

Surrender School Step Study

Work the steps using a “Study Guide for Overeaters”

Introduction – [Pages 2-3](#) and Video [Session A](#)

Step One – [Pages 4-14](#) and Video [Session B](#)

SET ASIDE PRAYER

God, please set aside everything I think I know about myself, my emotional sobriety, the 12 Steps and You; for an open mind and a new experience of myself, my emotional sobriety, the 12 Steps and especially You!

LINK:

<https://surrenderschool.org/wt-s-usingastudyguide/>

Password: **Surrender2023!**



Step Study (Aug 27, 2023 – Nov 12, 2023)

Session A: Introduction to the Step Study: 8/27/2023

1. Read the [Study Guide](#) pages 2-3 (Introduction)
2. Watch the [video for Session A](#).

Session B: Step One: 9/3/2023

1. Read the [Study Guide \(Step One\)](#), pages 4-14
2. Optional Homework:
 - Read: Alcoholics Anonymous (*Big Book*) "[The Doctor's Opinion](#)"
 - Read: *Big Book* "[Bill's Story](#)," pages 1-8
 - Read: *Big Book* "[There is a Solution](#)"
 - Read: *Big Book* "[More About Alcoholism](#)"
 - Listen to these *OA Podcasts/videos on Step One*.
 - [Step 1](#): by Kara L. from *A Design for Living*
 - [Step One](#): from *Overeaters Anonymous: "The Importance of Working All Twelve Steps"* podcast series
 - [The Doctor's Opinion](#) by Sean B. from *Greater New York Metro Intergroup*
 - [More about Alcoholism](#) by Bob R
3. Watch [video for Session B](#).

Introduction – [Pages 2-3](#) and Video [Session A](#)

This Step Study

Those of you familiar with the well-known AA team of Joe and Charlie will recognize much of what I say here, although I base this study on my own experience, of course.

Virtually all of this step study is based on what I have learned from the great AA speakers, Joe and Charlie, Roger, and Blaine D. from Winnipeg, Canada, and a lot of reading of AA history and experience. I don't think much of what I have to say is particularly original. I therefore want to acknowledge the teachings of AA and of those who have given their time and effort and experience to convey the message of recovery to those who still suffer.

The Big Book

OA stands for the proposition that the Twelve Steps give us freedom from the bondage of food. If the steps aren't working for you, then maybe you're not working the steps in a way that works for you. It might therefore be worth it to try the approach to the steps used in this step study, based on the Big Book.

The Big Book was written as a set of directions for doing the steps. It was aimed at those people who would not be able to meet anyone from AA, because at the time it was published AA was centered in New York City, and Akron and Cleveland, Ohio. So the Big Book was written as a do-it-yourself manual. As such it is a textbook—a book which contains valuable information to compulsive eaters.

Introduction – [Pages 2-3](#) and Video [Session A](#)

The basic outline of the Big Book's discussion of the Steps is as follows:

- Step One: "The Doctor's Opinion", part of Chapter One, "Bill's Story", most of Chapter Two, "There Is A Solution", and Chapter Three, "More About Alcoholism".
- Step Two: part of Chapter One, "Bill's Story", part of Chapter Two, "There Is A Solution", Chapter Four, "We Agnostics".
- Step Three: part of Chapter Five, "How It Works".
- Step Four: part of Chapter Five, "How It Works".

- Steps Five, Six, Seven, Eight, Nine, Ten, and Eleven: Chapter Six, "Into Action".
- Step Twelve: Chapter Seven, "Working With Others", and part of Chapter Eleven, "A Vision For You". Chapters Eight, "To The Wives", Nine, "The Family Afterward", and Ten, "To Employers", can also be read as containing discussions of Step Twelve, but I won't be dealing with them in any great detail.

Why use the Big Book directions?

If the way you work the steps has given you the recovery described by the Big Book, then why would you switch?

If, however, you are not free from the bondage of food, if food at times becomes attractive to you, if you're really white-knuckling it, then why not try the Big Book directions? They're guaranteed!

Step One – [Pages 4-14](#) and Video [Session B](#)

Step One

“We admitted we were powerless over alcohol—that our lives had become unmanageable.”

Step One – [Pages 4-14](#) and Video [Session B](#)

Step One, Part One—the Allergy of the Body:

Put simply, we have (1) an abnormality of the body (he called it an “allergy of the body”) which means that once we start eating certain kinds of foods or indulging in certain compulsive eating behaviors we develop cravings which overpower us; and we have (2) an abnormality of the mind (he called it a “mental obsession”) which means that even if we stop eating those foods or indulging in those behaviors, our mind persuades us that we can return to eating those foods and indulging in those behaviors.

[Video Link:](#)
[1:11 - 2:21](#)

Step One – [Pages 4-14](#) and Video [Session B](#)

Thus we can't stop once we start (the allergy that creates cravings), and we can't stop from starting again (the obsession that sends us back). We are thus in a vicious circle. That is the explanation for yo-yo dieting, and for all the despair that we bring to OA when we join.

Step One – [Pages 4-14](#) and Video [Session B](#)

[Video Link: 3:18 - 4:00](#)

It's often said that alcoholics can stop drinking but OAers can't stop eating. From the Big Book perspective, that isn't correct. Alcoholics have to drink, but they can't drink alcohol. OAers have to eat, but they can't eat the foods or indulge in the eating behaviors that create the cravings.

Step One – [Pages 4-14](#) and Video [Session B](#)

My Problem:

The Physical Allergy:

An allergy is an abnormal physical reaction to something. In my case, it's my binge foods and my binge eating behaviors. Once I start eating my binge food or indulging in my binge eating behaviors, I find it almost impossible to stop eating it.

Step One – [Pages 4-14](#) and Video [Session B](#)

The Mental Obsession:

An obsession is an idea which takes control over all other ideas. In my case, if I've stopped eating my binge foods or indulging in my binge eating behaviors, my mental obsession gives me reasons to go back to eat the binge foods or indulge in my binge eating behaviors.

My problem in a nutshell—the addict's dilemma:

I can't stop once I've started. And I can't stop from starting again.

[Video Link: 2:37](#)

Step One – [Pages 4-14](#) and Video [Session B](#)

[Video Link:](#)
[1:11 - 3:20](#)

SESSION B:
2023 STEP STUDY

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Step One – [Pages 4-14](#) and Video [Session B](#)

[Video Link: 7:31](#)

The phenomenon of craving:

What is this phenomenon of craving?

A phenomenon is an unexplained occurrence. It is something that happens for which we don't have a clear explanation. We can describe it. We just don't know why it happens.

The phenomenon of craving is a craving that can't be explained. It just happens. There may be biological reasons for the craving, and we know that there's a lot of research on why some people become binge-eaters. But the concept of the phenomenon of craving puts the emphasis not on explaining it, but on making it obvious and powerful. What "the phenomenon of craving" describes is an overpowering urge for more and more.

Step One – [Pages 4-14](#) and Video [Session B](#)

AA's Big Book- [Page xxviii - xxix](#)

We believe, and so suggested a few years ago, that the action of alcohol on these chronic alcoholics is a manifestation of an allergy; that the phenomenon of craving is limited to this class and never occurs in the average temperate drinker. These allergic types can never safely use alcohol in any form at all;

Men and women drink essentially because they like the effect produced by alcohol. The sensation is so elusive that, while they admit it is injurious, they cannot after a time differentiate the true from the false. To them, their alcoholic life seems the only normal one. They are restless, irritable and discontented, unless they can again experience the sense of ease and comfort which comes at once by taking a few drinks—

Step One – [Pages 4-14](#) and Video [Session B](#)

[Video Link - 8:31 - 9:17](#)

SESSION B:
2023 STEP STUDY

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Questions!

What are my stories of overeating/Food Addiction?

Do I have the equivalent of a gallon of icecream, or a goose skin, a huge bag of potato chips, the whole container of cookies, or eating at times or in ways that normal people wouldn't eat?

Step One, Part One—Developing a Plan of Eating:

[Video Link: 13:30](#)

The topic of this chapter comes from Dr. Silkworth in *The Doctor's Opinion*. He says: "Of course an alcoholic ought to be freed from his physical craving for liquor". The Big Book takes sobriety for granted.

No one attends AA thinking that he or she is going to continue drinking while working the steps. You stop drinking. You do anything to stop drinking, even if it means going to three or four meetings a day. And you work the steps.

Step One, Part One—Developing a Plan of Eating:

[Video Link: 14:18](#)

What about us in OA? Is that OA's message—that we stop compulsive eating, do anything to stop eating compulsively (even if means going to as many meetings as we can, and phoning as many people as we can, and reading as much literature as we can), and work the steps? It should be.

We have to stop our craving, and the only way to stop the craving is to stop eating foods that cause our craving. (We also have to stop the eating behaviors that cause our cravings, and I discuss that below.) Our Dignity of Choice pamphlet makes that perfectly clear.

Step One, Part One—Developing a Plan of Eating – (Page 7-9)

1. Abstain from individual binge foods. (Page 7) – [Video – 17:36](#)

What are the foods that I consistently overeat when I have the chance to eat them?

What are the foods that I hunch over, hoarding, eating incessantly, blissing out?

2. Abstain from individual binge ingredients. (Page 7) – [Video - 18:47](#)

I asked myself whether there was a common ingredient in those foods, and if so, whether the presence of that common ingredient seemed to be a problem for me in general

3. Abstain from individual binge eating behaviors. (Page 8) [Video – 19:29](#)

What eating behaviors was I indulging in that caused me to eat too much of healthy foods?

4. Continue to be honest and careful. (Page 9) – [Video – 21:48](#)

The lesson I take from this experience is that it's important always to be honest and vigilant, and not to relax in the program. It's easy to relax; we lose a lot of weight and feel better, and then we reach a plateau. It's important to be honest to see if that plateau is a reasonable plateau!

5. The individual's plan of eating. (Page 9) – [Video – 23:30](#)

Each person finds his or her own way to find a plan of eating that works for him or her. There's no magic to it. We eliminate foods and eating behaviors that cause cravings...

Step One – [Pages 4-14](#) and Video [Session B](#)

Step One, Part Two—the Obsession of the Mind:

[Video Link: 27:23](#)

If our only problem were that we get physical cravings that overwhelm us, there would be a simple solution, when you think about it: just don't eat those foods or indulge in those eating behaviors; everything would be fine. In effect, that's what we did when we went on diets.

Step One – [Pages 4-14](#) and Video [Session B](#)

Our real problem, as the Big Book points out, is that we keep finding excuses to go back to those foods and those eating behaviors:

*These observations would be academic and pointless if our friend never took the first drink, thereby setting the terrible cycle in motion. **Therefore, the main problem of the alcoholic centers in his mind, rather than in his body.** (pages 22-23 of the Big Book)*

Step One – [Pages 4-14](#) and Video [Session B](#)

Why do we keep going back? What gets us to eat the first bite?

Well, one thing that's obvious is that virtually every diet and every book on losing weight, and many doctors and dietitians and nutritionists whom we consult, all seem to say that once we have lost our weight, we can go back to eating ALL the foods we used to eat, but this time immoderation! It's just a matter of will power, or maybe they phrase it as won't power. They can't imagine why we would eat in large quantities again.

[Video Link: 29:13](#)

Step One – [Pages 4-14](#) and Video [Session B](#)

[Video Link: 34:38](#)

The Double Whammy:

The first part of our addiction is that we are powerless over food—we get uncontrollable physical cravings when we eat certain foods or indulge in certain eating behaviors. This is the allergy of the body.

The second part is that we can't manage our lives in relation to our powerlessness over food—we get mental obsessions that send us back to those foods and those eating behaviors that we know will cause us the uncontrollable cravings. This is the obsession of the mind.

Protected: Work the Steps using a "Study Guide for Overeaters"

This step study uses *A Study Guide for Overeaters* (available free from oabigbook.info).

This guide is one compulsive overeater's interpretation of the Big Book's direction for working the steps.

***Important Notice:** This study will be recorded in video/audio format and will be made available on the Surrender School website. To preserve the anonymity of the speaker at the public media level, please do not share the URL of this video on social media.

Need Zoom Instructions for this Step Study – [Click Here.](#)

Join our Homework Group: [Register Here.](#) You will get Zoom Instructions Immediately.

LINK:

<https://surrenderschool.org/wt-s-usingastudyguide/>

Password: **Surrender2023!**

Session C: Step Two: 9/10/2023

1. Read the *Study Guide (Step Two)*, pages 15-19
2. Optional Homework:
 - Watch the *video of Step 2 Session C: Homework* and *view the slide show.*
 - Read: *Big Book "Bill's Story,"* pages 9-16
 - Read: *Big Book "We Agnostics"*
 - Listen to these *OA Podcasts on Step Two.*
 - *Step 2* by Mellisa C. from *A Design for Living*
 - *Step Two* from *Overeaters Anonymous: "The Importance of Working All Twelve Steps"* podcast series
 - *Bill's Story by AD4L* from *A Design for Living*
 - *We Agnostics: Step 2* by Lawrie C. from *Choose Your Own Conception: OA Big Book Study*
3. Watch *video for Session C*

SERENITY PRAYER

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