

*This meeting format stems from the original 2 hour OA/HOW Meeting Format that was brought to Minnesota in 2001. Anything underlined been inserted solely to reflect the fact that this is a telephone meeting. Anything in **bold italics** reflects changes made to the format as per the Oct.29, 2011 Meeting Among OAHOW 2Hour Format Meetings.*

**See item #25: If someone is celebrating an anniversary, invite the person to light a candle at the beginning of the meeting.*

OA/HOW MEETING FORMAT

1. Good morning. Welcome to the Keep it Simple Saturday HOW meeting of Overeater's Anonymous. My name is _____. I am a compulsive overeater and your leader for this meeting. (Group responds: "Hi, _____ welcome.")

2. To open the meeting, let us have a moment of quiet meditation, followed by the Serenity Prayer. ... "God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can and the wisdom to know the difference. Thy will, not mine, be done"

3. I assume that I am not alone this morning. But, for the record, are there any other compulsive overeaters at this meeting other than myself? Please now mute your phones by pressing star six (*6) on your phone key pads to prevent background noise. Thank you.

4. To exchange names and telephone numbers, please stay on the line after the meeting. You may wish to have a pen and piece of paper handy to copy down information given throughout the meeting. We ask that you please read from the Keep It Simple Saturday Meeting Format. Should you need a copy, please contact me. My phone number is _____, or you can email me at _____.

5. Overeaters Anonymous is a Fellowship of individuals who, through shared experience and mutual support, 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.

6. Would someone please read, "What is HOW"?

What Is H.O.W.

H.O.W. is a movement within Overeaters Anonymous whose basic principle is that abstinence is the only means to freedom from compulsive overeating and the beginning of a spiritual life.

Where And Why Did H.O.W. Begin?

H.O.W. began in Phoenix in 1981, as a means of reviving a group called "OA VICTORIOUS". Its meeting format is taken from Rozanne's book, *I Put My Hand In Yours*, and centers around the concept of service. Many of the questions used in H.O.W. sponsoring stem from O.A. Plus and Westminster groups. The outline of service came from the O.A. Suffolk County, New York sponsor's guide.

7. Would someone please read, "The Only Requirement"?

The Only Requirement

Overeater's Anonymous respects the autonomy of each OA group. We do suggest, however, that any group that has requirements in addition to the suggested twelve steps and twelve traditions inform its members that these requirements are what that particular group has found effective in working the program and do not represent OA as a whole.

The members of this group have found the H.O.W. concept to be effective in working the O.A. program. The opinions expressed here this morning by those who share, are their own and not necessarily those of O.A. The Board of Trustees states: "We understand the third tradition to mean that individual ways of working one's program should not exclude any compulsive overeater from attendance and participation at OA meetings anywhere, anytime."

"The only requirement for membership is the desire to stop eating compulsively. Anyone who says [he or she] is a member; is a member. We of Overeaters Anonymous welcome all members with open arms.

8. WOULD someone please read, "The HOW Concept"?

The H.O.W. Concept

The Overeaters Anonymous H.O.W. meetings have been formed to offer the compulsive overeater, who accepts the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions

as a program of recovery, a disciplined and structured approach. The O.A./H.O.W. groups are formed in the belief that our disease is absolute, and that only absolute acceptance of the OA program will offer any sustained abstinence to those of us whose compulsion has reached a critical level. Therefore, we accept the *nine* tools of the program and the Twelve Steps and the Twelve Traditions as necessary for our recovery. ***In OAHOW, our daily Action Plan is outlined in the structured use of each of the other tools.***

Our meetings are dedicated to the concept of remaining honest, open-minded and willing to listen. This is the H.O.W. 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 H.O.W. ideals 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.

The Keep it Simple Saturday meeting 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 overeating 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 our hearts to the love which is manifested in this room.

Amen.

9. Would someone please read, “Reflections for the Newcomer”?

Reflections For The Newcomer

Welcome to O.A./H.O.W. We are all so glad that you have decided to become a part of our fellowship. You know that the H.O.W. concept is very disciplined. We believe that the discipline of weighing and measuring, of telephoning your sponsor at a particular time, of attending meetings and making phone calls all lead to a life based on the Universal Discipline,

which is accord rather than discord with all those things going on around us. Therefore, if there is a breakdown in any of these areas, the concept is threatened (as is the individual's abstinence).

We have found that the discipline must remain as constant for the beginner as for the sponsor. If the newcomer shies away from this life's responsibility, the sponsor may give the newcomer's time slot to someone more committed to recovery. This is not a personal affront, but a matter of necessity. So many who think they should recover, in fact, are not ready. If the newcomer should show lack of commitment, the sponsor may then offer the newcomer assistance in finding a new sponsor. The rationale here is, if the newcomer insists on picking up the food before the phone, then there is a breakdown in the level of communication between the sponsor and the newcomer. "Frothy emotional appeal seldom suffices." ("Doctor's Opinion", BB p.XXVI, para.2) If a sponsor slips, get a new one. The pitfalls of self-deception cannot be overstressed if you are to recover, therefore, a sponsor, in all self-honesty, must release all sponsee's to continue his own recovery. A sponsor cannot give what he does not experience.

Finally, you must believe that we need each other, All problems that arise can be worked on via the phone, or person-to-person contact. Only positive, upbeat recovery belongs at our meetings.

"A body badly burned by food does not often recover overnight, nor do twisted thinking and depression vanish in a twinkling. We are convinced that a spiritual mode of living is a most powerful restorative." ("The Family Afterward", BB p. 133, para. 2)

Good luck. Everyone in the fellowship is praying that you find the release from the obsession so many of us have.

God bless. And no matter what, **KEEP COMING BACK!! WE WILL ALWAYS BE HERE FOR YOU!**

10.Would someone please read an excerpt from Chapter Three of the book, Alcoholics Anonymous? We have adapted this selection to deal with compulsive overeaters.

CHAPTER 3 (Adapted from the book, Alcoholics Anonymous)

Most of us have been unwilling to admit we were real 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 that we could eat like other people. The idea that somehow, someday he will control and enjoy his eating is the great obsession of every compulsive overeater. 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. It is the first step in recovery. The delusion that we are like other people, or presently may be, has to be smashed.

We compulsive overeaters are men and women who have lost the ability to control our eating. We know that no real compulsive overeater ever regains 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 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 people who have lost their legs; they never grow new ones. Neither does there appear to be any kind of treatment which will make compulsive overeaters of our kind like other people. 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 overeating agree there is no such thing as making a normal eater out of a compulsive overeater. Science may one day accomplish this, but it hasn't done so yet.

Despite all we can say, many who are real compulsive overeaters 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 eating can do the right-about-face and eat like a normal person, our hats are off to him. 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 or starches; never eating alone; never eating breakfast (or lunch or dinner); never having any snack foods in the house; never eating during working hours; switching from regular food to health foods; eating only certain foods; dieting as part of a bet or an agreement;

swearing off a particular food forever; taking a trip: taking a solemn oath; going to health farms; going the shots and pills route; going to a sanitarium; reading inspirational books; going to gyms for exercise; purging—we could increase the list ad infinitum.

We do not like to pronounce any individual a compulsive overeater, but you can quickly diagnose yourself. Step into the kitchen and try some controlled eating. Try to eat and then 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 if you get a full knowledge of your condition.

11. Would someone please read from Chapter Five of the book *Alcoholics Anonymous: How It Works*?

CHAPTER 5: “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. We 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

12. Would someone please read the Twelve Steps of Recovery?

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. Continued 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.

13. Would someone please read the Twelve Traditions of the program?

THE TWELVE TRADITIONS

The Twelve Traditions are:

1. Our common welfare should come first; recovery depends upon OA unity.
2. For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern,
3. The only requirement for OA membership is a desire to stop eating compulsively.
4. Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or OA as a whole.
5. Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry its message to the compulsive overeater who still suffers.
6. An OA group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the OA name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.
7. Every OA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
8. Overeaters Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers.
9. OA as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.

10. Overeaters Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the OA name ought never be drawn into public controversy.
11. Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, films, television, and other public media of communication.
12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all these traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

14. The Tools of Recovery - The Twelve Steps of Overeaters Anonymous is a program of recovery. Webster's dictionary defines "tool" as "any person or thing used to get something done." We have many tools of the program which will help us recover on a daily basis. Tools are essential to get the job done and they work for us. In order for a tool to work, it must be used. So, too, with our tools of recovery. I will ask that H.O.W. sponsors explain how they use a particular tool. Limit of three minutes for each tool. Would someone be willing to be the timekeeper?

Sponsors, if you would like a warning before your time is up, please ask the timekeeper. Please end when your 3 minutes are up. Thank you.

If you do not have a copy of this meeting's format and would like to pitch on a tool, I can do the reading for you.

➤ **WOULD SOMEONE PLEASE READ AND SHARE ON ABSTINENCE/PLAN OF EATING?**

Plan of Eating

A food plan is a commitment to recovery. The O.A. /H.O.W. Program was designed for food addicted people. We believe in a disciplined and structured approach. H.O.W. abstainers do not modify their food plan to suit themselves and commit themselves to black and white abstinence. Deviations invite the return of many other problems.

A food plan is not a personal thing in H.O.W. This means that we depend upon each other for the strength and growth that we need to remain abstinent. We join together in an effort to free the compulsive eater from the bondage of food through the use of a food plan, positive thinking and the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous. We eat weighed and measured meals with nothing in between except sugar-free

beverages and sugar-free gum. Food is written down, called in to our sponsor and committed so that we can get on with our recovery and out of the food. We also believe that negative thinking is a large part of our disease, so we abstain from negative thinking.

Those of us who work the HOW program concepts use the following guidelines for food plans.

1. We do not write our own food plan. We use a food plan given to us by— a doctor, nutritionist or dietician. We discuss it with our sponsor. We do not pick one that allows any of our binge foods. If some food on our plan becomes a problem, we avoid it.
2. We do not skip meals, switch meals or combine meals. We do not deviate or manipulate our food plan in any way. If we need to change our committed food during the day, we call a sponsor.
3. We weigh and measure all our portions so that there is no guess work. We do not measure by eye. We use a measuring cup, spoon, and a scale. (Demonstrate with abstinence kits.)
4. We weigh ourselves once a month until we reach goal weight and once a week on maintenance.
5. Unless advised otherwise by our doctor, we take a multi-vitamin and drink 64 oz. of water a day.
6. We do not drink alcohol.
7. We do not use foods containing sugar, except if sugar is listed 5th or beyond on the ingredients label.
8. Above all, we do not vacillate or water down the disciplined nature of the H.O.W. Program. It is not the extra string bean that counts; it's the decision to take it.

➤ **WOULD SOMEONE PLEASE READ AND PITCH ON SPONSORSHIP?**

Sponsorship

Sponsors are OA members who are committed to abstinence and to living the twelve steps and twelve traditions to the best of their ability.

We ask a sponsor to guide us through our program of recovery on all three levels: physical, emotional and spiritual. In working with other members of OA and sharing their experience, strength and hope, sponsors continually renew and reaffirm their own sobriety. Sponsors share their program up to the level of their own experience. Ours is a program of attraction; find a sponsor who has what you want and ask how it was achieved. A member may work with more than one sponsor and may change sponsors at will.

A H.O.W. sponsor is a compulsive overeater who has completed at least 70 days of back-to-back abstinence and who has taken the first three steps of the program. Sponsors have also completed at least 70 days of assignments.

REFLECTIONS TO THE SPONSOR - SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

No list of reflections and meditations are end-alls and be-alls for the newcomer. A sponsor must be attentive not only to what the new person is saying, but also to what the newcomer is not saying. There are many newcomers who are reticent to purchase books, and who are hesitant to throw themselves headlong into the program. Therefore, we have a list of pre-commitment assignments.

Above all, **DO NOT VACILLATE OR WATER DOWN THE DISCIPLINED NATURE OF THE H.O.W. PROGRAM...** It is not the extra string bean that is the problem. It is the **DECISION** to have it that results in some trouble.

The H.O.W. Concept is an alternative for people who have tried everything else—therefore, the program is an immutable triumvirate of tools, steps, and traditions. Using the tools of weighing and measuring our food, sponsors, meetings, phone calls, reading and writing, service, and anonymity, we follow the 12 Steps and the 12 Traditions of O.A. in order to free ourselves from the bondage of food addiction.

SPONSORS DO NOT HAVE THE RIGHT TO PLAY GOD ... WE HELP EACH OTHER.

Leader: We will now have our Sponsor Line. Will all sponsors unmute their phones by pressing star six and state:

- A. Your name and what type of sponsor you are.
- B. Your back-to-back abstinence date in 2hour OAHOW, and,
- C. How much weight you have lost or gained.
- D. Sponsors, thank you for sharing these three items only. If you have an opening for a sponsee, please slowly give your phone number and state the best time to call you.
- E. In face to face meetings, sponsors stand and hold hands encircling the room.
- F. Name of person who pitched on Sponsorship, please go first and I will go last.

Leader reads "Clay Feet" when all sponsors are done qualifying.

CLAY FEET

We should remember that all OA's have CLAY FEET. We should not set any member upon a pedestal and mark her or him out as a perfect O.A. It is not fair to the person to be singled out in this fashion and if the person is wise she or he will not wish it. If the person we single out as an ideal O.A. has a fall, we are in danger of falling too. Without exception, we are all only one bite away from a binge, no matter how long we have been in O.A. Nobody is entirely safe. O.A. itself should be our ideal, not any particular member of it.

➤ **WOULD SOMEONE PLEASE READ AND PITCH ON ANONYMITY?**

(Please read one side of your choice)

Side 1

Anonymity

Anonymity is a tool as well as a tradition because it guarantees that we will place principles before personalities. It offers each of us freedom of expression and protection against gossip. Anonymity assures us that only

we as individual OA members have the right to make our membership known within our community.

Anonymity at the level of press, radio, films and television means that we never allow our last names or faces to be used once we identify ourselves as OA members.

Within the fellowship, anonymity means that whatever we share with another OA member will be held in respect and confidence. What we hear at meetings should remain there. It should be understood, however, that anonymity must not be used to limit our effectiveness within the fellowship. It is not a break of anonymity to give our names and addresses to the secretary of our group or to other service offices of OA for the purpose of conducting OA business, which is primarily twelfth-step work. It is likewise not a break of anonymity to enlist twelfth-step help for group members in trouble, provided we are careful to omit specific personal information. If their disease has reactivated and we persist in protecting their anonymity, we may, in effect, help kill them and their anonymity.

(Please read one side of your choice)

Side 2

Anonymity (cont'd)

Anonymity is the Part of the program that allows each of us to stand in front of our fellows and share for the first time ...honestly, who we are ... where we have been ... and where we hope to go ... without fear that our story will be told outside these rooms.

For many of us, the O.A. rooms are the first place where we have no fear being judged or criticized. We are accepted as we are at that moment. This is the first time for most of us that we experience sharing where we are not told what we did wrong.

We come into O.A. at rock bottom... mangled emotionally, physically and spiritually. We are supported back to health with honesty, openmindedness, and willingness. We are encouraged to speak of our pain and we are lovingly told "your secrets are safe". Come share our recovery... recovery on a three-fold level: physical, emotional, and spiritual.

Lastly, a word to newcomer's -- ***please join us***. However, if you

decide that our program is not for you ... please remember that our anonymity allows us to grow and recover from a very serious disease.

WHOM YOU SEE HERE

WHAT YOU HEAR HERE

WHEN YOU LEAVE HERE

LET IT STAY HERE.

➤ **WOULD SOMEONE PLEASE READ AND PITCH ON TELEPHONE?**

Telephone

Compulsive overeating is a disease of isolation. The telephone is a means of communicating with another compulsive overeater between meetings. It provides an immediate outlet for those hard-to-handle highs and lows we all experience. The telephone is also a daily link to our sponsors and, as part of the surrender process, is a tool by which we learn to ask for help, reach out and extend that same help to others.

In O.A./H.O.W. we are asked to make at least 4 telephone calls a day - one to our sponsor and 3 more to other O.A. members. These calls give us an opportunity to “talk program” on a daily basis. The telephone is our “lifeline.”

➤ **WOULD SOMEONE PLEASE READ AND PITCH ON MEETINGS?**

Meetings

Meetings are gatherings of two or more compulsive eaters who come together to share their experience before and after recovery and to share their strength and hope OA has given them. Though there are many kinds of meetings, fellowship is the basis of all of them. Meetings are an opportunity for us to identify and confirm our common problem by relating to one another and by sharing the gifts we receive through this program.

➤ **WOULD SOMEONE PLEASE READ AND PITCH ON LITERATURE & WRITING? (Please read both tools, then pitch for a total of 3 minutes)**

Literature

We study the text book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, referred to as the Big Book, and the *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, another AA book to reinforce our program. By substituting the words, “food” and “compulsive eating” for the words, “alcohol” and “alcoholism”, we can identify closely. We also read OA literature: the OA book, *Overeaters Anonymous*, referred to as the Brown Book, the *OA Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, For Today*, for daily meditation, and *Lifeline*, our journal of recovery. Read on a daily basis, our literature impresses on us certain basic truths that we have found vital to our growth. Our literature and the AA books are an ever available tool that gives insight into our problem, as well as the strength to deal with it and the very real hope that there is a solution for us.

Writing

In addition to our writing our inventories and the list of people we have harmed, most of us have found that writing has been an indispensable tool for working the steps. Further, putting our thoughts and feelings down on paper or describing a troubling incident, helps us to better understand our actions and reactions in a way that is often not revealed to us by simply thinking or talking about them. In the past, compulsive eating was our most common reaction to life. When we put our difficulties down on paper, it becomes easier to see situations more clearly and perhaps better discern any necessary action.

➤ **WOULD SOMEONE PLEASE READ AND PITCH ON SERVICE?**

Service

Carrying the message to the compulsive overeater who still suffers is the basic purpose of our Fellowship and therefore the most fundamental form of service. Any service, no matter how small, that will help reach a fellow sufferer adds to the quality of our own recovery. Putting away chairs, making coffee, talking to newcomers, doing whatever needs to be done in a

group or for OA as a whole are ways in which we give back what we have so generously been given. Do what you can when you can. “A life of sane and happy usefulness” is what we are promised as the result of working the twelve steps. Service fulfills that promise.

Always to extend the hand and heart of O.A. to all who share my compulsion; For This I Am Responsible.

Those of us working the H.O.W concept also believe that our greatest service is abstinence.

15. We applaud all people doing service for OA at any level.

16. We applaud all people on maintenance.

17. The Keep it Simple Saturday meeting is a friendly place. We want to get to know each other. If you are here with us today for the first time, will you please unmute your phone by pressing star six and introduce yourself by first name only? (Group responds with: “Hi, ____, welcome!”) The leader will write down newcomer phone numbers. Please call me at [leader gives his/her phone #] if you would like to obtain these numbers.

18. As you have heard, our seventh tradition tells us we must be fully self-supporting through our own contributions. The money collected is used to support levels of the OA organization, to help spread the message that there is recovery from compulsive overeating. The Keep it Simple Saturday meeting has no expenses. We ask that you please make a donation to a local OA meeting or mail a contribution to an intergroup or region of your choice or to OA’s World Service Organization.

** (At this point, the leader reads one of the ...following readings.)

(A) The Promises: “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.” (Big Book, pp.83-84)

OR...

(B) “We’ve Got Some Bad News For You. It was bad news for us, and it will probably be bad news for you. Whether you quit six days, months, or years, if you go out and take that first compulsive bite of food, you’ll end up... just like you have been in the past.... You are a compulsive overeater.” (Big Book, p.187)

19. Are there any announcements?

If we need a leader and/or speaker for upcoming meetings the leader says: “We need a leader for *date of meeting*. If you are able to be of service in this way, please call me at *leader gives his/her phone #* to receive a copy of ***this meeting’s format***.” AND/OR, “If you would like to be a speaker for an upcoming meeting, you may call me at *leader gives his/her phone #*.”

20. Literature and books are available at www.aa.org or www.oa.org or at your local OA or AA meetings.

21. It is now time to celebrate abstinence. At HOW meetings, we recognize milestones of recovery for those working the HOW program. At face to face meetings this is the time that medallions would be presented. All other OA abstinence is given a round of applause. Is there anyone celebrating: 6 or more years of abstinence? 5 years?, 4,3,2, years of b2b abstinence? Is there anyone celebrating 18mos of b2b abstinence? How about 1 year? 9 months, 6months, 90 days (3months), 60 days (2 months), 30 days of b2b abstinence? Now comes the most important part, the 24 hour chip. We refer to it as the chip of desire. It does not mean that you are making a commitment to be abstinent for the next 24 hours. What it means is that you saw something in the sponsor line that you liked, or heard something that was spoken that you liked.

22. Step-Ups. At this point in our meeting, we ask the group to join us as we celebrate another example of the miracles that abound in OA. The stepping-up portion of the meeting asks the leader to introduce a newcomer who has at least 70 days of back-to-back abstinence, who has completed the first

three steps of the program and is now ready to become a sponsor. At HOW meetings, new sponsors are presented with a cactus plant to signify the tough love of the program: to stick with the stickers, reminder to drink water and a reminder that we don't water down the program. Do we have any step ups this morning? [*Note to Leader: Skip to page 21 if no step-ups*]

H.O.W. STEPPING UP CEREMONY

BEFORE YOU YOU SEE FIVE CANDLES, TRUTH, REALITY, SURRENDER, ACCEPTANCE, AND KNOWLEDGE.

O.A. 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 O.A. ACTION IS THE MAGIC WORD. UNTIL WE SO HUMBLE OURSELVES THROUGH THESE ACTS, THERE IS NO EVIDENCE OF OUR EGO REDUCTION OR OUR SURRENDER TO ANYONE OR ANYTHING OUTSIDE OF OURSELVES.

EACH CANDLE SIGNIFIES A STEP TOWARD ARRESTING THE PROGRESSION OF OUR DISEASE. THE FIRST TWO REPRESENT TRUTH AND REALITY. WITHOUT THESE TWO QUALITIES, WE WOULD NOT BE RECOVERING COMPLSIVE OVEREATERS.

(NOTE TO LEADER: AFTER THE READING OF CANDLE No. 5 READ PARAGRAPHS 8 AND 9 OF STEP 12 IN THE AA 12&12.

Please address new sponsor directly using his/her name

CANDLE (1)

THE CANDLE OF TRUTH IS THE KEYNOTE OF ALL WHO STRIVE TO STOP THE ADVANCEMENT OF COMPULSIVE OVEREATING.

IT IS THE UNRELENTING FORCE THAT PERMITS NO DOUBLE STANDARD. ITS ATTAINMENT BRINGS THE SATISFACTION OF INWARD PEACE. WE MUST FEARLESSLY FACE THE TRUTH TO AVOID THE EVER PRESENT PITFALL OF SELF-DECEPTION.

Please address new sponsor directly using his/her name

CANDLE (2)

THIS IS THE CANDLE OF REALITY AND IT IS A NEW LIGHT. IT OPENS THE DOOR TO A NEW LIFE. IT HOLDS A PROMISE OF NEW UNDERSTANDING. IT OFFERS A CHANCE FOR PERSONAL RENEWAL. IT MAKES A STATEMENT THAT GOES BEYOND FANTASY AND IT HOLDS THE DREAM OF A BETTER TOMORROW. WITHOUT THE LIGHT OF REALITY, WE ARE DESTINED TO REMAIN IN THAT SICK, SHADOWY WORLD OF PAST MISTAKES AND UNREALISTIC DREAMS OF FALSE TOMORROWS.

Please address new sponsor directly using his/her name

CANDLE (3)

THIS IS THE CANDLE OF SURRENDER. IN O.A. SURRENDER IS THE FIRST AND MOST IMPORTANT ACT NECESSARY TO LAUNCHING YOU INTO THE OTHER STEPS. WITHOUT THE SURRENDER OF YOUR FOOD, YOUR EGO, AND YOUR WILL, ALL ELSE IS HOPELESS. WHEN YOU SURRENDER, YOU SUSPEND SUCH NEGATIVE EMOTIONS AS DISBELIEF AND GRANDIOSITY AND YOU OPEN YOURSELF UP TO THE PROCESS OF LEARNING WHO YOU ARE AND WHERE YOU FIT INTO THE SCHEME OF THINGS.

Please address new sponsor directly using his/her name

CANDLE (4)

THIS IS THE CANDLE OF ACCEPTANCE, WITHOUT ACCEPTANCE YOU COULD NOT HAVE COME THIS FAR. ACCEPTANCE IS SEEING THINGS AS THEY REALLY ARE. ACCEPTANCE IS UNDERSTANDING THAT WE HAVE SPENT OUR LIVES DENOUNCING EVERYTHING AND NOW WE MUST OPEN UP OUR HEARTS, AS WELL AS OUR MINDS AND ACCEPT. WE MUST ACCEPT THE WILL OF GOD. ACCEPT THAT ONLY HE CAN RESTORE US TO SANITY.

Please address new sponsor directly using his/her name

CANDLE (5)

THIS IS THE CANDLE OF KNOWLEDGE AND IT OPENS THE DOOR WIDE. WE NOW KNOW THAT GOD IS ON OUR SIDE. WE CAN SEE AND HEAR HIS PRONOUNCEMENTS IN OUR LIVES. WE RECOGNIZE WHAT IT IS THAT WE MAY DO AND WHAT ONLY HE CAN DO. WE ACKNOWLEDGE THAT THE GREATEST GIFT HE HAS GIVEN US; IS KNOWING OURSELVES.

LEADER READS THE FOLLOWING TO FINISH THE STEP UP CEREMONY

A.A. 12&12 - Paragraphs 8 & 9

Even the newest of newcomers finds undreamed rewards as he tries to help his brother compulsive overeater, the one who is even blinder than he. This is indeed the kind of giving that actually demands nothing. He does not expect his brother sufferer to pay him, or even to love him. And then he discovers that by the divine paradox of this kind of giving he has found his own reward, whether his brother has yet received anything or not. His own character may still be gravely defective, but he somehow knows that God has enabled him to make a mighty beginning, and he senses that he stands at the edge of new mysteries, joys, and experiences of which he had never even dreamed.

Practically every O.A./H.O.W. member declares that no satisfaction has been deeper and no joy greater than in a Twelfth Step job well done. To watch the eyes of men and women with wonder as they move from darkness into light, to see their lives quickly fill with new purpose and meaning, to see whole families reassembled, to see the compulsive overeater outcast received back into his community in full citizenship, and above all to watch these people awaken to the presence of a loving God in their lives—these things are the substance of what we receive as we carry the message to the next compulsive overeater.

23. Anniversaries. “Birthdays are celebrated for each year of continuous abstinence.” (OA Group Handbook, p.10.) Are there any Anniversaries? _____, we invite you to imagine coming up to the front of our meeting room so we can celebrate with you.

To Be Read by a H.O.W. Sponsor *(only if there is an anniversary)*

Anniversary Reading

Now comes the biggest question yet. What about the practice of these principles in all our affairs? Can we love the whole pattern of living as eagerly as we do the small segment of it that we discover when we try to help other compulsive overeaters achieve sobriety? Can we bring the same spirit of love and tolerance into our sometimes deranged family lives that we bring to our OA group? Can we have the same kind of confidence and faith in these people who have been infected and sometimes crippled by our own illness that we have in our sponsors? Can we actually carry the OA spirit into our daily work? Can we meet our newly recognized responsibilities to the world at large? And can we bring new purpose and devotion to the religion of our choice? Can we find a new joy of living in trying to do something about all these things?

Furthermore, how shall we come to terms with seeming failure or success? Can we now accept and adjust to either without despair or pride? Can we accept poverty, sickness, loneliness, and bereavement with courage and serenity? Can we steadfastly content ourselves with the humbler, yet sometimes more durable, satisfactions when the brighter more glittering achievements are denied us?

The OA answer to these questions about living is “Yes, all of these things are possible.” We know this because we see monotony, pain, and even calamity turned to good use by those who keep on trying to practice OA's Twelve Steps. And if these are facts of life for the many overeaters who have recovered in OA, they can become the facts of life for many more.

24. The leader now qualifies for 10 minutes.

25. I would like to introduce, _____, our guest speaker, who qualifies for 20 minutes.

26. The floor is now open for (3) three-minute pitches. In H.O.W. meetings we share our experience, strength and hope. No one is prohibited from sharing, but we ask that you focus on the solution. ALL PITCHES SHOULD BE OF A POSITIVE NATURE IN WHICH YOU SHARE YOUR GROWTH AND RECOVERY. ALL OTHER ISSUES CAN BE WORKED OUT OVER THE PHONE OR AFTER THE MEETING. Would someone care to pitch (share)?

28. I want to thank you for allowing me to be your leader for this meeting. I also thank all of those who participated, especially our speaker, _____ who offered so much of (her/him) self.

29. May we have the reading, “Just For Today”?

Just for Today I will try to live through this day only, and not tackle my whole life problem at once. I can do something for one day that would appall me if I felt I had to keep it up for a lifetime.

Just for Today I will be happy. This assumes to be true what Abraham Lincoln said, that, “Most folks are as happy as they make up their minds to be.”

Just for Today I will adjust myself to what is and not try to adjust everything to my own desires. I will take my “luck” as it comes and fit myself to it.

Just for Today I will try to strengthen my mind. I will study. I will learn something useful. I will not be a mental loafer. I will read something that requires effort, thought, and concentration.

Just for Today I will exercise my soul in three ways. I will do somebody a good turn and not get found out; if anyone knows of it, it will not count. I will do at least two things I don't want to do, just for exercise. I will not show anyone that my feelings are hurt; they may be hurt, but today, I will not show it.

Just for Today I will be agreeable. I will look as well as I can, dress becomingly, talk low, act courteously, criticize not one

bit, not find fault with anything, and not try to improve or regulate anybody except myself

Just for Today I will have a program. I may not follow it exactly, but I will have it. I will save myself from two pests: hurry and indecision.

Just for Today I will have a quiet half-hour all by myself and relax. During this half-hour, sometime, I will try to get a better perspective of my life.

Just for Today I will be unafraid. Especially, I will not be afraid to enjoy what is beautiful, and to believe that as I give to the world, so the world will give to me.

30. Closing Statement: To those who are still new to the program, we remind you that all that was said here this morning should safely remain here, as we respect and cherish our tradition of anonymity. We also assure you that following the program will get your weight off. Abstinence will remove the craving. Our way of life will remove the compulsion in time, and give you contentment and fullness in all areas. After a moment of meditation, will you please join me in saying the Serenity Prayer? Please unmute your phone by pressing *6 (star six) on your phone keypad so we can pray together. (...Let's pray for those still suffering ... “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. Thy will, not mine be done. Keep coming back. It works when you work it and give a lot of love!!!)

APPENDIX A *(these Guidelines are from the MN 2001 original meeting)*

GUIDELINES FOR SPONSEES

Food Plan and Sponsor Calls

Write down food plan and assignment every day before calling your sponsor. We do not skip either of these things and make up for it later. If you have not done your reading and writing before you call your sponsor, call on time anyway and explain this to your sponsor and commit your food anyway. Most sponsors will ask you to spend the rest of your time normally talking to her/him on writing so that you may then read it to them later that same day. This is a rare exception because we take reading recovery material and writing seriously. If we find that we don't have 10-15 minutes in our day to write, there is something wrong with our day.

Nutritionist

We all see a nutritionist. We do not use someone else's food plan. Even those of us with financial difficulties manage to budget for a nutritionist. We usually remind members that are resistant to this practice that we often spent much more on weight loss programs and schemes, not to mention the cost of binges.

We give a copy of our food plans to our sponsors and discuss what instructions we were given. Most of us have found that many nutritionists and doctors are unfamiliar with back-to-back abstinence, and the concept is often looked down upon until they have worked with HOW members for awhile. Many nutritionists believe that we can have sugar in moderation and see no reason why we shouldn't "free" ourselves to enjoy eating. They often use the rationale that we are probably overweight or underweight because of restricting ourselves. Those of us in recovery from compulsive eating found that "freeing ourselves" with sugar actually imprisoned us. Those of us "working" the HOW program do not eat sugar unless it is 5th or beyond on the ingredients label.

We do not switch food times from one meal to the next, regardless of instruction from our nutritionist. Many of the nutritionists have been trained using the Weight Watchers model where calories are counted for the whole day. Many of us have been lifetime members of Weight Watchers and we gradually manipulated our food plans so that we were once again bingeing. This begins with not having a starch or protein for breakfast, and sometimes lunch, then having all of them at one meal. We may have eaten

all of the food that we have committed to our sponsors, but we did not eat moderate meals in a balanced way. For this reason, we eat the same number of items in each meal and snack every day *without* exception! Ex. Breakfast 2 protein, 3 starches, 1 dairy, 1 fruit, 1 fat. Every day this same formula will be used to plan breakfast. Different foods are allowed (within the given category), but not different amounts. Our body's needs do not change just because we change our minds about how we should eat. We discovered that when we decide what is best for us that we end up where we have been before. Those of us with long-term recovery do not change this rule to suit ourselves, even when we think it sounds like a good idea. It keeps us from having the highs and lows from our food.

Changes to Food Plans

We call in all food changes to a H.O.W. sponsor. We try our best to keep our plans as they were written for the day. We made at least 2 attempts to get a HOW sponsor on the phone in person. We can only leave messages of changes on the recorder of our own sponsors, or if long-distance, the recorder of the designated substitute that will be familiar with us and our food plans and issues. We still tell our sponsor about the change the next day. If there are a lot of changes going on, a sponsor may offer helpful suggestions to plan better in the future. Many of us in the beginning have to make a lot of changes. This protects us from our disease. The following guidelines are given for special circumstances:

- a) **Making a change because we forgot part of our meal, something has soured, we cannot find what we planned, or our plans have changed at the last minute:** Make at least 2 attempts to get a HOW sponsor in person! If unable to do so, on the 3rd call, leave a message with your own sponsor about why you changed and what you are having instead. If your sponsor is long-distance, you will leave it on a sponsor's recorder that you have arranged to be your "steady" substitute. In this way, someone else knows you and your issues.
- b) **Making a change because we change our minds about what we want:** Always speak directly to another HOW sponsor on the phone prior to the change. If no one can be reached, do not change it – leave it as it was planned. Tell the sponsor why you do not want the food that you have planned. Tell the sponsor why you do not want the food that you have planned that day. Often, we have found that we were hurrying with our plans instead of taking some extra time to plan appealing meals.

Generic Food Plans

When a generic food plan is called in for a meal, the same guidelines apply to making food changes. A call is made from the restaurant before eating the plan. Make a call to your sponsor or designated sponsor before eating the food. This has prevented us from decisions based on our disease or because we do not know what to choose. If uncertain about a certain food – Leave it out!!!! Do not take a chance!!!! Make a decision to have something that you know will be allowed on your plan. We try not to commit generic plans but once a week, unless on a vacation or other extraordinary circumstances.

We weigh and measure all of our portions - even in restaurants! We use a knife to scrape the tops (and sides and bottoms) of the containers so that we don't get extra portions. Those of us who have measured by eye find it difficult to begin this practice, but our disease does not take time off when we are in public. Many of us realized the hard way that we especially needed this safety net in restaurants (and when eating out anywhere). Most of us have found that people are more than happy to help us to get what we need when we ask. This also helps us to practice humility – we have lost our ability to eat like other people, as much as we always wished we could. Reflect on your motives for eating in restaurants. Our disease never takes a vacation – constant vigilance is essential for long-term recovery. Discuss all food decisions with your sponsor. Remember, when we fail to plan, we can plan to fail. In OA/HOW, we go to any lengths to recover.

Special circumstances:

- a) Some items like potatoes and salads may be committed as ½ or 1 whole part. Ask for protein to be prepared plain, grilled, without sauce, or with sauce on the side. It is recommended that protein be weighed. Salad dressing must be measured. If you are served a vegetable, it should be measured. Many of us find that we need to order extra portions of vegetables or take an extra one in with us. We do not eat mixed foods or casseroles unless we know what is in them. We do not eat fried foods or breaded foods. We check it out with our sponsors first. It is always best to have the plan worked out in advance to avoid confusion. Do not be afraid to request your needs. Restaurants generally respect our requests and honor our food allergies. Remember we are not visiting restaurants to take a vacation from our program. Reflect on your motive for eating in a restaurant. Fail to plan, plan to fail! Do not leave your abstinence in the hands of

strangers. All food decisions need to be worked out ahead of time with your sponsor.

- b) Chinese Food: Many of us ask for the protein to come separately from the vegetables so that we can measure it. We measure our rice.
- c) Don'ts at Chinese Restaurants: Never order dishes with peanuts, sweet sauce or breaded toppings (orange beef or chicken, kung pao chicken or beef, etc.). Never eat the fried noodles, fortune cookies or any of the extras that come with the meal. Never eat fried rice.
- d) Other Restaurants: do not order casseroles, fried foods, mixed foods, or foods with sauces unless they can be scraped off. We do not take bites of other people's food. We eat only our measured portions. We do not share bites with anyone else, unless we have leftovers. We can split food with someone else, but it must be measured and part of our own food plan. If a salad is ordered with protein included, we measure the protein, and we ask that the dressing should not contain sugar, unless it is listed 5th or below in the ingredients. Many of us carry a small container of dressing with us.

Miscellaneous Tips

*If you realize that you forgot to eat something at your meal it is not added later. Notify your sponsor and "let it go".

*When in doubt, leave it out!

*Allow at least one hour between a meal and a snack, and at least 3 hours between meals. Establish a reasonable time frame with your sponsor about when you will eat meals.

*Do not neglect to eat part of your food plan just because you didn't want it. Finish all of the food you committed to eat. Leaving food out intentionally is the same as adding extra portions. No part of our food plan is optional!

*If you realize that you don't have part of your meal attempt to get it and always call a sponsor, don't just leave it out.

* We do not substitute one type of food for another (ex. Dairy as protein, fruit as vegetable).

* We measure condiments except for spices, vinegars, salt. There are no free foods for us.

* We call our sponsors on vacation too! Our disease doesn't take a vacation.

* If our sponsor takes a vacation, we find a substitute to call each day. We do not take a break from working the program.

*Calls do not count if we leave a message on a recorder.

* Calls are counted as live conversations between you and another OA member, whether a call is made or received.

APPENDIX B (these Guidelines are from the MN 2001 original meeting)

H.O.W. Guidelines for Abstinence

1. **Choose your food plan carefully.** It should be a sensible one given to you by some knowledgeable authority -- a doctor, nutritionist or dietician. (We CANNOT write our own food plans!!) Discuss it with your sponsor. Be sure you are being HONEST and not picking one that allows any of your binge foods. Most importantly of all, do not deviate. Do not manipulate your food plan in any way.
2. **Be sure to weigh and measure all your portions so that there is no guesswork.** Do not measure by eye. Use a measuring cup, spoons, and a scale.
3. If some food on your plan becomes a problem, avoid it.
4. **When in doubt, leave it out.**
5. While you're losing weight, **weigh yourself only once a month**, unless your doctor suggests otherwise. You are your sponsor will determine which day you are to weigh yourself. People maintaining their weight will follow the suggestions of the "source" of their food plan. ** See the document on the tool of food plans as per the OA/HOW telephone meeting for more info on this.
6. **Discuss with your doctor our recommendations to take a multi-vitamin and 64 ounces of water per day.**
7. **We do not use alcohol or foods containing sugar, except if sugar is listed 5th or beyond on the ingredients label.**

According to the O.A. pamphlet, A Commitment to Abstinence, "An eating plan is a guide to the food we eat each day. For some O.A.s an effective plan includes specific foods and food portions...Rigorous honesty makes it clear that we don't eat foods or amounts that are not included in our plan."

APPENDIX C

The Keep it Simple Saturday Group Conscience Guidelines

(to be read by a H.O.W. sponsor who is a member of the K.I.S.S. group at the beginning of any GC meetings this group may have)

- 1) Our group conscience meetings will be minimal, held only when absolutely necessary. No group conscience meetings will be held in regards to changing the existing Meeting Format. This group is dedicated to keeping things as simple as possible. Our aim is to present the 2 hour OA/HOW Meeting Format to those who want it and to pass it on as it was passed on to us.
- 2) Our group conscience meetings will be held after our regularly scheduled meeting on Saturday morning. The meetings will be brief.
- 3) Group conscience meetings may be called only by OA/HOW sponsors who are members of the Keep it Simple Saturday OA/HOW Phone Meeting.
- 4) If something is brought to this group's attention that affects OA as a whole, we will participate in the Meeting Among 2hour OA/HOW Format Meetings and proceed accordingly.
- 5) Only abstinent OA/HOW sponsors who are members of the Keep it Simple Saturday OA/HOW Meeting will have a vote at our group conscience meetings. All others are welcome to listen in to the group conscience meetings but we ask that they remain silent.
- 6) We aim for consensus at our group conscience meetings.
- 7) Whoever facilitates the group conscience meeting will be a member of the K.I.S.S. group who is a sponsor. The facilitating member will use the following format: (See Appendix D as follows.)

APPENDIX D

Keep It Simple Saturday GROUP CONSCIENCE FORMAT

1. Please unmute your phone and introduce yourself. Could we please have a timer?
2. _____ will be given 3 minutes to present a matter for this group's consideration. _____, please go ahead.
3. Facilitator then asks: "Are all in favor of having a discussion about this matter? Please unmute your phones and respond with yay or nay. If anyone thinks more information is needed to have a *well-informed* discussion and vote, the topic will be tabled until such time as everyone has enough information to vote.
4. If all are in favor of discussing this matter, each attending member of this group will be given a limit of 2 minutes to speak if he or she so chooses.
5. After each person has spoken or passed, a vote will be taken. We will aim for consensus.

*If consensus is not achieved, the matter will be tabled.

*If the matter is to be addressed again, consensus will be the aim. If consensus is not achieved, the group will defer to keeping it simple: "We have ceased fighting anything or anyone."

*We may choose to follow OA's suggestions for guidelines for group conscience meetings and the Twelve Concepts of Service and/or defer to discussions brought forward at future Meetings Among 2hour OA/HOW Format Meetings.

Thank you everyone for your attendance and participation at this meeting!