



Been Slipping and Sliding? A Reading and Writing Tool

The following thirty questions are for use in daily writing and/or discussion with a sponsor by members who want to stop “slipping and sliding.” The questions are also recommended for those in relapse who want to recommit to their OA program.

The OA literature referenced is available from the OA bookstore (bookstore.oa.org). The list includes *The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous, Second Edition (OA Twelve and Twelve)*; *Overeaters Anonymous, Third Edition*; the Overeaters Anonymous daily meditation book *For Today*; and the OA pamphlets *The Tools of Recovery, A Plan of Eating*, and *Dignity of Choice*.

Read the suggested material(s); then reflect and write on the accompanying idea or question.

1) Read the story “Freedom Isn’t Free” in *Overeaters Anonymous* (pp. 113–117) and pages 17 to 20 of Step Three in the *OA Twelve and Twelve*, ending with “living of our lives.” What does “abstinence” mean to me physically, emotionally, and spiritually?

2) Read Step Two in the *OA Twelve and Twelve* (pp. 9–15). Reread pages 9 to 11. How did I know that my eating was out of control?

3) Do I have a devastating disease that leads me to return to food for comfort? If so, how much pain does this cause me? How could my disease kill me? Some readings in our OA literature that may help on this question are:

- OA Twelve and Twelve*, pages 10 to 12, especially the paragraph at the top of page 11 beginning with “Most of us got plenty of advice ... ” through “Some of us tried it.”
- “Surrender Brings Freedom” in *Overeaters Anonymous* (pp. 131–134).
- “The Tiny Acorn Grows Into a Mighty Oak” in *Overeaters Anonymous* (pp. 163–166).
- “A Bad Case of Denial” in *Overeaters Anonymous* (pp. 179–182).

4) Read “Out of Darkness” in *Overeaters Anonymous* (pp. 143–146). What made the difference that brought the author to renewed abstinence? How would I describe my willingness to accept that this program may be more difficult once my previous abstinence has eluded me?

5) Read the story “Agony Aunt Saved My Life” in *Overeaters Anonymous* (pp. 139–142). The OA pamphlets *A Plan of Eating* and *Dignity of Choice* are possible resources for developing an appropriate food plan for continuing in Overeaters Anonymous. Both eating behaviors and specific quantities of each food group are worth considering. Ask: What was my food plan in earlier efforts to work the program? What is it now? What changes do I need to make?

6) Read Appendices A, B, C, and D in *Overeaters Anonymous* (pp. 191–208). “The men and women in OA, who are recovering from their own eating problems, reach out in love to help each other with suggestions, support, and strategies” (p. 192). How is OA a “we” program? How do we depend on each other? Reread pages 192, 195, 201, 205, and 206. Discuss the idea that love from others has helped me find love for myself.

7) May 26 in *For Today* (p. 147) refers to “distorted ideas.” What were my thoughts before I indulged in that first compulsive bite?

8) Read pages 20 to 23 of Step Three in the *OA Twelve and Twelve*, beginning with “It is important to bear ...” Then read January 12 in *For Today* (p. 12) for one illustration of thinking that can lead to compulsive eating. In what ways is my thinking irrational when I believe that I can take just one bite?

9) April 18 in *For Today* (p. 109) starts with the problem of denial, described in different words. May 22 (p. 143) gets very pointed on the subject of denial. January 21 (p. 21) gives the OA perspective that works in place of denial. How did denial play a part in my relapse?

10) Read Our Invitation to You in *Overeaters Anonymous* (pp. 1–5). Is this an unconditional or conditional guarantee? How does the Overeaters Anonymous statement that “There is a proven, workable method by which we can arrest our illness” affect my willingness to depend on the Twelve Steps?

11) Read two paragraphs of Step Ten in the *OA Twelve and Twelve*, starting with “In Step Four, for instance, we ...” through the paragraph ending with “... our practice of Step Ten” (p. 70). Which of the following signs of relapse or slipping have I noticed in myself? As I read the stories in *Overeaters Anonymous*, let me make note of which ones apply to the items I have checked on this list.

Being argumentative	Expecting too much of others
Cockiness	Forgetting gratitude
Complacency	Frustration
Defiance	Grief
Denial	Impatience
Depression	Feeling that “It can’t happen to me”
Dishonesty	Letting up on discipline
Eating my binge foods	Self-pity
Exhaustion	Wanting too much

12) How much willingness do I have to stop living in my problem(s) and start living in the solution(s)? Am I willing to memorize and to remind myself daily of the OA Promise?

“I Put My Hand in Yours ... and together we can do what we could never do alone! No longer is there a sense of hopelessness, no longer must we each depend upon our own unsteady willpower. We are all together now, reaching out our hands for power and strength greater than ours, and as we join hands, we find love and understanding beyond our wildest dreams.” (*Beyond Our Wildest Dreams*, p. 207)

13) Read “Keep Coming Back for the Miracles,” in *Overeaters Anonymous* (pp. 89–92). “I graduated from a university in the south with a master’s degree in health and physical education. (Note that my health knowledge did not help me overcome my eating disorder)” (p. 89). Also read pages 20 to 23 of Step Three in the *OA Twelve and Twelve*. “It is important to bear in mind that knowledge of ourselves and our nutritional needs is useless without the kind of help we find through working all of OA’s Twelve Steps.” (p. 20). How has my own self-knowledge failed me in the past? Reread Step Three of the *OA Twelve and Twelve* (pp. 17–23) and write about “doing it yourself” and how that has or has not worked for me.

14) Read January 13 in *For Today* (p. 13). How do I understand the term “relapse”? How do I understand the term “slip”? How do I think they are different from each other?

15) Read the story “Plenty of Growing Room Left” in *Overeaters Anonymous* (pp. 119–122). What does my last eating binge tell me about my powerlessness against that first compulsive bite?

16) In addition to reading Step One in the *OA Twelve and Twelve* (pp. 3–7), also read March 17, March 24, and April 5 in *For Today* (pp. 77, 84, and 96). How willing am I to admit that I am powerless over food and that my life is unmanageable?

17) Read the OA pamphlet *The Tools of Recovery*. How do I use each of the OA Tools of recovery? How frequently do I use them?

18) Read February 21 and July 6 in *For Today* (pp. 52 and 188). What will I do to stop thinking and speaking negatively about myself? How will I replace such self-defeating thinking?

19) Read May 16 in *For Today* (p.137). Then read the story “Binge Foods and Diet Books” in *Overeaters Anonymous* (pp. 77–79). How will I give up reasons and excuses for eating compulsively and for not embracing the solution offered in *Overeaters Anonymous*?

20) Read “Dying to Live” in *Overeaters Anonymous* (pp. 37–39). Reread page 39, beginning with “My sole focus ...” to the end of the page, ending with “... part of that world.” In what ways am I willing to believe that I must change or I will not recover?

21) Read “The Boat Story” in *Overeaters Anonymous* (pp. 41–44). Then consider Step Two: “Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.” Willingness to pray is open-mindedness to the experiment of praying, rather than a conviction that prayer will “work.” How do I gain the needed willingness to pray for the willingness to work the OA program? When I have trouble being willing to pray, how can I not worry about whether I “really mean it” and have patience with myself and my practice of the program?

22) Read Step Two in the *OA Twelve and Twelve* (pp. 9–15). Pay close attention to the paragraph that begins “Some of us began by ...” and ends “... could restore us to sanity” (p. 13). Am I willing to believe in a Higher Power that would give me the comfort and security I am seeking when I turn to food? How do I cultivate an effective relationship with such a Higher Power?

23) Read pages 157 to 158 of the story “My Doctor Insisted” in *Overeaters Anonymous*. How can I recognize when my intuition and my Higher Power are giving me messages? In what ways can I “listen” to those messages by writing about them and applying them in my new way of life?

24) Read Step Three in the *OA Twelve and Twelve* (pp. 17–23). What are my Higher Power’s intentions for me regarding food and the other aspects of my life? How can I bring my will into line with my Higher Power’s will?

25) Read “Seeking and Finding a Power to Live By” in *Overeaters Anonymous* (pp. 49–52) and January 31 in *For Today* (p. 31). How will I commit myself to the life that my Higher Power is giving me and to practicing the Tools and working the Steps of Overeaters Anonymous?

26) Read July 22 in *For Today* (p. 204) and read the first three paragraphs of Step Ten in the *OA Twelve and Twelve* (pp. 69–70). How do I feel about the idea that freedom from food obsession is contingent upon the daily practice (repetition, repetition, repetition without exception) of surrender to “whatever it takes”?

27) Do I agree that spiritual dependence is the only means of escaping from the destruction of compulsive eating? What is called for in this question is moving into Step Three. Read the story “Don’t Let Me Waste an Iota” in *Overeaters Anonymous* (pp. 85–88). Reread pages 87 to 88. Then read the first two paragraphs of Step Three in the *OA Twelve and Twelve* (pp. 17–18). Am I ready to agree? Let me write down where I am, honestly, with Steps One, Two, and Three.

28) Consider June 23 in *For Today* (p. 175). Additionally, read “The Hiking Trail Meeting” in *Overeaters Anonymous* (pp. 65–68). Do I have the willingness to commit to using the Tools and working the Steps on a daily basis? What specific action(s) will I take between now and this time tomorrow?

29) Read “Humility, Gratitude, and Kindness” in *Overeaters Anonymous* (pp. 57–60). What actions can I take to ensure that relapse is not inevitable?

30) Read December 25 in *For Today* (p. 360). There is a saying that the longest journey begins with a single step. April 7 in *For Today* (p. 98) suggests such a first step. With what services have I been served? What service has been a part of my program up until now? To what length am I now willing to go for my recovery by giving back to OA? Am I ready to apply the OA Responsibility Pledge?

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

OA Board-approved.

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