

OA OA

WELCOME TO  
OVEREATERS  
ANONYMOUS

A collection  
of personal  
stories

OA OA

## **WELCOME TO OVEREATERS ANONYMOUS**

**This booklet of personal sharing has been locally produced by Canterbury Intergroup from OA members in New Zealand and Australia.**

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### **TO CONTACT OVEREATERS ANONYMOUS:**

**Phone: (03) 365 3812**

**Address: P O Box 2451, Christchurch**

**E-mail: [oacanterbury@yahoo.co.nz](mailto:oacanterbury@yahoo.co.nz)**

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## **My weight was never a matter of self control**

I don't remember when eating became a problem for me. My family were and still are all overweight. I was always bigger than my classmates and I do remember that there never seemed to be enough food. I could always have eaten more.

During my adolescence I began dieting occasionally, living on very little food for lengths of time until I reached an “acceptable” weight. Once I left home at seventeen, I gained weight very quickly and this really disturbed me. From then on I was either overeating or undereating. I would often sneak food that belonged to my flatmates, hiding in the pantry to do so, hoping that I wouldn't be caught. When I began living with my partner I started bingeing on large amounts of food. I would wait until I had the house to myself and stock up on food which was meant to last for a week but which would be gone in a matter of hours.

When we moved I decided to try a diet club since I knew no one there. I thought I wouldn't have to explain why to family and friends, even though my weight gain must have been obvious to them all. I reached my goal weight, left and then quickly began eating again. I knew, however, that there was something going on for me apart from weight. I could lose weight but couldn't manage to stay on a healthy eating programme. I spent the next twelve years trying to work out what was wrong with me. I thought that if I found this out the weight would no longer be a problem. This turned out to be true but it took me years of overeating to finally learn that what was wrong with me is that I'm addicted to food!

Over these years I stopped dieting but tried adjusting what and how I ate. For example, becoming vegetarian and trying to only eat while sitting at the table. No one knew the extent of my eating, not even my partner. The last two years of my overeating were the worst. I started vomiting as a way to control my weight and the overeating. I thought

that vomiting was so awful that it would make me stop. I had many moments of remorse after I'd overeaten when I would tell myself that I would never eat like that again. I desperately meant this. Soon, however I'd be eating in exactly the same way as I had the day before and ending up in exactly the same place of despair.

Since I've been working a Twelve Step programme for what I now know is my addiction to food, I am free of the overeating, the vomiting and the despair. I believe that addiction is a disease that has affected me physically, emotionally and spiritually. I know today that I am not the only one who has done things with food that I have done and that it was never a matter of self-control. I had lots of self control in many other areas of my life.

For the first time in my life my weight is normal and barely changes from year to year. I don't have to blame other people or circumstances for my problems. I am able to tell other people about my eating and this has allowed me to be honest about many other aspects of my life. I can ask for help and gratefully receive it instead of always having to be the one helping others. My relationships are much more honest and loving and today I want to live life to the full.

### **I thought I was the only one.**

From an early age I knew I was different with food. I only have one sibling, a brother, and we were brought up just the same, but I could tell I was very different from him with food. When we were given lollies I would eat mine straight away. He would put his in his bedroom drawer and make them last, until eventually they would drive me crazy and I would have to eat them too! Whenever food went 'missing' at home, I would flatly deny it was me who took it. I used to take food out of the tins when Mum wasn't looking and was always trying to 'get rid' of people so I could eat. If I got home from school and Mum was outside gardening, I would be on top of the world as I knew I could race inside and quickly eat. If I got home and she was ironing in the

kitchen, I would be furious because I couldn't eat what I wanted. Mum never knew how I would be (or why!).

I was overweight but my weight was always a mystery because I didn't eat much (that people saw!). I started going to Kilo Club in my early teens and, by rigidly sticking to my plan, I lost weight for 20 weeks, finally reaching my goal weight. I thought my life had begun! Even while I was going to Kilo Club, I had the feeling of being different with food. The other members would talk about the 'naughty' thing they had had off their plan, but I knew if I had even one thing off my plan I would be away and would not be able to stop eating.

After reaching my goal weight my mother took me away for a celebratory weekend and I started eating. I kept going to Kilo Club for a while but could not get back on my plan again and the weight started piling back on. I gave up as I couldn't bear to keep going along when I was gaining weight. For the next few years I struggled on by myself, regaining all the weight I had lost and totally obsessed with food. I thought I was the only one that ate like I ate and it felt like my dirty dark secret that I never told anyone about.

When I was 18 my father died and I ate my way through his death. I was getting more and more miserable and increasingly unable to pretend my life was normal. I had done it all my life to hide my eating and it was just getting harder. That same year I read an article in an Australian magazine entitled "Are you a Food Addict?". It was an article about Overeaters Anonymous. I was stunned. It was talking about people that ate like me and did the same things with food that I did. I wrote over to Australia and, for the first time in my life, I told someone about my eating. Eventually I got put on to a member of OA in Christchurch and she came and visited me in my home. The first thing that I noticed, and most important to me, was that she was slim. She told me the story of her eating and I could identify with everything she said (except I didn't think I was that bad!). She took me to my first OA meeting

and there was a room full of people talking about their eating. It was so good to be able to identify with other people that were like me, after having kept it a secret my whole life.

It is a long time now since that girl first came and saw me. I have continued to go to OA meetings and have found a life I would never have dreamed, a life free of the food – free of thinking about it all the time and free of having to eat it. I don't have to keep busy or not have the food in the house in case I eat it. For me, my pantry and my fridge are like my pot drawers or my linen cupboard. They don't drive me crazy all day, they just serve a purpose in the house and I go to them to get the food I need for my family.

I have not become a normal eater. I have never been a normal eater and I don't believe I will ever be a normal eater. That is fine with me. In OA I have found a Higher Power of my own understanding that gives me the strength not to pick up the first one on a daily basis. I didn't like that idea when I first came into OA, but as my eating got worse and I became more desperate, my mind was forced open to try the idea of a Higher Power. Today I definitely know there is a Higher Power, working through the fellowship of OA, that is stopping me from eating and that has removed the obsession to eat. It is not hard for me to do what works. The people in OA are just like me and we are all in the same boat. I love coming to meetings and I need to try and give away what I have been given in order to keep it. I never want to forget what it was like because I never want to go back there. I have a great life today, all due to my recovery in OA.

### **I desperately wanted to be thin**

I knew there was something wrong with me at a very early age. I always loved food; I loved gatherings because of the

food; I always wanted to eat everything. I stole food and money to buy food, I ate food from the fridge and cupboards from home and my grandparents place. My life was all about food.

When I was about 10 years old my grandmother brought cake home and scraped off the cream into the sink. I was horrified.

My eating was out of control. I went on my first diet when I was 16 years old; I took herbal diet tablets; exercised like a person obsessed. I drank alcohol, smoked cigarettes and drank black coffee to control my weight. I lost a lot of weight and got a lot of compliments about how I looked but that didn't stop the madness in my head. I was obsessed about my body, how fat I was and how thin I wanted to be. My self-obsession and food controlled my life. I dieted and exercised for about 18 months and slowly stopped eating meals to lose more weight.

The more I starved the more insane I became; the more self-obsessed I was. My behaviour was getting more erratic and my anger was all-consuming. My family were worried but I would not listen to them because I knew better, being thin was going to be the answer to all the problems in my life. How wrong I was.

I desperately wanted to be thin but my obsession to eat was more powerful. When I began eating and the compulsion to go on eating was insatiable, I started to throw up to control my weight. I could not control myself and I binged and purged for many years. Getting married and having two babies did not stop me from bingeing and purging. I spent 15 years going to counsellors, self-help programmes and workshops. I read countless books and listened to tapes trying to find out what was wrong with me and how I could change. Little did I know that I was a compulsive overeater and I needed a programme of recovery to recover from this disease.

I saw a public notice on the TV about a woman standing at the fridge eating uncontrollably, that was me and it said there was a solution. I rang the clinic and it was \$4,000 to stay for three months, I couldn't afford that amount so they told me about Overeaters Anonymous (OA). I started going to meetings and learned that I had a disease and if I wanted to get well I needed a Higher Power, a sponsor to help me work the Twelve Steps of OA and to help with my unmanageable life.

I have been in OA for two and-a-half years now and my life has been so much better. I am not overeating, my mind has quietened down and my self-obsession has been relieved. I am much more peaceful in my daily activities and I am learning how to have kind and loving relationships with my family and the world around me.

### **Not just a "women's problem"**

I first went to Overeaters Anonymous 25 years ago. I'd like to say I've been sober ever since, but there was a 17-year lag between my first OA meeting and me admitting complete defeat. Thirteen of those long, miserable years were spent in the rooms of Alcoholics Anonymous. Now if that's not insanity, I don't know what is.

All that time, I put up a false front. I had a good job and I was heavily involved in sport. I had a wife and two kids I loved, a house and a car but food always came first. I clamped a smile on my fat face but I was crying and dying inside.

I always knew there was a solution in OA. I saw it in a couple of people at my very first meeting. They were free of the fear, guilt, shame, secrecy, anger and humiliation which had always accompanied my eating. They told me if I wanted to get well I'd have to give up eating, drinking and

drugging. They offered me an answer but I flung it back in their faces. For years I came in and out OA's batwing doors, insisting I wanted to do it my way.

My eating was no different to theirs. I believe I was born an addict. I always remember having the obsession to eat and the craving for more. I stole food, ate burnt or soiled food and food dumped in rubbish bins. I screamed at the staff in a fried chicken joint because they'd run out of chicken. Once I started eating I couldn't stop, I was powerless over the craving.

When I was 12 years old, a classmate collapsed with a ruptured spleen. He'd barely hit the floor before I was plotting to steal his lunch. I furtively lined up at the takeaway counter and mumbled his name. I cradled his bag of sausages and chips to my chest like a baby, only grudgingly giving a few chips away. I've always been selfish and self-centred.

Yet, for so long, in OA, I kidded myself that "my case is different". I was a man, for a start. I can't recall any men at my first meeting. There still aren't a lot but I no longer believe "this is a woman's problem". I thought I had a weight problem, but it was only a symptom of the disease of addiction. My problem centres in the mind.

For years, I deluded myself I could use AA as a one-stop shop for all my addiction ills. That never worked either. I can only stay sober alongside other compulsive overeaters, not at home alone in my head. This is certainly a fatal, progressive disease. I was around 25 when I first came to OA. I was 42 when I started to get well. Near the end, I was separated from my wife and kids and was really just living to eat.

Every day I woke up, determined to "beat it". Within an hour, I'd be eating and the whole sordid cycle would start again. I was convinced my steering was faulty because my car always lurched to a stop outside food stores and

takeaway bars. I'd end my day blobbed out in front of late-night TV, too gorged to go to bed.

So what changed for me? The two most expensive cans of cola in the world were a catalyst but I believe the real impetus came from my Higher Power. I was working overseas and got myself embroiled in a bar scam in Paris. The French woman I'd met on the Champs-Élysées drank two bottles of champagne. This so-called "sober" alcoholic slugged two cans of coke and choked on a bill for around \$1200. Later, back in my hotel, having had to explain why I'd booked it to my company credit card, I just knew that my actions weren't those of a sober man. My Higher Power sent me the message: I was as powerless over food as I ever was over booze.

I came back to Christchurch and went to every OA meeting I could. But I still had the obsession for some months. My recovery only started when I did the one thing I'd never done in OA before – asked for help. I remember my sponsor asking if I was entirely ready to give up the food. I said, "I couldn't say 100 per cent, but I think I might be". Something shifted then.

Next day I called her for a food plan and the fight I'd had all my life had somehow gone. I'd finally let go of my old ideas. I haven't had to eat since. After accepting I was a newcomer, I set out to work the Steps of recovery from Step One. I did my first real, searching and moral inventory and have made many amends to people I harmed both before and during my time in AA. I'm still a compulsive overeater, I'm not cured. But, no matter what happens in my life, good or bad, I don't have to eat, one day at a time. I'm very grateful that God has removed the problem.

I attempt to express that gratitude by trying to carry this message to the still-suffering male compulsive eater. It took me so long to pick up the set of spiritual tools laid at my feet. Now, it's a privilege to give it away.

## **I was born like this**

When I look back on my life I can see that as a young child I had a lot of unusual behaviours involving food. Some of my earliest memories are of birthday parties I was at, the other children were out playing games and I would still be sitting at the table eating the party food.

Food was an obsession and the constant thinking about it wouldn't go until I could get what I wanted. I felt a great sense of relief when eating and often stole food to have secret binges in my room or out in the garden, hiding from my parents.

At the age of thirteen my parents took me to see a psychiatrist who diagnosed me with depression and prescribed prozac. I immediately felt great. The pills seemed to be the answer for my problem but as time progressed I began to need more medication and a bit of this and that. Throughout the next nine years I took large amounts of sedatives, anti-depressants and anti-psychotics but the obsession with food was still there.

At the age of 16 I began trying to control the food and began vomiting after a binge. I would feel this overwhelming anxiety that wouldn't leave until I had got rid of the food. The doctor I was seeing at the time was concerned because my blood tests were showing that my body was suffering as a result of what I was doing with the food, so after a change in medication onto a more powerful drug the vomiting stopped but the bingeing continued and I was eating huge amounts of food. I wanted to diet and every day I would wake up with all the best intentions saying to myself: "this is the day". I would have it all planned: the exercise, the food and the things to do to keep my mind busy. I would have breakfast and just keep going. When I started I couldn't stop and I continued this way, day after day. Some days I would just have coffee and cigarettes because it seemed I could get through part of the day by doing this but then, as much as I would try to fight,

the obsession always won and I would be eating once again. I couldn't work out what was wrong with me. I felt ashamed and frustrated with myself.

Just before I came to OA I was living at my father's house. I would wake up at about lunchtime and go straight to the shop buying whatever I needed for my binge and I would go back to my room spending the afternoon eating and sleeping. Later at night I would go back to the supermarket. Because I was so paranoid, I would alternate the different shops or supermarkets I went to. I would stay up all night eating and watching TV and planning the next day's diet – tomorrow was going to be different but this continued for about a year.

When I was 21 years old I saw a notice at my doctor's surgery for OA. After a while, I decided to call the number. I was still very focused on the weight and thought it might be some sort of diet club. When I came to OA I learnt that compulsive overeating and bulimia are part of the disease of addiction and that it is a family disease. For me, the addiction manifested as compulsive overeating and bulimia. I was completely controlled by food.

I now know that no circumstances caused me to be this way because I was born like this. I do believe that there were parts of my life that contributed to the progression of the disease in me. I am so grateful for the fellowship of OA and the support I get on a daily basis. The ability to be able to relate to other people is such a blessing because I always felt so alone and fearful in the world and I didn't know who to turn to. I learnt that to get well I had to work the 12-Step programme of recovery. In the past I had no direction and no structure in my life but now with the guidance and support of other members my life is getting better and better.

## **I was so obsessed with food**

My relationship with food has been unconventional for most of my life. As a young child I felt different and felt bigger than my friends, although the fact was I was never really overweight. I was brought up in a supportive family and remember my primary school years fondly.

At 12 years of age my feelings of difference could be linked directly with food. I always wanted to be delicate and fragile, but perceived myself to be overweight. I was very sensitive to what anyone said. I remember being told in ballet class that we should watch what we ate and this resonated with me. I felt like the teacher was singling me out specifically.

By the time I left school, I was a highly competitive rower. Exercise was the main way I purged, my binges happened almost daily. I was unable to make myself vomit after eating so I used exercise, mostly running or skipping, in order to get rid of the food. My eating binges weren't often the high calorie foods you may usually think of... My family were relatively healthy eaters so a lot of the time a binge was toast, cereal, nuts or cooking chocolate chips – basically whatever we had in the cupboard. It didn't matter what it was as long as it filled my stomach and the horrible empty feeling of being different.

When the time came for me to leave home and go to uni, I was terrified of putting on weight.

I knew that a lot of first year uni students put on weight in their first year and I was determined not to. Without my parents around to make me eat, I spent my first year at uni exercising at least 4 hours a day (a two hour run in the mornings and at least a couple of hours in the gym each night.) I rarely went to the dining hall, I was afraid of anyone seeing me eat. I ate on average about every third day with some starvation spells lasting up to seven or more days punctuated by the inevitable binges. I was weak and found it a great effort to go to class or even get out of bed.

I was terrified of anyone seeing me eat so when I did eat it would be food from a vending machine... although I could tell you the dining hall menu for the entire week!

I was so obsessed with food....

Time went on and my eating progressed until I was bingeing on chocolate biscuits, chips and muffins in secret before running for six to eight hours at a time. I could not control my eating and I felt trapped. I woke up in the mornings wishing I was dead. I was gaining weight and started to realise that my way of life was unmanageable and I needed help. I knew I was obsessed with food in both my bingeing and starving periods, either obsessing about having it or obsessing about trying to avoid it. I was always thinking about it.

I couldn't cope alone so I rang Overeaters Anonymous (OA). I was humiliated and ashamed and the last place I wanted to go was OA but I was desperate. The people I talked to had eating histories that matched what I was doing with food. They told me their eating stories and how they were no longer doing with food the things they had done with it before they came to OA. I identified. Their honesty and openness gave me hope. I was relieved to find there were others like me who had found a solution.

However, I was not ready to give up entirely and felt that by taking some of what OA had to offer and adding it to what I wanted to do, I could get myself well. I set to it with all the willpower I had. Over time I became increasingly obsessive with food and exercise. I tried to put up a good front hoping other OA members wouldn't realise that in reality I was getting worse, not better. The food had me beat.

I had to get desperate before I was ready to give up trying to make myself well and admit defeat. I saw that I needed to give up trying to control my eating and hand it over to a Power greater than myself if I wanted to be free from the obsession with and craving for food. I wanted the freedom

I saw in other OA members. When I gave up the food and started to focus on the programme each day, I found the solution to my food addiction for that day. It was in OA all along! Today I am a happy, healthy member of society. I am employed in a fulfilling job and have family and friends in my life who don't always have to walk on eggshells around me. I sit in my room with the sun streaming in on me and I am happy to be exactly where I am at this moment. I know where I fit in the world, and that, is a gift of the programme.

### **Not living in addiction anymore**

I didn't think I had a problem with food until I was fifteen years old and at high school, but now I realise that I was born with the problem. I didn't recognise it as a child because I wasn't overeating or starving but I did have other characteristics like wanting to be alone all the time, feeling ugly, wrong and bad. I stole, lied and was a very secretive child.

At High School, when I was about fifteen years old, I remember being in a physical education class when the whole class had to be weighed. I weighed nine stone! I thought I was fat. I was shocked and ashamed that I could weigh so much. I determined that I would lose weight and I decided to keep it a secret. I stopped eating breakfast and lunch and started attending an aerobics class which was held in the school gym during lunch time. When I got home I ate only as much of the evening meal as I could get away with without anyone asking any questions. I began to lose weight and people commented on how good I looked. I loved the admiration I was getting and I wanted more of it. After a time my weight loss became a point of concern to my family and I knew I was going to have to start eating more. I decided to take laxatives to control the weight gain and I also started smoking cigarettes and drinking strong black coffee.

Eventually I moved out of home – free at last I thought. I continued starving and exercising. I also started drinking alcohol and taking drugs. A good day was when I didn't eat at all and a bad day would be eating a six pack of sausages or a whole box of rice risotto. One day, about a year later, the boyfriend I was living with moved out and went to live in Australia. I was very down. The only thing that I wanted to do was eat. I imagined buying all my favourite foods and being left alone to eat. I thought it would make me feel better.

This desire to eat was my dirty dark secret. I hated myself for wanting to eat. I thought it showed weakness. In spite of my critical thinking I did buy all that food and I had a big binge on food. My plan was to exercise it off afterward, however, when I tried to exercise I got cramp. I panicked. How was I going to get rid of all that food I had just eaten? I tried vomiting – it worked. This started a pattern of eating and vomiting that continued until well after I joined Overeaters Anonymous. I would plan binges with great excitement and then vomit up as much food as I could. It wasn't always easy for me to vomit. I often choked which was very scary. As the years went by I began to hate the vomiting but driven by my fear of gaining weight I had to go to more extreme lengths to make myself sick.

Thinking about food, when to eat, how much to buy, where to get the money and how to get rid of it became my whole life. I had started smoking marijuana and taking other drugs when I could. I wasn't interested in working, making friends, being a member of my family, saving money or any of the other things I saw my peers doing. I didn't like myself and I knew I should change. I decided to go to the doctor and tell her about the vomiting I was doing. I thought she would feel sorry for me and give me diet pills which I would use instead of vomiting. Then I could eat what I wanted without putting on weight. The only problem with my plan was that the doctor didn't offer me diet pills; instead she offered me anti-depressants and suggested I needed to go to OA. "What's that?" I said. "Overeaters Anonymous", was her reply.

Eventually I rang OA and two members came to see me. They shared their eating stories with me and one of the ladies took me to a meeting. I didn't like OA for a long time. I was ashamed to be in Overeaters Anonymous. I wanted the life of my fantasies. I couldn't accept that I was sick and I didn't like what I needed to do if I wanted to get well. I continued to binge and vomit for a long time even after I started going to OA regularly.

In time I came to understand that I have a disease and it is called addiction. I am addicted to food and other substances. I learnt that addiction swaps from substance to substance which is why I can't handle food, alcohol, drugs and exercise sensibly like normal people. I learnt that addiction is a threefold illness that affects me spiritually, mentally and physically. I learnt that I can't fix myself and that there are lots of other people who are addicted to food like me. Some of them are working together to help each other. They are not living in addiction anymore. They have found a solution in Overeaters Anonymous. As my eating got worse I started to see the freedom these people had from food and I wanted it. I was developing a more open mind, able to listen and, with help, started to do what they were doing.

Today I have a new life free of bingeing, vomiting, drinking, taking drugs, exercising and smoking. I'm not overweight or underweight. I don't think about food all day every day. I have friends and I am a part of my family. I have been in the same job for many years. I can save money and take holidays. I could never do these things for myself; they have happened to me while I have been going to OA meetings and trying to follow the directions of my sponsor. My sponsor is a person in OA who guides me in working the 12 Steps and finding a Higher Power. It is my Higher Power, I believe, who has stopped me compulsively overeating. I am very grateful. Being in OA has given me hope that my life will continue to get better. In OA I am finding freedom from food and a way to handle life.

## **I work the 12 Steps in my life**

Over the years that I have been in recovery and off the food the 12 Steps have become a way of life for me.

In the early years when I was very sick and confused I was very diligent and intense about working the Steps 'absolutely right' so that I would not eat again. In other words my motivation was fear. However it worked and as the years have gone by my fear has dissolved as my faith has grown.

Steps 1, 2 and 3 were a sort of package deal to me back in 1980 when I came to OA. In fact I had to get worse for the first few months before I came to know in my heart that I was powerless over food and that my life was unmanageable. This 'knowing' was quickly followed by the conviction that I needed to do the 4th and 5th Steps immediately if I wanted to stop eating and stay stopped. I did my 5th Step with great fear as I was very proud and arrogant, as well as very ashamed of my past including my eating, stealing and lying – in other words the double life I led. However I have not had to eat since I did this first 5th Step.

Steps 6 and 7 I struggled with for many years. I tried to analyse them and made them very complicated. Eventually I came to work them exactly as they are written, in other words I identify the defect of character and ask God to remove it.

Steps 8 and 9 very quickly followed Step 5 and I completed all my amends with the help of my sponsor's advice. I found Step 9 hard as I hated admitting I was wrong. One of the amazing things that happened to me was that as time was passing, God was freeing me from the shame, guilt and emotional pain of my past. As time passed I was able to share anything and everything from my past with other people if it could be of help to them.

Step 10 is one that is ongoing for me. In the early times I struggled with trying to do a Step 10 at the end of the day, but my experience is that when I have done something wrong I am usually aware of it immediately and have to do something about it (sometimes with the encouragement of my sponsor) or else when I am sitting in a meeting and listening to the sharing I become aware of an amends I need to make.

My practice of Step 11 is very much a turning to my Higher Power at several times throughout the day – to me it is more of an attitude of greater or lesser awareness of my connection to God and acknowledgment that I am not alone in any situation. I find that I need time on my own daily, preferably in peaceful surroundings to 'ponder on' things. In addition, of more recent times, I have been meditating each morning for 30 minutes as is suggested in our literature.

Step 12 (as in 12 Step work) has been a major part of my focus in recovery, as for me my primary purpose is to be off the food and to carry the message to others. I try and practise the principles of the previous 11 Steps in my daily life through working with others, going to regular meetings and focusing on love and service.

## **TO CONTACT OVEREATERS ANONYMOUS:**

**Phone:** (03) 365 3812

**Address:** P O Box 2451, Christchurch

**E-mail:** [oacanterbury@yahoo.co.nz](mailto:oacanterbury@yahoo.co.nz)

## Twelve Steps of Overeaters Anonymous

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.

Permission to use the Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous  
for adaptation granted by AA World Services, Inc.