

## **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 They 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.*)