

OVEREATERS ANONYMOUS

Tiger Swallowtail



3rd Quarter, 2012
"A Plan of Eating" Tool

Greater Ann Arbor Area

Newsletter also available on line at <http://a2oa.org/>

A Member writes...

Have you ever heard someone say they went to a meeting and heard one little thing that was life-changing? That's what the Holiday Boot Camp was for me. The speaker said, "I don't care what your food plan is, as long as you don't make it." That single comment changed my life in three ways. First, it validated the new food plan because I didn't make it. I accepted it for what it is, a nutritious and balanced plan that addresses many health concerns an overweight person might face. Second, it made me realize that I hadn't taken ownership of the food plan. I had been referring to it as my husband's, not mine. Third, I realized that it didn't matter whether or not he followed it; that was not my side of the street. I needed to let that go. On the way home I checked my thinking with the OA members I had carpooled with, which furthered my resolve.

Arriving at home with a new plan of action regarding my food plan, I found a quiet place to seek out my Higher Power. I asked for help in all areas of this plan. Then, I did something that is challenging for me...I waited and listened for an answer. The first solution I received was that I was trying too much at once. I had been trying 3 to 5 new recipes each dinner alone and had completely overwhelmed myself! Instead, I tried just one at a time. That worked much better. Next, I looked at some of my favorite recipes to see if modifications could be made to fit into my new food plan instead of just assuming it was too different. Finally, I began making a new recipe book with the new and modified recipes we like. It is filled with wonderful recipes of delicious foods that are appropriate for my program as well as the needs of my family.

Now, I no longer cry while cooking dinners. I am a great cook of these recipes. I appreciate the healthy choices they allow me to make daily. That one sentence at that one meeting allowed me to own and embrace my food plan, which has led me to find abstinence. (Greater AA Area OA Member)

What is a "Plan of Eating"?

As a tool, a plan of eating helps us abstain from compulsive eating, guides us in our dietary decisions, and defines what, when, how, where and why we eat. There are no specific requirements for a plan of eating; OA does not endorse or recommend any specific plan of eating, nor does it exclude the personal use of one. (See the pamphlets Dignity of Choice and A Plan of Eating for more information.)

For specific dietary or nutritional guidance, OA suggests consulting a qualified health care professional, such as a physician or dietitian.

Each of us develops a personal plan of eating based on an honest appraisal of his or her past experience. Many of us find it essential to take guidance from our sponsors to develop a plan of eating that reflects an honest desire to achieve and maintain abstinence. Although individual plans of eating are as varied as our members, most OA members agree that some plan—no matter how flexible or structured—is necessary. This tool helps us deal with the physical aspects of our disease and achieve physical recovery. From this vantage point, we can more effectively follow OA's Twelve-Step program of recovery and move beyond the food to a happier, healthier and more spiritual life.

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Upcoming Events & Announcements

Meeting

Announcements

- **Ann Arbor Friday 5:30 pm Meeting** at Joe's needs support. Please attend if you are able. St Joseph Mercy Admin. Services Bldg, 5305 Elliott Dr, Ann Arbor 48104. (Parking lot P, second floor, room 6).
- **Brighton Thursday 7:30pm Meeting** also needs support. Please attend if you are able. First United Methodist Church of Brighton 400 E Grand River Ave

Intergroup Meetings are 3rd Saturday of each month – 11:30 – 12:30 at St. Joe's. All are welcome.

Region 5 Conference in Cleveland area – Oct. 5-7
<http://region5oa.org/convention>

Region 6 Conference in Ottawa – Oct. 26-28
www.oaregion6.org

Your articles wanted for next Newsletter!

The deadline is Sept. 1 for the 4Q12 edition of the Tiger Swallowtail Newsletter. The theme is the tool of Sponsorship.

Share your experience, strength and hope with other members by submitting to aaanewsletter@gmail.com.

O&A's on "A Plan of Eating" – A Tool for Living One Day at a Time

by Scott McCann (<http://www.anonymityone.com/faq102.htm>)

If I am powerless over food, where will I get the power to follow this plan? Our Higher Power gives us the power, providing we do the footwork. Working the Twelve Steps, committing our daily plan of eating to our Higher Power and a sponsor, going to meetings, making phone calls, studying the literature and using the other tools bring us the power to do what we have not been able to do before on our own.

How does having a plan of eating help me work the Steps? The act of continually overeating and the never-ending attempts to hide our abnormal behavior squander great quantities of mental energy. Overeating clouds our thinking. Most newly abstinent people talk about the clarity and increased productivity that comes after a few weeks of abstinence. The inner-change process of the Twelve Steps requires clarity and painstaking self-honesty. A plan of eating leading to abstinence puts food in the proper perspective, so we can devote our clear-headed energies to working with our Higher Power on changing those things in us that need changing.

What is the difference between a plan of eating and abstinence? Abstinence from compulsive overeating is the objective of working our program. At the physical level, its simplest definition is to refrain from eating compulsively, and a plan of eating helps us to achieve this. At the emotional and spiritual levels, abstinence is a state of mind characterized by freedom from the food obsession; this comes because of working the Steps and surrendering to a Higher Power.

Isn't this just another diet? OA is not a diet club. We treat our food obsession as a physical, emotional and spiritual malady. A plan of eating is the beginning of learning a new, healthier way of eating. It is a way of life, not a temporary solution. Unlike dieting, a plan of eating is not about deprivation. Choosing to follow a healthy plan of eating is a positive choice for life.

Why is it so difficult to eliminate excess food? There is no question that food often takes the edge off uncomfortable emotions. When we are abstinent, we begin to experience the feelings that food has kept us from facing. Recovery is about learning to face these feelings without seeking comfort in food. This is what we learn in our emotional and spiritual growth in the program. Excess food keeps us from "feeling and dealing", and we must put food down before we can get the full benefits of the program.

It seems like all I do is think about food. How can a plan of eating stop that? A plan of eating allows us to minimize the time in the day that we have to think about food. We plan once a day, write it down, commit it to our Higher Power and a sponsor, and then don't think about food until it is time to eat. Committing the plan to our Higher Power and a sponsor allows us to clear our minds of food thoughts and improves our focus on the rest of our program and on our lives. Over time, our plan of eating will become a new, positive pattern.

Following a daily plan of eating seems too hard. What if I don't have the discipline? Our willingness to do something about our compulsive overeating is a product of two things. The first is pain. The pain became so great that finally we were willing to take action. Second, we changed our minds about self-sufficiency. Most of us suffered from the delusion that self-sufficiency is one of the objectives of life and that not being self-sufficient is a defect. Beginning the OA program means giving up this illusion and acknowledging that we are powerless. To use the plan of eating tool, we have to be willing to accept that the disease is stronger than our willpower. We must be willing to try a way other than our own, which includes planning our meals and committing them to someone, letting go of problem foods, and learning to recognize the difference between emotional hunger and physical hunger. We must be willing to begin again if we make a mistake. Moreover, we must be willing to put the pursuit of abstinence from compulsive overeating ahead of everything.

When the urge to eat is driving me crazy, how do I stick to my plan of eating? Thinking of eating is not overeating. We do not have to act on our feelings. The worst thing we can do is try to talk ourselves out of it. Our unaided willpower will usually lose. Taking some short-term action—any action other than eating—will usually help alleviate the urge. We can do a few things. Ask our Higher Power to remove the urge, call another member and explain what is going on; get to a meeting; write about our feelings; read a piece of OA or AA literature to help us focus on our recovery; and remind ourselves that we can abstain, no matter what. For more suggestions, see OA's brochure, "*Before You Take That First Compulsive Bite.*"

What is the biggest danger to watch out for in trying to follow my plan of eating? Mostly our thinking. Our irrational thinking may make us view a plan of eating as a loss of freedom, when in fact it leads to freedom. This illusion can keep us a slave to food forever. In addition, we remember not to focus only on our plan of eating. The OA recovery program is a three-part program physical, emotional, and spiritual. Focusing only on physical recovery usually does not result in abstinence. We have to work all three parts of the program if we hope to achieve and maintain long-term abstinence.

What is the connection between food and emotion? For a compulsive overeater, anorexic or bulimic, eating is attached to emotions. We are never fully satisfied, no matter how much we eat or avoid eating, because we are eating for emotional reasons rather than physical reasons. We eat for excitement, love, celebration, loneliness, escape, pleasure, and comfort. We devour food, purge, or abort eating to anesthetize ourselves. We eat out of anger, resentment, envy, jealousy, fear, pride, guilt, and grief. As the problem worsens, and it always does because this is a progressive disease, the self-destructive impact of overeating begins to far outweigh the temporary pleasure or comfort that eating once brought. For the Anorexic, starvation becomes a way of obtaining that "emotional high" The Bulimic feels that "rush and relief" of the purge cycle. Eventually, some of us do this for so long that we become addicted to an eating pattern for no apparent reason, even when the pleasure has turned to pain.

Q&A's on "A Plan of Eating – A Tool for Living One Day at a Time" (cont'd)

Is OA for You?

Only you can decide that question. No one else can make this decision for you. We who are now in OA have found a way of life which enables us to live without the need for excess food. We believe that compulsive eating is a progressive illness, one that, like alcoholism and some other illnesses, can be arrested. Remember, there is no shame in admitting you have a problem; the most important thing is to do something about it.

<http://www.oa.org/new-to-oa/is-oa-for-you.php>

What happens if I go off my plan? Relapse is not inevitable. However, you should take every precaution to avoid it. If you make a mistake and go off your plan of eating, it does not make you a mistake. We admit our mistakes, learn whatever is to be learned from them, and move on. There is no value in feeling shame, guilt, and self-hate. A slip reaffirms that we continue to have a disease that we cannot control on our own. We are not failures because we have a failure. Failure is being unwilling to start over.

What about my family? How can I do this to them? What we have found is that if we do not take care of ourselves, we cheat others out of our best. The best thing we can do for those we love is to recover from the disease, whatever it takes. Those who love us want us to be healthy and happy.

Will I be following this plan of eating the rest of my life? You need to remain flexible and honest about your plan. A change in a plan of eating is not a break in abstinence, as long as you are not eating compulsively. Eating plans may change over time as you gain more experience or your body changes. You may think a particular food is not a trigger, and later find that it is. Alternatively, you may find that you need to lose weight, but are not doing so with your current plan of eating. If you have been in the program for awhile, you may find that you need either less food or more exercise to maintain a constant weight. You may even switch trigger foods. For awhile, you may have no trouble refraining from a particular food, and then one day wake up in the morning obsessing about it. When you think a change is in order, it is wise to consult a professional and notify your sponsor about changes in your plan.

What happens if I conscientiously follow my plan of eating? The accomplishment begins to make us feel good about ourselves and grateful to our Higher Power. Our feelings of self-worth begin to grow when we see the results of working all three aspects of the program. We come to understand that our self-esteem comes not from others, but from within. Chaos and cloudiness are replaced with a new clarity. Our accomplishments reinforce that we are going in the right direction and motivate us to continue our journey through the Twelve Steps. This is what will ultimately lead to the food obsession being lifted. Moreover, becoming abstinent also puts us in a position to help others who are where we were.

You can do it. The fundamental truth is that you have the choice, if you are willing, to do something about your eating problem; regardless of your circumstances, regardless of what you have or haven't done in the past, regardless of how weak you think you are when it comes to food. You no longer have to be a prisoner of your eating disorder. You can, at this moment, begin a personal journey of recovery and transformation.

This article is based on the Booklet, "A Plan of Eating, A tool for living—one day at a time" prepared by Overeaters Anonymous. If you believe you or a loved one has an eating disorder, we encourage you to contact your local Overeaters Anonymous office. If you believe that your eating disorder or that of a loved one has become life threatening, we strongly recommend seeking medical assistance immediately.

CONTACT US:

(734) 480-4556

<http://a2oa.org/>

P.O. Box 7836
Ann Arbor, MI 48109

What is OA? Overeaters Anonymous (OA) offers a program of recovery from compulsive eating using the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of OA. Worldwide meetings and other tools provide a fellowship of experience, strength and hope where members respect one another's anonymity. OA charges no dues or fees; it is self supporting through member contributions. OA is not just about weight loss, weight gain or maintenance, or obesity or diets. It addresses physical, emotional and spiritual well-being. It is not a religious organization and does not promote any particular diet.

OA members differ in many ways, but we are united by our common disease and the solution we have found in the OA program. We practice unity with diversity, and we welcome everyone who wants to stop eating compulsively. Welcome to Overeaters Anonymous. Welcome home.



Greater Ann Arbor OA Meetings

UPDATED: 6 / 8 / 12

CITY	DAY	TIME	DUR	LOCATION	TYPE	CONTACT
Ann Arbor	Sun	1:30PM	1 hr	Ann Arbor Church of Christ, Neighborhood Church. 2500 S Main St, Ann Arbor, Mi 48103. (just south of Busch's , towards Briarwood).	S,BF	Jewell 734-883-4812
Toledo, OH	Sun	6:30PM	1 hr	The Sisters of Notre Dame Provincial House, the corner or Monroe and Secor, Toledo, Ohio (Parking is across from main entrance)	PP	Marilyn 419-344-4191
Ann Arbor	Sun	7:00PM	1 hr	King of Kings Lutheran Church, 2685 Packard Rd, Ann Arbor, Mi 48104.	R,BF	Martha 734-663-7933
Tecumseh	Mon	6:00PM	1 hr	Tecumseh United Methodist Church, 605 Bishop Reed Drive, Tecumseh, Mi. 49286.	BB	Carol T. 517-423-5080
Dexter	Mon	6:00PM	1 hr	Foggy Bottom Coffee Shop, 7065 Dexter Ann Arbor St, Dexter, Mi 48130.	BF,SB	Ellen 734-995-1835
Ann Arbor	Mon	7:00PM	1 hr	Temple Beth Emeth/St Clare Episc. Church, 2309 Packard Rd, Ann Arbor, Mi 48104. NEWCOMERS MEETING	O	Sheila 734-845-0963
Brighton	Mon	7:00PM	1 hr	St George Lutheran Church, 803 W Main St, Brighton, Mi 48116. (in the building to the left of the church from the parking lot)	S	Bonny 810-772-8701
Toledo, OH	Tue	9:30AM	1 hr	Christ Presbyterian Church, 4225 W. Sylvania, Toledo, Ohio (corner of Sylvania and Talmadge, Room 5)	S	Jan 419-877-0431
Ann Arbor	Tue	12:10PM	3/4 hr	West Side Methodist Church, 900 S. 7th St between Pauline and Liberty Sts, Ann Arbor. (Back lot, back door, library down stairs).	BF	Katlyn 734-426-4743
Ann Arbor	Tue	6:30PM	1 hr	West Side Methodist Church, 900 S 7th St between Pauline and Liberty Sts, Ann Arbor. (Back lot, back door, room next to lib.)	BF	Lynn F. 734-255-8337
Manchester	Tue	7:30PM	1 hr	Meeting in private home. 11702 Ella Drive, Manchester, MI. (Turn onto Pleasant Shore Drive, directly across from Pleasant Lake School and it is 1st cottage on the right).	S	Liz P. 734-665-3487
Ann Arbor	Wed	9:30AM	1.5 hr	Bethlehem United Church of Christ 423 S 4th Ave, Ann Arbor, 48104. (Enter rear door to 2nd floor youth room).	BB, BF	Dorothy 734-930-1972
Ann Arbor	Wed	12:10PM	1 hr	1st Congregational Church 608 E William, Ann Arbor, 48104. (enter Maynard Street).	BF,L	Katy 734-330-4834
Ann Arbor	Wed	7:00PM	1 hr	King of Kings Lutheran Church, 2685 Packard Rd, Ann Arbor, 48104	BB, BF	Becki M. 734-717-8814
Flint	Thur	10:30 AM	1.25 hr	Brennan Senior/Youth Center 1301 Pingree Ave, Flint, Mi phone 810-766-7238 Topic is Dignity of Choice and The tools.		Beverly 810-742-7226
Ann Arbor	Thur	5:30PM	1.5 hr	First Baptist Church, 517 E. Washington St, Ann Arbor, 48104. Between Division & State Sts. Memorial Room in basement. (ABSOLUTELY no parking in church lot. Park on Washington St.) . All are welcome. Please respect special focus.	H	Kathy S. 734- 417-0679
Brighton	Thur	7:30PM	1 hr	First United Methodist Church of Brighton, 400 East Grand River Avenue Brighton, MI 48116	BBSG	Karen 810-623-5100
Ann Arbor	Fri	1:30PM	1 hr	Covenant Community Church, 5171 Jackson Rd, Ann Arbor, Mi 48103. (West of Ann Arbor between Wagner & Zeeb Rds).	S,BF	Ellen 734-995-1835
Ann Arbor	Fri	5:30PM	1 hr	St Joseph Mercy Admin. Services Bldg, 5305 Elliott Dr, Ann Arbor 48104. (Parking lot P, second floor, room 6).	A, BF	Lynn R .734-994-6009
Monroe	Fri	7:00 PM	1 hr	Monroe Free Methodist Church, 3928 East Dunbar Rd., Monroe, MI.		Jody&Dale734-241-0441
Ann Arbor	Sat	10:00AM	1 hr	St Joseph Mercy Admin. Services Bldg, 5305 Elliott Dr, Ann Arbor 48104. (Parking lot P, second floor, room 5).	S, BF	Christen 734-663-1605
Adrian	Sat	9:00AM	1hr	Siena Heights University, Dominican Hall, Rm 202, Adrian, Mi 49221.	V	Mary S. 517-260-0595
Grand Blanc	Sat	10:00AM	1 hr	Complete Care Center, 8401 Holly Rd, Grand Blanc, Mi 48439	BB	Ellen 810-260-1553

INTERGROUP MEETS THE 3rd SATURDAY OF THE MONTH AT 11:30 AM, FOLLOWING THE 10:00AM MEETING, ALL ARE WELCOME. KEY: A Abstinence **BB-** Big Book **BBL-** Brown Bag Lunch **BF-** Barrier Free, **BBSG-**Big Book Study Guide, **H-** HOW, **M-** Men's Mtg, **PP** –Primary Purpose, **R**–Relapse **S-** Step Study **T-** Tradition Study **O-**Open to the public * Needs support **SB-** Spirituality Book **L-** Literature **V-**Varies

Newcomers are always welcome at all meetings. Monday Temple Beth Emeth/St Clare Episc is the only meeting open to the public. All other meetings are restricted to those who desire to stop eating compulsively (OA members and others who think they may have a problem with food). Meetings change from time to time—newcomers are asked to call the contact person or the OA Answering Service 734-480-4556 prior to attending meetings to be sure location is current. Thanks.

The Tiger Swallowtail newsletter is published quarterly and distributed at the Intergroup meeting prior to the quarter, e.g., the 1st qtr newsletter is distributed in December, 2nd qtr in March, etc... It is requested that contributions or corrections be e-mailed to Becki M. at oaanewsletter@gmail.com by the first day of the month that the newsletter comes out (e.g., submissions due Dec. 1 for the 1st qtr edition). Questions? Contact Becki M. at 734-717-8814.