

## *Society Pages*

The newsletter of Unity  
Intergroup

Sharing experience, strength, and  
hope

May 2004

### *Step Five*

*Admitted to God, to ourselves, and  
to another human being the exact  
nature of our wrongs*

#### A Clean Fifth Step

Even though I had done a number of fifth steps in another 12-step program, I had never done one without hiding behind the safety of food. This was to be my first really "sober" fifth step. I was directed to do it the way the Big Book instructs: "We pocket our pride and go to it, illuminating every twist of character, every dark cranny of the past" (pg. 75). I was prepared to tell my sponsor things that I did not even want to tell myself. As we went through the process, talking about my resentments, fears and sex conduct, the load I had been carrying around began to feel just a little lighter. When we were through, she asked

me if that was everything and I said yes. She left the room to get a drink of water, and when she came back, I said "There is one more thing" and I told her the one thing that I had rationalized and justified away in a previous Fifth Step and had decided that I never really needed to tell anyone. After I finally had told the truth, I felt transformed. I was finally right with "God and my fellows." I could look the world in the eye. I never again had to hide behind mountains of food to try to get relief from the feelings of self-hate and self-loathing. I was free. I was "walking hand in hand with the Spirit of the Universe" (pg. 75).

~Anonymous

#### A Careful Fifth Step Listener

I am currently preparing to hear a fifth step and want to share some suggestions I have been given as a fifth step receiver.

When I was preparing to give my first fifth step, I was extremely apprehensive and worried about what the person who had agreed to listen to me would think. I felt extremely vulnerable. I cried through most of it and was relieved when I was through. I have to admit that as a fifth step receiver, the feeling of anxiety is still there. I understand the place where my

sponsee is in her recovery. I know that she is intimidated and worried. The people pleasing side of me wants to make her feel at ease and take on some of her burden. But that is not my place; that is for her HP.

My responsibility is to be an instrument to bring her closer to her Higher Power. I am not there to fix her or to find out what's wrong. I am not her psychologist. I am not there to judge her or try to problem solve. My instincts are to do all of these things, but in order for her to experience the promises that follow Step Five, I have to take a different role.

I need to let her know that I will uphold her anonymity in every way. I need to explain to her that I am there merely as a listener and to encourage her to be thorough in her fifth step so that she may enter the Sunlight of the Spirit.

I will share some of my story and some of the items that I had included on my fourth and fifth steps to reassure her that I am just like she is, a compulsive overeater. I will also share that the reason I can live happy, joyous and free is because I went to any lengths with these steps and was in the same spot that she is in.

My role, most of all, is to listen. I need to listen to hear that my sponsee has taken ownership for all

the items on her fourth step. Without that accountability, the promises discussed in the Big Book after Step Five will not materialize in her life.

I will reassure her when she is done that I am trustworthy and that my continued recovery depends on anonymity, both a tool and a tradition in our program.

Finally, I will read with her page 75 of the Big Book..."Once we have taken this step, withholding nothing, we are delighted. We can look the world in the eye. We can be alone at perfect peace and ease. Our fears fall from us. We begin to feel the nearness of our Creator. We may have had certain spiritual beliefs, but now we begin to have a spiritual experience. The feeling that the drink (food) problem has disappeared will often come strongly. We feel we are on the Broad Highway, walking hand in hand with the Spirit of the Universe."

-Anonymous

### *A Clearer Picture of Myself*

I just gave away my fourth step yesterday. Today, I feel sad, vulnerable, almost shy in a way. It's as if I am being introduced to myself again after a long time of not being in touchy. I thought as I was writing my fourth step that I could see the big picture of my character defects, but by saying my resentments, fears, and harms out

loud, the biggest patterns emerged. It's like looking at those pictures where you have to focus for a long time before seeing the inside picture pop out at you.

There are two parts of me that popped out as we journeyed through the fifth step together, my sponsor and I. First of all, I know exactly what everyone should be doing in every situation. Apparently, I am all-knowing as far as everyone is concerned, and by the way, they are doing it ALL WRONG! In other words, I like to play God.

The other part is like the true self behind the God mask. I feel like I'm the great Wizard of Oz, and the real me behind the curtain is the one who seeks others' opinions in nearly all I do. I want my house clean not because I want to live in a tidy place but because people might stop by. I want to look nice not because I care about myself but because I want others to think I'm cool. I want to have sparkling conversations full of wit and intellect not because they are rewarding and stimulating but because I want people to think I am funny and bright.

If I think I can even begin to try to remove my God complex and self-seeking defects, I am overwhelmed by the prospect. They are SO big and such a part of me. Then I remember God is there for me.

My Higher Power wants only good for me. It feels like some of the resentments, fears, and harms have already been lifted. I need only pray and believe these defects will be removed, and my true self will pop out – ready to serve God and my fellows. –Paula W-L

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## Buffalo Retreat a Success!

Gratitude. That is what I felt following a wonderful weekend of fellowship and recovery at the Buffalo Retreat. There were participants from all over Minnesota and beyond who came together in the spirit of Unity and to hear the OA message of recovery. Beginning on Friday evening until Sunday morning, the speakers shared their experience, strength and hope with honesty, humor, and humility. We heard from OA's with many years in program and from those in program only a few years. The common message was that the solution to our disease is in the 12 steps and 12 traditions and it is here for anyone who wants to take it.

Many people shared in small groups, or during pitches at the end of the weekend, that the retreat was a new beginning or a boost to their recovery. I was touched by the depth of feeling and connections that were made and shared by so many. I am grateful to all who participated in planning and giving service for the retreat. The weekend was a true celebration of our primary purpose, which is to carry the message to the compulsive overeater who still suffers.

With gratitude, Sarah S.

Overeaters Anonymous  
*2004 Informational Open Meetings!*

If you are interested in learning more about Overeaters Anonymous, if you want to support a family member or friend in OA, or if you would just like to find out more about how OA works, please be our guest at one of the following informational meetings:

Saturday, May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2004  
9 AM  
Pax Christi Church  
12100 Pioneer Trail  
Eden Prairie, MN 55343

Saturday, September 25, 2004  
9 AM  
Pax Christi Church  
12100 Pioneer Trail  
Eden Prairie, MN 55343

Contacts:

Chris L. 952-945-0558  
Mark 952-937-0585  
[mark@arboretum.umn.edu](mailto:mark@arboretum.umn.edu)

These meetings will feature

- An explanation of abstinence and how it differs from dieting
- The tools we use to achieve abstinence and work the “program”
- A personal story of recovery achieved by working the Twelve Steps of Overeaters Anonymous
- A time for you to ask questions and get answers about how OA works

Although our regular meetings are considered “closed” (open only to those who consider themselves to be compulsive overeaters) these meetings are open to everyone who wants to learn more about OA. Please join us!

**The Farmington Retreat  
is Coming!**

“Many Symptoms – One Solution”  
July 23<sup>rd</sup> – 25<sup>th</sup>, 2004  
Mount Olivet Retreat Center  
7984 257<sup>th</sup> Street W.  
Farmington, MN 55024

Contact:  
Jason 952-942-2903  
Sarah L. 612-929-1211

**CORRECTION:**

The zip code on the registration flier is a misprint. The correct address to send your registration is:

Ellen W.  
1500 W. 55<sup>th</sup> St.  
Minneapolis, MN 55419

Mark Your Calendars!  
Minnesota OA State Convention

When: November 5 – 7, 2004  
Where: Mpls North Hilton  
Cost: To Be Determined  
Contacts:  
-Registration:  
Barb N 763-434-7260  
-Partial Scholarships:  
Etta 763-560-3493  
-To Volunteer:  
Eileen 651-688-9373  
Cheryl 651-786-0461



Each month, Society Pages features a step. In June, it will be Step Six, "Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character." Please send your submissions to [pmarsicano100@hotmail.com](mailto:pmarsicano100@hotmail.com).

Deadline is Friday, June 4, 2004.

Editor's Note: When submitting articles for the newsletter, please indicate clearly how you want your submission to be signed – first name and last initial, first name only, first and last initials, or simply anonymous. Thank You!