



Step 0 And Step 1

When I first heard the words Step Zero, I felt I knew intuitively what it meant. I don't know if there is a formal definition anywhere. To me, it means the realization that I need help, and the willingness to take action to get it.

After 50 years of fighting with food on my own, I finally gave up and went to my first OA meeting. I hadn't had sugar for a few years but was using artificial sweeteners here and there. I made myself a batch of baked goods and even though they didn't turn out very well, I ate all of them within a few days. Then, believing I had figured out how to make them better, I made another batch, telling myself I would eat these more reasonably, you know, make them last at least a week. Despite my good intentions, I ate them more quickly than the first batch.

I realized I was no better off than I was in my 20's when I came home from work and started shoveling sweet things into my mouth before even taking off my coat. I realized that all my best efforts to control my eating had gotten me nowhere. I had heard about OA in another 12-step group I was part of. I looked for OA meetings online and went to my first one that same day.

I knew I was home immediately. I cried. I felt relief that I might have some help with this 'thing' I could not conquer on my own.

Step 1 – Admitting I was powerless over food and that my life had become unmanageable.

I knew in my mind I was powerless over food but wasn't convinced that my life was unmanageable. I hadn't figured out yet that if I brought certain foods into my home, they would call to me relentlessly until I ate them. I hadn't acknowledged to anyone that eating certain foods seemed to weaken my immune system, or something, because I would start to feel like I was fighting off a cold if I ate those foods too many days in a row. I'd end up taking vitamin C and drinking lots of water to try to avoid getting sick. It hadn't clicked that continuing in this behavior made me feel so ashamed of myself and that same shame would push me back to the food, which would cover up the feeling, but only temporarily. I hadn't acknowledged how much of my mental space and time was being 'eaten up' by my persistent and overwhelming thoughts and arguments with myself about food. I was wasting the precious moments of my life and wrecking my self-esteem fighting with food. Was any of this working? No! Not at all! None of it was manageable.

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Our *Cocoon* is an impressive example of the on-going work of OA members in MAI's communities. You can give service by taking a few of your program moments to read a *Cocoon* article, and give your own comments about anything in the *Cocoon* (anonymously or with your name) to be posted in the blog on our website. Just email a few words to yourstory@oamilwaukee.org. Your words can make a difference to those who visit the oamilwaukee.org website.

Milwaukee Area Intergroup

Serving Eastern Wisconsin

MAI Website oamilwaukee.org

Facebook Overeaters Anonymous - OA Milwaukee

Contact Info

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Board of Directors

(new board members take office at November meeting, based on October elections)

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Leave message for any board member: 414-259-0640

MAI News Available Via Email

Want to receive free, monthly MAI news via email? Send an email to emailblast@oamilwaukee.org with "Subscribe" in Subject. Include in the body of the email your first name, last initial, and home meeting.

Your email address will never be distributed nor seen by other people receiving the mailings.

MAI Monthly Meetings

Third Monday of every month, 6:30-8:00 p.m., via Zoom. Contact chair@oamilwaukee.org for the information. Each member group can have two voting representatives. All OA members are welcome.

OA World Service

oa.org

Free OA podcasts featuring OA speakers: oa.org/podcasts/. A podcast is a radio-type show you can download from the Internet to your computer.

A link is available at this site to get World Service Office (WSO) information.

Spanish OA Website Espanol.@oa.org

French OA Website Francais.@oa.org

Region 5

region5oa.org

Serving Midwest US and Canada

Cocoon Submissions

We need and want your stories of recovery, poems, and pictures, that share your experience, strength, and hope!

Issue	Deadline	Topic
2nd Quarter	March 20	Reaching Out Our Hands

Send to cocooneditor@oamilwaukee.org or OAMAI, Attn: Cocoon Editor, PO Box 270054, Milwaukee, WI 53227.

Editor: Jennifer W.

Editorial Policy

Out of the Cocoon is the quarterly newsletter of the Milwaukee Area Intergroup of Overeaters Anonymous, Inc. We welcome OA-related contributions from members. Material cannot be returned, nor can payment be made. All submissions must be signed; names will be withheld upon request. The editor reserves the right to make editorial changes and to refuse any article not meeting the editorial policy or that breaks any traditions. Articles may not appear in the quarter of submission. Other OA groups may reprint articles without permission as long as credit is given. The opinions expressed herein are those of the writers, and not of the Intergroup or OA as a whole. Deadline for articles is the 20th of odd-numbered months to cocooneditor@yahoo.com.

Seeking a Sponsor?

The MAI Twelfth-Step-Within Committee maintains a list of available sponsors and temporary sponsors so newcomers and those still suffering can get direction and support. If you need help finding a sponsor, email 12th-stepwithin@oamilwaukee.org or call 414-259-0640 and leave a message. Provide your contact information, the type of sponsor you are seeking (i.e. food, step, maintenance, late night calls, for newcomer, temporary, etc.), and any other specific needs you have.

Available to Sponsor?

Please add your name and phone number to the list so you can help another member. Indicate type of sponsor you are willing to be (see above for ideas) and time of day you are available.

Step 0 and Step 1
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Taking Step One felt like a bit of a defeat but it gave me a smidgeon of sanity back. I was finally admitting to the reality of my relationship with food instead of living in denial. It was a step towards being willing to connect with others who understood, instead of fighting this addiction on my own.

I find that I must repeat Step Zero and One over and over, just like the rest of the steps. The disease pokes at me by telling me that I'm not really a compulsive overeater and I can go back to being a regular person and eat whatever I want. It tells me I don't need the program or the people in it.

Working the steps, including Step Zero, is my only way to sanity and serenity. I've found listening to others helps me to continue to remember Step Zero, that I need help and must continue to be willing to make the decision to get it, through Overeaters Anonymous. Thank God for the program! And thank all of you in it!

By Anonymous

FEELING

Step 0

Desperate
Powerless
Lonely
Crazy
Scared

Step 1

Relieved
Interested
Hopeful
Serenity
Solution

15 Questions

Are You a Compulsive Eater?

1. Do I eat when I'm not hungry, or not eat when my body needs nourishment?
2. Do I go on eating binges for no apparent reason, sometimes eating until I'm stuffed or even feel sick?
3. Do I have feelings of guilt, shame or embarrassment about my weight or the way I eat?
4. Do I eat sensibly in front of others and then make up for it when I am alone?
5. Is my eating affecting my health or the way I live my life?
6. When my emotions are intense—whether positive or negative—do I find myself reaching for food?
7. Do my eating behaviors make me or others unhappy?
8. Have I ever used laxatives, vomiting, diuretics, excessive exercise, diet pills, shots or other medical interventions (including surgery) to try to control my weight?
9. Do I fast or severely restrict my food intake to control my weight?
10. Do I fantasize about how much better life would be if I were a different size or weight?
11. Do I need to chew or have something in my mouth all the time: food, gum, mints, candies or beverages?
12. Have I ever eaten food that is burned, frozen or spoiled; from containers in the grocery store; or out of the garbage?
13. Are there certain foods I can't stop eating after having the first bite?
14. Have I lost weight with a diet or "period of control" only to be followed by bouts of uncontrolled eating and/or weight gain?
15. Do I spend too much time thinking about food, arguing with myself about whether or what to eat, planning the next diet or exercise cure, or counting calories?

<https://www.oamilwaukee.org/printable-documents/ti>

Reader's Email

I accept that I'm not a normie when it comes to food and weight behaviors. I'm glad to have lots of OA cohorts who are like-minded with me including each of you, in those areas and a Higher Power who is kind and loving. They all support my endeavor to remain abstinent, support which is reciprocated by me. Together we get better. Bobbi

Pages From The Past

Step one we admitted we were powerless over food that our lives had become unmanageable.

I recently took this step of surrender, and I repeated it every day. When I remember that I'm a creature and God is the creator, His grace is able to flow through me, transforming into the person He intends me to be. What a joy! What peace! My HP has gently brought me to this place after a lifetime of struggle. Hope has replaced despair as I no longer listen to the death message of "it's hopeless, I'll never change." Instead I hear "you are my child in whom I am pleased. You are my work of art! My grace is sufficient." How can I struggle out of loving such loving arms? I like to picture my HP as comforting and soothing me, as a parent comforts a fretful child. The parent soothes, rocks, pats, sings, uses whatever tool will quiet the child until finally the child surrenders and lies peacefully in its parents' arms. I'm called to rest comfortably in my HP arms – trusting Him "one day at a time "...

Roselyn S. Brookfield WI. Reprint from Cocoon, January 1994

I Knew This Is Where The Answer Lived!

I am so glad I had already started on a commercial food plan before I began with my OA low carb food plan. I didn't have to struggle to eat or cut my intake of food. I was amazed at how full I was when I was eating so little! In the past I had put so many calories in my body each day, it's amazing I only weighed what I did. How could I feel so good with so little food...a miracle, I say!

I have always known that weight loss could not only be about dieting, but I never knew the answer, until January 7, 2023 when my husband and I attended our first zoom meeting on a Saturday morning. As soon as we started the meeting, I knew this is where the answer lived! I don't remember what, exactly, went on there, but I heard about the 12 steps, we read something and then the women shared about their experiences. I could relate to everything they were talking about and I thought this was the answer to getting myself whole again. As I attended more meetings and started praying a little bit, not only did a physical change occur, but a spiritual one also. My entire being is at peace. I don't ever remember feeling like this. I am usually filled with angst about...something! After more than a month, I still feel at peace.

I know God spoke through our daughter to suggest coming to OA, and I know He's been with me every step of the way!

Heard It At A Meeting....

"My recovery is proportionate to my honesty." Anonymous

"We are doing something miraculous together—something terrifying, courageous and beautiful.

We are choosing to recover."

Lifeline, August 1990

To The Newcomer ...

You sit down, then say your name
Your eyes not trusting—full of pain. My
heart remembers how you feel
As you try to comprehend what is real.

We read the steps, traditions, tools... You
ask yourself, "are they just fools? I eat too
much -- willpower's weak
What are these things of which they speak?

It's hard to trust.— it's hard to know
As on and on stories go,
But still you sense, begin to feel
That what is in our hearts is real.

You hear us speak. You see our eyes
You wonder if it's truth or lies.
Please listen as we tell you how
Believe – it can be yours right now!

We're speaking from our hearts it's true
This joy we feel is here for you.
You never have to feel the pain
Or have to overeat again.

Keep coming back!

Janet C, New Beginnings
Central Florida Intergroup Newsletter
Reprinted