

# “STEPPING OUT”

AN OUTREACH PUBLICATION OF THE WESTERN MICHIGAN INTERGROUP—TWELFTH STEP WITHIN

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We all need to be loved and accepted, not because we are abstinent, not because we are at goal weight, but for who we are. This is especially true of OA members who are still suffering. They have been in program for some time, perhaps for months, maybe even years, but either they have not attained abstinence, or they are in relapse. When asked what helped them most, people who have gone through this painful experience agree on one thing: being loved and accepted—even when they are compulsively overeating, even when they are falling apart emotionally, even when they themselves felt hopeless and unlovable—was the key to their eventually loving and accepting themselves.

(from the OA Pamphlet— “Members in Relapse”)

## WHAT IS RELAPSE?

Compulsive overeating is a three-fold disease, and so relapse may occur on three levels:

Physical Relapse  
Emotional Relapse  
Spiritual Relapse

**Physical Relapse:** is marked by a return to:

- compulsive overeating by a compulsive overeater
- vomiting by a Bulimic
- starving by an anorexic

**Emotional Relapse:** is characterized by a return to obsessive thoughts and feelings.

**Spiritual Relapse:** involves a return to self-will over Higher Power.

## WHAT ARE THE WARNING SIGNS OF RELAPSE?

Some of the mental states and warning signs that precede a relapse into compulsive overeating are found in the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous, pages 35-43.

- Not accepting a spiritual remedy
- Failing to enlarge a spiritual life
- Ignoring or denying your feelings
- Getting into slippery places when not in fit spiritual condition
- Thinking a little couldn't hurt me
- Ignoring reasons for not eating compulsively
- Using trivial excuses
- Deliberately compulsively eating, and feeling justified by nervousness, anger, worry, depression, jealousy, etc.
- Giving little thought to the terrible consequences that might ensue.
- Getting a thrill out of compulsively eating in spite of warnings
- Thinking it doesn't apply to me because I'm not that bad
- Telling myself that it won't happen again
- Not admitting I am a compulsive overeater
- Believing I can solve my problems by myself
- Believing I can do with my willpower
- Believing that I am not hopelessly defeated by my disease.

## SYMPTOMS AND SOLUTIONS

All twelve steps and all eight tools of recovery would be appropriately used for any of these symptoms.

SYMPTOM OF RELAPSE	POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS	SYMPTOM OF RELAPSE	POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS
Depression Excessive Sleep	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>exercise in moderation</li> <li>express gratitude</li> <li>look for some diversion</li> <li>make phone calls</li> </ul>	Fear	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pray for Willingness to accept life on life's terms, as it is now; <b>F</b>ace <b>E</b>verything <b>A</b>nd <b>R</b>ecover.</li> </ul>
Demands Expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>pray for acceptance</li> <li>practice tolerance</li> <li>work Step 3</li> </ul>	Anger Resentment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work Steps 4, 5 and 6</li> <li>Pray for those you resent</li> <li>Pray for forgiveness and for the ability to forgive others</li> </ul>
Isolating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>go to meetings</li> <li>call your sponsor</li> <li>ask for help</li> <li>call fellow OA</li> </ul>	Living in the Past Living in the Future	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pray for willingness to stay in the present.</li> <li>Make phone calls</li> <li>Practice acceptance by relinquishing control</li> </ul>
Binging Slips	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pray</li> <li>make phone calls</li> <li>call your sponsor</li> <li>go to meetings</li> <li>be completely honest</li> </ul>	Excessive Fantasy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>reach out</li> <li>interact with other people</li> <li>check your reality</li> </ul>
Obsessive Thoughts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pray</li> <li>look for healthy diversion</li> <li>write in your journal</li> <li>follow food plan</li> <li>engage in healthy activities</li> </ul>	Overreacting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Call your sponsor</li> <li>pray for serenity</li> <li>go to meetings</li> <li>Work Step 10</li> </ul>
Over Commitment Exhaustion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rest</li> <li>Do one thing at a time</li> <li>set aside quiet meditation time</li> <li>take time to check your motives</li> <li>say NO</li> </ul>	Excessive Hunger	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Write down and follow a food plan</li> <li>Eat at regular times</li> <li>call someone and talk it through</li> <li>Do something to get closer to your higher power</li> </ul>
Self Deprivation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>draw up list of things you are proud of</li> <li>engage in moderate indulgences (non food)</li> <li>strive for progress not perfection</li> <li>express affirmations</li> </ul>	Taking Life Too Seriously Irritability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Practice tolerance</li> <li>use the Serenity Prayer</li> <li>Write a Gratitude List</li> </ul>
Anxiety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work Steps 4, 5 and 6</li> <li>practice relaxation techniques</li> <li>take a hot bath</li> <li>pray the serenity prayer</li> </ul>	Cockiness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Call of newcomer</li> <li>Do 12th Step Work</li> <li>Do a 4th Step on Humility</li> </ul>
Self Pity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pray for Others</li> <li>Call a Newcomer</li> <li>Practice Gratitude</li> </ul>		

This publication is designed to help individuals and groups within our intergroup carry the message of recovery to those within our fellowship who still suffer and to make Twelfth Step Within information available to everyone. If you need any help or encouragement in implementing these suggestions, please contact Cathy Claus (231) 843-1432, the Western Michigan Intergroup Twelfth Step Within Representative or ANY representative of the Intergroup. The contact numbers and addresses are included in your monthly minutes.