

Overeaters Anonymous Seventh-Tradition Skits

The following skits are designed to help OA groups and service bodies foster greater understanding of OA's Seventh Tradition. "What's It Worth?" focuses on how much OA members spent on binge foods before coming to OA. "Wheel of Misfortune" addresses what program would be like without the services provided by member contributions. "A Typical Day" follows an OA member from morning to evening. All skits can be adapted to local situations. By having fun and using humor, your group or service body can help members understand the direct benefits their contributions provide to the Fellowship.



WHAT'S IT WORTH?

Two members are sitting talking over coffee after the meeting.

TRIXIE: You know, I got kind of ticked off today when our intergroup rep said that the Board of Trustees is asking members to increase their Seventh-Tradition contributions at meetings!

DIXIE: You know what surprised me? She said that only 28 percent of OA's income is from contributions—and the rest is from literature sales. She says the Board of Trustees wants us to become less dependent on literature sales.

TRIXIE: Hmmph! What ever became of “no dues or fees?” I don't like being told what to do!

DIXIE: Who do those trustees think we are? Millionaires?

(Enter the ABSTINENCE FAIRY holding a magic wand.)

TRIXIE: Are you our waitress? Can I get another decaf?

AF: Oh my dears, I am The Abstinence Fairy! Has abstinence made your memory faulty? Do you have selective amnesia?

DIXIE: Oh, Abstinence Fairy, what do you mean? My memory's just fine!

TRIXIE: So's mine! My thinking is clearer than ever because my head's not in the food!

AF: OK, my dears, then let's take a little trip down memory lane. We're going back... back... back to the year before you became abstinent, while you were still eating compulsively. We're going to take a look at what your expenses were back then. I'll keep track on my magic flip chart (*make chart appear magically*). Let's review a typical binge, and what it cost you.

TRIXIE: That seems so long ago... Let's see, my last binge was in 2001, and it was a doozie! A typical day of bingeing for me would have looked like this....

(AF writes on flip chart)

Now, I wouldn't eat breakfast.... so that's free. But then I'd have to get a muffin... or two... in the morning. Say, \$3. A Big Mac and fries, \$6. A large shake, \$2.50. Then a bag of chips to get me through the ride back to work, \$1. A can of soda and a candy bar or two from the vending machine at work..... \$4. Oh! If I was lucky, there'd be pastries left over from a meeting in the conference room—freebie!

AF: Let's add that up so far. We're up to about \$15.

DIXIE: And it's only three in the afternoon! I spent at least another \$10 to get from work to bed! That means a typical day of bingeing would cost us at least \$25.

AF: Was that the only day every month that you'd spend like that?

Trixie and Dixie laugh their heads off

DIXIE: Oh, no! We said typical — that was pretty much five days a week —

TRIXIE: — except Mondays of course —

AF: All right. Not counting weekends, and if we don't even count Mondays, that comes up to.... *(she does calculations)* that's 16 times 25.... That comes to.... *(she writes figures)*

TRIXIE AND DIXIE together: \$400 a month!

AF: Not counting weekends and holidays. *(AF flips to clean page; writes "Food: \$400")*

TRIXIE: No wonder I was broke all the time!

AF: Let's look at another way that compulsive eating cost you money. What about your clothes?

DIXIE: I don't even want to talk about that! Every time I went up a size, I swore I would say there and not get any bigger.

TRIXIE: Yeah. I started shopping at thrift stores! I felt so bad about myself, I didn't care how my clothing looked. But it only cost me about \$60 to \$75 a month to keep my body covered.

DIXIE: Wow, I never thought about thrift stores. I was shopping sales and using coupons, and I spent a lot more than you did trying to look halfway decent for work. Weekends I spent in sweatpants and an old tee shirt.

AF: Okay. So would it be fair to say that clothes cost you, let's say conservatively, \$75 a month?

TRIXIE AND DIXIE: *(Shrugging agreement)* Yeah, that's reasonable.

AF: *(Writes: "Clothes, \$75")* Trixie, didn't you do one of those commercial weight-loss programs?

TRIXIE: Oh, don't remind me! That was a nightmare! It got so I used those protein drinks like a cocktail before my main meal! But I was still spending \$60 a month on that nasty stuff.

AF: *(Writes "Weight-loss programs and cost" on the chart)* Any other expenses that you can think of related to your compulsive eating?

DIXIE: Well, I'm embarrassed to admit it... but I went for hypnosis. I was desperate. I'd tried everything and a friend told me about a local therapist who did hypnotherapy for weight loss. I had to go every week and it wasn't covered by my insurance. It cost \$75 a session! That means it cost me \$300 a month! It took a lot of willpower to overcome the hypnotic suggestion to not eat.... but I did!

AF: *(Writes "Hypnotist: \$300 a month")* OK ladies, let's add that up. Food—only four typical days a week—\$400 a month. Clothing: \$75 a month. Weight loss: \$360 a month. That comes out to \$835 each month.

TRIXIE: No wonder I never had any money! I couldn't ever seem to make ends meet.

DIXIE: I even had my car repossessed once when I was compulsively eating. Now I have a savings account, a retirement fund, I don't have any debts. My bills get paid on time.

AF: And do you think that has anything to do with OA?

DIXIE: It has EVERYTHING to do with OA!

TRIXIE: I owe my life to OA!

AF: Well... then don't you think you owe OA some of your money as well? Why were you so generous with your disease, but when OA asks for a little more in the basket, you act as if you couldn't possibly afford to give it? How many meetings do you go to a week?

DIXIE: At least three....

TRIXIE: Three or four.

AF: How much do you throw in the basket?

DIXIE: \$2.

TRIXIE: Depends on if it's before or after Starbucks.

AF: *Writes on board:* \$2 times three meetings, four weeks a month.... Wow! That's \$24 a month!

DIXIE: That's not very much. I spend \$4 a day on a venti latte.

TRIXIE: Nonfat, sugar free!

AF: Think what a difference it would make if every member put in at least one more dollar a meeting. All of OA's activities—supporting members, translating literature into different languages, public awareness, reaching the professional—could happen sooner and better, if more money from contributions was available.

TRIXIE: Maybe giving a little more when the basket comes around isn't such a bad thing.

AF: Your Higher Power would be so proud of you! After all, what is your abstinence worth to you?

DIXIE AND TRIXIE: It's priceless! Thank you, Abstinence Fairy!

WHEEL OF MISFORTUNE

Sleazy game show host and large “wheel” that doesn’t actually spin, marked with “pie” segments marked:

WORLD SERVICE OFFICE 22%
LIFELINE 12%
MEMBER SERVICES 14%
PUBLICATIONS 22%
BOARD OF TRUSTEES 8%
REGION TRUSTEES 2%
BOARD AND CONFERENCE COMMITTEES 2%
WORLD SERVICE BUSINESS CONFERENCE 5%
COST OF GOODS SOLD 13%

(The above figures are accurate for 2008.)

Note to performers: You can ask one or more volunteers to come up and “spin” the wheel, perhaps by asking them to close their eyes and “spin” the wheel so as to randomly select one of the budget segments, or simply ask them to pick one. Whichever segment is chosen, go to that section of the script. At the end of Slim’s reading of the text regarding that segment, when asked if that segment should be eliminated, hopefully the contestant will say “No!” You can either ask one contestant to play the whole game, or invite other volunteers to take a turn.

SLIM TIGHTWAD: Welcome, everyone, to WHEEL OF MISFORTUNE! I’m your host, Slim Tightwad! Everyone wonders: Where does my Seventh-Tradition contribution go? You know how your group spends those precious dollars: to rent your meeting room and buy newcomer packets. You know how your intergroup keeps that meeting list printed and the hotline humming. Your region gives that great convention every year. But what the heck does that World Service Office do with all that money?

Well, let’s get right to our game. We’re going to give each of our lucky contestants the chance to save a lot of money. All you gotta do is spin the Big Wheel of Misfortune and one of these pieces of the World Service so-called budget pie will be eliminated! What a savings! Who needs all this stuff!

Here’s our first contestant:

(Contestant spins wheel: depending on “budget wedge” selected, SLEAZY HOST or ANNOUNCER reads a blurb describing the item)

WORLD SERVICE OFFICE: A whopping 22 percent of the budget, this covers every expense involved in running the World Service Office: utilities, staff salaries and benefits, equipment—including computers, building maintenance, right down to the paper clips and Post-Its.

Let's see what would happen if we just shaved off a little of that 22 percent—let's get rid of the computers. We could save a bunch! No hardware, no software, no consultants—no website! No more online contributions, literature ordering, no downloadable files—forget about worldwide meeting information! Do you want to make your choice final, and eliminate the World Service Office budget?

Contestant says "NO!"

LIFELINE: This accounts for 12 percent of our budget. *Lifeline*, our "meeting between meetings," has been an invaluable recovery aid for our members for years. We could save a lot of money by eliminating it – who needs a meeting in print that you can carry with you anywhere, any time? *Lifeline's* cost of production isn't covered by subscription fees. Who needs that kind of help? Why don't we just get rid of it? Is that where you want to save your money?

Contestant: No!

MEMBER SERVICES: Includes expenses like intergroup mailings, mailings to new groups and secretaries, professional exhibits and kits, public information responses, and group registrations. If member services were eliminated, we could save 14 percent of our expenses! Of course, this would mean getting rid of the three professional exhibits OA is represented at every year; these meetings are attended by over 40,000 health care professionals. But that's OK; surely your region and your intergroup can take care of all that from now on? No?

Contestant: No!

PUBLICATIONS: Ouch! That's 22 percent—our literature catalog, online ordering—and that includes fees for the convenience of using credit cards, shipping, warehousing. Well, who needs it! If we want to save that 22 percent, all we have to do is buy all our literature direct from the printer, store it, sell it and ship it within our regions, intergroups, and groups ourselves! How hard could that be! What do you say—shall we eliminate Publications from our budget?

Contestant: No!

BOARD OF TRUSTEES: Eight percent of your World Service contribution goes to the upkeep of this bunch. Officer expenses, a parliamentarian, transportation and lodging at meetings—plus food, they have to be fed! Want to do without this bunch of layabouts? That's OK, we can hire more professional staff to administer OA World Services—to oversee our finances, to guard the Traditions, do public awareness and professional outreach—we can just amend those Twelve Concepts that provide for trustees to act as servants to OA as a whole. Maybe we can get local volunteers to do it? Do you have eight to ten spare hours a week? No?

Contestant: No!

REGION TRUSTEES: Our link between the board of trustees and the regions. A mere 2 percent! Not much of a cost savings there. Spin again.

BOARD AND CONFERENCE COMMITTEES: Only 2 percent! They develop all our literature; they vet all public awareness activities, oversee our bylaws and policies, plan our conferences and conventions, develop our strategic plan—these committees are the real workhorse of the organization, and they only take 2 percent of the budget? Nah—we don't want to touch this piece of the pie. Spin again!

WORLD SERVICE BUSINESS CONFERENCE: Five percent of our budget is spent on four days a year. That's the expense of bringing the board of trustees; staff expenses; supplies and support of delegates; meeting room expenses; mailing and postage; the parliamentarian. Who needs it? Well, who needs *The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous* book? Conference approved it. Who needs OA in Italy, or Africa, or Australia? Without Conference, we wouldn't be there. Who needs the effective conscience of OA as a whole? We don't need all OA groups to agree on how many Steps to have, or which Traditions we need to follow, do we? Shall we just put a line through that one?

Contestant: No!

COST OF GOODS: That's 13 percent of your money to WSO. Cost of goods sold represents the cost of developing, manufacturing, and delivering to our warehouse OA books, pamphlets, tapes, and other materials available for sale. Do we really need our own literature? Couldn't we just use AA literature, and keep substituting words? Or what about that great book Oprah had last year? I know a publisher in Minnesota that does some nice stuff... Axe it?

OK, OK. I'm convinced. Looks like there are no areas we can eliminate and still be able to carry out our primary purpose: to carry the message of recovery to the compulsive eater who still suffers. Maybe we learned a little about where our Seventh Tradition money goes today. We know that our Fellowship isn't about making profits, or having lots of money on hand, but even though we have no dues or fees, we do have expenses. So the next time you reach a little deeper when the basket comes around, you might feel better knowing that your money is well spent and getting so much done! And then none of us will end up on the

ALL: ...WHEEL... OF ... MISFORTUNE!

A TYPICAL DAY

Scene 1: An OA Meeting

Leader: Our 7th tradition states we are self-supporting through our own contributions. The money is used for rent and literature as well as support for our intergroup, region and our World Service. We will now pass the basket; please give as if your life depends upon it.

[Please insert your local currency where appropriate.]

(As the basket is passed we hear the thoughts of the individuals in the circle.)

Member 1: Here's my \$2.

Member 2: I only have a five and there's not enough change in the basket. I'll put in some next time.

Member 3: I don't have any money with me, so I can't give any. (Takes a long drink from large, Starbucks-like, commercial coffee cup.)

Member 4: I only have some change. I need the rest of my money for when we go to lunch after the meeting.

Member 5: It's the first of the month, here's my check for \$30. I hope it covers my share. When I think of how much I used to spend.....

(Transition)

Scene 2: Various locations

(At stage right is a "tote board." This can be played by a person holding up signs and/or announcing the amounts out loud. At stage left is a "clock." This can also be played by a person who announces the time for each interval.)

Clock: 7:00 AM

(At center stage, Member 5 wakes up, surrounded by piles of empty food packages.)

Member 5: Whoa! Another day and I'm already late for work. Guess I'll have to go to the drive through again for breakfast, since I don't have time to fix anything.

Clock: 7:30 AM

(Sitting in a car at the drive-through window)

Member 5: I'll have two big breakfasts, a breakfast sandwich, and an order of the sweet treats. Also two coffees and two diet cokes. *(Aside)* That should make them think I'm taking breakfast to four people.

Tote Board: Breakfast, \$23

Clock: 8:30 AM

(Arrives at the office, stops at vending machine)

Member 5: I'm going to need some caffeine to keep awake in that meeting. Oh good, they have that energy drink in the giant size!

Tote Board: Sugar beverage, \$3

Clock: 11:00 AM

(Sitting at desk, checks watch)

Member 5: Is it really only 11:00? I'm starving! *(goes back to vending machine)* Ooo, they have those candy bars I really like. I'll get two, one for now and one for after lunch.

Tote Board: Candy, \$3

Clock: 12:30 PM

(Meets Joe, another employee)

Joe: Well where should we go for lunch?

Member 5: Let's go to the Pig Out Buffet – it's all-you-can-eat for \$12.99!

Joe: But the food there sucks!

Member 5: But you get a lot! Anyway, it's fast and I have to be back by two.

Tote Board: Lunch, \$13

Clock: 2:05 PM

(stops at vending machine)

Member 5: I'm already late for that meeting and I'll need another energy drink. I already ate the candy bars I bought this morning so I need another one of those too.

Tote board: More sugar, \$4.50

Clock: 5:00 PM

Member 5: What a horrible day. I definitely deserve a treat. I think I'll visit the Cluck In a Bucket and pick up a family size bucket for dinner. Better stop at the 24/7, too. I ate all my snack foods last night.

Tote Board: Dinner with snacks for later, \$36. Total for the day, \$82.50

(Transition)

Scene 3 – The same OA meeting from scene 1, which is now closing.

All Members: It works when you work it!

Member 3: (to Member 5) How do you like that new 7th tradition slogan – ‘Give as if your life depends on it?’ Guess it's supposed to make us feel guilty and give more. I'll tell you I don't know how OA spends its money, but I think \$2 was more than enough. A person's got to have money for the rest of our lives.

Member 5: Well, I think it's just a reminder that without OA I wouldn't have a life. I know what I used to spend on my disease and I don't put anywhere near that much in the basket. I think of contributing to OA as a part of my recovery. Our job is to carry the message to those who still suffer and it takes money to carry that message outside the walls of our little meeting. Without OA, I might not be alive today - I want that opportunity to be there for others as well. My life does depend on it!

Tote Board: *(perhaps joined by all the other cast members)* OA, Priceless!

Overeaters Anonymous, Inc.
World Service Office
6075 Zenith Court NE, Rio Rancho, New Mexico 87144-6424 USA
Mail address: P.O. Box 44020, Rio Rancho, NM 87174-4020 USA
Tel: 505-891-2664 • Fax: 505-891-4320 • www.oa.org
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