

# SOAR 8

Southeast Overeaters Anonymous Region 8



Alabama  
Arkansas  
Florida  
Georgia  
Louisiana  
Mississippi  
North Carolina  
South Carolina  
Tennessee  
Puerto Rico  
South America  
Central America  
Caribbean Islands

## Abstinence Awareness in Region 8

2013 has been designated "The Year of Abstinence Awareness". At the March Region 8 Assembly in Memphis, we did a writing exercise in which business attendees were asked to write about what "abstinence awareness" means to them. Here are the responses we received on the meaning of "abstinence awareness":

1. Abstinence awareness is like an ever deepening spiral. My understanding of the reality of abstinence and its centrality in my life continues to unfold.
2. Abstinence awareness is the central, pivotal reality of OA.
3. Abstinence is a gift from God which I work my ass off to keep.
4. Abstinence awareness means my physical, emotional, and spiritual fitness is in tune with my higher power.
5. Abstinence awareness means I am mindful of all that I do and say in terms of my compulsive behaviors.
6. Abstinence awareness means giving newcomers and others struggling with their abstinence inspiration and hope by being an example and proclaiming our abstinence and dependence on OA and a higher power for our continued success
7. My abstinence is a gift of my higher power, mediated through OA and OA's "sponsoring fellowship" -- AA. My abstinence must be as clear and definable as a sober alcoholic's sobriety. My disease was visible to the world. My recovery must be also.
8. My abstinence is the self-fulfilling prophecy which allows me to live the life I

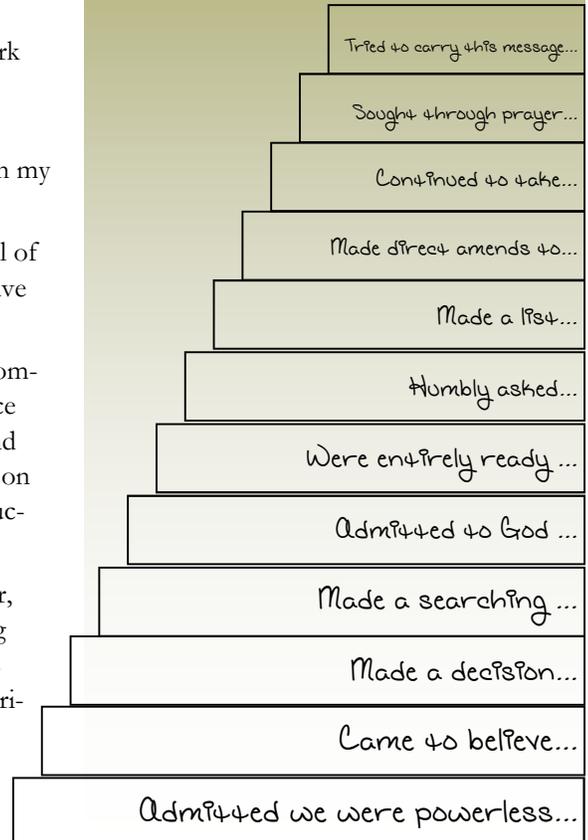
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### STEP INTO ACTION

JULY 12—14, 2013

SOAR8  
RECOVERY CONVENTION &  
BUSINESS ASSEMBLY

BOCA RATON, FL



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## OA Makes Me Feel Beautiful Today

"OA has saved my life..."

It's not only my weight loss of 70 pounds over the past 15 years and the ability to keep it off that makes me feel beautiful today. In addition, I feel and look younger than I did 15 years ago, and today I eat healthy and exercise regularly.

I'm grateful to OA, the program of recovery that helped me lose the weight, and maintain it for the first time in my life. OA has saved my life, which has prompted me to do volunteer service for them, in hopes of paying it forward in some small measure,

one day at a time. I now serve on the Region 8 board, sharing my recovery and doing service that I love as the treasurer.

I saw a hand-painted tile years ago that read "The Older I Get the More I Feel Like Myself". That, and "Living the Dream" have become my mottos. My life is so much richer today than I had ever hoped it could be when I was in the throes of my disease.

Along with my weight loss success, comes the added bonus of being able to wear smaller sizes and

more fashionable clothing; AND liking what I see in the mirror.

These things are a big part of what make me feel beautiful today – on the outside. And the joy I get in living everyday without the addiction to food ruling my life, giving me the opportunity to enjoy time with friends, my children and grandchildren, and my loving and supportive husband of 33 years, has been the truest blessing of all, and the reason I feel beautiful today – on the inside.

~Patti  
Tampa, FL

**You are beautiful!**

### *Abstinence Awareness in Region 8 continued from front page*

was created to live. My physical abstinence makes it possible for me to work the 12 steps which cleanse the path to my higher power. With an open path to spiritual fitness, I can obtain both emotional sobriety and a greater desire for physical abstinence. This physical abstinence then reduces my desire to eat inappropriately.

9. Service greatly enhances incentive to be abstinent. I am in the public eye of my fellow addicts. I personally want to be an abstinent member of Overeaters Anonymous.

10. Abstinence is the action of refraining from compulsive eating and compulsive food behaviors. Many people in my area have considered that eating off their food plan was breaking their abstinence. Only if they did so compulsively. The nerve racking aching compulsion to grab something and

shove it in our face, uncontrollably, unstop- pably, animalistically, vampirically.

11. Abstinence Awareness means that I am always conscious of my program, every wak- ing moment of every day. It means that I fit my life around my program; I do not fit my program into my life. In times of trouble or struggle I turn toward my program, not away from it. Abstinence Awareness means that wherever I go and whatever I do, I put my abstinence first. I live life being conscious, awake, aware of the gift I have and willing to go to any length to protect it and to share it. Abstinence Awareness means my abstinence must be like breathing; it must be second nature to me and it must always be so.

**What does Abstinence Awareness mean to you?**

~Gloria L. , Region 8 Chair

## *Suggestions? Really?*

I have now just completed seven years of abstinence and recovery in OA, yet a quotation in the “Big Book” always puzzled me. In the chapter, “How it Works,” we are told, “Here are the steps we took, which are *suggested* (emphasis supplied) as a program of recovery.” Why simply “suggestions” I wondered.

In the past seven years, I have come to believe that my recovery absolutely depended on my following the twelve steps to the best of my ability. To me, these were not merely “suggestions,” but mandatory keys to our program’s success.

Then, in a meeting I attended on my seventh year anniversary, I suddenly understood. Someone shared that we receive daily messages and insights from our HP. We can elect to follow those messages or not. We still have “free will.” However, if I use my own will to ignore those messages, insights, and, yes, suggestions, then I bring destruction on myself. I realized that HP is not “commanding” me to “put down the fork;” however, He strongly suggests that if I do, I will find relief from my compulsion to overeat. It is as if HP is by my side, advising me with “suggestions” that I can choose to follow or ignore according to my will. “Sander, put down the fork.” OK God. “Sander, stop arguing with your wife.” OK God. “Sander, treat your body with respect.” OK, God. “Sander, treat all those around you with all the honor, respect, and dignity for whom each is entitled as fellow human beings, brothers and sisters of yours, in and of My creation.” OK, God.

In Step 3, I made a solemn commitment to my HP that I would follow His suggestions, always, and in all ways, to the best of my ability. Then, in Step 11, I pray only for knowledge of His will for me and the power, strength, and will, to carry that out. This, to me, has been the key to my success.

So, again, why are steps merely suggestions? Because, as I have come to understand, HP has given all of us free will. So I can choose, if I wish, to ignore the Steps, His will, at my own peril. No, I don’t believe He will strike me dead with a lightning bolt from heaven. I do, however, believe that if I fail to follow His suggestions, i.e. His will for me, I will bring destruction upon myself. If I follow his suggestions, though, I can be assured of a life filled with great happiness and joy; and a freedom from the obsession of overeating.

I have had sponsees argue with me that they have had a problem with the third step because they think it is giving up their God-given gift of free will. I argue that it was my mis-use of my free will that got me into my hopeless situation to begin with. So, now, I can instead use my free will to align with His. As the “Big Book,” p. 85, says, “Every day is a day when we must carry the vision of God’s will into all our activities. ‘How can I best serve Thee – Thy will (not mine) be done.’ These are the thoughts which must go with us constantly. We can exercise our will power along this line all we wish. It is the (only) proper use of the will.”

~Sander B., Vice Chair, Region 8



**“...it was my mis-use of my free will that got me into my hopeless situation to begin with.”**

## Highlights From World Service Business Conference 2013

Here are some highlights from this year's WSBC:

### Elections

- Joe L. was elected Chairman of the OA Board of Trustees ("BOT").
- Gerri H. was elected a General Service Trustee and First Vice Chair of the OA BOT.
- Linda H was elected Region 8 Trustee
- Gloria L was re-elected Delegate Co Chair of the Region Chairs Committee
- Barbara T is the delegate Vice Chair of the Conference Literature Committee
- Atiya M. and Barbara T were elected as members of the adhoc committee reviewing the *OA 12 & 12* in advance of it coming up for regular literature review in 2015
- Burt T remains the Delegate Co Chair of the WebTech Committee

I am sure there are others I am failing to include and for that I do apologize!

Region 8 Rocks because we now have five trustees currently from or originally from Region 8 on the OA Board of Trustees!!! They are:

Gerri H	Stephanie D
Karen C	Linda H
Janice S	

### Motions:

Delegates adopted a change to the last Sentence of the OA preamble as follows:

*Our primary purpose is to abstain from compulsive eating and to carry the message of recovery through the 12 steps of OA to those who still suffer.*

The WSBC policy statement on anonymity was changed to add "and all public media of communication" as in "we do not break our individual anonymity at the level of press, radio, films, television and all public media of communication"

A new e-workbook for the For Today was approved

A motion to allow virtual service boards that span more than one region to choose to affiliate with one of the regions it spans was defeated

The motion to amend the 12 Concepts of OA Service was also defeated.

### Exciting New Strategic Plan ("SOP")

We worked on a new strategic plan for 2014 through 2016. Our last strategic plan was a five year plan and our new plan will be a three-year plan. It will focus on "our primary pur-

pose" and highlight abstinence. One fun way to remember the focus of the new plan is as follows:

Year 1: Abstinance first

Year 2: It takes all 12 (steps)

Year 3: I am responsible (for carrying the message)

### Region 8 Representation at WSBC

The percentage of Intergroups and service boards represented at WSBC 2013 from Region 8 was 32%.

Therefore Region 8 is eligible to send five additional delegates to WSBC in 2014.

### Forum

It is my great pleasure to report that the Forum put on by the Region Chairs was a resounding success! It was entitled "Searching and Fearless—A Good Look ". It helped convey the results of the OA survey so many of us took last year.

### More Information:

A short form wrap up report of WSBC 2013 is posted online at [oa.org](http://oa.org).

The Final Conference Report will be mailed on September 9, 2013 to all delegates and those service bodies who did not have a delegate at Conference. The Final Conference Report will be posted online in early August (excluding full delegate names and contact information). If your service body does not wish to receive a printed version of the Final Conference Report, notify the World Service Office via email to [szimmerman@oa.org](mailto:szimmerman@oa.org) no later than July 14, 2013.

### Personal Note:

On a personal level I have to say that I feel privileged and grateful to have represented Region 8 at WSBC. I found it to be an incredible experience and so helpful to my recovery. Spending the week with over 200 people from all over the world committed to OA and to their personal abstinence and to carrying the message helps me see how OA really is a global community! Remember that Region 8 offers financial assistance if your Intergroup cannot afford to send you!

WSBC reinforced for me our Region 8 motto:  
RECOVERY: PASS IT ON!

Thank You Region 8!

~Gloria L., Region 8 Chair

## The Main Thing About an Action Plan

*An action plan is the process of identifying and implementing attainable actions, both daily and long-term, that are necessary to support our individual abstinence and emotional, spiritual and physical recovery.*

Whenever someone mentions OA’s newest recovery tool— “Action Plan” - it always makes me think of a superhero comic book.

“Superman! Help! There is a big emergency over on the other side of town! You’ve got to hurry!”

“Just a minute, Jimmy. I have to come up with a good action plan.”

Action IS the magic word for my recovery, because without doing something about changing myself, well... nothing will change. Action is what the tools are all about: doing something about my recovery, building something new.

When I was actively going to a HOW meeting on the other side of the river, one of the most effective slogans they hung up on the walls of the church basement meeting room went like this:

AWARENESS

+ACTION

=ABSTINENCE

Awareness is only the beginning. I love that the Big Book spells it out in no uncertain terms, sometimes in ways that make me shudder because they leave no room for wishy-washy efforts on my part. Phrases such as “Half measures availed us nothing” (p. 59) and “will power and self knowledge would not help in those strange mental blank spots” (p42).

My action plan helps me to not only work the program but also to live a more orderly life. Self-discipline is elusive for me, so writing down an action plan each night for the next day really helps me in all aspects of my life.

One of the many gifts I’ve received in my 25-plus years in OA is to be more realistic about what I can do on any given day. I used to overbook my schedule, and that always led to feeling rushed, frustrated, harried, indecisive (should I do this or that? I don’t have enough TIME!), and always ended up making me feel as though I had failed somehow. Today I make an action plan that is modest, reasonable, doable. It always starts with “call my sponsor,” and includes some physical exercise, some prayer & meditation, and a short list of necessary chores or duties, such as paying a bill or calling the plumber. And I cross off the items on the list as I complete them! Very satisfying!

But the main thing about an action plan, as with a food plan, is that I HAVE one. I rarely follow my action plan perfectly, but coming up with one, writing it down, helps me stay on the road to recovery, and that’s where I want to be, one day at a time.

~Linda F.

### Superhero Action Plan

1. Save the day
2. Bask in glow of admiration
3. Take cape to dry cleaners

H·E·R·O

HONESTLY EXPERIENCING RECOVERY'S OPPORTUNITIES



## WSBC 2013: What Happened?



This was the fourth year that I had the privilege to serve as a WSO delegate from Triangle IG. Each time the adventure and blessings that I receive more than compensate for the vacation days spent, time change, lack of sleep, and emotional challenges. This year was my best trip yet. Although each year I have consistently followed my daily spiritual practices while in Albuquerque, this year I really enjoyed the fruits of my daily work. I was able to be present, serene and joyful throughout. In this spirit, I will share a bit about what happened (although I am very tempted to simply write "What happens in Albuquerque, stays in Albuquerque").

You may remember that Triangle IG submitted a motion to change the OA Preamble. Because there were three motions presented to change the Preamble, all three were sent to the Reference Subcommittee (which is a subset of the Bylaws Committee). The Reference Subcommittee chose to recommend one of the other two proposals, which was adopted by the body. Our new Preamble:

Overeaters Anonymous is a Fellowship of individuals who, through shared experience, strength and hope, 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 is not affiliated with any public or private organization, political movement, ideology or religious doctrine; we take no position on outside issues. Our primary purpose is to abstain from compulsive overeating and to carry ~~this~~ the message of recovery through the Twelve Steps of OA to those who still suffer.

We are asked to use the new language when reading the OA Preamble. There was no change to the Twelve Concepts and the motion to require intergroups' compliance with all OA policies was defeated. A full listing of the results of all votes will be in the 2013 Final Conference Report.

For the past three years, while serving on the Conference Literature Committee, I had the honor of working on OA3 (which will be called *Overeaters Anonymous, Third Edition* if published). The product - 40 powerful stories of experience, strength and hope



- is nearing completion. I will no longer be working on OA3. Instead I was blessed to be selected to serve on the ad hoc committee to review and possibly revise the OA 12 & 12 (*The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous*). Only in recovery can I realize my dream of becoming a writer because I used to eat out of and throw up into garbage cans. If you are interested in being considered for this committee, please apply:

[http://www.oa.org/pdfs/12&12\\_committee\\_application\\_final.pdf](http://www.oa.org/pdfs/12&12_committee_application_final.pdf).

We have new literature: the *For Today e-Workbook* is now Conference Approved. *Abstinence, Second Edition* was also recently published and is available for sale at [www.oa.org](http://www.oa.org) and possibly at your local meetings. The presented *Unity with Diversity Inventory* was not approved. Delegates were invited to submit comments on changes they perceive are needed for that piece.

One share on the Seventh Tradition was so powerful that I decided to take action. After years of attending OA telephone meetings and ignoring the suggestion to “give double at your next face-to-face” meeting, I signed up to make an automatic recurring contribution to World Service. It was very easy. I first learned about OA through our website. I want to do my part to ensure that the website is available for the next still-suffering compulsive eater. I challenge you to do the same by going to [www.oa.org](http://www.oa.org) and clicking on contribute at the top of the page. As a reminder, individual members may contribute up to \$5,000 per year to the general fund, up to \$5,000 per year to any special fund and up to \$5,000 per year to honor the memory of a deceased member. Further, any member may bequest an unlimited amount to OA in their will.

As of January 2013, the number of *Lifeline* subscriptions was 20 percent higher than in January 2012, however it is still not fully self-supporting. If you do not yet have a subscription, please purchase one today. Also, please be sure to renew before your subscription expires. <http://www.oa.org/lifeline-magazine/>

In August I plan to attend the Convention, which only takes place every three years. During the Convention in 2010, I got to meet our founder, Rozanne S. This year’s Convention is in Cleveland, Ohio, August 29 - September 1st. 1,300 members from around the world are expected to attend workshops, enjoy entertainment and share experience, strength and hope. You can register and get more information here: <http://www.oa.org/world-service-events/world-service-convention/>. I hope to see you there!

Finally 2013 is the Year of Abstinence Awareness. Are you Abstinent? Are you staying Abstinent? What can you do to help yourself and others enjoy the gift of Abstinence?

Thank you for allowing me to serve in this manner. Love, peace & blessings to all!

~Atiya

WSBC Delegate,

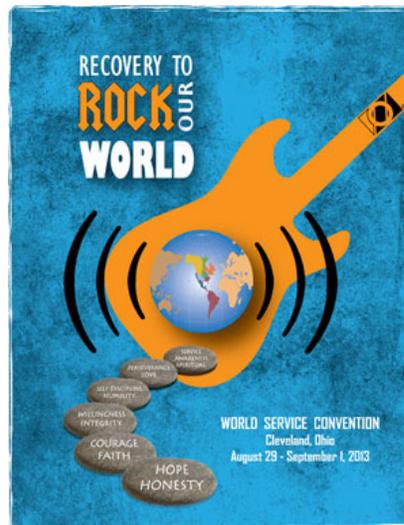
**“What can you  
do to help  
yourself and  
others enjoy the  
gift of  
abstinence?”**

**Recovery:  
Pass it on!**

“ALWAYS TO EXTEND THE HAND AND HEART OF OA TO ALL WHO SHARE MY COMPULSION; FOR THIS I AM RESPONSIBLE.”

### Upcoming Events

- **Jul. 12-14, 2013**—SOAR8 Recovery Convention & Business Assembly, Boca Raton, FL
- **Aug. 29-Sept. 1, 2013**—World Service Convention, Cleveland, OH
- **Nov. 15-17, 2013**—SOAR8 Recovery Convention & Business Assembly, Jacksonville, FL
- **Mar. 21-24, 2014**—SOAR8 Recovery Convention & Business Assembly, Little Rock, AR



### Serenity Prayer Pocket Reminder

100 % lead-free pewter



A Region 8 Fund-Raiser

Skyline and Main Street Bridge Jacksonville, Florida

120

**The North Florida Intergroup**  
is hosting the  
**November 15-17, 2013**  
**Region 8 Business Assembly & Recovery Convention.**

Our hotel is The Royal Plaza, located on the St. Johns River in downtown Jacksonville, Florida, for the reasonable rate of \$99. For details on how to register online or by mail, go to [www.oanfi.org](http://www.oanfi.org).

## Region 8 Trusted Servants

### Board Officers

Chair—Gloria L.  
Vice Chair—Sander B.  
Secretary—Janet T.  
Treasurer—Patti S.  
WS Regional Trustee—Linda H.

### Committee Chairs

Bylaws/Electronic Documents—Ellen F.  
Intergroup Outreach (IGOR) - Pat L.  
Public Information/Public Outreach (PI/PO) - Lonna C.  
Technology/Website—Burt T.  
Twelfth Step Within—Nina S.  
Unity with Diversity—Katherine G.  
Ways and Means—Kat M.