

Compulsive Eaters Anonymous - HOW Meditation Meeting Format (rev Aug 2023)

Welcome to the _____ Meeting of Compulsive Eaters Anonymous-HOW. My name is _____, and I am a compulsive eater and the leader for this meeting.

Will you please join me in the Serenity Prayer?

God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and wisdom to know the difference.

Are there any compulsive eaters here beside myself?

Is there anyone here for the first time or any returning members? Please give us your first name so we may get to know you.

Compulsive Eaters Anonymous-HOW is a group of individuals, who, through shared experience and mutual support, are recovering from compulsive eating. We welcome everyone who wants to stop eating compulsively. There are no dues or fees for members; we are self-supporting through our own contributions, neither soliciting nor accepting outside donations. CEA-HOW is not affiliated with any public or private organization, political movement, ideology, or religious doctrine; we take no position on outside issues. Our primary purpose is to abstain from compulsive eating and to carry the message of recovery to those who still suffer.

Will someone please read "How It Works" from the "Big Book" pages 58 & 59? (Optional)

The next four readings can be found in the *Forever Abstinent* book and on the CEA-HOW website.

Will someone please read "The 12 Steps of CEA-HOW"?

Will someone please read "The 12 Traditions"?

Will someone please read "The CEA-HOW Concept"?

Will someone with at least 30 days of back-to-back CEA-HOW abstinence please read "The Seven Tools of CEA-HOW"?

It is suggested in the *12 Steps and 12 Traditions* that we search religious literature for methods of meditation. The following method is one that this Group has found helpful. We do not imply this is the CEA-HOW method or the only way of meditating.

(The Leader or a Volunteer reads the meditation selected for the meeting. The following readings can be found at the end of this format. Note: All readings are based on or directly taken from Conference approved A.A. or CEA-HOW literature. A.A. asks that CEA-HOW does not change the text of their publications, with the exceptions of the Twelve Steps and the Twelve Traditions readings.)

1. Step Ten Meditation, Format page 4
2. Step Eleven Meditation #1, Format pages 5-6
3. Step Eleven Meditation #2, Format page 7-8
4. Step Twelve Meditation, Format page 9
5. Meditation on a Slogan (*Let Go, Let God*), Format page 10
6. Meditation on *Acceptance*, Format page 11

After reading:

This is our meditation time. We will silently meditate for 10 minutes.

We ask you to please make sure your phone is muted. (*After the 10 minutes of meditation*): We ask

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you to take this time to jot down what revelations you had during meditation time.

Now it is time to begin our sharing. We ask that sharing be limited to 3-minute positive pitches to allow as many as possible to share. A pitch is an experience that has helped us grow or given us a new level of awareness. Can I have a volunteer to be Timekeeper?

We ask that no one give advice and please no crosstalk. Crosstalk during a meeting refers to expressing a compliment, commenting on someone's share, any form of disruption, advice giving, or speaking directly to another person rather than to the group. Sharing our own experience, strength and hope and avoiding crosstalk frees us from worry about negative or positive judgment. We further ask that those who share keep to the subject at hand, avoiding outside issues, such as: religious creeds, other 12-step programs (except in passing), or outside literature or philosophies. Remain positive by offering experience, strength, and hope as it relates to CEA-HOW.

Everyone is offered a chance to share provided they have at least 30 days of continuous CEA-HOW abstinence. Those members who have at least 7 days of continuous CEA-HOW abstinence may pitch if their pitching has been discussed with their sponsor.

Seventh Tradition Break (about 10-15 minutes before the end of meeting)

Our **Seventh Tradition** tells us that every group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions. The Seventh tradition is the only source of income to support Phone Bridge operations, sponsorship of retreats, sending Area 10 delegates to represent us at the annual business conference, and spreading the message that there is recovery from compulsive eating. Your contributions are a primary source to help World Service allow "CEA-HOW to continue to function." At phone meetings, we don't pass a literal basket or hat, but we do encourage you to please give generously.

Send your Seventh Tradition donations via check to:

CEA-HOW Bridge Meeting
PO Box 983
Duarte, CA 91010-9998

To make contributions using PAYPAL:

1. Go to www.ceahow.org.
2. Select "Meetings".
3. Click on "Phone Bridge Meetings".
3. Scroll down to the "PAYPAL DONATIONS" tab and follow the prompts.

Does anyone have any CEA-HOW-related announcements, including any open service positions?

To hear a recording of the weekly announcements, you can call [605-475-4849](tel:605-475-4849), access code [605134#](tel:605134#).

You must have a CEA-HOW sponsor to receive the food plan. Sponsors in need of food plans and members needing literature can send an email to phonebridgeliterature@gmail.com.

If you experience any difficulty accessing the conference line, please send an email to phonebridgeassistance@gmail.com.

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To receive a list of member numbers or to be added to the phone bridge outreach list, you can send an email to phonebridgeoutreach@gmail.com. When contacting our Outreach Coordinator, please include your name, phone number and time zone.

If you call a phone bridge meeting listed on the CEA-HOW website and find that the meeting doesn't have a leader or the meeting is not in progress as scheduled, please notify our Meeting Coordinator at phonebridgemeetinginfo@gmail.com.

The next part of the meeting acknowledges CEA-HOW milestones, including moving to a new level of sponsorship or celebrating a CEA-HOW anniversary. Are there any new sponsors? Is anyone celebrating a CEA-HOW Anniversary?

Will all available sponsors please tell us who you are, your abstinent date, weight loss, phone number, and if you are an available Food, Inventory, Step and/or Maintenance Sponsor.

If you are in need of a sponsor, if you become an available sponsor, or if you are no longer available to sponsor, please send an email to phonebridgesponsorcoordinator@gmail.com. When contacting our Sponsor Coordinator, please leave your name, phone number, time zone, and level of sponsor needed or the level that you can provide.

I wish to thank all members who read and shared today. Please remember our cherished 12th Tradition which states: "Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities".

The requirements of CEA-HOW are what this particular group has found to be effective in working this program, and do not represent any other organization or meeting except this one. The opinions expressed here today by those who shared are their own and not necessarily those of CEA-HOW as a whole.

We invite any and all members to stay on the line after the Serenity Prayer at the close of the meeting, to share experience, strength and hope with one another. If any newcomers or returning members have questions, we encourage you to stay on the line to talk with someone after the meeting. May I have a volunteer to stay and talk with newcomers and returning members and to facilitate the exchange of phone numbers?

Will someone please read their choice of "A Vision for You" on page 164 in the "Big Book", "The Promises" on pages 83-84 in the "Big Book", the "Acceptance" paragraph on page 417 in the "Big Book" or the reading "Just for Today"? (Optional)

Thank you the opportunity to lead. My name is _____, and I am a compulsive eater. My phone number is _____. Please adhere to the CEA-HOW traditions in the fellowship time with no mention of outside issues, politics, religions, or other fellowships except in passing.

After a moment of quiet meditation, will those of you who wish to, please join me in the Serenity Prayer.

God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.

STEP TEN MEDITATION

Alcoholics Anonymous, pages 84-85

(A.A. asks that CEA-HOW does not change the text of their publications, with the exception of the Twelve Steps and the Twelve Traditions readings. Leader or Volunteer reads as follows:)

...Step Ten...suggests we continue to take personal inventory and continue to set right any new mistakes as we go along. We vigorously commenced this way of living as we cleaned up the past. We have entered the world of the Spirit. Our next function is to grow in understanding and effectiveness. This is not an overnight matter. It should continue for a lifetime. Continue to watch for selfishness, dishonesty, resentment, and fear. When these crop up, we ask God at once to remove them. We discuss them with someone immediately and make amends quickly if we have harmed anyone. Then we resolutely turn our thoughts to someone we can help. Love and tolerance of others is our code.

And we have ceased fighting anything or anyone—even alcohol. For by this time sanity will have returned. We will seldom be interested in liquor. If tempted, we recoil from it as from a hot flame. We react sanely and normally, and we will find that this has happened automatically. We will see that our new attitude toward liquor has been given us without any thought or effort on our part. It just comes! That is the miracle of it. We are not fighting it, neither are we avoiding temptation. We feel as though we had been placed in a position of neutrality—safe and protected. We have not even sworn off. Instead, the problem has been removed. It does not exist for us. We are neither cocky nor are we afraid. That is our experience. That is how we react so long as we keep in fit spiritual condition.

It is easy to let up on the spiritual program of action and rest on our laurels. We are headed for trouble if we do, for alcohol is a subtle foe. We are not cured of alcoholism. What we really have is a daily reprieve contingent on the maintenance of our spiritual condition. Every day is a day when we must carry the vision of God's will into all of our activities. "How can I best serve Thee—Thy will (not mine) be done." These are thoughts which must go with us constantly. We can exercise our will power along this line all we wish. It is the proper use of the will.

(Reader joins the group in silent meditation. After the meditation, the Reader leads the group in the Serenity Prayer.)

STEP ELEVEN MEDITATION #1

(Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, pages 98-100)

(Leader or Volunteer reads:)

There is a direct linkage among self-examination, meditation, and prayer. Taken separately, these practices can bring much relief and benefit. But when they are logically related and interwoven, the result is an unshakable foundation for life. Now and then we may be granted a glimpse of that ultimate reality which is God's kingdom. And we will be comforted and assured that our own destiny in that realm will be secure for so long as we try, however falteringly, to find and do the will of our own Creator.

As we have seen, self-searching is the means by which we bring new vision, action, and grace to bear upon the dark and negative side of our natures. It is a step in the development of that kind of humility that makes it possible for us to receive God's help. Yet it is only a step. We will want to go further.

We will want the good that is in us all, even in the worst of us, to flower and to grow. Most certainly we shall need bracing air and an abundance of food. But first of all we shall want sunlight; nothing much can grow in the dark. Meditation is our step out into the sun. How, then, shall we meditate?

The actual experience of meditation and prayer across the centuries is, of course, immense. The world's libraries and places of worship are a treasure trove for all seekers. It is to be hoped that every A.A. who has a religious connection which emphasizes meditation will return to the practice of that devotion as never before. But what about the rest of us who, less fortunate, don't even know how to begin?

Well, we might start like this. First let's look at a really good prayer. We won't have far to seek; the great men and women of all religions have left us a wonderful supply. Here let us consider one that is a classic.

Its author was a man who for several hundred years now has been rated as a saint. We won't be biased or scared off by that fact, because although he was not an alcoholic he did, like us, go through the emotional wringer. And as he came out the other side of that painful experience, this prayer was his expression of what he could then seem feel, and wish to become:

(Continue slowly, pausing after each phrase.)

“Lord, make me a channel of thy peace—that where there is hatred, I may bring love—
that where there is wrong, I may bring the spirit of forgiveness—
that where there is discord, I may bring harmony—
that where there is error, I may bring truth—
that where there is doubt, I may bring faith—

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that where there is despair, I may bring hope—
that where there are shadows, I may bring light—
that where there is sadness, I may bring joy.
Lord, grant that I may seek rather to comfort than to be comforted—
to understand than to be understood—
to love than to be loved.
For it is by self-forgetting that one finds.
It is by forgiving that one is forgiven.
It is by dying that one awakens to Eternal Life. Amen.”

As beginners in meditation, we might now reread this prayer several times very slowly, savoring every word and trying to take in the deep meaning of each phrase and idea. It will help if we can drop all resistance to what our friend says. For in meditation, debate has no place. We rest quietly with the thoughts of someone who knows, so that we may experience and learn.

As though lying upon a sunlit beach, let us relax and breathe deeply of the spiritual atmosphere with which the grace of this prayer surrounds us. Let us become willing to partake and be strengthened and lifted up by the sheer spiritual power, beauty, and love of which these magnificent words are the carriers. Let us look now upon the sea and ponder what its mystery is; and let us lift our eyes to the far horizon, beyond which we shall seek all those wonders still unseen.

(Reader repeats the prayer, then joins the group in silent meditation. At the end of the meditation the Reader leads the group in the Serenity Prayer.)

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STEP ELEVEN MEDITATION #2

Alcoholics Anonymous, pages 85-88

(Leader or Volunteer reads:)

Much has already been said about receiving strength, inspiration, and direction from Him who has all knowledge and power. If we have carefully followed directions, we have begun to sense the flow of His Spirit into us. To some extent we have become God-conscious. We have begun to develop this vital sixth sense. But we must go further and that means more action.

Step Eleven suggests prayer and meditation. We shouldn't be shy on this matter of prayer. Better men than we are using it constantly. It works, if we have the proper attitude and work at it. It would be easy to be vague about this matter. Yet, we believe we can make some definite and valuable suggestions.

When we retire at night, we constructively review our day. Were we resentful, selfish, dishonest or afraid? Do we owe an apology? Have we kept something to ourselves which should be discussed with another person at once? Were we kind and loving toward all? What could we have done better? Were we thinking of ourselves most of the time? Or were we thinking of what we could do for others, of what we could pack into the stream of life? But we must be careful not to drift into worry, remorse or morbid reflection, for that would diminish our usefulness to others. After making our review we ask God's forgiveness and inquire what corrective measures should be taken.

On awakening let us think about the twenty-four hours ahead. We consider our plans for the day. Before we begin, we ask God to direct our thinking especially asking that it be divorced from self-pity, dishonest or self-seeking motives. Under these conditions we can employ our mental faculties with assurance, for after all God gave us brains to use. Our thought-life will be placed on a much higher plane when our thinking is cleared of wrong motives.

In thinking about our day we may face indecision. We may not be able to determine which course to take. Here we ask God for inspiration, an intuitive thought or a decision. We relax and take it easy. We don't struggle. We are often surprised how the right answers come after we have tried this for a while. What used to be the hunch or the occasional inspiration gradually becomes a working part of the mind. Being still inexperienced and having just made conscious contact with God, it is not probable that we are going to be inspired at all times. We might pay for this presumption in all sorts of absurd actions and ideas. Nevertheless, we find that our thinking will, as time passes, be more and more on the plane of inspiration. We come to rely on it.

We usually conclude the period of meditation with a prayer that we be shown all through the day what our next step is to be, that we be given whatever we need to take care of such problems. We ask especially for freedom from self-will, and are careful to make no request for ourselves only. We may ask for ourselves, however, if others will be helped. We are careful never to pray for our own selfish ends. Many of us have wasted a lot of time doing that and it doesn't work. You can

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easily see why.

If circumstances warrant we ask our wives or friends to join us in morning meditation. If we belong to a religious denomination which requires a definite morning devotion, we attend to that also. If not members of religious bodies, we sometimes select and memorize a few set prayers which emphasize the principles we have been discussing. There are many helpful books also. Suggestions about these may be obtained from one's priest, minister, or rabbi. Be quick to see where religious people are right. Make use of what they offer.

As we go through the day we pause, when agitated or doubtful, and ask for the right thought or action. We constantly remind ourselves we are no longer running the show, humbly saying to ourselves many times each day, "Thy will be done." We are then in much less danger of excitement, fear, anger, worry, self-pity, or foolish decisions. We become much more efficient. We do not tire so easily, for we are not burning up energy foolishly as we did when we were trying to arrange life to suit ourselves.

It works—it really does.

(Reader joins the group in silent meditation. After the meditation, the Reader leads the group in the Serenity Prayer.)

STEP TWELVE MEDITATION

(Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, pages 124-125)

(A.A. asks that CEA-HOW does not change the text of their publications, with the exception of the Twelve Steps and the Twelve Traditions readings. Leader or Volunteer reads:)

...Today, in well-matured A.A.'s, ...distorted drives have been restored to something like their true purpose and direction. We no longer strive to dominate or rule those about us in order to gain self-importance. We no longer seek fame and honor in order to be praised. When by devoted service to family, friends, business, or community we attract widespread affection and are sometimes singled out for posts of greater responsibility and trust, we try to be humbly grateful and exert ourselves the more in a spirit of love and service. True leadership, we find, depends upon able example and not upon vain displays of power or glory.

Still more wonderful is the feeling that we do not have to be specially distinguished among our fellows in order to be useful and profoundly happy. Not many of us can be leaders of prominence, nor do we wish to be. Service, gladly rendered, obligations squarely met, troubles well accepted or solved with God's help, the knowledge that at home or in the world outside we are partners in a common effort, the well-understood fact that in God's sight all human beings are important, the proof that love freely given surely brings a full return, the certainty that we are no longer isolated and alone in self-constructed prisons, the surety that we need no longer be square pegs in round holes but can fit and belong in God's scheme of things—these are the permanent and legitimate satisfactions of right living for which no amount of pomp and circumstance, no heap of material possessions could possibly be substitutes. True ambition is not what we thought it was. True ambition is the deep desire to live usefully and walk humbly under the grace of God....

...We are problem people who have found a way up and out, and who wish to share our knowledge of that way with all who can use it. For it is only by accepting and solving our problems that we can begin to get right with ourselves and with the world about us, and with Him who presides over us all. Understanding is the key to right principles and attitudes, and right action is the key to good living; therefore, the joy of good living is the theme of A.A.'s Twelfth Step.

With each passing day of our lives, may every one of us sense more deeply the inner meaning of A.A.'s simple prayer:

God grant us the serenity to accept the things we cannot change,
Courage to change the things we can
And wisdom to know the difference.

(Reader joins group in silent meditation. At the end of the meditation, Reader leads the group in the Serenity Prayer.)

MEDITATION ON A SLOGAN: LET GO, LET GOD

*(Based on Step Three, “Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of
God as we understood Him.”)*

(Leader or Volunteer reads very slowly, pausing in the blanks between phrases:)

Sit comfortably in your chair with both feet on the floor, back straight and hands folded loosely in your lap. Then gently and easily close your eyes, breathe deeply and center down into the quiet stillness. Float. Do not strain. Relax completely as you fall away into the depths. *(Pause...a few seconds)*

After centering call gently and effortlessly to mind the words, “LET GO, LET GOD.” Saying “Let go”..... on the exhale. “Let God”.....on the inhale. Do not think; Do not try; do not make an effort. Let the focal words slide easily and effortlessly into your consciousness; then quietly slide beyond it into the wordless depths. Don’t clutch or concentrate on the words. Flow into their presence and around them and into the quiet stillness. *(Pause.....)*

Once into the depths you will notice that you will often float back up to more superficial levels of consciousness. When this happens, after a time up there, gently take another dive into the deep. In the depths you will be released from stresses, grudges, fears and uptightness. You may have thoughts of all kinds. Don’t try to stop, corral or control them. Just watch them float by. In the depths of your tranquility you may have a heightened awareness of all going on around you without any of it disturbing the deep fluid peace in which you float. Since you are in touch with the silent and Living Source, something like a membrane may break and you will feel a surge of new energy flow from the depths until it permeates your whole being. You will be able to accept God’s will, whatever that may be.

(Reader joins group in silent meditation. After the meditation Reader leads the group in the Serenity Prayer.)

MEDITATION ON “ACCEPTANCE”

Alcoholics Anonymous, p. 417 Fourth Edition

(A.A. asks that CEA-HOW does not change the text of their publications, with the exception of the Twelve Steps and the Twelve Traditions readings. Leader or Volunteer reads:)

And acceptance is the answer to *all* my problems today. When I am disturbed, it is because I find some person, place, thing or situation—some fact of my life—unacceptable to me, and I can find no serenity until I accept that person, place, thing or situation as being exactly the way it is supposed to be at this moment. Nothing, absolutely nothing happens in God’s world by mistake. Until I could accept my alcoholism, I could not stay abstinent; unless I accept life completely on life’s terms, I cannot be happy. I need to concentrate not so much on what needs to be changed in the world as on what needs to be changed in me and in my attitudes.

Shakespeare said, “All the world’s a stage, all the men and women merely players.” He forgot to mention that I was the chief critic. I was always able to see the flaw in every person, every situation. And I was always glad to point it out, because I knew you wanted perfection, just as I did. A.A. and acceptance have taught me that there is a bit of good in the worst of us and a bit of bad in the best of us; that we are all children of God and we each have a right to be here. When I complain about me or about you, I am complaining about God’s handiwork. I am saying that I know better than God.

For years, I was sure the worst thing that could happen to a nice person like me would be that I would turn out to be an alcoholic. Today, I find it’s the best thing that ever happened to me. This proves I don’t know what’s good for me. And if I don’t know what’s good for me, then I don’t know what’s good or bad for you or for anyone. So I’m better off if I don’t give advice, don’t figure I know what’s best, and just accept life on life’s terms, as it is today—especially my own life, as it actually is. Before AA, I judged myself by my intentions, while the world was judging me by my actions.

(Reader joins the group in silent meditation. At the end of the meditation, Reader leads the group in the Serenity Prayer.)