

Ebony OA _____ Meeting Format

The meeting is to begin at _____

(meeting location)

Welcome to the Ebony _____ meeting of Overeaters Anonymous. My name is _____, and I am a compulsive overeater and your leader for this meeting.

Will those who wish to please join me in the Serenity Prayer.

"God grant me the Serenity to accept the things I cannot change, Courage to change the things I can, and the Wisdom to know the difference."

The following is the OA 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 message of recovery to those who still suffer.

Will someone read :

1st week "Our Invitation to You?"

2nd week "How it Works"

3rd week "Our Invitation to You?"

4th week "How it Works"

5th week "Our Invitation to You?"

Will someone read the Twelve Steps? Will someone read the name of the Tools of Recovery and pick one to discuss in detail. Would someone read the Twelve Traditions?

A telephone list is being circulated; please add your name and number. Indicate if you are available for sponsorship. Please take numbers if you wish. The telephone is a means of communicating with other compulsive overeaters between meetings

Ebony Overeaters Anonymous is designed to reach out to African American first time members of the fellowship, or to those who are long time members. Too often, too few of our community find the recovery offered in the rooms of the OA Fellowship. To remedy this problem, Ebony OA offers the same OA principles, but with an emphasis on the issues that affect African Americans.

Our shared experience of the Ebony Group is a side issue that relates to our compulsive eating. It is in our best interest not to get distracted from our primary purpose by the shared issue that brings us together in this room. Instead, let us focus on how our compulsive eating is affected by this aspect of our lives.

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This is a literature/discussion meeting. Today we will study OA literature. The master copy is being passed around so each person can read a paragraph and pass the book on. If you do not feel like reading, feel free to pass.

The meeting is open for discussion. Discussion ends at _____. From _____ to _____ we'll open the floor for any newcomer who'd like to share. In this meeting, we discourage cross talk. Cross talk is defined as commenting, interrupting, criticizing, or giving advice on another person's share. We need a safe and supportive place to discuss our feelings and cross talk can be very hurtful and humiliating. Thank you.
(Discussion begins)

(After Discussion read)

It is now time for the 7th Tradition which states, "Every OA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions." The money is use to pay rent and to buy literature. If you are a newcomer, we ask that you buy literature instead.

Are there any OA related announcements? Is there a treasurer's report? Is there a literature person's report? Is there an Intergroup report? The business meeting for this group is held on the first _____ of the month.

The opinions expressed here today are those of the individual OA members and do not represent OA as a whole. We encourage you to keep coming back. Many of us at one time were unsure if OA was for us. If you are a newcomer, it's suggested that you attend at least 6 meetings before you decide OA is for you. If you are struggling or if you have yet to find the recovery you seek, please don't leave before the miracle happens. Let us all reach out to newcomers, returning members, and each other. This, like all service is an important part of our recovery from compulsive overeating.

Does anyone need a ride?

Would someone read the

1st week "The Promises"

2nd week "A Vision for You?"

3rd week "Tenth Step Promise"

4th week "OA Suggested Closing"

5th week "The Promises"

Thank you for allowing me to be your leader. After a moment of meditation, will those of you who wish to please join in _____, [Either the Seventh-Step Prayer, the Third-Step Prayer, or "I Put My Hand in Yours." If this was a speaker meeting, have the speaker select the closing prayer.]

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**Opening and Closing Prayers
(11/13/99)**

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."

(Taken from the Twelve & Twelve of AA, pg. 41)

Unity Prayer

"I put my hand in yours ... and together we can do what we could never do alone! No longer is there a sense of hopelessness, no longer must we each depend upon our own unsteady willpower. We are all together now, reaching out our hands for power and strength greater than ours, and as we join hands, we find love and understanding beyond our wildest dreams."

(Taken from "I Put My Hand In Yours" by Rozanne S.)

The 3rd Step Prayer

"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. Take away my difficulties, that victory over them may bear witness to those I would help of Thy Power, Thy Love, and Thy Way of life. May I do Thy will always!"

(Taken from the Big Book of AA, Third Edition, pg. 63)

The 7th Step Prayer

"My Creator, I am now willing that you should have all of me, good and bad. I pray that you now remove from me every single defect of character which stands in the way of my usefulness to you and my fellows. Grant me strength, as I go out from here, to do your bidding. Amen."

(Taken from the Big Book of AA, Third Edition, pg. 76)

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11th Step Prayer

“Lord, make me a channel of thy peace-that where there is hatred, I may bring love-that where there is wrong, I may bring the spirit of forgiveness-that where there is discord, I may bring harmony-that where there is error, I may bring truth-that where there is doubt, I may bring faith-that where is despair, I may bring hope-that where there are shadows, I may bring light-that where there is sadness, I may bring joy. Lord, grant that I may seek rather to comfort than to be comforted-to understand, than to be understood-to love, than to be loved. For it is by self-forgetting that one finds. It is by forgiving that one is forgiven. It is by dying that one awakens to Eternal Life. Amen.”

(Taken from the 12 & 12 of AA, pg. 99)

(Please return to the Secretary at the end of the meeting)

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Our Invitation to You

We of Overeater Anonymous have made a discovery. At the very first meeting we attended, we learned that we were in the clutches of a dangerous illness, and that willpower, emotional health, and self-confidence, which some of us had once possessed, were no defense against it.

We have found that the reasons for the illness are unimportant. What deserves the attention of the still-suffering compulsive overeater is this: *There is a proven, workable method by which we can arrest our illness.*

The OA recovery program is patterned after that of Alcoholics Anonymous. We use AA's Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, changing only the words "alcohol" and "alcoholic" to "food" and "compulsive overeater."

As our personal stories attest, the Twelve-Step program of recovery works as well for compulsive overeaters as it does for alcoholics.

Can we guarantee you this recovery? The answer is simple. If you will honestly face the truth about yourself and the illness; if you will keep coming back to meetings to talk and listen to other recovering compulsive overeaters; if you will read our literature and that of Alcoholics Anonymous with an open mind; and, most important, if you are willing to rely on a power greater than yourself for direction in your life, and to take the Twelve Steps to the best of your ability, we believe you can indeed join the ranks of those who recover.

To remedy the emotional, physical, and spiritual illness of compulsive overeating we offer several suggestions, but keep in mind that the basis of the program is spiritual, as evidenced by the Twelve Steps.

We are not a "diet and calories" club. We don't endorse any particular plan of eating. Once we become abstinent, the preoccupation with food diminishes and in many case leaves us entirely. We then find that, to deal with our inner turmoil, we have to have a new way of thinking, of acting on life rather than reacting to it-in essence-a new way of living.

From this vantage point, we begin the Twelve-step program of recovery, moving beyond the food and the emotional havoc to a fuller living experience. As a result of practicing the steps, the symptom of compulsive overeating is removed on a daily basis, achieved through the process of surrendering to something greater than ourselves; the more total our surrender, the more fully realized our freedom from food obsession.

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Chapter 5

(AA Big Book)

How It Works

Rarely have we seen a person fail 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 recover 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. 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:

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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. Continues 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 adventure 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 food obsession.
- c. That God could and would if He were sought.

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The Promises

If we are painstaking about this phase of our development, we will be amazed before we are half way through. We are going to know a new freedom and a new happiness. We will not regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it. We will comprehend the word serenity and we will know peace. No matter how far down the scale we have gone, we will see how our experience can benefit others. That feeling of uselessness and self-pity will disappear. We will lose interest in selfish things and gain interest in our fellows. Self-seeking will slip away. Our whole attitude and outlook upon life will change. Fear of people and of economic insecurity will leave us. We will intuitively know how to handle situations which used to baffle us. We will suddenly realize that God is doing for us what we could not do for ourselves.

Are these extravagant promises? We think not. They are being fulfilled among us, sometimes quickly, sometimes slowly. They will always materialize *if* we work for them.

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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 us. 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.

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**Chapter 6
(AA Big Book)**

Tenth Step Promise

And we have ceased fighting anything or anyone, even *food*. For by this time sanity will have returned. We will seldom be interested in *food*. If tempted, we recoil from it as from a hot flame. We react sanely and normally, and we will find that this has happened automatically. We will see that our new attitude toward *food* has been given us without any thought or effort on our part. It just comes! That is the miracle of it. We are not fighting it, neither are we avoiding temptation. We feel as though we had been placed in a position of neutrality safe and protected. We have not even sworn off. Instead, the problem has been removed. It does not exist for us. We are neither cocky nor are we afraid. That is how we react so long as we keep in fit spiritual condition.

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Suggested Closing

The following is a suggested closing reading from *The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous*, page 106.

“We who began working the steps in order to recover from compulsive eating now find that through them we have embarked on a lifelong journey of spiritual growth. From the isolation of food obsession we have emerged into a new world. Walking hand in hand with our friends and our Higher Power, we are now exploring this world, using the great spiritual principles embodied in the Twelve steps as the map to guide our way. We gratefully follow in the footsteps of many others who have walked this way before us, and we’re gratified to be making footprints of our own for others to follow.

“Those of us who live this program don’t simply carry the message, we are the message. Each day that we live well, we are well, and we embody the joy of recovery which attracts others who want what we’ve found in OA. We’re always happy to share our secret: the Twelve steps of Overeaters Anonymous, which empower each of us to live well and be well one day at a time.”

