

SOCIETY PAGES

THE NEWSLETTER OF UNITY
INTERGROUP OFFERING EXPERIENCE,
STRENGTH, AND HOPE

APRIL 2004

Step Four

Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves

Keep it Simple

Who cares about character defects when you're still compulsively eating? I didn't. I ate my way through my first several 4th step inventories. I approached them like big, burdensome research papers and never really got to the bottom of any root causes because as soon as I uncovered any glaring truths about myself, I ran back to the food.

What helped me was first getting and following a food plan that was balanced and designed for my body. Then as the fog lifted, I could begin to see the benefits of beginning this lifetime practice of searching out my biggest character flaws, not to beat myself up but to move forward in life. To have peace. To learn to live in harmony with others.

“Nearly every serious emotional problem can be seen as a case of misdirected instinct” (AA 12 & 12 p 42). Yikes! Those are powerful words. I would like to be rid of my emotional problems so it makes sense to get at these misdirected instincts. When we do this “the sense of relief at finally facing

ourselves is indescribable” (AA 12 & 12 p. 50).

My sponsor gave me a time limit and I chipped away at it each day by filling out those handy 4th step sheets. I was encouraged to simply do it and not try to be perfect. We set a time for my 5th step and before I knew it, I was done. Gone are my thoughts that step 4 is a big, bad, research paper. It is a glorious beginning of a new way of life. It begins a lifetime practice that helps me learn “to be a friend among friends, to be a worker among workers, to be a useful member of society.” (AA 12 & 12 p. 53)

I want sobriety and peace of mind. I will be on my way to having these things if I make it a practice to face myself in the step 4 process.

—Laura E.

I did it with help

Like most people, I struggled with my 4th Step. I kept asking, “What exactly do they mean by ‘resentment?’” The most helpful piece of advice was, anything that bothers me goes on my 4th Step; anything that has bothered me and I want to let it go but can't, goes on my 4th Step; anything that I think about over and over which takes up room in my mind, goes on my 4th Step; and if I think something is resolved but still keep thinking about it, that goes on my 4th Step too. Finally, if I'm not sure if something belongs on my 4th Step, I write it down anyway.

I cannot do a 4th Step by myself. I was powerless to work on and complete the 4th Step

when I was doing it alone. I couldn't do it as much as I couldn't relieve myself of compulsive overeating. First, I learned I needed God's intervention. I needed His presence, His guidance in helping me be as thoroughly honest as possible. My Higher Power would carry me where I couldn't dare walk alone. Secondly, I needed to reach out for help from my sponsor, who had gone through this before me. Having a sponsor was invaluable in this process. Third, I had to be willing to reach out to my other fellows for help and support in this journey. Others had worked this Step and hadn't died. I could work this Step and not die also. One small step at a time. Fourth, I learned my perfectionism was keeping me from moving on with the step. I would wrack my brain wondering if I was thorough, was I working deeply enough? I had to trust if I asked Higher Power for help, my Higher Power would help me. Period. No doubt. I didn't have to worry. I was taking an inventory of myself. I wasn't going to do a perfect job. What was required of me was to be fearless and thorough, as fearless and thorough as I can be, to the best of my ability. I was asked to take stock of myself, and to ask, what were my characteristics?

I found it was a relief and blessing to complete my 4th Step. The process continues for me. I simply was not able to see all the characteristics about myself at the time I did my 4th Step. As I continue to work this program, my Higher Power shows me glimpses of myself I was unable to admit before. That's the glorious part of this program; that today I don't have to become defensive or push the glimpses away. Instead, I pause, ask myself if it's true, and say to myself, "This is a part of me. Yes, I am like this. I don't like it, but this is me." The other glorious thing about this program is sharing this with others. They understand. Awareness is the beginning of change.

~Aida R.

Farmington is On!

The annual OA Farmington retreat IS going to happen thanks to a committed group of OA'ers who are organizing it!

“Many Symptoms – One Solution”

OA Farmington Retreat

July 23 – 25, 2004

Mount Olivet Retreat Center

7984 257th Street West

Farmington, MN 55024

952-469-2175

OA does outreach at St. Paul Women's Expo

Thank you to all the volunteers who staffed the Overeater's Anonymous booth at the St. Paul Women's Expo! We had a great showing of OA members, who shared their experience, strength and hope with visitors. The Expo was held the weekend of March 13th and 14th. Volunteers committed to two-hour shifts, and their job was to attend the Expo and be a presence at the OA booth, to hand out OA literature and talk with people who visited the booth.

Quite a few people stopped at the booth and we had the pleasure of giving them free pamphlets which explained what we do, and how we do it. We were also able to distribute meeting location lists, and information about the Newcomer meeting, which introduces the newcomer to the basics of the 12-step program. It was a lot of fun, and we encourage anyone who wants to volunteer for upcoming similar events to do so. It's great to spend a few hours with other recovering compulsive overeaters, and to have the incredible privilege of speaking with newcomers about what we were like, what happened, and what we're like today.

Thanks again to all the people who made this possible by giving part of their weekend to spread the word that there is a solution! ~Robin B. and Unity Intergroup Outreach Committee

Unity makes outreach commitments

The Unity Outreach Committee recommended at the March Unity Intergroup meeting that OA participate annually at the Minneapolis Women's Expo, St. Paul Women's Expo, and Gay Pride. Unity Intergroup unanimously approved the recommendation.

Each of these events offer an opportunity to reach thousands of suffering compulsive overeaters, some of whom have never had any exposure to Overeaters Anonymous. Having our presence at these events helps not only the person who stops for information at the booth, but also the person who walks by and sees the display with our name on it. You never know when a seed is being planted.

Our primary purpose is to abstain from compulsive overeating and to carry this message of recovery to those who still suffer. (OA Preamble

-Kristie M.
Unity Outreach Chair

The Program Works Long Distance

Hi. My name is Tara, a grateful recovering compulsive overeater. I am writing from my home in British Columbia, Canada. I call Minnesota every day, several times a day, to work the program. I've never been there and I've never known anyone from there. Until now.

I have been in and out of OA since 1989, always in small, struggling meetings. Today I live in a place where there are no OA meetings at all. How is it that I am abstinent, in maintenance, and living the promises of this program? Well, I had to hit rock bottom, get out of my own way, and squash the "yeah buts" that whirled around my head and got me nowhere.

I went on line and found a sponsor in Washington State. Thus began daily calls to the States, initially at 32 cents per minute. My sponsor required this of me. She told me I would be acting on *faith* (what a novel concept!), that my HP would not have helped me to find the sponsor I'd always been looking for (an abstinent one!) just to say, "Sorry, I'm not taking you any further."

That was April 12th, 2003. Was I scared? You bet. Did I think I was worth the added expense, the hefty phone bills? No, not really. But what else was I going to do? Have a nervous breakdown? Die? I

chose to plunge in to this program, once and for all, one day at a time.

By chance, I hooked up with someone in Minnesota in October. I was introduced to a more rigorous program. Eventually I let go of my old sponsor and got a new one in Minnesota. Was I scared? You bet. This was even *further* away, a different time zone. But I knew I needed more than what that first sponsor was able to give me. I listened to my HP and started over with someone 2000 miles away in Minnesota. Today is day 84 for me of working an even more structured program than I'd been working for 8 and a half months. What a blessing. The emotional and spiritual growth I have experienced in this short period astound me.

I am so grateful no one coddled me and said, "You poor dear, never mind about the calls, you can skip that part of the program." These calls are *crucial* to my recovery, perhaps more so because I am isolated. Although I must say that I have learned, through personal experience, that I can isolate in a place like Toronto, too, where they have big OA meetings. I know. I went to one once during the two years I lived there. If I lived in Minneapolis/St. Paul and wasn't at bottom, I wouldn't go to any lengths there, either.

What do I do about meetings? I go to two other 12-Step meetings a week. Would I prefer OA? You bet. Am I grateful I have options? Yes. Going to these meetings makes me feel alive -- I am reaching out, I am breaking my isolation, I am forming fellowship with these people, I am saying, *I cannot do this alone*.

I have been told that this is the meat of the program - doing what I don't want to do and not doing what I want to do. Left to my own devices, I wouldn't call long distance to the States every day. Left to my own devices, I would be 100 pounds heavier than I am today, possibly in a mental hospital, divorced, and miserable. The possibilities are endless!

Living in fear and self-pity no longer work for me. I must use *all* the tools of the program, not just the ones that are convenient for me. The key of willingness has opened the door to recovery for me, and a chance to put my hand in yours and do what I tried and tried to do on my own but could not.

There is a solution, no matter where you are, no matter what your circumstances.

Thank you for doing this with me. I'll be calling.

Tara,
BC, Canada

MINNESOTA OVEREATERS ANONYMOUS
ANNUAL CONVENTION

November 5 - 7, 2004

Minneapolis North Hilton Hotel

2200 Freeway Blvd.

Brooklyn Center, Minnesota

“There is a Solution . . . ”

*National and local speakers will share their recovery
throughout the convention.*

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Registration forms will be mailed in mid-

August

Registration:

Call Barb N. 763-434-7260

barbjnyhammer@usfamily.net

Volunteer opportunities:

Call Eileen 651-688-9373

Call Cheryl 651-786-0461

Partial scholarships available:

Call Etta, 763-560-3493/email: ettawith@aol.com

Convention Schedule

Friday, November 5

On-site registration begins - 5:30 p.m.

Program - 7:30 - 9:30 p.m.

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Saturday, November 6

On-site registration begins - 8:00 a.m.

Program - 9:15 a.m. - 9:00 p.m.

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Sunday, November 7

Program - 8:30 a.m. – Noon

Night Owl and Early Bird OA Meetings

Since the Buffalo Retreat happened on the same weekend as the newsletter deadline, we will have a report on the retreat in May!

Group Contributions to Unity

February

Saturday early am, St. Clements...\$480.00

Monday pm, Minneapolis....\$203.66

Tuesday pm, Shoreview...\$72.00

Saturday am, Macalaster....\$120.00

Monday pm, Anoka...\$60.00

March

Thursday pm, Burnsville....\$25.00

Saturday am, Minneapolis...\$25.00

Saturday am, Golden Valley...\$60.00

Sunday pm, Hopkins...\$120.00

Monday pm, St. Paul...\$220.00

Monday pm, Elk River...\$38.00

Saturday am, Eden Prairie...\$165.00

Monday pm, Lynnhurst, Mpls...\$30.00

Monday pm, Walker, Mpls...\$32.08

Wednesday am, Rochester....\$107.86

How to contact OA:

Twin Cities: 612-377-1600

Toll free 888-540-1212

Unity: www overeaters.org

Region: www.oaregion4.org;

World: www.oa.org.

(Each month, Society Pages features a step. In May, it will be Step Five, “Admitted to God, to ourselves and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.”

Please send your submissions to

pmarsicano100@hotmail.com. Deadline is May 7th).