

## **Planning Your Elevator Speech**

An elevator speech is a specific way to prepare ahead for an unexpected opportunity to carry the message. It can also be a way to share your experience in an encounter with a health care professional, or with someone who asks about your physical recovery. These opportunities happen all the time, but they are hard to act on unless we are prepared and comfortable with what we want to say. The idea is to write and practice a short speech ahead of time so you are ready when the opportunity arises. We think it probably won't really happen in an elevator – it's just the idea of it being very brief.

What are the elements of a an Elevator Speech \*not necessarily in this order:

1. State you are a member.
2. Explain what OA is.
3. Explain what It has done for you – how it has helped you, how your life has changed.

EXAMPLE: I had no control over my food, my weight, and my life. I tried everything. I had lost hope and thought it was always going to be this way. But I started going to OA, which is like AA but for people with eating disorders. I learned about Compulsive Overeating and heard stories of others that gave me hope and changed everything. Now I have a healthier relationship with food and am maintaining a healthy weight.

How do I create one?

1. Work on your own feelings about doing this to be ready.
2. Get clear about what you want your message to be. That can be vastly different from person to person. The message could be different based on what form your disease takes.
3. Jot down bullet points.
4. Try saying it out loud as if you were talking to a friend.
5. Write it down and practice again, adjust until it is what you want it to be.

OK, this is a really brief introduction to this process, but we hope you can see it doesn't have to be complicated. It just takes some thought and practice ahead of time. It's a way to get comfortable with introducing your story. Ideally, you will memorize it. Once you have it, we suggest carrying in your purse or wallet. If needed you could bring it out before an encounter to remind yourself about it.

Another example of an Elevator Speech

Vivian R.

I was overweight a good portion of my life. I always felt awkward and out of place. I felt like I didn't fit in. I thought everything would be okay, if only I lost weight. I tried lots of diets and exercise programs. I paid to join programs that taught me about nutrition and moderation. They offered coaching, encouragement and guidance. I should have had everything I needed to be successful. But I couldn't stop eating. I gave up on having a better life. I was in despair. Then I heard about OA. I met people who talked about eating the way I did. I felt like I fit in. OA has helped me to find a balance in my life and in my eating. I'd love to tell you all about it if you are interested.