

Serenity Times

Westchester United Intergroup
www.oawestchesterny.org

STEP 5 - Spiritual Principle Integrity

OA 12 Steps and 12 Traditions, 2nd Edition, p.44

ADMITTED TO GOD, TO OURSELVES, AND TO ANOTHER HUMAN BEING THE EXACT NATURE OF OUR WRONGS

In the process of sharing our inventory, we have become more honest with ourselves and others than we have ever been before. Honesty is a key factor in our recovery from compulsive eating, and so we will want to develop this trait. The best way to do so is to continue working the Twelve Steps. In this way, we can learn how to deal with those troubling aspects of ourselves that we discovered in Steps Four and Five. Simply knowing what is wrong with us isn't always enough. Steps Six through Twelve show us more actions we can take to bring about the necessary changes in our lives. From this point on, we begin to leave behind the character defects that have caused us so many problems in the past.

Be rigorously honest with yourself.

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STEP SIX

“Admitted to
God, to
ourselves and to
another human
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wrongs.”

The 12 Steps and 12
Traditions of OA,
2nd ed, p. 39

What Integrity Means to Me

~ Anonymous

In taking my daily inventory, I review the past 24 hours and work from a list of common character defects and assets. Integrity is among the assets on that list. But for a long time, integrity rarely made an appearance on my daily inventory. Why?

Because I had trouble defining what integrity meant to me. So it was no surprise I had a hard time identifying those moments in life when I practiced integrity.

Like for many things, a good place to start here is with our OA literature. Integrity is the spiritual principle of Step Five. There is just one problem: in the entire chapter on Step Five in *The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous*, 2nd ed., the word integrity appears only once.

“It is human nature to cling to the illusion that we have done no wrong, and through the years, we have become experts at rationalizing our thoughts and behaviors. Now, with God’s help, we leave rationalization behind and begin to practice integrity. We face the reality of what we’ve done.” (OA 12 & 12, 2nd ed., p. 40)

Now don’t get me wrong, this is a beautiful and helpful passage. But beyond Step Five, how do I practice integrity in all my affairs? To answer that, a logical place to go would be the chapter on *Step 12 in OA’s 12 & 12*.

“In Steps Four and Five, we learned courage and integrity as we faced the truth about our defects of character. Applying these principles in all our affairs means we are no longer ruled by a fear of admitting our mistakes. We have the integrity to show the world our true selves.” (OA 12 & 12, 2nd ed., p. 85)

Integrity is about facing the truth, admitting my mistakes and showing the world my true self. But when I’m doing my daily inventory, and I think about a time when I was truthful or authentic, a different spiritual principle comes to mind: honesty. How is integrity different than honesty? What does integrity mean to me?

And then one day, by the grace of Higher Power, an intuitive thought came to me. I was doing my daily Step Ten inventory, reviewing the past 24 hours, and thinking about earlier that evening when I called my sister. I was tired and busy, and part of me wanted to skip it – maybe text her an excuse and suggest we talk later. But I called her.

As I sat there contemplating all this, a single word presented itself: integrity. Why? Because I did what I said I would do.

Back when I made amends to my sister for, among other things, my isolating behavior (like not returning her calls), I also told her *“what sorts of changes or restitutions [I was] undertaking” (OA 12 & 12, 2nd ed., p. 65)*. In that case, I committed to contacting her regularly.

Then, when I followed through on that commitment – when I did what I said I would do – I practiced integrity.



What is INTEGRITY?

I - Integrity means doing the right thing even when no one is watching.

N - Nobility of character shows in honesty, fairness, and kindness to others.

T - Trustworthiness is keeping your promises and being dependable.

E - Ethical behavior means choosing what is right over what is easy.

G - Good judgment guides actions that reflect strong moral values.

R - Responsibility is owning your actions and standing by your words.

I - Inner strength helps a person stay true to their values despite pressure.

T - Truthfulness means speaking honestly and avoiding deception.

Y - Your word matters - people with integrity mean what they say and follow through.

Suggestion: Use the tool of writing and the examples above to describe how integrity is part of your recovery program.

Submitted by Mary Anne K.





Integrity: The Principle of Step 5

Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs. The first time I worked this step, I had almost no trouble admitting my wrongs to another human being. After all, I had been in therapy for at least a hundred years. There were multiple people who knew all about me. But admitting my wrongs to myself, coming out of my denial and defiance, that was another kettle of fish entirely.

Denial (Don't Even Know I Am Lying). So true for me. I truly have gone blithely along for much of my life, unaware of my character defects. Oh, I knew I wasn't perfect, but I couldn't understand why everyone in OA was spending so much time talking about their character defects. What was wrong with these people?

Once I began to understand that becoming and staying abstinent requires "a complete psychic change," as stated in The Doctor's Opinion in the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous, it started to make sense. "A complete psychic change" is a total personality change. We've all heard the slogan "The same person will eat again." For years, I didn't understand what that meant. It means that if I don't change who I am, I will pick up compulsive eating again. So, I do really need to examine my character defects. I do need to discuss them with at least one other person. And I do need to give them to God.

And, I have recently learned that, in order to be a person of integrity (honesty, morality, ethics, consistency), I need to address those character defects as best I can. It is not enough in Steps 6 and 7 to wish to be rid of my character defects, although that is a beginning. I need to learn to replace them with their opposites. If I am intolerant, I need to practice tolerance. If impatient, then be patient. I am one of those people who wants patience NOW. Unfortunately, it doesn't work that way. So, in the current Step Study I am taking, I am looking at each problem behavior and troublesome attitude and reflecting on how I can manifest their opposites.

I am creating a template of those preferred behaviors and attitudes to keep with my morning journal, so that I can reflect on them every day. While much of my initial denial in my first Step 4 many years ago has been overcome, I still need to be vigilant that it doesn't creep back in.

Here are some examples:

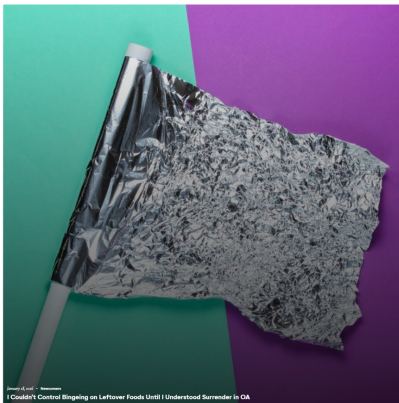
- I will PAUSE (Pray And Use Spiritual Energy) before responding to people in meaningful conversations.
- I will truly listen and not be thinking about what I am going to say.
- Before I comment on my experience related to what the other person has said, I will actually comment on what they have said. I will take myself out of the equation as much as possible.
- And I need to remind myself of who I want to become, which is closer to my Higher Power's vision of who I can be.

Carol G.



Lifeline

Stories of Recovery



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Featured Topic: Newcomers



Check out the OA Lifeline
[Click here](#)



Share your experience,
strength and hope in
the 3rd quarter 2026
Serenity Times

Theme: LOVE

Send your submissions to:
wuignewsletter@gmail.com

Deadline: June 19th

Looking for meetings?



Find a meeting

Face-To-Face

Online

Telephone

Non-Real-Time

Find a face-to-face meeting

You do not have to register to attend an OA meeting. It is a good idea to reach out to the contact person to make sure the meeting information on this list is current. We want to make sure that someone is there to welcome you when you arrive at a meeting that you have never visited before.

Go to: <https://oa.org/find-a-meeting/>

An opportunity to share, inspire and serve...

Whether it's a heartfelt reflection, a creative story, a witty observation, or favorite piece from OA approved literature—your words have the power to help and serve others. Our newsletter thrives on the diverse voices of our members, and we want you to share yours. This is your space to inform, inspire, and connect with your fellows.

You can submit your contributions to the newsletter by emailing
wuignewsletter@gmail.com.

THANK YOU





News and Events

Access the most up-to-date
information at

<https://www.oawestchesterny.org/>

2026 WUIG RETREAT

April 17 4:00 pm to April 19 1:00 pm
Holmes Camp Retreat, Holmes, NY
[Link for more info](#)

TOOLS OF RECOVERY WORKSHOP

Tuesday, April 28, 2026, 7:00 pm to 8:00 pm
First Presbyterian Church, Mahopac, NY
[Link for more info](#)



Important Links

- [WUIG Key Points \(Link\)](#)
- About meetings: www.oawestchesterny.org/meetings.html
- 7th Tradition: www.oawestchesterny.org/7th-step-tradition.html
- Contact WUIG: www.oawestchesterny.org/contact.html
- Overeaters Anonymous: www.oa.org



OA Responsibility Pledge

Always extend the hand and heart of OA to all who share my compulsion; for this I am responsible.

Sponsorship

Need a sponsor? Are you an available sponsor?

Email: sponsorwuig@gmail.com

Seventh Tradition Contributions

We are fully self-supporting through our own contributions. Send your check to: Westchester United Intergroup of OA, PO Box 125, White Plains, NY 10603.

wuigtreasurer@gmail.com. State your contribution distribution in the MEMO section.



Please contribute what you can; we need you more than your money. OA World Service suggests \$5 for each meeting.

WUIG Trusted Servants

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- Newsletter Editor: Cindy A. wuignewsletter@gmail.com
- World Service Business Conference Delegates: Cathy C.

What we do have to offer is far greater... a Fellowship in which we find and share the healing power of love.

The 12 Steps & 12 Traditions OA,
2nd ed, p1



Instagram

Overeaters Anonymous has expanded its social media presence. Get a bit of OA inspiration or program wisdom-follow us at

https://www.instagram.com/overeatersanonymous_official/

