

TUESDAY NIGHT CLARK HOW MEETING

GUIDELINES FOR

SUCCESSFUL

H.O.W. SPONSORSHIP



“We have found much of Heaven
and we have been rocketed into a
4th dimension of existence of which
we had not even dreamed.”

A.A/ Big Book, pg. 25

*H*onesty

*O*pen Mindedness

*W*illingness

The Overeaters Anonymous HOW Concept has been formed to offer the compulsive eater who accepts the 12 steps and 12 traditions as a program of recovery, a disciplined and structured approach. The HOW groups have been formed in the belief that our disease is absolute and therefore only absolute acceptance of the HOW program will offer any sustained abstinence to those of us whose compulsion has reached a critical level.

Therefore, the 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 ensure our continued and sustained abstinence from compulsive eating 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 hearts to the love which is manifest in this room. Amen.

More about Food Addiction*
An excerpt from Chapter 3 of Alcoholics Anonymous
modified for the compulsive overeater

Most of us have been unwilling to admit we were real compulsive overeaters. No person likes to think he is bodily and mentally different from his fellows. Therefore, it is not surprising that our eating careers have been characterized by countless vain attempts to prove we could eat like other people. The idea that somehow, someday he will control and enjoy his eating is the great obsession of every abnormal eater. The persistence of this illusion is astonishing. Many pursue it into the gates of insanity or death.

We learned that we had to fully concede to our innermost selves that we were compulsive overeaters. This is the first step in recovery. The delusion that we are like other people, or presently may be, has to be smashed.

We compulsive eaters are men and women who have lost the ability to control our eating. We know that no real compulsive overeater ever recovers control. All of us felt at times that we were regaining control, but such intervals -- usually brief -- were inevitably followed by still less control, which led in time to pitiful and incomprehensible demoralization. We are convinced to a man that compulsive overeaters of our type are in the grip of a progressive illness. Over any considerable period we get worse, never better.

We are like men who have lost their legs; they never grow new ones. Neither does there appear to be any kind of treatment which will make compulsive eaters of our kind like other men. We have tried every imaginable remedy. In some instances there has been brief recovery, followed always by a still worse relapse. Physicians who are familiar with compulsive eating agree there is no such thing as making a normal eater out of a compulsive eater. Science may one day accomplish this, but it hasn't done so yet.

Despite all we can say, many who are real compulsive eaters are not going to believe they are in that class. By every form of self-deception and experimentation, they will try to prove themselves exceptions to the rule, therefore non compulsive eaters. If anyone who is showing inability to control his food intake can do the right-about-face and eat like a lady or gentleman, our hats are off to them. Heaven knows, we have tried hard enough and long enough to eat like other people!

Here are some of the methods we have tried: Eating one meal only, limiting the amount of sweets, starches or fats, never eating alone, never eating in the morning, eating only at home, never having it in the house, never snacking during business hours, snacking only at parties, switching from processed foods to organic, eating only natural foods, agreeing to resign if ever overeating on the job, taking a trip, not taking a trip, swearing off forever (with and without a solemn oath), taking more physical exercise, reading inspirational books, going to health farms and sanitariums, accepting voluntary commitment to asylums -- we could increase the list ad infinitum.

We do not like to pronounce any individual as addicted, but you can quickly diagnose yourself. Step over to the nearest kitchen and try some controlled eating. Try to eat and stop abruptly. Try it more than once. It will not take long for you to decide, if you are honest with yourself about it. It may be worth a bad case of jitters or a weight gain if you get a full knowledge of your condition.

HOW SPONSOR'S GUIDE

When working with a newcomer in HOW:

- 1) Explain your experience with following a sugar, wheat and flour free, weighed and measured food plan and encourage him/her to check out any food plan with a physician or nutritionist. It is important that all labels on canned and packaged food be examined to ensure that there are no trigger foods present.
- 2) Set up a time for the sponsoree to call. Explain the necessity of consistency with calling on time daily to one's sponsor.
- 3) Give the newcomer a copy of the First Thirty Day questions and explain that the AA 12 & 12 book and the Alcoholics Anonymous Big Book are the required texts for these questions.
- 4) Explain that when following the HOW concept, the Steps and tools of the program are requirements for recovery, not suggestions:
 - a. **Plan of Eating:** We write down our daily plan of eating and commit it to a sponsor daily. Any changes made during the day must be reported to a sponsor as well.
 - b. **Sponsor:** We must have a current sponsor in order to be HOW abstinent. Once a member has 90 days of HOW abstinence, they will be "stepped up" as an eligible sponsor. In HOW, members call their sponsor daily at the agreed upon time with a food commitment and a writing. Upon completion of the First Thirty Day Questions, the sponsor will walk the sponsoree directly into the next remaining Steps. Therefore, a sponsor needs to be committed to working the Twelve Steps of OA to the best of his/her ability.
 - c. **Meetings:** We attend at least three meetings a week. (a HOW meeting, a Step meeting and a meeting of your choice) Sponsors should encourage their sponsorees to share at meetings.
 - d. **Literature:** We read from OA or AA conference approved literature every day.
 - e. **Writings:** We write daily and read our writings to a sponsor. In the beginning, the sponsoree will be given the First Thirty Day writings to get started working on the first three Steps. After the first thirty days, the sponsoree will be given writings from the sponsor to support further recovery.
 - f. **Telephone:** We make 3 phone calls a day to people other than our sponsor.
 - g. **Service:** We offer service at meetings and in daily life. The only way we can keep what we have is to give it away.
 - h. **Anonymity:** We honor this tradition at all times. When sharing on what was discussed with a sponsor, the sponsoree must keep their sponsor's anonymity. Also in public and on the phone, we are careful not to disclose another person's membership in OA. The only anonymity we can break is our own.

Sharing at a HOW meeting:

All members of OA are encouraged to share at meetings. Mentioning of specific foods and cross talk are discouraged at the Clark HOW meeting. All pitches are encouraged to be on a positive level of how the members work their program.

It is by group conscious that in order for a member to lead a meeting or share on the Tools at the Clark HOW meeting, you must have at least 90 days of continuous HOW abstinence, have completed 90 days of writings with a qualified HOW sponsor and have gone through the Step up ceremony.

A word about relapse:

If a sponsoree relapses, the member must begin counting their days of abstinence at day one.

If a sponsor relapses, the sponsor must notify their sponsor and all sponsorees. The sponsor cannot stand up as a sponsor or accept new sponsorees until 90 days of HOW abstinence is achieved.

A SPONSOR CAN ONLY SPONSOR TO THE LEVEL OF HIS/HER PROGRAM.

You can only give away what you yourself have.

FIRST 30 DAY QUESTIONS FOR NEWCOMERS

*REQUIRED TEXTS FOR THESE WRITINGS: *The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous* and *Alcoholics Anonymous* (Big Book)

This is just a guide. No sheet of paper or list of ideas is the end all or be all for everyone. These reflections and meditations are designed to acquaint the newcomer with the FIRST THREE STEPS TOWARD RECOVERY.

1. Write a history of your compulsive overeating beginning with the first time you can remember food-related events. Discuss how much weight you have gained and lost, what medical attention you have sought for the problem and your attempts at maintaining your weight losses.
2. Read Step 1. Discuss and reflect upon the effect food has had upon you over the years. Do you truly see yourself as a compulsive overeater?
3. Reread Step 1. Discuss and reflect upon the following ideas found in Step 1:
 - a. Critical nature of our disease.
 - b. Progressive nature of our disease.
 - c. The need not to push someone until they are ready.
4. Discuss and reflect upon the fatal nature of our disease as seen on page 24 paragraph 2 in the 12 & 12. In this discussion, reflect on how at the very least the disease has diminished your life.
5. Read chapter 2 in the Big Book (There is a Solution). Discuss and reflect upon the idea that your discipline or lack of it has played an important part in your life.
6. Read pages 28-31 in the Big Book. Have I fully conceded to my inner most self that if I do not remain Spiritually fit, I will return to compulsive overeating?
7. Discuss the following ideas:
 - a. The deception of others is nearly always rooted in the deception of ourselves.
 - b. How does this relate to your eating history?
 - c. What have we done in the past due to compulsive overeating that reaffirms this idea?
8. Reread Step 1. Discuss and reflect upon what the knowledge of Step I can do for you. During your reading underline and note words and passages that are meaningful to you. Why are they important?
9. Read Step 2 in the 12 & 12. How is taking of Step I a necessity before taking Step 2?
10. Discuss and reflect upon the effectiveness of HOW from your personal experience and from what you have observed in others. Could what you have experienced emanate solely from you? If so, why had it not happened before?
11. Read Chapter 4 in the AA Big Book. Discuss and reflect upon the concepts of Honesty, Open-mindedness and Willingness. How are these tools of growth in the H.O.W. program?
12. Discuss and reflect upon the concept of insanity as it applies to us in H.O.W.

13. Discuss and reflect upon how we use the substitution method of accepting the presence of a Higher Power. How have you looked for substitutes all of your life? Are you still looking?
14. Discuss and reflect upon the following concepts available in Step 2:
 - a. Belief means reliance, not defiance.
 - b. Defiance is an outstanding characteristic of every compulsive overeater. Refer to page 31 in the 12 & 12.
15. Reread Step 2. Discuss and reflect upon your childhood exposure to any religious concept. On a two columned balance sheet list on one side your negative feelings and on the other side your positive feelings as they relate to early religious experiences. What conclusion do you reach when you reflect on the balance sheet?
16. Read Step 3. 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.
17. Reread Step 3. Discuss and reflect from the following quote 'Faith alone can avail us nothing'.
18. Read Chapter 5 in the AA Big Book (How it Works). Write on dependence as you understand it in H.O.W. How can dependence lead to greater independence?
19. Are you a 'grateful' compulsive overeater? Why are you grateful?
20. Reread Step 3. 'I am responsible for only one person's actions'. Whose and why?
21. Discuss and reflect upon the idea that 'abstinence is the most important thing in my life without exception'.
22. Discuss the idea of calling a H.A.L.T. when your life gets unmanageable. Do not allow yourself to get Hungry, Angry, Lonely or Tired.
23. Read 'A Vision For You' in the AA Big Book. Discuss and reflect upon the idea "The more you give the more you shall receive".
24. H.O.W. teaches us a sense of dignity. How have I utilized my newfound dignity in relationship to myself, my family and my friends?
25. What is the importance of giving service in H.O.W.? What is the importance of meetings? How are they both part of my road to recovery?
26. What is the importance of the telephone in HOW? What is the importance of anonymity? How are they both intertwined?
27. Discuss and reflect on reading and writing as a tool of the program. Why is it essential to my recovery?

28. Read pages 569-570 in the AA Big Book (Spiritual Experience). Discuss and reflect upon the following:
 - a. Spiritual growth is a daily commitment.
 - b. How can I grow daily?
29. Reread Step 3. Write on the idea that having taken Steps 1 and 2 - the degree of our success in the whole program depends on how far we take Step 3.
30. Reread Step 1 in the morning. Review your two balance sheets from 15 and 16. Make a sincere commitment to your Higher Power to turn your will and your life over to his care. Write on the idea that submission is not the same as surrender. Discuss the difference. Discuss and reflect on your own personal surrender.