

## ***Society Pages***

The newsletter of Unity  
Intergroup offering experience,  
strength, and hope

March 2004

(Each month, Society Pages will feature a step. In April, we'll feature Step Four "Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves. Deadline for submissions is April 9th to [pmarsicano100@hotmail.com](mailto:pmarsicano100@hotmail.com))

### ***Step Three***

"Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him."

#### **It's not up to me**

When I first became abstinent and began to work the steps, I found myself tripping over step 3. We hear constantly when confronted with disturbance, "Turn it over, you have to turn it over to God." Great advice, but I didn't know what it meant, much less how to do it. I heard step 3 as, "Turned our will and lives over to the care of God as we understood Him." Misunderstanding this step and my role in carrying it out only caused delay and frustration as I sought to lay down my will and my anorexia at God's feet.

It wasn't until a Big Book retreat that I truly heard the vital key words of this step that I had been missing and that would end up making all the difference in my ability to complete it. "Made a decision." This was not an

action step. We as humans do not have the ability to turn our problems, addictions, trials, hurts, and brokenness over to God. We make a decision to allow Him to release us from our chains—our bondage of self. And miraculously, He does.

What a relief it was to me to finally understand what I did and did not have to do to comply with this step. I do not remove my problems and hand them to God. This is not within my capability. The AA 12x12 states, "...it appears there are certain things which only the individual can do. All by himself, and in the light of his own circumstances, he needs to develop the quality of willingness, he is the only one who can make the decision to exert himself." That is my job--to be willing and to exert myself along the path God would dictate so that He can enter in and set me free.

I have nearly a year and a half of abstinence and find my need to work this step as present today as it was in my first 90 days. But today I see my limitations and I have to accept that I cannot free myself of whatever is plaguing my life. So I spend less time trying. Instead of struggling and pursuing the dead-end path of self-sufficiency, I take to my knees. I do not ask that God would remove my trial—I tried that with food and it didn't work. Instead I ask that He would make me willing to release my grip and allow Him full access to that area of my life. He will remold me and my heart as He sees fit and in His timeline. "It is when we try to make our will conform with God's that we begin to use it rightly" (AA 12x12 p.40)  
Jacki C.

### *Literature gives direction*

Step 3 in the AA 12 & 12 is the first place that I saw the term "emotional binge." This is the OA equivalent of what AA's call a "dry drunk." Symptoms of a dry drunk can include anger, depression & resentment.

There are many, many places in the AA & OA literature that mention the danger of anger and resentment. Some of these are:

"Anger and resentment are common manifestations of our disease. In fact, most of us ate compulsively when we felt anger or resentment." (OA 12 & 12 p 38).

"Resentment is the 'number one' offender. It destroys more [compulsive overeaters] than anything else. From it stem all forms of spiritual disease..." (BB p 64)

"Self-righteous anger also can be very enjoyable\*for it brings a comfortable feeling of superiority." (AA12&12 p 67)

"If we were to live, we had to be free of anger" (BB p 66)

"...when we harbored grudges we were really beating ourselves with the club of anger" (AA 12&12 p 47)

"We must avoid quick-tempered criticism and furious, power-driven argument. The same goes for sulking or silent scorn" (AA 12 & 12 p 91)

"In our [overeating] days we were prone to anger, hostility, rebellion and aggression. And even though we are now abstinent, the old patterns of behavior are to a degree still with us, always threatening to explode on any good excuse." (12 Concepts p 68)

I have a difficult time knowing when I am angry. I rarely explode or participate in a "furious, power-driven argument." My anger is generally more silent, and usually takes the form of holding grudges, sulking and silent (or not-so-silent) scorn. My anger is quieter, but it is anger none-the-less.

When my "old patterns of behavior explode," I am in an emotional binge. The biggest symptom of an emotional binge for me is self-pity, which can lead me into, or worsen, my depression. When I am "in a funk," my sponsor may make suggestions for me to follow in order to move on to a better place. My response to these suggestions (whether verbal or not) can be "BUT I DON'T WANT TO!"

(Imagine these words said with a six-year-old's whine!) This is a sure sign that I have taken my will back and I am in an emotional binge.

Daily making the decision to turn my will over to my Higher Power keeps me out of self-pity. It keeps me from having an emotional binge, which will then help keep me on the path to recovery and a spirit-filled life. So for me, being in recovery means that daily, I must make the decision to look for direction from the Universal Spirit and be willing to follow that direction.

In the AA 12 & 12, Step 3 ends with "God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference. Thy will, not mine, be done."

-Anonymous

### An important decision

I had been struggling with my recovery not lasting more than anywhere from two hours to two weeks, and not recovering because I was not willing to completely turn my will and life to God. I still wanted some control.

On Christmas morning I felt it was time to surrender my life and will To God and that I would be willing to go to any lengths to keep my abstinence just for that day and I would face every day as it came my way. By the Grace of God, who is my Higher Power, I have been abstinent since that day, and the obsession has been lifted one day at a time. I realize that it took my decision to turn my will and life over to God, and that I must make this decision every morning and throughout the day. I am happy to also report the physical recovery has been unbelievable and it hasn't been a struggle because I am no longer in control. I pray for daily direction from my Higher Power, who is God. ~Milagro

**OA Region IV Convention 2004  
"Our Primary Purpose" July 9<sup>th</sup>,  
10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, 2004 Omaha,  
Nebraska**

**Ask your meeting group representative for more details on this outstanding convention! Many meetings and Intergroups are represented at this convention.**

SPRING INTO ACTION!

**Overeaters Anonymous 2004  
Retreat April 2-4 2004**

Christ the King Retreat Center, 621 First  
Avenue North, Buffalo, Minnesota 55302

Deadline for registration is March 21.  
Registration is \$125.00 which includes two  
night's lodging, and five meals total  
Saturday/Sunday.

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**OA Travel Tips: Abstinence is  
Portable!!!**

I had the good fortune to travel in Europe  
last fall. Here's what I did to keep  
rigorously abstinent while traveling!

#1 - I traveled with a companion that has  
a commitment to my recovery and who  
has a sense of humor.

#2 - In my carry-on bag, I brought the  
tools necessary to maintain my abstinence.  
For me, that included a food scale,  
measuring cups and measuring spoons. In  
my luggage I brought a couple of sets of  
heavy-duty plastic forks and spoons, larger  
zip lock bags, and a small can opener. I  
put a small folding knife and a carrot  
peeler because I like my carrots to be  
aesthetically pleasing. I had absolutely no  
problems at security checkpoints.

#3 - I brought my complete meals for at  
least the first two days on my carry-on. I  
had no problem bringing fruit, vegetables,  
starch and a few canned goods in my  
carry-on or in my checked bag. While  
traveling to Europe, two days get  
telescoped into one long day, so I spaced  
out my meals to fit my needs.

#4 - As I checked into hotels, I inquired  
at the front desk about the nearest  
supermarket. I got specific directions, and  
the store was usually just a block or two  
away. I needed to get to the store so that I  
could augment the food I had already  
brought with me. I brought some protein  
(tuna and salmon come in foil packs and I  
read the ingredients first), and some starch  
(lots of rye crisp crackers and some  
canned cooked wild rice). In our daily  
foray into the supermarket (some of the  
best learning of the trip) I often bought a  
large bottle of water, a bag of carrots,  
fresh fruit and/or tomatoes, sausage and  
spreadable cheese, and occasionally a 1-  
liter bottle of milk. The European  
standard appears to be 1.5% milk.

My nutritionist told me that sugar is not a  
problem in European sausage since they  
use less salt and a very small amount of  
sugar, if any at all. All I had to do was to  
go to the meat counter and point at  
whatever looked good (cooked of course)  
and gesture as to the amount I required.  
Everyone was so cordial and  
accommodating even though we spoke  
different languages.

#5 - I stayed flexible for our trips to  
restaurants. On four occasions, my  
partner wanted to eat sit down ethnic  
meals. For two of these, I simply had tea  
and enjoyed the patrons and the ambiance  
of the restaurants. The other two times I  
brought my scale and measuring devices  
along with me and had no problem at all  
ordering from the menu.

#6 - I kept daily phone contact with my sponsor using a "call back card". On the Internet, I simply went to Google and entered "call back cards" and I got many references to telephone companies that sell this product. The call back card account allowed me to phone home at a greatly reduced rate (mine was 35 cents/minute). I arranged to phone my sponsor at 10 a.m. her time and 5 p.m. my time. I solicited phone numbers from OA members who were willing to take a phone call at about 10 a.m. Minnesota time. It was important for me to make sure I arranged this as close to my departure date as possible so that it was fresh in people's minds.

#7 - I made use of email. Every hotel and/or street corner cyber café has inexpensive access to email. With email, the time difference didn't matter as it would on the phone, and it was a really nice feeling to send and receive email messages of encouragement and support on a regular basis while I was abroad.

#8 - One of my greatest experiences was hunting down and attending an OA meeting in Vienna. International listings of meeting times, addresses and sometimes a contact person's phone number are listed on the OA World Service Office's website. I simply entered the cities I would be traveling to and found meetings that coincided with my itinerary. I attended a meeting in Vienna! The four young women attending the meeting truly impressed me with their dedication to abstinence and the program. It helped reinforce my own recovery. They were very pleased to have a foreign visitor and complimented me on my reading by saying "It is so great to hear the Big Book read by a native speaker." Even though the meeting was conducted in a foreign language, I found great value

simply spending time with fellow sufferers who are working on their recovery.

#9 - I made use of the many people in the fellowship who travel on a regular basis and who have developed finely honed skills for staying abstinent over multiple time zones and back. I asked for their experience, strength and hope around these issues and they freely gave it.

Above all else, I did not give up on travel. Learning how others live and work and play was a true joy, especially when I did it so abstinent and present. I hope this is a joy that you will experience too, if you have not already done so.

-Quinn (612) 760-0562

### *Farmington Needs Help*

*An organizing committee and committee chair are needed for the Farmington retreat, which normally takes place in summer. If you have any questions or for further information, please call Pat W. at 612-721-8908.*

**Ever wonder how Unity spends its money - the bulk of which comes from individual groups? Society Pages caught up with Unity's outgoing Treasurer, Mary T. who filled us in:**

**1. How much money does Intergroup take in each month?**

*We take in an average of \$733.00/month. The range is from a low of \$463.00 in April 2003 to a high of \$1,080 in May of 2003.*

**2. How is Intergroup money spent?**

We have an annual budget. The fiscal year for our Intergroup begins July 1 and ends June 30. On July 1 of 2003 the Unity Intergroup passed a budget allocating our money as follows:

~27% for the Society Pages Newsletter  
~6% for the Intergroup minutes  
~34% for Outreach activities  
~11% for rent, phones, website management, post office box  
~22% for World Service Conference and Region 4 Assembly

This is based on projected donations. We adjust as we go.

### **3. How is it decided where the Intergroup money will be spent?**

The Intergroup body decides where the money will go. Intergroup is composed of representatives from individual OA meetings in the Intergroup region. Since each meeting gets two representatives, and Unity Intergroup encompasses 53 meetings, there should be 106 representatives deciding on issues, including financial issues. However, only about 15 meetings send representatives to Intergroup.

### **4. What are Intergroup's biggest expenses?**

As you can see by the above allocation of resources, the most important thing to this Intergroup is Outreach. Our goal is to reach the still suffering compulsive overeater. As such, we've put our money where our mouth is. Outreach encompasses the Mpls. Women's Expo, the St. Paul Women's Expo, Gay Pride in June, any donations we make to new groups getting started, etc. The second largest budget item is the newsletter. That, too, is outreach. It's outreach to the recovering community and to those still suffering within our rooms. We also encourage people to leave old Society Pages in their doctor's and dentist's

offices, health clubs, and any other place they can think of to reach the still suffering compulsive overeater. We're a pretty thrifty group. We set our priorities and spend accordingly. We don't spend money we don't have.

### **5. How does Intergroup keep track of incoming and outgoing funds?**

The treasurer is in charge of that. It's pretty simple. We have an Intergroup checkbook. I have signing privileges and I write checks as needed. I've tried to get checks to people as soon as possible. All Intergroup work is voluntary and I figure if you've fronted money for OA, you should get reimbursed right away. Each month the treasurer gives a report of our financial standing at the Intergroup meeting. Once a year, the Intergroup body goes through a budget process, led by the treasurer.

### **6. Does Intergroup ever undergo a financial audit?**

Yes. Annually

### **7. What were the results of the last audit?**

Last year's audit came out very well. . The auditor liked what the 2002 convention treasurer used for documentation of money spent and he suggested all of the Intergroup accounts use it. I adopted that and have found it to be very useful. It's a great system. The outgoing board did a great job of documenting the coming and going of money.

### **8. On average, what is the health of Intergroup finances?**

Our bylaws state that we must always have \$1,500 set aside in a prudent reserve fund. One of the stories in the Big Book of AA says that we do the

footwork and however things turn out that must be God's will. I believe that. Whatever the checkbook balance is today for our Intergroup, it's exactly as it's supposed to be. As groups get stronger and have more and more people being abstinent and working the steps, the funds will flow just exactly the way they are supposed to. It's a really cool thing to watch.

### **9. How does someone become Treasurer?**

*You become a treasurer of Intergroup by first coming to the meetings as an intergroup rep. You must have served at least 3 months above the group level and have 90 days of abstinence. It helps to not be scared of numbers also, but you do not have to be a CPA. Also, keeping it simple is important. To translate the finance information into laymen's language is most important.*

*It's been an honor to serve this last year and please help me welcome Sharon R., the new treasurer of the Intergroup.*

*~Mary T.*

*And speaking of finances.....*

*The current treasurer of the state convention, Jennifer C., submitted the following report on the results of the 2003 convention finances:*

*The 2003 OA State Convention earned \$14,358.73. The revenue came from registration, meal payments, literature sales and hospitality sales. Expenses for the convention were as follows:*

*~Decorations \$169.51  
~Entertainment \$426.89  
~Hospitality \$60.76  
~Hotel Fees \$5,692.12  
~Literature \$3,177.66  
~Program Committee \$1,418.53  
~Public Relations \$30.50*

*~Registration \$1,307.51  
~Treasurer \$38.73.*

*Net income from the convention was \$2,036.52. Of that, \$1,000 went to the Hilton Hotel for the deposit for the 2004 convention and the remaining amount will be donated to Unity Intergroup.*

Newsletter submissions can be sent to [pmarsicano100@hotmail.com](mailto:pmarsicano100@hotmail.com)

*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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