

Society Pages

***The newsletter of Unity Intergroup
Offering experience, strength, and
hope***

February 2004

(Each month, *Society Pages* will feature a step. In March we'll feature Step Three..."Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him."

Submission deadline: March 5th to
pmarsicano100@hotmail.com)

Step Two

Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity

I have finally surrendered

Where am I at today with the Second Step? Today Step Two is a breath of fresh air. It is a promise of what is to come. I now work this step at depth like my life depends on it, because it does.

I have been in OA for many, many years, and I have said these words before several times. Yet never before have I ever believed and trusted that none but a higher power could restore me to sanity and relieve me of my obsession.

I had to get to the point in my disease where my life was so unmanageable and so painful. I felt like I was living one great big lie and I had no idea how to get out.

I was scared to death and I felt so alone. I continued to go to meetings terrified to tell the truth. My ego was running the show. It was at this point that I hit my bottom. I was defeated. I was hopeless, so hopeless I knew it was time for me to try this rigid crazy group that I had been hearing so much about. I could no longer

shut my eyes to the incredible results I was observing in a few of my friends that were attending these meetings. I was in too much pain, my marriage was in danger, and my parenting was motivated by fear and control. I needed help. I needed to stop fighting and to stop all the arguing.

I went to my first meeting and it was in these rooms that I have finally surrendered. I have just begun to let go of my old life and beliefs and move forward into a new way of living.

I am currently using the group as my Higher Power while I rebuild my relationship with the God of my understanding. I am relieved of my desire to compulsively overeat, and my life is being transformed, as is my faith in God.

I have a huge community to lean on, and teach me about true humility through ego reduction, in depth step work, and service. I watch the many others that walk before me in recovery and I see them "...calmly accept impossible situations, seeking neither to run nor recriminate..."

I am beginning to rely more on God and defy Him less, and I am willing to go to any lengths to right my will to His.

As a result of working Step Two I am being led to a faith that works under all conditions. For this I am truly grateful.

-Anonymous

I turned to God

"No man we saw, could believe in God and defy Him, too. Belief meant reliance, not defiance." (Page 31 in AA Twelve and Twelve)

Before I began my current OA recovery, I did defy God, in fact I shook my fist at Him. My faith then did not fully trust God. I only called on Him when I was in trouble; because food I thought I could control.

I knew God was my higher power, I let Him handle the big stuff; but food, no one was going to get between me and my food.

It was only after I admitted that I was powerless over food and my life had become unmanageable that I turned to God.

But this time I let Him fully out of the box and fully into my life. I came to believe and trust Him to restore me to sanity, peace of mind and an abundant life in Him.

Now my unbounded belief in Him has meant reliance on His will, not mine for my life. Defiance separated me from God but reliance brought me back to Him.

- Mary Ellen

I HAD TO TRUST

My moment of first coming to believe that a power greater than myself could restore me to sanity was like a burning bush experience for me. I had been sober for 6 years but I was heavily engrossed in a gambling addiction as well as my compulsive overeating disorder. I ended up in a jail cell after ignoring many requests and finally a court order because I was driving on an illegal license. I was a chronic abuser of driving without insurance. One day the police came to my apartment, handcuffed me and took me down to jail. It was that night in a jail cell at about 3 in the morning after a bed check where I came to believe that a power greater than myself could restore me to sanity. There I was in an orange suit, in a jail cell and it occurred to me that sober people do not end up in jail and they do not wear orange suits. That moment, which was 3 years ago, was a turning point for me. I came to believe that in order for me to get out of my crisis-filled life I would have surrender to anything but myself to relieve me.

I got clean from gambling after I got out of jail. Two years later I walked into the doors of OA. I was 90 pounds heavier than I am today. I first surrendered my food addiction by weighing and measuring my food and became willing to go to any lengths

to stay abstinent. I had to trust that anything was better than my will running the show. So when my sponsor said I should call three other people in the program every day, I did it. When my sponsor said to weigh and measure all of my food, I did it. When she told me to call her every morning at 6:15, I did it. When I did all these things that were most definitely not of my own will, my life started to get better. What I realized is that even if my sponsor was dead wrong, it was better than me trying to take over and run the show.

My history had proved over and over that my being in the driver's seat did not work for me. I continually come to believe that a higher power can restore me to sanity on a daily basis. When my mind starts to wander into self absorbed thinking or self centered fear, I have to, right then and there, ask my higher power to redirect my thinking and trust that my higher power is doing for me what I could never do for myself.

- Sue W.E.

I HAVE A CONNECTION

I hated hearing about God when I first came into OA. After all, I came to OA because I was fat, not to hear about God. I knew I wouldn't believe in God, I knew I couldn't believe in God, In fact, I knew I really shouldn't believe in God. God had disappeared from my life long ago. God had done me wrong by not letting me eat what I wanted and making me thin. I had prayed countless times for God to help me with food. "God, please don't let me overeat again! You have to stop me! Hey wait! There's leftover pizza in the refrigerator. Hmm...I wonder how much?" Then I was off and running. The problem was that I never took any action. I wanted

God to stop me, but I didn't truly want to stop eating. I wanted my life to change, but I didn't want to do any necessary footwork to change it. It's a little like praying not to run out of gas and never stopping at the gas station.

I finally got to the point where I realized if I wanted things to change, I was going to have to take some action. I had no idea what or who my Higher Power was and I didn't need to know. Taking Step 1 meant I put down the food so I could stop hearing pizza call out to me and start becoming clear enough to hear my Higher Power speak through other people. I first heard my Higher Power through my sponsor. Then I heard my Higher Power through other people in my group. Eventually, I came to believe in my own interpretation of a Higher Power, my very own personal Higher Power.

Today I connect with that HP on a daily basis. I pray on my knees every morning because I want to remain humbled by my addiction. I can't forget that I'm a compulsive overeater. I have extreme gratitude today that I am free from excess weight, the desire to take that first compulsive bite, and obsessive thoughts about food. I have a connection to a power greater than myself. I may not always know what God's plan is for me, and today, I don't need to know. What I do know is that if God can remove my obsession for food, God can do anything! -K.M.

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TO LET SOMEONE ELSE HELP ME

In the AA Big Book on page five it states, "Food ceased to be a luxury, it became a necessity." That was how it was for me before

I finally put the food down with the help of a power greater than myself.

I remember those nights of sitting in my efficiency apartment; curtains drawn, phone turned off, in my comfortable stretchy clothes, binge food in hand and the television on. There I would begin my journey into oblivion. Then when I was done I would vow never to do it again. I would start the next day with high resolve only to make it until lunch, if I was lucky, and then I would be back into the food again. The sugar hangover had worn off, my belly was not so stuffed with food and the reality of life, along with the feelings, were all in front of me. That was absolutely too much for me to take, so I ate.

My binges kept getting closer and closer together, with little if any abstinent periods in between. Usually, I would have some fight before going into the convenience store to buy my binge foods, but now the fight was pretty much gone. I just couldn't stop eating. I needed that food like I needed air to breathe. If I didn't have "my food," I felt as though I couldn't function. It was the thing that was helping me make it through the day and through life in general, so I thought. I was relying only on myself to conquer this disease of compulsive overeating all by myself. And as you can see, it wasn't working very well at all. My binge foods consisted of sugar, white flour, and high fat foods along with volume. But, by this time, I could binge on anything, even fruit. It really didn't matter.

So what happened? Well, I started a program that helped show me how to put the food down. I didn't realize that I needed to get abstinent before I could start seeing the miracles of the steps. It's pretty hard to believe in something outside myself if I'm still drunk with food.

In the AA 12x12, Step 2 states, "...you can, if you wish, make AA itself your higher power. Here's a very large group of people who have solved their alcohol problem. In this respect they are certainly a power greater than you, who have not even come close to a solution. Surely you can have faith in them. Even this minimum of faith will be enough." And so it began for me. I obviously was not

working with any type of solution and the abstinent people I saw and heard at the meeting had what I wanted. So I let go of my self reliance and relied on the belief that they had found a solution and that meant I could too. I didn't know how I would be able to do it or why what they were doing worked, but I knew I was miserable and needed something. The old ways of asking god for what I wanted just didn't work because I was still trying to run the show. So I just sat and listened, followed directions and hoped a solution would come.

And it surely did. It also states in the 12/12 on step 2, that "...all of them will tell you that, once across, their faith broadened and deepened. Relieved of the alcohol obsession, their lives unaccountably transformed, they came to believe in a Higher Power, and most of them began to talk of God." As I started to have faith in something outside myself I was able to have some abstinence and with that, my faith began to deepen. I started seeing that it was a relief to not be in control and to let someone else help me make decisions and take the huge load off my shoulders, which I had been carrying most of my life.

Today, that is one of the biggest gifts and miracles this program has brought to me. I no longer have the desire to be in charge anymore, and I welcome the opportunity to turn it over to others and to God. So in part of my daily routine, I ask myself what God's will is for me each day and to have God's will, not mine, be done. Amen. - Dawn S.

I HAD NOWHERE ELSE TO GO

I struggled with this step for a long time – trying to figure out what my higher power was and how this power acted in my life. If insanity was doing the same destructive, insane thing and expecting a different result – I was insane – especially around food. I could not get it under “control”. I tried everything – diets like Weight Watchers, Nutra System, Optifast, Atkins, gray sheet, -- what every was the fad of the day. I lost hundreds of pounds and of course gained hundreds of pounds. My

problem was not losing weight – I was very good at it. My problem was gaining weight.

In the Dr.'s Opinion in the BB of Alcoholics Anonymous it describes this as an allergy of the body and an obsession of the mind. I tried to beat this dynamic duo for 20 years using “will power”, dieting, etc. I was and am an active member of OA. I read all the literature and would pick and choose what I wanted to believe about myself. I did not want to believe I was a Real Compulsive Overeater. I was different. I was unique. I could do it my way and I convinced myself that it might work this time – the controlled eating. My disease is progressive – and fatal. And it was progressing at a rapid rate. My willingness to find a God of my understanding was an intellectual exercise – always in my head – never in my heart. My prayers were of the begging and bargaining variety always when I was desperate and in trouble and as soon as the crises had passed and the fear had been put under with food, I would forget about God until the next countless vain attempt had failed.

After years of this insanity I could no longer “diet” – I was truly powerless and had nowhere else to go but to a God of my understanding. In the beginning, all I had to realize about God was that it was not I. I saw something working in the lives of others that I wanted. I prayed for willingness to get through one day – no begging –no bargaining – just the willingness to do what I was told by those who had what I wanted. I experienced that one day, and getting that one day made me a believer.

I was at the point where I could not get from my a.m. promise to myself to the kitchen. Nothing I tried worked any longer. But my humble prayer for willingness was answered and it has been answered every day for 2years and 2 months. As my willingness grows, my recovery grows. I have found something I could not have imagined – not only weight loss, which I have experienced before, but freedom from obsession, which I had never experienced before.

As this new and tentative relationship with a Higher Power grew and evolved, I grew and evolved. The AA 12x12 tells me that the

depth of my recovery is directly related to the depth of my willingness – my willingness to put down the food (because that's where it all starts), my willingness to clean house, to make amends, and my willingness to work with other suffering compulsive overeaters, even my willingness to work these principles in all my affairs – with my family, friends and co-workers.

My life has changed. I am a different person. I am a recovered compulsive overeater one meal at a time – one day at a time and if this amazing thing can happen for me, it can happen for you.

~Peace in Recovery, Sharon S.

I FINALLY ASKED FOR HELP

I remember the day when I finally put aside my false pride and asked for help. I came to my group and admitted that I was out of tricks. I finally understood that there was no diet club out there that might have the answer to my problem. There was no hope in my mind of being able to control my eating and my weight. I was out of options. I was out of control. Having admitted this to myself, finally, I was able to ask for help. I'd been begging God for years for help. I'd been praying, and I thought, surrendering to my Higher Power. What I hadn't done however, was surrender to the OA program, and the people in my fellowship. This was when things changed for me.

I came to my fellowship and I asked a sponsor to help me and then I started making phone calls and asking my fellow OA's to help me. I came to believe that a power greater than myself, the power of the OA community, could restore me to sanity. And that is what's happening.

My fellowship teaches me and nurtures me and lends me the power to follow a food plan. It lends me the power to get and stay abstinent one day at a time.

It lends me the power to face my character defects and deal with relationships that used to baffle and confuse me. I found out I needed

people to hold me up so my Higher Power could heal me. -Anonymous

I HAVE A LIFE JACKET

As I sit in the waiting room while my son sees a doctor for a serious condition, I'm tempted to flounder in fear, in this big ocean of unknowing. When I still the voice of fear I realize that I have a life jacket on. I am safe. Whatever happens with my son, God will be there to sustain me. I will stay afloat. Not only will I not sink in fear, but God will help me to be of maximum usefulness and maximum helpfulness to my son at this time.

How did I come to believe that a power greater than myself could restore me to sanity, not only with the food but in all areas of my life? Over 15 months ago, I came to a meeting and I saw recovery. A small seed of hope was planted, it they could find recovery, so might I.

One day at a time I did what they did. I followed a food plan and began to work the steps in all my affairs. One day at a time I came to know that just for that day, a power greater than me could restore me to sanity. I am grateful.

~An abstinent mom

No Human Power

I spent more than two decades trying to find recovery in OA before I experienced the miracle of freedom from food obsession. For almost two years, I have lived without taking that first compulsive bite---and what's even more of a miracle-- without wanting to! Hard-core food addict that I am, this is a REAL miracle.

In the past I was able to practice controlled eating for up to six months (but more often, not for more than a day or two), then somehow I would always lose

control, unable to resist the compulsion to drown out pain and problems through oblivion eating. I know it is a Higher Power that has made this possible, because I know where is no way in the world that I could have removed my food obsession. While I've experienced short periods of controlled eating, I have *never* been able to free myself with that constant and consuming obsession with food.

'Miracle' was not even a word I used until I experienced a recovery I knew no human power could have brought about. I don't understand how that Power works. I don't have a name for it, except "the God of my understanding." For me, this Power is not related to any religious doctrine. The amazing thing is that I found this Power can work miracles in my life without my understanding what it is, or even understanding how this is accomplished. I only know it's true, because my life is living proof. I'm living the miracle I had given up believing was possible.

When I finally became willing to surrender everything to a Higher Power, I didn't know if that Power could ---or would---really help me kick a food addiction that was as much a part of me as my hands and legs. It seemed impossible. I had quit believing long ago that abstinence could be forever. I have discovered that recovery can be permanent, one day at a time. My experience and my faith in a Higher Power have given me this conviction. It

couldn't happen until I gave up the food for real, and became willing to follow the directions of a sponsor and others who were living free of this demoralizing disease and its destructive effects.

After I really put down the food, I was able to work all the Steps at depth, and I began experiencing transformation in every area of my life. Those transforming changes just keep happening as I keep living in the solution first in my life---before family, career, friends, and my own way. I hardly recognize myself---and the physical recovery [I'm maintaining a 63-pound weight loss for the first time in my life, and I'm 58 years old], and the profound changes in who I *am* inside, and the way I live life now. Those changes are awesome to me, and it's clear without a doubt that God is doing for me what I have never been able to do for myself. Grab hold of the Solution! It begins with coming to believe.

~Victoria V.

NEW O.A./H.O.W. MEETING

WHERE: *Our Saviour's Lutheran Church
9185 Lexington Avenue North
Circle Pines, MN*

WHEN: *Sat. Morning 8-10:00 AM
February 28, 2004 (first meeting)*

QUESTIONS: *Sheryl 651-786-0461
Suzanne M. 763-754-6310*

OA Carries Message at Women's Expo

In January, OA volunteers sowed seeds of recovery at the Cub Women's Expo held at the Minneapolis Convention Center. We shared our experience, strength, and hope with folks (mostly women) who stopped by our booth to learn more about us. We passed out our literature, answered questions, and shared our stories. We plan to participate in the St. Paul Women's Expo in March. OA Information Line: 612-377-1600. - Annette R. Cub Women's Expo Chair

This year's Minnesota State Overeaters Anonymous Convention is scheduled for November 5th, 6th, and 7th 2004 at the Minneapolis Hilton Hotel North. Mark your calendars!

***Overeaters Anonymous 2004 Retreat
April 2-4 2004
Christ the King Retreat Center
621 First Avenue North, Buffalo, Minnesota
55302***

***Registration:
\$125 after February 15th***

~Includes two night's lodging and five meals. Scholarships available.

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In January, Intergroup representatives elected the following OA members to the Unity Intergroup Board:

Chair: Etta W. was elected to a second one-year term. Her home group is Saturday morning Golden Valley.

Vice Chair: Sharon S. was elected for a one-year term. Sharon's home group is Friday night St. Paul.

Treasurer: Sharon R. was elected for a one-year term. Sharon's home group is Wednesday night St. Louis Park.

Peggy B. was elected Secretary for a one-year term. Peggy's home group is Wednesday night St. Louis Park.

We thank you all for your service!

Hello fellow OA'ers! My name is Patty M., compulsive overeater, and the new *Society Pages* editor. My home group is Wednesday night St. Louis Park. I've been a regular member of OA since 1997, my current abstinence is 2 ½ years and I'm maintaining a 117-pound weight loss. I humbly succeed our editor Cynthia who did a magnificent job!

Please email your newsletter submissions to:

pmarsicano100@hotmail.com

In Recovery and Service,
Patty M.

January Group Contributions

Saturday a.m. Mendota Heights.....\$19.50
Sunday p.m. St. Louis Park.....\$180.00
Tuesday a.m. Roseville.....\$10.00
Tuesday p.m. Eagan.....\$60.00
Saturday a.m. Roseville.....\$60.00
Saturday a.m. St. Paul.....\$540.00
Friday noon Minnetonka.....\$69.93
Monday Minnetonka.....\$108.00
Friday noon Minnetonka.....\$87.40
Wednesday a.m. Minneapolis.....\$42.00
Friday p.m. St. Paul.....\$120.00

Society Pages is now available by subscription for individuals outside of the Unity Intergroup! (Groups within the Unity Intergroup will continue to receive enough copies for all members). ***Society Pages*** one-year subscription for \$6.00.

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