

Use of Non-OA Literature in OA meetings

It has come to my attention that some OA members in my Region have been recommending non-OA literature for use in OA Meetings.

Because of this I felt it was necessary to review why it does not agree with a number of our Traditions when we recommend non-OA Literature for use in our meetings.

One of the recommended items has been the "OA Big Book Study Guide" by Lawrie C. This publication is **not** OA literature. The title itself is confusing, and to a newcomer, they may not realize this. If a meeting is using this publication, it would be a good idea for the group to have a group conscience in order to discuss why the use of non-OA literature is not appropriate.

First only OA literature can be used or promoted at an OA meeting or an OA service Body. Tradition Six is clear that only OA-approved literature be displayed or used at an OA meeting. Use of unapproved literature implies endorsement of the philosophy of the author.

"Whenever an OA meeting displays or sells non-OA-approved literature it implies that OA endorses the philosophy of whoever wrote that piece. OA-approved literature reflects the experience of many members of the Fellowship whose recovery is strongly rooted in the twelve steps and twelve traditions."
(Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous, p. 154)

Members are free to use whatever literature they wish to use for their own personal program, but not in an OA meeting. OA has no opinion on whether this literature is worthwhile or not because it is not OA literature and therefore an outside issue, (Tradition 10).

Tradition Four says 'Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or OA as a whole'. This might suggest that the group can do whatever they want with outside literature. But by doing so, the group is affecting OA as a whole. If an OA member attends the meeting that is using that literature they may get the impression that it is OA literature and therefore by using it, it damages OA as a whole because it is not OA literature.

Clearly this is written by one person, Lawrie C., not the OA fellowship. The fact that his name is on the book does not respect the idea of anonymity, (Tradition Eleven and Twelve).

OA literature is written by the fellowship and reviewed and approved by the fellowship respecting the 12 Steps and Traditions. This puts our common welfare first, (Tradition 1)

The Twelve Traditions help our Overeaters Anonymous meetings stay focused on our primary purpose of carrying the OA message of recovery. They all have an impact on how the meetings work and we often find that using the suggested OA meeting format,

https://www.oa.org/pdfs/suggested_meeting_format.pdf, which includes the Twelve Traditions at our OA meetings help with that focus.

Tradition Five *'Each group has but one primary purpose – to carry its message to the compulsive overeater who still suffers'*. This helps us not to become side tracked and moving away onto other topics. Some of these topics can be very worthy, but if once we allow them, where do we draw the line. The part of the Tradition that is important here is 'to carry its message' meaning Overeaters Anonymous message, not any other. An OA member has many things going on in their lives but if they manage to get to some OA meetings (it maybe just one per week) then we have to keep focused on OA during that time. It isn't a long time.

Use of non-OA literature in OA meetings involves many tradition issues, so it might be helpful at the next group conscience that the meeting format be changed to include studying the Traditions once a month. If members are unreceptive to this idea, Tradition meetings that discuss the Principles behind the Traditions may be helpful.

We have wonderful OA resources on our OA website that focus on the Steps including podcasts on the Steps (a new one is being added each month). The *Step Study Meeting Format* is rich with suggestions and references, plus there is the option of working through the Steps in a closed group using the OA workbook.

A list of all OA-approved literature can be found under literature documents https://www.oa.org/pdfs/oa_approved_literature_list.pdf

If we don't speak up for our Traditions, who will?

I hope this is helpful if this is an issue in your meetings.

In service,

Linda J
Region 5 Trustee

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