

# **SPEAKERS GUIDELINES**

## **PLEASE DO:**

- Reveal only your first name and explain why OA members remain anonymous.
- Explain that although you are here to represent OA, you speak only from your own experience, and do not speak for OA as a whole.
- Explain the tools of recovery.
- Explain the Twelve Steps and how they guide the individual to recovery on three levels: physical, emotional and spiritual.
- Talk about recovery and how you use the Twelve Steps to live abstinently.
- Explain the Twelve Traditions and their purpose of protecting the unity of the Fellowship.
- Remember OA's amateur standing. We are not professionals and offer no medical, nutritional or psychological advice.
- Explain that the only requirement for membership is a desire to stop eating compulsively.
- Explain that no dues or fees are required.
- Relax — you wouldn't have been asked to speak if you weren't capable.
- Thank everyone for the opportunity to share.

Presentations are better received when negativity is avoided. The following guidelines have been found to be very important.

## **PLEASE DON'T:**

- Talk down to a group or use profane or vulgar language.
- Use clinical or psychological terms. Also avoid program jargon.
- Argue or debate. Just say that OA takes no sides on outside issues (this includes nutrition).
- Give a prolonged binge-a-log.
- Make any negative remarks about a facility, its program or staff.
- Criticize another program or food plan. They can use whatever food plan they wish.
- Use names of specific professionals, institutions, hospitals, diet or nutritional products, etc.
- Give information about therapists, church attendance, exercise programs, self-help books, metaphysics, etc. Although these things may have been supportive and crucial to your personal interpretation of recovery, they are not part of the OA message. Think about what message you are sending to the newcomer.

Adapted from the Speakers Instructions in the HIPM manual.