

Society Pages

The newsletter of Unity
Intergroup

Sharing experience, strength,
and hope

June 2004

(The opinions expressed are those of the writers and do not represent OA as a whole)

Step Six

*Were entirely ready to have God
remove all these defects of character*

Simple Instructions

I find the instructions for doing Step 6 in the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous, on page 76, where it asks “Are we now ready to have God remove all the things we have admitted are objectionable?” For me, the “things” they are referring to are the character defects that came to the surface in step five – selfishness, self-seeking, dishonesty, and fear. Why do I admit that these characteristics are “objectionable?” Because they will drive down my serenity and lead me back to the food. It’s that simple.

All I have to do is ask myself if I’m willing to have the God of my

understanding remove these. I simply say “yes” right away to this question. I don’t think about it. I don’t wait until I’m “willing.” I can’t afford the luxury of that kind of time –because my addiction will catch up with me. *Saying* I’m willing helps bring my willingness into fruition.

Recently, I had a resentment come up at work. I came home that night and wrote down the specifics of the resentment (Step 4), gave it away to a program person (Step 5), and then said, “Yes I’m willing to have these character defects removed” (Step 6). Then, I moved quickly to Steps 7 through 9, which amounted to changing my attitude and going into work the next day ready to be a productive, positive employee. No one at my office had harmed me in any way – it was my attitude that was the problem. The next day at work went *so* much better because I had used the steps using the Big Book method, including Step 6.

For me, Step 6 is fast, it’s simple, and it works.

-Anonymous

OA at Pride!

Hey all you OA’ers – here’s your chance to get out there and do some 12-stepping! The OA Unity Intergroup is sponsoring an outreach booth at the 2004 Gay Pride festival in Minneapolis. It’s

our chance to carry the message of recovery to those who still suffer. Unity has decided that the Pride event will be one of the three major outreach events we will sponsor each year. Come and donate a couple of hours at the booth – ALL OA'ers are welcome and encouraged to participate!

For more information, call Kevin at 612-237-6209.

***World Service Business Conference:
Unity and Diversity in Recovery***

More than 200 delegates from the United States and around the world converged on Albuquerque, N.M. in the last week of April to reaffirm some basic concepts about Overeaters Anonymous and map bold new strategies to reach out to the still suffering compulsive overeater.

The mood was thoroughly upbeat at the 43rd annual World Service Business Conference, which took the step—after four years of discussion and debate—to approve a new pamphlet entitled “Dignity of Choice” that will include a half dozen sample food plans for newcomers to OA. The carefully worded pamphlet underscores that OA endorses no food plan.

The conference, which met from April 26 to May 1, 2004, also voted

to begin registering OA groups that have sprung up across the Internet in recent years. Delegates were told that the online meetings have become a source of strength for compulsive overeaters who live too far from a community to attend a meeting regularly, or are housebound because of illness. The online meetings have also served as an introduction for some people, who have later begun attending meetings. With the Internet becoming such a central part of our lives, the value of our work in this area cannot be underestimated.

The theme of the conference was “Unity—Together We Can!” and many speakers talked about the wide variety of different programs we follow to maintain our abstinence, but the necessity of OA members to work together to support our international, regional and local efforts.

As a first-time attendee at a world conference, that theme struck a chord with me. I attend a HOW meeting in the Twin Cities and was not sure what I would find at an international OA conference. What I found were people who participate in a wide variety of OA programs, many of which were different from HOW, who are abstinent and doing just fine. I discovered that my program was not the only way. It works for me, but other models work as well. And I also found that folks in these

programs welcomed and embraced me, knowing that I come from a HOW background. It seems to me that there was a very open-minded approach by OA delegates, staff and trustees.

A substantial number of delegates were newcomers. So that we did not get lost in the crowd, the conference has a very pro-active program to help us get integrated, with mentors available for all first time delegates. And there was plenty to learn. There were meetings every day from early morning to late at night, which included OA meetings, morning, noon and night where people could share.

The world conference is open to visitors, but this annual event is a business meeting—where programmatic ideas are hammered out, and much discussion centers on ideas for reaching out to compulsive overeaters. I participated in a committee that is devoted to developing new literature designed to attract more people to OA. The conference also spent a fair amount of time crafting by-law changes aimed at improving our work. It also included sessions devoted to hearing from candidates for OA's Board of Trustees followed by elections of the trustees.

While the bulk of the delegates came from the United States, there was

also significant representation from many other countries including Canada, Mexico, Central and South America, Europe, Asia, Africa and Australia. Each session began with the serenity prayer in a different foreign language, as well as in English. At the first session delegates stood one by one, as their states and nations were called out. As the elected representative from the Unity Intergroup in the Twin Cities, I proudly stood when Minnesota's name was called.

The "Dignity of Choice" pamphlet has been discussed at World Service Conferences since 2000, and has gone through numerous debates and revisions. The general consensus among delegates was that the latest version was far and away the best. The pamphlet begins with the 12 Steps and a brief explanation of Overeaters Anonymous and talks about compulsive overeating. It spells out the first step--admitting powerlessness over food. It then talks about a plan of eating and abstinence, and observes that, "A plan, however, is only the beginning. No matter how good our plan of eating is and how supportive our meetings and OA friends are, we will experience lasting recovery only if we work the Twelve Steps." After some debate, the pamphlet was approved by a more than 3 to 1 vote.

I was impressed by the democratic nature of the conference proceedings. A professional parliamentarian helped the conference chair make fair rulings, and a longtime OA member who has great knowledge of conference rules served as an impartial counselor to delegates who wanted to make a motion, offer an amendment or take other action on the convention floor. It made it possible for all delegates, be they longtime members or first-timers, to participate in the convention and raise issues as needed.

Rozanne S., the co-founder of OA, stressed the need for unity in an address to the conference on the session's final day, May 1, noting that as the years passed, "We began to understand that together we could do what we could never do alone."

Rozanne quoted from the OA Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, noting that in Tradition One, the book states, "Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon OA unity." The book stated, "The unity of OA is a matter of life and death to us. However, unity isn't always easy to maintain. OA members come from diverse backgrounds, and in meetings we sometimes encounter people very different from us in their approaches to recovery." She continued to quote from the book: "Unity does not mean uniformity. In OA we learn we can

disagree with other people on important issues and still be supportive friends. We listen to others with open minds, and we learn to express ourselves without insisting that everyone must do this our way. As we practice these new skills, we begin to better understand ourselves and others. It becomes easier to find a way of doing things which meet everybody's needs.

She said that as she read through the AA Big Book and the OA books, "it became clear to me that our Conference theme is really in two parts. Tradition One spells out our first part, the necessity for our all-important unity. Tradition Five and Step Twelve describe the second part, carrying the message of recovery to another compulsive overeater."

Rozanne continued: "Our personal recovery depends on OA unity. We are not alone. We are connected to our fellow human beings. We must rejoice in our diversity, celebrate our many local and worldwide backgrounds, yet recognize that our shared illness brings us together on our common path to recovery."

As a member of the conference literature committee, I have spent some time since the convention reading the various pamphlets and brochures that the World Service publishes. I am impressed by the

quality of the material, so much of which is aimed at the still suffering compulsive overeater and the new OA member. The conference underscored for me the value of the OA World Service. With a worldwide epidemic of obesity and so many people suffering from compulsive overeating and other eating disorders, it is terrific that we have a professional, national organization committed to our recovery work.

The World Service Business Conference also helped me understand the value of our Intergroups and the regional structure. Each region supports the work of OA nationally as well as our work locally. Minnesota is a member of Region IV, which is holding a regional convention in Omaha, Nebraska July 9 to 11. I encourage anyone who can to consider attending this convention. You can download a flyer with full information on the convention by going to www.oaregion4.org/regionconv2004.doc

You can also learn more about the world organization by going to www.oa.org

-Randy F.
WSBC Delegate

Farmington Retreat!

July 23-25, 2004

**Mount Olivet Retreat Center
Speakers, small group
sessions included**

Price break before June 20th

Contact: Jason 952-942-2903

Sarah L. 612-929-1211

Minnesota OA State Convention

November 5, 6, 7, 2004

Mpls North Hilton

Registration:

Barb N: 763-434-7260

Partial Scholarships:

Etta 763-560-3493

To Volunteer:

Eileen 651-688-9373

Sheryl 651-786-0461

Big Book Study Weekend

Aug. 13th, 14th, 15th

*Audubon Center of The North
Woods, Sandstone, Minnesota*

\$120.00 by July 15th

\$130.00 after July 15th

(Sorry, no refunds)

Registration Deadline: Aug. 10th

Led by a recovered OA from Canada

For more information:

Wanda B. 218-724-1726

Becky N. bnorlien@lakenet.com

May 2004 Contributions

Brooklyn Center, Tues pm...\$102.00
La Crosse Mon/Wed...\$55.00
La Crosse groups also contributed
\$50.00 in January 2004

Unity also received a contribution
from this year's Buffalo Retreat in
the amount of \$976.28.

*Society Pages is now available by
subscription for individuals outside
of the Unity Intergroup region.*

One year subscription = \$6.00

*Please print your name, address, and
zip code, along with a check payable
to Unity Intergroup (with Society
Pages in the memo section) to:*

*Sheila Hyde
311 First Street NE
New Prague, MN 56071-1821*

Each month, *Society Pages* features a
step. In July, we will feature Step
Seven, "Humbly asked Him to
remove our shortcomings." Send
your Step Seven submissions to
pmarsicano100@hotmail.com.
Deadline is Friday, July 2nd, 2004.

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