a rule follower, and/or over achiever? If so, what did you do that makes you say that about yourself? (i.e. Did you feel pressure to make good grades? Did you participate in activities you did not like because you wanted to be good/successful, etc.?)
45. How did you feel about class leaders, i.e. the most handsome or beautiful person in school, successful athletes, honor roll students, etc.? Discuss.
46. Did you resent or compare yourself to others, or have an over-inflated sense of your worth? Discuss.
47. Did you avoid conflict or were you argumentative? Were you a bully or were you ever bullied?
48. Compare yourself physically to your peers. Did you develop early or late? How did you feel about your physical development?
49. Were you shy or outgoing? How are you now? Did any particular type of person make you uncomfortable? Were you part of a crowd or a loner?
50. If you dropped out of school, explain your feelings and reasons. Did anything happen to you that was a continuing source of shame? What?
51. Did your parents, or other significant family members compare you to other family members or friends? How did this affect your attitude toward yourself and your place in

- the family? What were your feelings towards the people to whom you were compared? What are your feelings about your parents/ other family members for comparing you to others?
52. How did you get the attention of your family? Did you pout, sulk, over-achieve, be a good child, have temper tantrums, act like a clown? Discuss.
  53. Did you tell lies? How did you feel when you got caught? How did you feel if you told a lie and did not get caught?
  54. List and discuss the most embarrassing incidents of your adolescence.
  55. Were you jealous or envious of other people? If so, discuss. What were your attitudes towards sex in your family? How did they influence you?
  56. Do you remember your first sexual experience? What were your feelings? Be as specific about your feelings as you can.
  57. Discuss your feelings about any other sexual experiences or masturbation fantasies not previously covered.
  58. Did you get someone pregnant or become pregnant yourself? What did you do and how did you feel about your actions?
  59. Did you, or the person who got pregnant have an abortion? If not, who raised the child? What are your feeling related to this?
  60. What were your feelings towards your parents, or those who raised you? Were you ashamed of them? Proud? Why? What were your feelings towards your siblings? Proud/ashamed/envious?
  61. Did you have the kind of clothes other kids wore? Was there enough money for the things you needed? If not, were you resentful or afraid of that? If enough or abundance, did you take that for granted or did you fear it would be lost, or did you feel guilty? Did you feel any sibling got more or less than you did? Write out your feelings about money as an adolescent.
  62. Were you the kind of child you would want to have? Discuss.
  63. As an adolescent, did you ever steal anything? What were your reasons/feelings for your actions?
  64. In middle school or high school, did one or more grades give you trouble? Did one or more grades seem like good grades for you? Discuss.
  65. Did you skip a grade, or were you every held back a grade? If so, did you have trouble emotionally? How did you act? How did you feel? Did you feel uncomfortable because you were younger/older than the other students were?
  66. Did you feel inferior or superior to other students? If so, describe.
  67. What kind of friend were you? Were you possibly undependable as a friend, breaking off relationships without any explanation when someone or something that seemed better came along? Were you possibly codependent as a friend, doing anything to make sure you were liked? If so, describe.
  68. Did you pit one member of your family against another? If so, describe? Or did you try to be the peacemaker in your family, and keep anyone from fighting? If so, describe.
  69. What was your best experience as an adolescent? Your worst? Discuss.

## OA-HOW Fourth Step Inventory Questions

### Adulthood

For purposes of this inventory, the word marriage refers to the traditional definition as well as any committed, sexual relationship between two adults.

70. When and how did my selfish pursuit of sex hurt other people or myself? In each instance who was hurt and how badly? What relationships were damaged because of this behavior? My marriage? Relationships with my children? My relationships at work, church, or in my community?
71. What was my attitude about these situations at the time? Did I overreact with guilt? Did I justify to myself that I was the pursued and not the pursuer and therefore guiltless?
72. What has been my reaction to sexual frustration? Sexual frustration meaning unmet sexual needs/desires or sexual avoidance in myself or my partner. How have I taken these feelings out on others?
73. Have I used either real or imagined rejection or loneliness at home to justify promiscuity? With what results? Discuss.
74. Do you feel your spouse or significant other is cold or unloving? Do you feel any other relationships in your life are or were cold and unloving- mother father, siblings, grandparents, friends, etc.? Discuss.
75. Why did you get married? What were your feelings when you got married? Do you still feel that way today? If you have never formed a committed relationship, what are your feelings about that? What did you learn from your parents about love, marriage, and relationships?
76. Did you marry either much earlier or much later than your peer group? Discuss.
77. Do you have any resentment about the responsibilities of marriage, family or other committed relationships? Do you feel that you shoulder more than your share of responsibilities in your relationships?
78. Have you ever let your family come between you and someone with whom you wanted to have a committed relationship? Has your family ever come between you and your spouse or other significant other? Do they now? Do you regret ignoring the concerns of your family and/or friends about a relationship you entered? Discuss.
79. Does your family still treat you like a child? Do you take advantage of this? How do you let them "take care of" you?
80. Does your spouse or significant other treat you like a child? Do you take advantage of this? How do you let him/her "take care of" you?
81. Have other people (your family, spouse, significant other, friends) gotten you out of trouble that you should have been able to handle yourself? Discuss.
82. Have you ever paid for a purchase or service knowing you did not have the money to cover it? Discuss.
83. Do you feel like the world owes you a living? Write about this.
84. Do you gossip? Write about this.
85. Are laws for other people? Do you feel that they do not apply to you or that you can adjust the rules for your situation?

86. Do you desire or seek revenge? List all people, places and things that bring up this feeling and discuss.
87. Write about your present feelings in different areas of your life. Areas to examine: sex, parents, siblings, grandparents, extended family, spouse, significant other, children, friends, job, finances, marital status.
88. Where and how do you spend most of your time? Do you ever commit in some areas and not show up in others? How do you balance your time between job, family, HOW, recreation, and community?
89. What is your greatest fear?
90. What is your sex life like currently? Do you use sex as a reward and/or punishment? Are you careless or insensitive to the feelings of your partner? Do you disregard, discount, or repress your own feelings about sex?
91. Write about any sexual experience not already covered, especially any that make you feel embarrassed, ashamed or uncomfortable.
92. Do you have sex to boost your ego, or as a conquest. Do you say "yes" even when you do not want to have sex?
93. Are you afraid of being sexually rejected? Discuss.
94. Are you happy with or ashamed of your appearance? Write an inventory of your physical features, including both positive and negative characteristics.
95. Write about your feelings about being a compulsive overeater now.
96. Do you use people and situations to get what you want? Do you gossip or put people down because of jealousy, or to build up your own ego and to feel superior?
97. Write a history of your stealing. Besides material things, have you stolen time, attention, or another's ideas, accomplishments, or good name?
98. Do you use illness as an excuse? Do you use it to justify avoiding responsibility, to get attention, or to get out of a bad situation?
99. In your work life, list all persons that you resent. Why? Who are you jealous of at work? What other negative feelings do you have about your job or the people there? What kind of employee are you? Are you a careless or indifferent worker? Are you hypervigilant about every task, and afraid of making mistakes? What do you like about yourself in your work life?
100. Do you feel that you are not being paid what you are worth? Are you jealous or resentful of others who earn more than you?
101. Do you think you could do a better job than your boss?
102. If you are divorced, getting a divorce or terminating a significant relationship, write down all the negative feelings, including guilt, resentments and fears, you have about the situation and the people involved, such as your spouse, and/or any children. What positive feelings do you have about this situation? Discuss. Have you used your children against your spouse or others? Discuss.
103. If married or in a committed relationship, write about your true feelings for your spouse/partner and any children. Include your positive feelings as well as your negative ones.
104. What are your expectations of your spouse/partner and your children? Are your expectations reasonable? Why or why not?
105. Have you expressed your expectations to your spouse/partner and children? In what way have you expressed them? Discuss.
106. What do you think your life would be like without your spouse/partner and children?

107. Do you feel misunderstood? Unappreciated? Taken for granted? If so, how, why and by whom? Discuss.
108. Do you feel separate from other HOW members? Different? Discuss.
109. Do you have feelings of superiority (better than) or inferiority (not as good as) when comparing yourself to others? Discuss.
110. Do you avoid self-examination by continually making favorable or unfavorable comparisons of yourself to others?
111. Do you judge or make fun of others who are different from you? Discuss
112. Do you compare yourself to others? Do you sometimes perceive that others are somehow "more than" or "better than" you? Do you sometimes perceive that others are less than you? If so, how and why do you do this? Discuss.
113. The only person you can adequately compare yourself to is you. How satisfied are you with your progress in working the OA HOW program?? Describe your progress.
114. Do you resist getting close to others out of fear or rejection? Discuss.
115. Do you reject others? If so, why? Do you avoid getting close to others? If so, why? Discuss.
116. Write your definition of love.
117. Write your definition of a responsible person. List all the ways in which you are a responsible person.
118. Are you a tightwad or a spendthrift? Explain. Do you deny yourself things you need, such as medical care, medicine, clothes, food, home maintenance because you don't want or are afraid to spend money? If so, why? Do you spend money you don't have? If so, why? Discuss.
119. How has being extravagant hurt your life? Have you borrowed beyond your ability to repay? If so, what quick fix methods have you tried that only made matters worse? Have you hoarded money for yourself to the detriment of others? Have you misused charge accounts? Has gambling been a problem for you? Discuss.
120. Are you satisfied with your personal appearance? Do you spend too much time and money on how you look? If so, why? Do you neglect to take care of your personal grooming? If so, why? Discuss.
121. Do you judge people by their appearance? By other external circumstances of their lives- their home, family, intimate relationships, job? Discuss.
122. Describe what circumstances- people, places and things- that bring up feelings of greed, envy, or anger for you.
123. Are you scornful of, or do you discount ideas that are not yours? Do you judge a person as bad or wrong because he/she holds an opinion with which you disagree? Discuss.
124. How do you describe yourself to others? Are you comfortable with yourself? Discuss.
125. Do you sometimes like feeling superior to others? Do you sometimes feel the need to tell others about how good you were or are? Or do you feel the need to tell them about how bad you were or are? Discuss.
126. Do you sometimes feel bad when you compare yourself to others? How do you react when someone compliments you? Criticizes you?
127. Describe the feelings you now have for your family members (parents, siblings, other family members).
128. Do you still have any resentments or hatred? If so, discuss.
129. Write about any lingering feelings of embarrassment or guilt.

130. Do you ever take advantage monetarily of your employer? If so, describe. Do you pad, or have you ever padded your expense account?
131. Do you inappropriately spend your family's food budget on things just for yourself? Discuss.
132. Do you have any resentments against other members of HOW? Discuss.
133. What kind of lies do you tell? Is there a pattern to when you lie? Discuss.
134. How do you play the role of "Big Shot"? Where? With whom? In what areas of your life? Are you afraid to share, or do you ever hide your accomplishments from others? Discuss.
135. Are you hurt or angry when people refuse to do things your way? Discuss.
136. Have you kept program relationships platonic? If not, have you used others to gratify your own sexual desires?
137. Have you used sharing in meetings or service in the program to build up your ego? Do you avoid being of service because of feelings of unworthiness? Discuss.
138. How much do you worry about things in your past? How much do you worry about things in your future? Discuss.
139. If you have children or are a caretaker of children, do you punish your children the way you were punished? Are you too lenient because you feel you were excessively punished or abused? Do you overly restrict them because of your own fears? Discuss.
140. Have you been so busy trying to provide a living, making a home, or caught up in your addiction that you have not been either physically or emotionally available for your family? Discuss.
141. Do you feel that you give everything to your family but get little in return? That they are never satisfied or appreciative? Discuss.
142. Do you avoid and/or expect family members to do all the day-to-day work of the house? Do you show appreciation for the things others do for you? Discuss.
143. When your spouse is cold or unresponsive, do you try harder to please? Or do you use their attitude to separate yourself from them and your family? Do you turn to someone more "understanding"? Discuss if and how this relates to you.
144. Do you spend too much time at HOW? If so, discuss.
145. Do you spend an appropriate time each week with your family? If not, why not? What are your experiences with your family when you are with them? Fun? Heartwarming? Tense? Cold or distant? Discuss.
146. Do you depend only upon HOW members to have fun, enjoy yourself, feel good about yourself? Discuss.
147. Do you feel you have to prove you are worthy of love? Describe these feelings and how they affect your actions with others either in your family, friends, work, or in HOW.
148. How are you cold and indifferent to the needs of others? If so, in what way? are you cold or indifferent to your own needs? If so, in what way?
149. Do you feel guilty about what you have put others through? If so, discuss.
150. Do you feel you deserve special consideration because you are staying abstinent? Do you use your abstinence to get your own way? Discuss.
151. Are you involved in a relationship that is harmful to you or to another? If so, discuss.
152. Do you argue with people in an effort to always be "right"? Do you become angry when someone does not see things your way? Discuss.
153. Do you start gossip (idle talk not always true) about others? Do you listen to gossip? Do you spread on gossip/rumors? Do you believe the gossip without checking out the facts? Discuss.

154. Do you compare your spiritual program to the spiritual program of others? Do you feel your spirituality is superior or inferior to others in the fellowship? Discuss.
155. What are your thoughts and feelings about masturbation? Do you ever masturbate? Do you feel guilty about it? Discuss.
156. Do you feel superior to others? Do you feel superior because of some seeming advantage, such as having more money, intelligence, education, talent, right ethnic heritage, vocation, etc.? Discuss.
157. Do you feel inferior to others? Do you feel inferior because of some seeming disadvantage in any of the areas listed above? Discuss.
158. How do you manage your time? Is it hard for you to get to places on time? If so, why? Discuss.
159. Do you resent others who appear to be happy? Discuss.
160. Do you judge your insides by other people's outsides? Discuss.
161. Have you asked the people who seem happy how they got that way?
162. Do you envy people who can eat whatever it is they want, especially foods that are not on your food plan? Discuss.
163. How do you think life has treated you? Do you feel grateful for your life today? Are you angry, sad, hurt, upset at the way your life is today? Discuss.
164. List the fears you have today. Are they different from when you first joined OA HOW? Discuss.
165. How do you act out to get others' attention? Do you sulk, pout, have temper tantrums, be a martyr, be very good (and let everyone know it), play dumb, complain, or be uncooperative with others' plans? Discuss.
166. How have feelings of fear and inferiority affected your life? Did you have conflict and/or negative consequences because of the actions you took, or did not take, due to your fears? How do you deal with fear today? Discuss.
167. Have you cheated, lied, evaded responsibility, or diverted attention from yourself due to fear? Discuss.
168. What are your ambitions? Are they realistic? Do they feel fulfilling to you? Have you ignored your ambitions out of fear or feeling of inferiority? Have you let your ambition override your ethical principles in business? In family relationships? In friendships? In community organizations? Discuss.
169. How do you use your time, your energy, your money? How and when do you use your time, energy and money in a good way? How and when have you been extravagant or wasteful of time, energy, or money? Discuss.
170. Write about anything in these questions that has made you feel shame, or badly about yourself.
171. Write about anything in these questions that has made you feel proud. Do you have hopes, dreams and goals? Write about them. Write about anything in these questions that have made you feel good about yourself.



**V.**

**FIFTH STEP  
CEREMONY**

### OA-HOW Fifth Step Ceremony

Note to Sponsor: This ceremony has two purposes. The first is to celebrate with your sponsoree his/her completion of his/her fourth and fifth step. Secondly, it can help him/her begin to identify for him/herself the character defects that have contributed to his/her problems with living. It is also good at this time for him/her to acknowledge those character assets that have added to his/her life. This outline is suggestive only. You may use it verbatim or you may use it as an outline. Do personalize it to fit your way of sharing your experience, strength, and hope.

Sponsor reads aloud: Congratulations on the completion of your fourth and fifth steps. I hope this inventory has given you some valuable insights into your past. Certainly, you have reflected seriously on the good times and bad times in your life and have begun to see the patterns and habits of how you reacted to various personalities and situations over the years. As you have looked at yourself with honesty, you have probably digested some uncomfortable truths about yourself. As you have looked at yourself with love, you have also acknowledged the good that dwells within you and begun to identify the values by which you want to live your life.

Sponsor asks sponsoree to light first candle, saying: This is the candle of honesty. You have taken up this tool and sharpened it in the process of self-examination. If you respect it, it will remain in your toolkit and will help you progress along the road of "Happy Destiny".

(Note to sponsor: There is a chart included in your "Sponsor's Booklet" that can be helpful with this part of the fifth step ceremony. It provides a way to list the character defects your sponsoree will want to include in her 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> Steps and the names to be included in the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> Steps.)

Sponsor continues: Your inventory has covered the three major time spans of your life: childhood, adolescence, and adulthood.

Sponsor asks sponsoree to read in the "Big Book" page 70-71 beginning with, "If we have been thorough...").

Sponsor asks the following questions and helps to write answers on chart if desired.

1. As you reflect back upon the questions related to your childhood, are there any specific relationships about which you are still disturbed?
2. Who are those relationships with? Write these names down.
3. Next to each person, write down one or two of the negative feelings (instincts that have been threatened) you associate with that relationship.
4. With each person, if you believe that they harmed you, are you now willing to forgive them? Why or why not?
5. If you believe you harmed that person, are you now willing to forgive yourself? Why or why not?

6. Understanding yourself as you do now, look back over each of the names and what you've written. What specific character traits can you identify within yourself that contributed to the damage in each of these relationships? Write these traits down.

Sponsor asks sponsoree to light the next candle, saying: This is the candle of trust. I hope that this hard work will re-awaken in you the joy and trust you experienced as a child. Believe that:

- Whatever your faults, you deserved loving, stable caregivers.
- Whatever trouble occurred for you and/or your family, you can be proud that you did survive.
- Whatever habits you might have acquired to help you survive the rough times of childhood, you are free today to let them go if they no longer serve you.

Are there thoughts or feelings you wish to add?

### **Now the Adolescence**

Sponsor asks sponsoree to read in the "Big Book" the two paragraphs on page 73 beginning with, "More than most people..."

Sponsor asks the following questions:

1. As you reflect back upon the questions related to your adolescence, are there any specific relationships about which you are still disturbed?
2. Who are those relationships with? Write these names down.
3. Next to each person, write down one or two of the negative feelings (instincts that have been threatened) you associate with that relationship.
4. With each person, if you believe that they harmed you, are you now willing to forgive them? Why or why not?
5. If you believe you harmed that person, are you now willing to forgive yourself? Why or why not?
6. Understanding yourself as you do now, look back over each of the names and what you've written. What specific character traits can you identify within yourself that contributed to the damage in each of these relationships? Write these traits down.

Sponsor asks sponsoree to light the next candle, saying: This is the candle of discovery. I hope that your hard work will reconnect you with the joy of discovery that you felt as an adolescent. Believe that:

- Whatever negative messages you might have heard from your peers or your family, you were a beautiful child of God.
- It is never too late to use your talents.
- It is never too late to pursue your dreams.

### **Now for adulthood**

Sponsor asks sponsoree to read in the "Big Book" the four paragraphs on pages 13-14 beginning with, "My schoolmate visited me..."

1. As you reflect back upon the questions related to your childhood, are there any specific relationships about which you are still disturbed?
2. Who are those relationships with? Write these names down.
3. Next to each person, write down one or two of the negative feelings (instincts that have been threatened) you associate with that relationship.
4. With each person, if you believe that they harmed you, are you now willing to forgive them? Why or why not?
5. If you believe you harmed that person, are you now willing to forgive yourself? Why or why not?
6. Understanding yourself as you do now, look back over each of the names and what you've written. What specific character traits can you identify within yourself that contributed to the damage in each of these relationships? Write these traits down.

Sponsor asks sponsoree to light the next candle, saying: This is the candle of responsibility. I hope the gift you have given yourself in completing this inventory will empower you to continue on your own spiritual path. You are well on your way to experiencing the gifts this program promises. Believe that:

- Whatever difficulties still complicate your life, you have everything you need to live a rich and healthy life.
- In God's hands, your past can be one of your greatest assets.
- Your Higher Power wants you to be happy, joyous, and free.

Sponsor asks sponsoree to read in the "Big Book" the one paragraph on page 75 beginning with, "We pocket our pride..."

Sponsor continues: An inventory looks at assets and liabilities. Let's reflect on your positive traits and how they have manifested in your life and relationships.

1. As you reflect upon the questions you've answered, are there any relationships that hold a special place in your heart?

2. Who are these relationships with?
3. Write down one or two of the positive feelings (character assets) you associate with that relationship.
4. Understanding that there is some bad in the best of us and some good in the worst of us, and that we are all human beings. Tell me what you have come to appreciate about YOU. List your good qualities.

Sponsor asks sponsoree to light the next candle, saying: This is the candle of integrity. It symbolizes the wholeness that one experiences when she has come to truly know herself. Believe that you have experienced in this inventory: honesty, trust, discovery, responsibility, and integrity. And your newfound strength and hope will be an essential part in building a joyful life.

Sponsor continues: Thank you for allowing me to be a part of your recovery and trusting me to listen to your inventory. Witnessing your willingness to do your inventory and listening to the insights it has given you about yourself has helped me as much as it has helped you. You are now an Inventory Sponsor and can help others to receive the same gift of self-knowledge that you have received from this step.

Let me encourage you to continue your commitment to your recovery by obtaining a Step Sponsor and moving forward by answering these questions. (Sponsor hands questions for Steps 6-12 to sponsoree. If Sponsor has kept a written list of defects for his/her sponsoree while the sponsoree was sharing the inventory, the sponsor can give the defect list or a copy of it to his/her sponsoree now.) These questions will help you to identify your character defects and to begin the process of asking your Higher Power to help you grow out of them.

**VI.**

**STEP QUESTIONS**

**(Steps 6-12 Questions)**

## **Steps Six Through Twelve Questions**

Members of OA-How who have completed their Fifth Step may use the following questions to work Steps Six through Twelve using the "AA Big Book" and "AA Twelve & Twelve". These questions are to be written down and read to an OA-HOW step sponsor. The references to the Big Book are to the 4<sup>th</sup> edition.

### **Step Six**

1. Read pages 75-76 in the "AA Big Book". Discuss what stood out for you in the reading.
2. Read Step 6 in the "AA Twelve and Twelve". Discuss what part honesty and willingness play in this step for you.
3. Read pages 48-54 (beginning with "To avoid falling into confusion...") and pages 66-68 (beginning with "Some who feel...") in the "AA Twelve and Twelve". Have you made a list of character defects with your sponsor? If not, do so now.
4. Do you truly believe that your own willpower will not work with food or with many of your character defects?
5. Read pages 64-65 in the "AA Twelve and Twelve". Reflect and write on on the concept of a natural instinct far exceeding its intended purpose and becoming a defect of character.
6. Read pages 66-69 in the "AA Twelve and Twelve" (beginning with "Some who feel they..."). Examine your list of defects. Do you have any that fall into the "No, I can't give this up yet" category? Discuss.
7. Discuss and reflect on the last paragraph on page 69 in the "AA Twelve and Twelve", which concludes with "...we abandon limited objectives, and move toward God's will for us".
8. Do you have character defects you really enjoy that masquerade as something other than their true nature? For instance, "isn't it true that we like to let greed masquerade as ambition." (AA Twelve and Twelve, page 66). Discuss with your sponsor. What did you discover as a result of this exercise?
9. What does the concept of "patient improvement" or "best possible attitude" described in Step Six, page 65 in the "AA Twelve and Twelve", mean to you? How do these concepts apply to you in your recovery?
10. From page 75 in the "AA Big Book", the final paragraph reads:

"Taking this book down from our shelf we turn to the page which contains the twelve steps. Carefully reading the first five proposals we ask if we have omitted anything, for we are building an arch through which we shall walk a free man at last. Is our work solid so far? Are

the stones properly in place? Have we skimmed on the cement put into the foundation? Have we tried to make mortar without sand?"

Take the action this paragraph recommends and answer the above questions.

### **Step Seven**

1. Read Step 7 in the "AA Twelve and Twelve". Go back and reread Step 7 and circle (or highlight) the words "humility" and "humble" in your book.
2. Discuss and reflect on your current understanding of the words "humble" and "humility".
3. List your defects of character you have admitted are objectionable and are ready to have God remove. Write the opposite of each defect of character that you are asking your Higher Power to remove. Discuss with your sponsor.
4. Reflect and write about your character assets, such as patience, tolerance, forgiveness (for a complete list see appendix "Inventory of Character Traits"). Discuss with your sponsor.
5. Write out and then pray the Seventh Step prayer in the "AA Big Book", page 76, paragraph 2, "My Creator, I am now willing you should have all of me good and bad...". Reflect on the meaning of this prayer and how it makes you feel to say it.
6. According to the Seventh Step prayer, where does the power come from to change us? Do you truly believe this? Discuss.
7. How does the taking of the Seventh Step aid in ego reduction?
8. How can humility grant you serenity?
9. Write out a gratitude list of what God has done for you that you couldn't do for yourself.
10. Write about the experiences you have had that prove other problems besides the "deadly obsession of eating compulsively" can be banished?



## Step Eight

1. Read Step Eight in the “AA Twelve and Twelve”. Discuss what is significant for you in the reading.
2. Read pages 76-82 in the “AA Big Book” (beginning with “Now we need more action”). From your Fourth Step work you may have already made a list of people and institutions you have harmed, if not, make one now with the help of your sponsor.
3. Read page 78 in the “AA Twelve and Twelve” on the “first obstacle” to this step. Why is forgiveness of the utmost importance in Step Eight?
4. Read pages 78-79 in the “AA Twelve and Twelve” (beginning with the last paragraph on page 78). Discuss and reflect on if fear, pride, “purposeful forgetting” or denial, have been obstacles for you in making your list of people you have harmed.
5. The last paragraph on page 79 in the “AA Twelve and Twelve” states:

“Though in some cases we cannot make restitution at all, and in some cases action ought to be deferred, we should nevertheless make an accurate and really exhaustive survey of our past life as it has affected other people.”

Select one especially troublesome name or institution and discuss why it was difficult to add this name to the list.

6. Read pages 80-81 in the “AA Twelve and Twelve”, which contains a definition of “harm” and types of harm we do when “instincts are in collision”. With this reading in mind, what kinds of harm have you done to others? Which of your personality traits have injured you and disturbed others?
7. Read the last paragraph on page 79 through the first paragraph on page 80 in the “AA Twelve and Twelve”. Discuss the emotional harm you have done to yourself.
8. Read from the last paragraph on page 81 through page 82 in the “AA Twelve and Twelve”. Discuss and reflect on forgiving others, as stated in this sentence taken from the reading:

“We shall want to hold ourselves to the course of admitting the things we have done, meanwhile forgiving the wrongs done us, real or fancied.”

9. Why is the taking of Step Eight, “the beginning of the end of isolation from our fellows and from God”?
10. Having reviewed these Step 8 questions and discussed them with your sponsor, make a list of amends you need to make.

### **Step Nine**

1. Read Step Nine in the “AA Twelve and Twelve”. What stood out for you in the reading?
2. Read pages 76-84 in the “AA Big Book” (beginning with “Now, we need more action”). Using the list you made in Step 8 of persons and institutions you have harmed, make an amends list with your sponsor.
3. Separate the names on your amends list into the “classes” as suggested in the “AA Twelve and Twelve” on page 83:

Class 1 – Those amends we can deal with just as soon as we become reasonably confident that we can maintain our abstinence.

Class 2 – Those to whom we can only make partial restitution, lest complete disclosures do them or others more harm than good.

Class 3 – Other cases where action ought to be deferred.

Class 4 – Others in which by the very nature of the situation we shall never be able to make direct personal contact at all.

4. Read page 79 in the “AA Big Book” (beginning with “Although these reparations”). Discuss the lengths to which you would go for freedom from compulsive overeating.
5. Read pages 82-83 in the “AA Big Book”. How would you describe the damage compulsive overeating did in your life?
6. Discuss how your character defects have had destructive effects on your life or on others.
7. Write on the most difficult amend(s) you have to make. How you will move into action to make these amends?
8. Write about any amends you are not willing to make at this time?

9. Reread Step Nine in the “AA Twelve and Twelve”. Are you delaying making amends because you are afraid? If so, how can you move into the “spirit” of Step Nine (as mentioned in the last paragraph on page 87 in the “AA Twelve and Twelve”)?
10. Read page 83 in the “AA Big Book”. Discuss the idea that “the spiritual life is not a theory, we have to live in it...”.

### **Step Ten**

1. Read pages 83-85 in the “AA Big Book” (beginning with “If we are painstaking...”). Review your progress so far. Reflect and write on the promises in this reading or other gifts you have received from the program.
2. Read the Step Ten paragraph on page 84 in the “AA Big Book” which begins, “This thought brings us to Step Ten”. Discuss the “world of the spirit” as a way of life for you.
3. “And we have ceased fighting anything or anybody – even food”. This sentence on page 84 in the “AA Big Book” is a powerful statement of freedom and a “fit spiritual condition”. Discuss and reflect on this quote.
4. Read Step Ten in the “AA Twelve and Twelve”. Discuss and reflect on what stood out for you in the reading.
5. Read pages 88-89 in the “AA Twelve and Twelve.” Reflect on the concept of an “emotional hangover.” Write about your most recent experience with an “emotional hangover”.
6. Read about the different types of inventories listed on page 89 in the “AA Twelve and Twelve”. Discuss the process of “taking inventory” and how it works for you.
7. Read pages 90-91 in the “AA Twelve and Twelve” which contains the sentence: “It is a spiritual axiom that every time we are disturbed, no matter what the cause, there is something wrong with us.” Reflect and write on a time you were disturbed and your part in it.
8. Read page 92 in the “AA Twelve and Twelve”. Discuss “big-shot-ism” as it may apply to you.
9. Read page 93 in the “AA Twelve and Twelve”. Have you stopped making unreasonable demands of those you love? Write about an unreasonable demand you made and the results of that demand.

10. Read pages 94-95 in the “AA Twelve and Twelve”. Write about the idea that we can rationalize conduct that is wrong.
11. Read the last paragraph on page 95 in the “AA Twelve and Twelve”. The inventory ends with gratitude, “we can truly thank God for the blessings we have received”. Reflect on how gratitude can become a natural result of working Step Ten on a daily basis.
12. Read the last paragraph on page 93 in the “AA Twelve and Twelve”. Step Ten implies a discipline or habit of “taking inventory”. Do you have a regular “habit” of doing Step Ten? If not, reflect on how you would like to incorporate Step Ten into your daily life.
13. Reread the Step Ten paragraph on page 84 in the “AA Big Book”. Reflect on the sentence “Love and tolerance of others is our code”, and how it relates to you and working the Tenth Step.
14. Inventories are written. Discuss some benefits for writing a brief daily inventory.
15. Read page 552 in the “AA Big Book”. This is sometimes referred to as the resentment prayer. Discuss a resentment that is bothering you, and that may benefit from the action suggested in the passage.
16. Read pages 418-420 (3rd edition is 448-452) in the “AA Big Book”. Discuss how your acceptance of yourself and others has changed as a result of working the steps.
17. Read pages 93-95 in the “AA Twelve and Twelve” (beginning with “When evening comes”). Relate at least one recent positive experience that you handled well. Was this question difficult for you?

### **Step Eleven**

1. Read pages 85-88 in the “AA Big Book”. How has prayer and meditation helped you to be free of self-will run riot?
2. Read pages 87-88 in the “AA Big Book” (beginning with “As we go through the day we pause”). Discuss the idea that we “pause” when agitated or doubtful and how this works for you.

3. Read Step Eleven in the "AA Twelve and Twelve". Underline any parts that speak to you.
4. Reread Step Eleven. Discuss the importance of spending daily quiet time alone with your Higher Power. Describe how you spend quiet time on a daily basis.
5. Read page 164 in the "AA Big Book". Discuss and reflect on the idea that "See to it that your relationship with God is right..." Explain why this is important to you.
6. Read page 102 in the "AA Twelve and Twelve". Discuss and reflect on the idea of "...praying only for knowledge of God's will for us and the power to carry that out".
7. Read the prayer passages listed below. Select and write on a prayer that has been especially helpful or meaningful to you since beginning the program.
  - "AA Big Book", page 63 (second paragraph, Third Step prayer)
  - "AA Big Book", page 67 (first paragraph, prayer for the sick man)
  - "AA Big Book", page 68 (third paragraph, prayer to remove fear)
  - "AA Big Book", page 70 (second paragraph, prayer for right ideal for sex)
  - "AA Big Book", page 76 (second paragraph, Seventh Step prayer)
  - "AA Big Book", page 552 (second paragraph, resentment prayer)
  - "AA Twelve and Twelve", page 99 (third paragraph, example of an Eleventh Step prayer)
  - "AA Twelve and Twelve", page 125 (last paragraph, Serenity prayer)
8. What specific actions will you take to improve or enhance your relationship and conscious contact with your Higher Power?

### **Step Twelve**

1. Read pages 89-92 in the "AA Big Book". Is the fact that compulsive overeating is a disease difficult for you to accept? Give examples of how accepting this fact has impacted your daily life?
2. Read pages 93-98 in the "AA Big Book" (beginning with "When dealing with such a person..."). In the OA-HOW program we have a structured way of sponsoring. Discuss the benefits of this method of sponsoring. What guides you in setting boundaries in your sponsoring relationships?
3. Read pages 98-100 in the "AA Big Book" (beginning with "Now the domestic problem..."). Discuss practicing the principles of the program at home or in your closest relationships.

4. Read pages 100-103 in the "AA Big Book" (beginning with "Assuming we are spiritually fit..."). Discuss any social situations in which your abstinence is still shaky. How do you handle it? How do you plan to handle it in the future?
5. Read pages 340-341 (4<sup>th</sup>- edition is 300) in the "AA Big Book" (beginning with, "The fellowship I found..."), paying particular attention to the idea of "surrender". Discuss how the principle of "surrender" works in your program of recovery from compulsive overeating.
6. Read pages 534-535 in the "AA Big Book" (beginning with "For a while..."). Discuss the idea of the intellect being ahead of the emotions. How would you define maturity for yourself?
7. Read pages 228-229 in the "AA Big Book" (beginning with "Then the miracle happened..."). Discuss any miracles in your recovery thus far.
8. Read pages 106-109 in the "AA Twelve and Twelve". Did you have a spiritual awakening? When did it take place? Can you define it?
9. Read pages 109-111 in the "AA Twelve and Twelve" (beginning with "Now what about..."). What part has service or Twelve Step work played in your recovery?
10. Read pages 111-114 in the "AA Twelve and Twelve" (beginning with "Now comes the biggest..."). Discuss having spiritual growth as a top priority.
11. Read pages 115-117 in the "AA Twelve and Twelve". Discuss emotional security where we can become dominating or dependent on others. Discuss ways the fellowship has been helpful in "learning right relations with people".
12. Read pages 117-120 in the "AA Twelve and Twelve" (beginning with "Most married folks..."). What has practicing the principles meant to you in all your relationships?
13. Read pages 120-122 in the "AA Twelve and Twelve" (beginning with "Where the possession of money..."). Has your attitude or behavior changed in regards to money since beginning recovery? Ideally for you, what does "practicing the principles" mean concerning material things?
14. Read pages 122-124 in the "AA Twelve and Twelve" (beginning with "Let's here take note..."). Discuss the role prestige or self-importance has played in the past. Are you

comfortable with just being yourself and a peer member of the group? Do you feel a need to be “in charge” or to improve yourself in some way in order to be accepted? Discuss your feelings of superiority or inferiority.

15. Read page 125 in the “AA Twelve and Twelve”. Discuss what the Serenity Prayer means to you.

16. How do you carry the message to others, especially to those who are still suffering?

**VII.**  
**MAINTENANCE**  
**FOOD PLAN**



### Maintenance Guidelines

This maintenance program of eating is designed for people who are at or near their goal weight as determined by the individual and their sponsor. This plan designates three weighed and measured meals a day with nothing in-between except no-calorie beverages, sugarless gum, and water. Any needed adjustments to the number of meals should be discussed with your sponsor.

As we are not physicians, we strongly suggest that before embarking on this new way of life you have a complete medical check-up, submitting this program to your doctor or health care professional so that he/she may make any necessary additions or corrections. Any recommendations your physician makes to amend this plan are acceptable.

As abstaining compulsive overeaters, for whose disease there is no known cure, we can only effectively continue to recover from our illness by adhering to the following:

- ALL FOOD MUST BE WEIGHED AND MEASURED. Use a scale, a measuring cup, and measuring spoons.
- FOOD SHOULD BE WRITTEN DOWN and committed on a daily basis as directed by your sponsor. Successful members continue to write their food down even after they have stopped committing it to a sponsor.
- Weigh yourself once a week. Allow a 3-pound weight variance.
- IF SOMETHING LISTED IN THIS FOOD PROGRAM BECOMES A PROBLEM, AVOID IT. AVOID ALL INDIVIDUAL BINGE FOODS.
- Vary your food selections.
- Moderate exercise, multi-vitamins (check for sugar), and 8 glasses of water a day are suggested.
- If a food item is not listed, check with your sponsor BEFORE having it. When in doubt, leave it out.
- LOOK FOR SUGAR! Sugar must be listed 5th or lower on ingredient lists and should not be in seasonings or soft drinks. Agave, cane juice or evaporated cane juice, concentrated fruit juice, corn syrup, dextrose, fructose, For additional information, review the "SUGAR BY ANY OTHER NAME" section of the sponsorship guide

### Slips or Weight Changes

SLIPS: If you've gained more than ten pounds, adhere to the HOW Basic Food Plan until you are at your goal weight. To re-qualify as a HOW Sponsor after a slip, you must take the first three steps with your HOW Sponsor, committing your food and answering questions for 30 days.

#### WEIGHT CHANGES:

- **Losses:** If your weight loss is greater than 10 pounds under your goal weight, please seek medical counsel. If your physician agrees, you may choose to adjust your goal weight lower. If not, we encourage you to work with your physician as necessary to stabilize your weight and gain whatever weight necessary. And it is also beneficial to continue to work with your OA-HOW sponsor to assist you as you tackle your weight loss issue. Working the spiritual program of the 12 steps is a powerful foundation to assist you in recovery of any eating issues.
- **Gains:** If your weight gain is less than 10 pounds, remove your last added phase to your Maintenance Food Plan with the guidance of your sponsor. When you reach your goal weight, follow the transition instructions. Between phases, allow one week for your body to adjust to the additional food before proceeding to the next phase.

## HOW Maintenance Plan

### Transition Instructions

To make the transition, follow these six phases IN ANY ORDER. In each phase, a serving of fruit, protein, grain, or fat is added to the allotments for one meal in the Basic Food Plan. Each phase terminates as the body accepts the additional food without a weight gain for a two-week period. If there is a weight loss, go immediately into the next phase. It is highly recommended that before moving from one phase to another, you discuss it with your health care professional and/or your sponsor. Continue to add food to your food plan using these transition instructions until you reach a stable period at your goal weight (within a 3 pound range). The recommended maximum amounts of food for each food plan for individuals, categorized according to their height and sex, are listed below. It is strongly recommended that you consult with your physician if you determine you need more food in your food plan than these maximums. NOTE: As metabolism rates vary over time and amount of activity, some members may need to make additional changes in their food plan from time to time.

- PHASE 1: Add a serving of fruit to one meal.  
 PHASE 2: Add a serving of protein to one meal.  
 PHASE 3: Add a serving of fat to one meal.  
 PHASE 4: Add an additional fruit.  
 PHASE 5: Add a serving of grain to one meal.  
 PHASE 6: Add an additional serving of one of previous phases up to the maximum for your category.

#### Women

4'10"-5'2" Use Category A  
 5'3"-5'6" Use Category B  
 5'7"-6'0" Use Category C

{  
 {  
 {

#### Men

5'0"-5'5" Use Category D  
 5'6"-5'10" Use Category E  
 5'11"-6'3" Use Category F

CATEGORY	A	B	C	D	E	F
Max Fruit Servings/Day:	2	3	3	3	4	4
Max Grain Servings/Day:	5	5	5	5	5	5
Max Protein Servings/Day:	3	3-1/2	4-1/4	4	4-1/2	4-1/2
Max Fat Servings/Day:	6	6	6	7	7	8

## Maintenance Food Plan

### PROTEIN (Proportionate amounts of different proteins may be combined to create one serving)

#### 4 oz. of:

Beef.  
Poultry.  
Pork  
Lamb  
Veal  
Rabbit  
Sausage  
Venison  
Fish  
Shellfish  
Variety meats . (i.e., liver, kidneys)  
Tempeh

#### 8 oz. of:

Yogurt (plain only)  
Tofu  
Evaporated, skim unsweetened milk

Bacon - 4 slices  
Legumes - 1 cup cooked beans  
Soft cheeses - 1/2 cup (i.e., cottage, ricotta, farmer's cheese)  
Hard cheeses - 2 oz.  
Milk - 16 oz. (incl. goat milk, buttermilk, soy milk)  
Eggs - 2 large

### GRAINS

1 slice whole grain bread (incl. pita, tortilla, sprouted grain bread)  
Whole grain cereals - single serving per package instructions  
1/2 c. cooked whole grain pasta or rice, kasha, bulgur, wheat, quinoa or other whole grains  
1 oz. whole grain rice cakes  
Rye crackers - 2 (3 1/2"x2")  
Popcorn - 1 1/2 c. air-popped or microwaved  
Potato - 4 oz. up to 3 times per week  
Corn - 1/2 c. or 1/2 ear  
Wheat Germ (1/8 cup = 1 vegetable)

Remember: Couscous is made with white flour and it NOT whole grain)

### VEGETABLES (1 cup)

Alfalfa sprouts  
Artichokes (1 medium)  
Asparagus  
Bean sprouts  
Beets  
Bok Choy  
Broccoli  
Brussel sprouts  
Cabbage (all types, incl. Chinese)  
Carrots  
Cauliflower  
Celery  
Chard  
Chicory  
Cucumbers  
Eggplant  
Endive  
Escarole  
Green beans  
Green Peas  
Greens (Mustard, spinach, beet, turnip, collard, etc.)  
Jicama  
Kale  
Kohlrabi  
Leeks  
Lettuce  
Mushrooms  
Okra  
Onions  
Parsley  
Parsnips  
Peppers (all types, incl. chilies & bell peppers)  
Pea pod (snow, snap, etc.)  
Pickles (Dill only) - 2 medium  
Pumpkin (fresh or unsweetened canned)  
Radishes  
Rutabagas  
Salsify (oyster plant)  
Sauerkraut  
Scallions  
Squash (all kinds)  
Snow peas  
Sorrel (sour grass)  
Soybean sprouts  
Tomatoes and tomatillos  
Water chestnuts  
Watercress  
Wheat germ (1/8 cup)  
Wheat germ (1/8 cup = 1 vegetable)

### FRUITS

Apples - 1  
Apricots - 3 medium  
Applesauce (sugar-free) - 1/2 cup  
Banana - 1 small  
Berries:  
Blackberries - 1/2 cup  
Blueberries - 1/2 cup  
Boyshenberries - 1 cup  
Gooseberries - 1 cup  
Huckleberries - 1/2 cup  
Raspberries - 1/2 cup  
Strawberries - 1 cup  
Cherries - 1/2 cup  
Figs - 2 medium  
Grapefruit - 1/2  
Grapes - 1/2 cup  
Guava - 1  
Kiwi - 2  
Lemons & limes - 2  
Mango - 1/2  
Melons:  
Cantaloupe - 1/4 melon  
Casaba - 1/4 melon  
Crenshaw - 1/4 melon  
Honeydew - 1/4 melon  
Watermelon - 1 & 1/2 cup  
Nectarine - 1  
Oranges - 1  
Papaya - 1/2 medium or 1 cup  
Peach - 1  
Pear - 1  
Persimmon - 1  
Pineapple - 1 cup unsweetened canned, or 1/4 fresh  
Plum - 2  
Pomegranate - 1 medium  
Rhubarb - 1 cup  
Unsweetened juice - 1 cup

### FATS & OILS

1 tsp. butter or margarine (1 pat)  
2 T. light cream  
1 T. heavy cream  
1 T. sour cream  
1 T. cream cheese  
1 T. mayonnaise  
1 tsp. oil or hard fat  
2 T. salad dressing (check for sugar)  
1/8 avocado  
1 slice crisp bacon  
6 small olives (green or black)  
1 T. raw or dry-roasted nuts

### CONDIMENTS (Sugar 5<sup>th</sup> or lower on label ingredient list)

All herbs and spices, salsa, soy sauce, onion soup mix, Worcestershire sauce, spaghetti sauce, tomato sauce, vinegar, mustard, sugar-free catsup, lemon juice, 1/4 cup sugar-free gelatin per meal, sugar & oil-free dressing, sugar-free syrup.

**VIII.**  
**MAINTENANCE**  
**QUESTIONS**

## OA-HOW Maintenance Questions

The purpose of the OA-HOW maintenance questions is to offer OA-HOW members, who have completed the steps through answering all the previous questions, with a review and contemplation of the work they have done and how they have made the OA HOW program their foundation for living. In this review they remind themselves of the recovery process as outlined in the Alcoholics Anonymous Big Book. The Big Book's preface indicates that it is a basic text, which is intended to be used in a progressive fashion, beginning in the front. Starting with Dr. Silkworth's Identification of the problem and working through the Big Book, the maintenance questions blend in readings from the Alcoholics Anonymous Big Book and the Alcoholics Anonymous Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions as appropriate. OA HOW maintenance members will clarify and identify exactly how the program works for them and how they can continue their program of recovery throughout their lives going forward.

1. Read pages xxiii-xxx (3rd ED.) pages xxv-xxxii (4th ED.) (Chapter- The Doctor's Opinion) in the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous where Dr. Silkworth identifies the problem. Why did I compulsively overeat? How has my program replaced my addiction?
2. Read pages 1-10 (Chapter – Bill's Story) in the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous. In what ways do you relate to the feelings and experiences that Bill had?
3. Read pages 11-16 (Chapter – Bill's Story) in the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous, ending with "We cannot answer the riddle." Bill talks about a foundation on which his life could be built. On what foundation does your abstinence rest?
4. Read pages 17-22 (Chapter – There Is A Solution) in the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous. What is the common bond that joins us in the fellowship of Overeaters Anonymous?
5. Read pages 22-29 (Chapter – There Is A Solution) in the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous. Do you accept the concept of a Higher Power in your life and are you willing to turn your life over to your Higher Power by working on the Twelve Steps in all areas of your life? Discuss how this is the solution to your ability to maintain your abstinence.
6. Read pages 30-35 (Chapter – More About Alcoholism) in the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous, ending with "the crux of the problem." How have you fully accepted the fact that you must remain spiritually fit, or you will return to compulsive overeating?
7. Read pages 35-43 (Chapter – More About Alcoholism) in the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous. Write on the concept that "self-knowledge alone avails us nothing". How have you utilized the idea that only total commitment to the program will insure your abstinence in your daily living? How do you accept the fact that you are powerless over food?
8. Read pages 44-48 (Chapter – We Agnostics) in the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous, ending with "we hope no one will be as prejudiced for as long as some of us were." What is your concept of a Higher Power?

9. Read pages 48-57(Chapter – We Agnostics) in the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous. Discuss how this program does not work on logic alone. How can an over-reliance on intellect lead us to rationalization?
10. Read pages 58-60 (Chapter – How It Works) in the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous, ending with “God could and would if he were sought.” How are the steps necessary to your serenity?
11. Read pages 21-25 (Chapter- Step 1) in the Alcoholics Anonymous Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions.
  - How does admitting being powerless help in taking this Step?
  - How does taking Step 1 make your life manageable?
12. Read pages 25-33 (Chapter – Step 2) in the Alcoholics Anonymous Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions.
  - Why is it important to have a “truly open mind” and to “resign from the debating society”?
  - Write on the following quote: “Humility and intellect could be compatible, provided we place humility first”. Why is it important to your program that you ask your Higher Power for humility?
  - What are you willing to do when the symptoms of your insanity surface periodically? What are these symptoms?
13. Read pages 60-63 (Chapter – How It Works) in the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous, beginning at “Being convinced *we were at Step Three*” and ending with “an effect, sometimes a very great one, was felt at once” on page 63.
  - How does self-seeking sometimes masquerade as kindness?
  - Discuss why trying to “wrest satisfaction and happiness out of this world” is a delusion.
  - Write on why selfishness and self-centeredness are thought to be the root of our troubles.
  - Would you rather be right or happy? Why?
14. Read pages 34-36 (Chapter – Step 3) in the Alcoholics Anonymous Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, ending with “independence of spirit.” How have you come to depend upon your Higher Power? Are you beginning to feel an acceptance of life as it comes?
15. Read pages 36-42 (Chapter – Step 3) in the Alcoholics Anonymous Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions.
  - What recurring moments of irrationality occur in your life today?
  - Discuss and reflect on the idea that only a Higher Power can remove your reoccurring moments of irrationality. Write about how, on a daily basis, you can turn these problems over to your Higher Power
  - What is the proper use of your will?

16. Read pages 63-71 (Chapter – How It Works) in the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous.
  - Discuss and reflect on “Why do people who have neglected to do a thorough Fourth Step have problems with their abstinence?”
  - How is spirituality the way of strength in our lives?
  - How can meditation help with specific relationship matters?
17. Read pages 42-48 (Chapter – Step 4) in the Alcoholics Anonymous Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions ending with “confidence that he is at last on the right track.”
  - Does self-justification sometimes still make it difficult for you to look at yourself honestly?
  - Do you ever still over-criticize yourself?
  - What danger is there in taking another’s inventory, blaming them for our problems?
  - Why must you change yourself in order to meet “conditions” (page 47)?
18. Read pages 48-54 (Chapter – Step 4) in the Alcoholics Anonymous Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions.
  - How has working an inventory affected your body image? What is your idea of your weight today? Does the idea of being “thin” evoke a negative or positive response in you? If so, why?
  - Why is thoroughness to be the watchword when taking inventory?
19. Read pages 55-59 (Chapter – Step 5) in the Alcoholics Anonymous Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, ending with straight thinking, solid honesty and genuine humility.”
  - How is the taking of Step Five necessary and vital in the quest for true humility?
20. Read pages 59-62 (Chapter – Step 5) in the Alcoholics Anonymous Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions.
  - Discuss and reflect on the idea that “confession without change is a game”.
  - Why is it necessary to share your inventory with another person?
21. Read pages 63-66, (Chapter – Step 6) in the Alcoholics Anonymous Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, ending with “rock bottom levels.” How can you determine what your character defects are?
22. Read pages 66-69 (Chapter – Step 6) in the Alcoholics Anonymous Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. When you put into practice, how can Step Six help us rub off the sharp, hurtful corners of our personality?
23. Read pages 70-73 (Chapter – Step 7) in the Alcoholics Anonymous Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, ending with “get rid of such overwhelming compulsion and desires.” Discuss the idea that “willingness to work on our character defects is our Higher Power acting through us.”

24. Read pages 73-76 (Chapter – Step 7) in the Alcoholics Anonymous Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. Discuss and reflect on the following idea: “We sought for humility as something we really wanted, rather than as something we must have.”
25. Read page 76, (Chapter – Into Action) in the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous, ending with “We have then completed Step Seven.”. Write all the defects you are willing to give to your Higher Power. Then write on those defects that you feel you may still be hanging on to.
26. Read pages 77-82 (Chapter – Step 8) in the Alcoholics Anonymous Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, ending with “honest search of our motives and actions.” Does fear still sometimes affect your ability to practice the steps of the program? Discuss the idea that “fear is disloyalty to your Higher Power.”
27. Read pages 83-84 (Chapter – Step 9) in the Alcoholics Anonymous Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. Discuss and reflect on how your past experience can benefit you and others in your life to come.
28. If you have not made a list of amends, start one now. Write out briefly what you intend to say to the top three persons on your list. How has making amends gone for you so far? Are there other amends you need to make? Share this with your sponsor or a trustworthy person of your choice. If you have made amends, how has making amends helped improve your relationships with others?
29. Read pages 85-87 (Chapter – Step 9) in the Alcoholics Anonymous Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. Change is the key to the OA program. What changes have you already made in your life? What further changes do you wish to have your Higher Power make in your life?
30. Read pages 83-84 (Chapter – Into Action) in the Big Book of Alcoholics, ending with “they will always materialize if we work for them.” These are often referred to as the “Twelve Promises.” Reflect on each of the Twelve Promises. Discuss how the Twelve Promises have manifested themselves in your life today.
31. Read pages 84-85 (Chapter – Into Action) in the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous, ending with “that means more action.” Discuss the idea that we have been given a daily reprieve contingent on the maintenance of our spiritual condition.
32. Read pages 88-95 (Chapter – Step 10) in the Alcoholics Anonymous Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions and then:
  - Reflect on something you need to clean up in your life. Write it down and share it with your sponsor or some trustworthy person of your choice. Discuss the concept of forgiveness and how it is important to forgive yourself.
  - Write a Tenth Step inventory based on the following ideas: a.) Honest regret for harms done; and b.) genuine gratitude for blessings received. Then discuss and reflect on a willingness to try for better things tomorrow.
  - Take an inventory of today that points to all the things in your life that your Higher Power has done.



33. Read pages 96-98, (Chapter – Step 11) in the Alcoholics Anonymous Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, ending with “How then shall we meditate?” Discuss how prayer and meditation allow the good in each of us to flower and grow.
34. Read pages 85-88 (Chapter – Into Action) in the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous. Discuss and reflect on how you have stopped trying to arrange life to suit yourself and have accepted the idea that: “Thy will, not mine, be done.”.
35. Read pages 98-100 (Chapter – Step 11) in the Alcoholics Anonymous Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, ending with “all those wonders still unseen.” Consider the prayer beginning “Lord, make me a channel of thy peace . . .” Discuss how this prayer can work in a particular aspect in your life.
36. Read pages 100-103 (Chapter – Step 11) in the Alcoholics Anonymous Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, ending with “the intent of Step Eleven.” Discuss how, through prayer, acknowledging defeat need not be a negative experience.
37. Read pages 103-105 (Chapter – Step 11) in the Alcoholics Anonymous Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. How does happiness come as a result of living the way you believe your Higher Power wants you to live”.
38. From your reading of Step 11 in the “Alcoholics Anonymous Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions”:
- How has adversity been a God-given opportunity for you to develop new courage?
  - How has praying for others become a force for good in your life?
  - How can you find out what your Higher Power’s will is for you?
39. Read pages 89-103, (Chapter - Working With Others) in the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous.
- Discuss the following ideas: a) Our problems are of our own making, b). Our eating disorder is only a symptom of a deeper problem, c.) We have stopped fighting anybody or anything because we have to.
  - Discuss & reflect on the way your life has changed? Are you happy with the changes? If not, what tools of the program can you use to help you continue to grow??
40. Read pages 106-117, ending with “we don’t have to be alone anymore.” (Chapter - Step 12) in the Alcoholic Anonymous 12 Steps & 12 Traditions.
- What form has your spiritual awakening taken as a result of working these Steps?
  - Reflect and discuss the concept that “Our basic troubles are the same as everyone else’s”. How has the program helped you “take these troubles in stride and turn them into demonstrations of faith?”

41. Read pages 117-125 (Chapter - Step 12) in the AA 12 & 12.
  - How are you carrying the message of the OA HOW program? Discuss.
  - Discuss the following ideas: a.) Right action is the key to good living; b.) The joy of good living is the result of working Twelfth Step.
42. Read pages 104-112 (Chapter - To Wives) in the AA Big Book.
  - Discuss how your recovery has impacted your relationships with others, including your significant other and family.
  - Discuss how you may show others the way to use this kit of spiritual tools, known as the steps, for personal growth.
43. Read pages 113-121 (chapter - To Wives) in the AA Big Book.
  - Do any of the descriptions of the addicts in this chapter remind you of yourself before you started working the program? Discuss.
  - Have you noticed any changes in the behavior of your loved ones and/or family as you have practiced the program in your daily life? Discuss.
44. Read pages 122-130, ending with “a life of sane and useful happiness.” (Chapter – Family Afterward) in the Alcoholics Anonymous Big Book. Discuss the concept that “cessation of drinking is but the first step away from a highly strained, abnormal condition.” What steps are you taking to exhibit the qualities of love and tolerance to your family and loved ones?
45. Read pages 130-135 (Chapter – Family Afterward) in the Alcoholics Anonymous Big Book. Discuss the concept “We are sure God wants us to be happy, joyous, and free. We cannot subscribe to the belief that this life is a vale of tears, though it once was just that for many of us”.
46. Read pages 136-141, ending with “...your understanding treatment of their cases will pay dividends.” (Chapter – To Employers) in the Alcoholics Anonymous Big Book. Discuss what you must do to be abstinent at your job or work. How do you avoid relapse?
47. Read pages 141-150 (Chapter – To Employers) in the Alcoholics Anonymous Big Book. Write on the idea that “No man should be fired just because he is alcoholic. If he wants to stop, he should be afforded a real chance. If he cannot or does not want to stop, he should be discharged. The exceptions are few.” How has your eating disorder affected your work life?
48. Read pages 151-158, ending with “church from which he was long absent.” (Chapter – A Vision For You) in the Alcoholics Anonymous Big Book. Is the fellowship of HOW an important part of your recovery? Has the fellowship of the program become a source of joy and pleasure in your life? Discuss.
49. Read pages 158-164, (Chapter – A Vision for you) in the Alcoholics Anonymous Big Book. Discuss the idea “that the answers will come, if your own house is in order.” Reread the last paragraph and discuss.

50. Read pages 129-131 (Chapter – Tradition 1) in the Alcoholics Anonymous Twelve and Twelve. Do you make an effort to add to the unity of OA HOW? Write on how your life depends upon adherence to spiritual principles.
51. Read pages 132-138 (Chapter – Tradition 2) in the Alcoholics Anonymous Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions.
- What are the benefits of each member having a home group?
  - Do you have a sense of a loving God expressing himself through the group conscience of your home group?
  - What can we do to remind ourselves that we are compulsive overeaters and are always just one bite away?
52. Read pages 139-145 (Chapter – Tradition 3) in the Alcoholics Anonymous Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. Discuss the following ideas:
- The importance of the idea that you are a compulsive overeater if you say you are, and
  - We need to focus only on our recovery from the disease.
53. Read pages 146-149 (Chapter – Tradition 4). How has the program helped you to begin to take responsibility for yourself? What type of service work do you do? What type of service do you enjoy the most?
54. Read pages 150-154 (Chapter – Tradition 5) in the Alcoholics Anonymous Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. Discuss and reflect on the following:
- As recovering members of OA HOW, we can offer a solution to fellow compulsive overeaters in ways few others can.
  - If we do not carry the message of OA HOW to others, we risk losing it for ourselves.
55. Read pages 155-159 (Chapter – Tradition 6) in the Alcoholics Anonymous Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions.
- Discuss and reflect on the concept of “Keep it simple.”
  - How does the phrase “keep it simple” help protect the primary purpose of OA HOW?
  - How does this slogan help you in your life in recovery?
56. Read pages 160-165 (Chapter – Tradition 7) in the Alcoholics Anonymous Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions.
- How important do you think it is for members to support OA HOW financially?
  - What type of service work do you provide to OA HOW so it may continue to function?
  - How do you practice the principle of being self-supporting in your life in recovery?
57. Read pages 166-171 (Chapter – Tradition 8) in the Alcoholics Anonymous Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions.

- Discuss and reflect on the following: “Our Twelfth Step is never to be paid for, but those who labor in service for us are worthy of their hire.” (P. 171 - “Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous”)

58. Read pages 172-175 (Chapter – Tradition 9) in the Alcoholics Anonymous Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions.

- Discuss what you feel you ought to do to carry the message to other compulsive overeaters.
- How does the lack of organizational structure benefit OA HOW?

59. Read pages 176-179 (Chapter – Tradition 10) in the Alcoholics Anonymous Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions.

- Discuss and reflect on the principle that OA ought never be drawn into public controversy.
- How have you adhered to this tradition in your program?

60. Read pages 172-183 (Chapter – Tradition 11) in the Alcoholics Anonymous Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. Discuss the following:

- How someone with long-term abstinence can be part of OA’s program of attraction.
- The difference between publicizing OA HOW and promoting it.

61. Read pages 184-187 (Chapter – Tradition 12) in the Alcoholics Anonymous Twelve and Twelve. Write on the concept that “it’s not how I talk the talk: it’s how I walk the walk.”

62. Read pages 171-181 (Chapter – Dr. Bob’s Nightmare) (3rd and 4th ED.) in the Alcoholics Anonymous Big Book. Discuss the following: knowledge alone avails us nothing.

63. Read pages 182-192 (Chapter – Alcoholics Anonymous Number Three) in the Alcoholics Anonymous Big Book (same pages for 3rd and 4th editions). Discuss the blessing you have received from working the steps of OA HOW and your gratitude for those blessings.

64. Read pages 526-530 (3<sup>rd</sup> ED.) pages 531-534 (4th ED.) (Chapter – Another Chance) in the Alcoholics Anonymous Big Book. Reflect on concept that we are all alike in our disease no matter how different we are in our outside lives.

65. Read pages 222-229 (3<sup>rd</sup> ED.) pages 200-218 (4<sup>th</sup> ED.) (Chapter – Women Suffer Too) in the Alcoholics Anonymous Big Book. Discuss and reflect on the idea that for us, as members of OA HOW, coming to a meeting is like coming home.

66. Read pages 238-250 (3<sup>rd</sup> ED.) pages 219-231(4<sup>th</sup> ED.) (Chapter – The Vicious cycle) in the Alcoholics Anonymous Big Book.

- Have you ever experienced relapse yourself? If so, what caused your relapse and how did you get back on track?
- Discuss and reflect on the concept that we will never graduate from OA HOW.

67. Read pages 439-452 (3<sup>rd</sup> ED.) (Chapter – Doctor, Alcoholic, Addict) pages 407-420 (4<sup>th</sup> ED.) (Chapter – Acceptance was the Answer) in the Alcoholics Anonymous Big Book.

- Give specific examples of how you live in the solution.

b. How is acceptance the key to your serenity?

68. Read pages 304-312 (3<sup>rd</sup> ED.) pages 268-276 (Chapter – Keys to the Kingdom) in the Alcoholics Anonymous Big Book. Describe how OA HOW has become a way of life for you.
69. The Man Who Mastered Fear, read pages 275-286 (3<sup>rd</sup> ED.) pages 246-257 (4<sup>th</sup> ED.) in the Alcoholics Anonymous Big Book.
- a. What part has fear played in your disease?
  - b. How has it driven you to food?
  - c. How has it driven you to work the Steps?
70. Read page 569 -570 (3<sup>rd</sup> ED.) pages 567-569 (4<sup>th</sup> ED.) (Chapter – Spiritual Experience) in the Alcoholics Anonymous Big Book. Discuss how your continued abstinence from compulsive overeating proof is evidence that your Higher Power is doing for you what you cannot do for yourself.
71. Read pages 544-553 (3<sup>rd</sup> ED.) pages 544-552 (4<sup>th</sup> ED.) (Chapter – Freedom from Bondage) in the Alcoholics Anonymous Big Book. Write on the idea that Honesty, Open-mindedness, and Willingness are the essentials of recovery.
72. What tools do you use today to maintain your abstinence? How does abstinence continue to be your first priority?

**IX.**

**RECOMMITMENT**

**QUESTIONS**

## Recommitment Questions

(to be answered after a slip or loss of abstinence as suggested by your sponsor)

1. Describe your physical, emotional, and spiritual state when you broke your abstinence.
2. Why is it important that I think of myself first?
3. Write on the Serenity Prayer. What it means to you and how it can help you in your life.
4. Discuss the following: Live and let live, Easy does it, But for the grace of God go I, Let go and let God, One step at a time, First things first, I see things differently now.
5. Write on the concept of Just for Today.
6. Write about carbohydrate abstinence and what the removal of carbohydrates from your eating program can do for you. Do you believe you have an allergy to carbohydrates? Yes or No. Explain.
7. List the things you want out of life. How many of these things are really important? Why?
8. What about your life would you like to change? How would you change it?
9. Count your blessings.
10. What would you lose by giving up HOW?
11. What do you fear? How many of these things are beyond your control?
12. Because you have a failure, you are not a failure. Write on this.
13. Discuss and reflect on the meaning of love.
14. Reverse a negative thought and write on it.
15. Discuss and reflect upon the importance of growing up.
16. By eating to punish another, how am I only deceiving myself?
17. Why don't I want to get well?
18. Read the 12 & 12 from page 102-104. Discuss and reflect up on the need for meditation.
19. Has the striving or drive for perfection been a realistic goal in my life? How has this helped or hindered me?
20. Discuss the dangers of your obsession as you see them...mental, physical, and spiritual.
21. Can I afford to have my pre-program insanity back?
22. In what ways do I look for joy in my life?
23. Do I really listen when people talk to me? In what ways?
24. Write on how the child within often controls your life.
25. Discuss and reflect upon the need for self-worth. List your good points.
26. What were my expectations yesterday? Am I realistic about them today?
27. How are the others in HOW acting as your mirror?
28. Choose a person to whom you should make amends. Ask their forgiveness. How does it make you feel?
29. Open the Twenty-Four Hours a Day book at random. What does it say? How does it relate to your life today?
30. Think of someone you haven't seen in a while. Find their phone number and give them a call. Reflect and write on reaching out.
31. We can't love others until we love ourselves. How does this relate to our feelings today? Yesterday?
32. Boredom is a bar against learning. Discuss and reflect upon the idea that boredom is part of our disease.

33. Ignorance is a bar against all proof – what you don't know won't hurt you. Reflect and discuss why How has proven this statement wrong.
34. Action is called a magic word. Why is this word important to you today?
35. Discuss and reflect upon the idea that we must keep things simple.
36. How many people do you fail when you fail yourself?
37. Read in the Little Red Book pages 9-13 and write your feelings.
38. Read in the Little Red Book pages 14 till the end of the chapter. How do you feel?
39. Read Step 6 in the Twelve & Twelve. Read page 68 particularly. How does the whole step make you feel?
40. Write on what the advantages are when you are on abstinence. Write on the disadvantages of eating as though you were normal.
41. Read February 28 to March 11 in the Twenty-Four Hours a Day book and write on your feelings.
42. Write on what your spiritual rock-bottom was.
43. Write on what your physical rock-bottom was.
44. What does food mean to you today? How does it affect you now?
45. Write on why you considered yourself a compulsive overeater. Why do you insist on letting your compulsion destroy you?
46. Write on "giving in" and why you do.
47. Write on your concept of a higher power.
48. Write on what HOW means to you.
49. Read October 6 and October 12 in the Twenty-Four Hours a Day book. Are you sharing the load?
50. When and how did I allow self-pity to rule my life?
51. How have I allowed false pride to defeat me?
52. Read Step Seven in the Twelve and Twelve. Write on humility.
53. Write on how defiance was a strong part of my life? Have I changed?
54. Have I allowed arrogance to play a large part in my life?
55. What changes did I see in myself before I slipped?
56. Read January 17 in the Twenty-Four Hours a Day book. Have I allowed hostility to take over?
57. Read November 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> in the Twenty-Four Hours a Day book. Have I allowed hostility to take over?
58. Read November 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> in the Twenty-four Hours a Day book. Have I found inner contentment?
59. Read December 3 in the Twenty-Four Hours a Day book. Make an inventory of all the good in your life.
60. Read February 22<sup>nd</sup> in the Twenty-Four Hours a Day book. How well am I handling my problems?
61. Read March 5<sup>th</sup> in 24 Hours a Day. Am I trying too hard to get program?
62. Read March 14<sup>th</sup> in the Twenty-Four Hours a Day book. Write on CAN I GET WELL?
63. Write on "Have I used food to face life?"
64. Write on "Thy will not mine by done."
65. What are my feelings today concerning God, food, other?
66. What is my concept of happiness?
67. The man who never makes a mistake is the man who never does anything.



68. Success is never final.
69. A friend is to be taken with his faults.
70. Evil conduct is the root of misery.
71. Patience is the companion of wisdom.
72. Difficulty is the daughter of idleness.
73. Am I the master of my emotions?
74. Take the world as it is – not as it ought to be.
75. A good example is the best sermon.
76. The greatest wealth is contentment with little or less.
77. He who is not ready today, will be less so tomorrow.
78. People cannot change truth, but truth can change people.
79. Who excuses, accuses.
80. Nothing with GOD is accidental.
81. Whatever is worth doing at all is worth doing well.
82. Love and Friendship is what binds the HOW fellowship together.
83. Over commitment – its danger.
84. Moderation – a way of life.
85. Kindness is produced by kindness.
86. Temper is what gets most of us in trouble. Price is what keeps us there.
87. Lord, when we are wrong, make us willing to change, and when we are right, make us easy to live with.
88. Men do not stumble over mountains, only over molehills.
89. Love: Then and Now.
90. The person I harmed was/is me.
91. Anger as a constructive force.
92. What my screaming heart is trying to tell me.
93. You may never get a second chance to make a first impression.
94. My best friends may be my worst enemies.
95. Self-pity is harmful and can set you up.
96. Why are we so afraid of ourselves?
97. Only if you accept yourself just as you are can you change.
98. Tolerance and intolerance. The good and the bad.
99. Have I truly surrendered to the program?

**X.**

# **APPENDIX**

# Inventory of Character Traits

This chart is meant to a helpful tool for OA HOW members in working their 4<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> steps

<b>Assets - Strive for</b>	<b>Liabilities - Watch for</b>
Gratitude	Self-Pity/Self-Loathing
Honesty	Dishonesty
Patience	Impatience
Courage	Fear
Promptness	Procrastination
Forgiveness	Resentment
Positive Thinking	Negative Thinking
Affirming	Criticizing
Sincerity/Straightforwardness	Insincerity
Self-Acceptance	Self-Condernation
Right-sized	Grandiose-Big Shot
Disciplined/Hard Working	Lazy
Loving	Hateful
Compassionate	Inconsiderate/thoughtless
Balance	Perfectionism/Controlling
Tolerant	Narrowminded
Intelligent	Pompous/Know-it-all
Generous	Lack of limits/boundaries
Confident	Insecure
Analytical/Logical Thinker/Open to other ideas	Judgmental/Cynical
Organized/On Task	Disorganized
Spontaneous/Adventurous	Isolating
Determined	Stubborn/vacillating
Trustworthy	Unreliable
Independent Dependable Kindess	Too dependent on others Irresponsible Cruelty
<b>Accentuate the Positive</b>	<b>Eliminate the Negative</b>

# **APPENDIX A.**

**OA HOW HOUSTON INC.  
INTERGROUP**

## **SUGGESTED MEETING FORMAT AND READINGS**

*\*Meeting format may be varied*

*\*\*Any changes to the Format or Readings  
MUST not violate the  
Twelve Traditions of OA*

**Note to Leader:** Meeting should start promptly at \_\_\_\_\_ and close at \_\_\_\_\_.

Leader must be an OA-HOW Sponsor, have 14 days of current, back-to-back abstinence, and be actively working the OA-HOW Program. Please avoid any mention of particular food items. Please keep the focus of your story on THIS 12-Step program.

## **OA-HOW Meeting Format**

Welcome to the [Day, Time, Type of meeting] meeting of **Overeaters Anonymous – HOW Concept**. My name is \_\_\_\_\_, and I am a compulsive overeater and the leader for this meeting. Will you join me, please, in 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.**

Are there any compulsive overeaters here besides me?

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-HOW is not affiliated with any public or private organizations, political movements, ideology, or religious doctrine; we take no position on outside issues. Our primary purpose is to abstain from compulsive overeating and to carry the message of recovery to those who still suffer.

Will someone please read “Chapter Five”?

Will someone please read “The Twelve Steps of Recovery”?

Will someone please read “The Twelve Traditions”?

Will someone please read “The HOW Concept”?

Our Seventh Tradition tells us that we must be self-supporting through our own contributions. The money collected goes to support this meeting and its expenses, as well as reaching out to other meetings, members, and levels of the OA-HOW organization to help spread the message that there is recovery from compulsive overeating. We ask that the newcomers refrain from contributing and purchase literature instead. As we pass the basket, please give generously.

Will someone please read “The Seven Tools”?

Is there anyone stepping up?

### **OPTIONAL – “STEPPING UP”**

At this point in the meeting, we ask the group to join us as we celebrate another example of the miracles that abound in OA-HOW. This portion of the meeting is known as “Stepping Up”. The sponsor is asked to introduce a newcomer who has at least thirty days of continuous back-to-back abstinence. The newcomer has taken the first three steps of the program and is now ready to become a HOW sponsor. Are there any new sponsors?

Is there anyone here for their very first OA Meeting? Is there anyone at this meeting for the first time? Would you please tell us your first name so that we can welcome you?

(Note to Leader: Welcome each person by name)

**OPTIONAL – “To the Newcomer”**

We encourage you to:

- Attend at least six different meetings to see if OA HOW is for you.
- Please stay after the meeting so we can answer any questions you might have.

Would any abstaining sponsors who are available, please stay after the meeting to answer any questions the newcomer may have?

Because we have newcomers present, please focus your share on the first three steps.

Please silence all electronic devices now. We ask that there be no cross talk in this meeting and no mentioning of particular food items. We also ask that you limit yourself to a \_\_\_\_-minute (*list # of minutes*) POSITIVE pitch so that everyone who wants to will have time to share. A PITCH is an experience that has helped us grow or has given us a new level of awareness. We suggest that you share the MESSAGE of recovery in this meeting and save the MESS for your sponsor.

The meeting is now open for sharing.

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I wish to thank those who shared today. Please remember our cherished tradition of anonymity —

**Who you see here, what you hear here, when you leave here, let it stay here.**

Are there any reports or OA-related announcements?

Will someone please read his or her choice of “A Vision for You” or “Just for Today”?

**OPTIONAL – CHIPS**

We’re on a chip system at this meeting. The first chip is a Desire Chip. It’s an outward symbol of an inward desire to stop doing whatever it is you’re doing with food. Would anyone like a Desire Chip? Is there anyone celebrating 30 days of continuous abstinence? 60 days? 90 days? 6 months? 9 months? Birthdays to celebrate years of abstinence and multiple years of abstinence are celebrated on the last Sunday of the month at 1 P.M. at Chapelwood. Is there anyone celebrating a birthday this month?

The requirements of the OA-HOW Concept are what this particular group has found to be effective in working this program and do not represent OA as a whole. The opinions expressed here today by those who shared are their own and not necessarily those of OA as a whole.

Thank you for allowing me to be your leader for this meeting. After a moment of quiet meditation, will those of you who wish to, please join me in the \_\_\_\_\_ Prayer? [Suggested prayers: Serenity Prayer, Third Step Prayer, or Seventh Step Prayer]

## CHAPTER FIVE

### Our Program and How it Works

We compulsive overeaters have followed many programs of reducing and weight control and have found that no amount of willpower or self-determination can make us stick to a sensible program of eating for any length of time.

We have found that self-reliance failed us. Self-reliance is good, as far as it goes, but it doesn't go far enough. Some of us once had self-confidence, but that didn't solve our eating problem either.

We have felt the need and have been asking about a solution to our dilemma. We instinctively knew that the food obsession was only the outward manifestation of a deeper problem.

For us the OA-HOW program has been the answer.

*Rarely has a person failed 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 recovery 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.*

## 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.

Our description of the compulsive overeater, the chapter to the agnostic, and our personal adventures before and after make clear three pertinent ideas:

- a) That we were compulsive overeaters and could not manage our own lives.
- b) That probably no human power could have relieved our compulsive overeating.
- c) That God could and would if He were sought.



## 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. An 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.

## THE H.O.W. CONCEPT

The Overeaters Anonymous HOW Concept has 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. The OA-HOW groups have been formed in the belief that our disease is absolute and therefore only absolute acceptance of the OA-HOW program will offer any sustained abstinence to those of us whose compulsion has reached a critical level.

Therefore, the OA-How plan of eating, steps, traditions and tools of recovery are not suggested. Rather, we accept them as requirements for our recovery.

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 ideal 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.

Each group 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 insure 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 heart to the love which is manifest in this room.

Amen

## THE SEVEN TOOLS

### TOOLS

As defined by Webster, a tool is "any person or thing used as a means to get something done." We have many tools of the program that help us recover on a daily basis. Tools are essential to get the job done, and they work for us. Here are a few:

### HOW ABSTINENCE PLAN OF EATING

Three meals daily, weighed and measured, with nothing in between except sugar-free soda, no-calorie beverages, and diet gum. Food is written down, called in and committed, so we can get on with our recovery and "out" of the food. It is recommended that you obtain your physician's approval before beginning your abstinence using the HOW food plan. Any recommendations your physician makes will be accepted.

### LITERATURE AND WRITING

We use the "Alcoholics Anonymous" (Big Book) and the "Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions." When we substitute the words "compulsive overeater" for "alcoholic" and "food" for "alcohol", we feel we identify absolutely; our writing assignments for the first thirty days are taken from them. We use the "A.A. Big Book" and the "12 and 12" as a tool of examination and release. We also believe that negative thinking is a large part of our disease; so we are learning, one day at a time, to abstain from negative thinking.

### ANONYMITY

Who you see here, what you hear here, when you leave here, let it stay here. When we meet another member in the outside world, we do not mention that they are members of OA-HOW.

### TELEPHONE CALLS

We are required to make four calls a day – one to our sponsor and three to other OA-HOW members. The phone is like a lifeline; we need the contact; it can be like a mini-meeting.

### MEETINGS

You must attend three meetings a week. It is recommended that each member commit to one specific meeting as his or her home group.

### SERVICE

Service is abstinence – the greatest service to yourself. Service is coming to meetings on time; being a leader or speaker; volunteering to be a service person (such as a program chairperson, coffee person, treasurer, secretary, literature person, intergroup representative) etc. Service is OA-HOW. Service is putting away chairs when necessary, picking up after the meeting, being quiet when a member is sharing. Service is one way to get involved in the program. Service is needed at all levels and at every meeting. Service is giving of yourself to help OA-HOW continue to function. Let's all get involved to help OA-HOW because we all know that "Service is freedom from the bondage of self."

### SPONSORSHIP

A sponsor will help the newcomer through their first thirty days. A sponsor is a compulsive overeater who initially completed 30 days of back-to-back HOW abstinence, completed thirty days of questions and took the first three steps. To take on new sponsees (or lead a meeting) a sponsor MUST have at least fourteen days of current back-to-back HOW abstinence and be actively working the HOW program.

Will all OA-HOW Sponsors please stand now, introduce yourselves, qualify as to the length of your time in the HOW program, the amount of weight reduction, the kind of sponsor you are – Food, Inventory, Step, or Maintenance – and whether or not you are available. To save time, we ask that you hold all applause until the last sponsor has qualified.

## A VISION FOR YOU

Our book is meant to be suggestive only. We realize we know only a little. God will constantly disclose more to you and to use. Ask Him in your morning meditation what you can do each day for the man who is still sick. The answers will come, if your own house is in order. But obviously you cannot transmit something you haven't got. See to it that your relationship with Him is right and great events will come to pass for you and countless others. This is the Great Fact for us.

Abandon yourself to God as you understand God. Admit your faults to Him and to your fellows. Clear away the wreckage of your past. Give freely of what you find and join us. We shall be with you in the fellowship of the Spirit and you will surely meet some of us as you trudge the road of happy destiny.

May God bless you and keep you – until then.

## JUST FOR TODAY

Just for today... I will try to live through this day only and not tackle my whole life's problems 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, "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 good 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. Sometime during this half-hour 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.