

# Society Pages

The Newsletter of  
Unity Intergroup February 2007

## Carrying the Message

### THE LANGUAGE OF UNITY

Over the last few months, Unity Intergroup has been discussing "The Language of Unity". We agreed that what we call ourselves and each other can serve to unite or divide us.

One of OA's strongest assets is that there is not just one way or one right way to work the program. What works for one person may not work for another. As a result, there is a need for (and room for) many different meeting formats under the OA umbrella. We are all part of OA, joined by the desires to stop eating compulsively and to carry the message of recovery to the still-suffering compulsive overeater. Meeting formats and the ways people work their programs may change. The steps, tools, traditions, and concepts of OA, however, do not change.

Unity Intergroup wants to make sure that it sends the message clearly—**we are all part of Overeaters Anonymous, and none of us is modifying OA.** Sending this message is especially important in our publications and communications. We may attend meetings with different formats, agreed upon by the individual groups' conscience. We do not, however, belong to different types of OA, nor do we wish to or need to. The framework of OA is broad enough for us all. Therefore, in our language we do not want to directly or inadvertently give the impression that any of us are modifying OA.

It is with this intent that the following motion was considered and passed at the January Unity Intergroup meeting:

"There are not different kinds of OA. There are, however, different meeting formats such as HOW meetings, Step meetings, BB Study

meetings, Traditions meetings, and Literature Discussion meetings. In Unity Intergroup publications and communications, OA will always be referred to as OA. If distinctions are wanted or needed they should refer to meeting descriptors or meeting formats. Meeting descriptors would be day, time, location, or group name. For example, a meeting could be referred to as the Tuesday morning meeting, the Tuesday morning HOW format meeting, or the Tuesday Minneapolis meeting."

This motion was passed in order to provide guidelines for OA's to differentiate groups within our fellowship, should the need or want arise. The template is very simple—day of week, time of day, location, meeting format. (For example, the Thursday 7:30pm Minnetonka Big Book Study meeting or the Tuesday 9:30 am Minneapolis HOW meeting (using the word format is not essential).) This motion's goal is to provide a framework so that we do not end up implying, by using terms such as Traditional OA, OA-HOW, and Regular OA in Unity Intergroup publications and communications, that we modify OA. After all, "our...personal recovery depends upon OA unity." (Tradition One, OA 12 Steps and 12 Traditions.)

### Links

List of Local Meetings [www.overeaters.org](http://www.overeaters.org)  
Region 4 Web Site [www.oaregion4.org](http://www.oaregion4.org)  
World Service Web Site [www.oa.org](http://www.oa.org)



## Receiving the Newsletter at Home

Society Pages is available via the Internet or e-mail. Go to [www overeaters.org](http://www overeaters.org) to download a copy of current or past newsletters. A hard copy of Society Pages is available by subscription for individuals outside the Unity Intergroup region. Please see enclosed subscription form for details.



## March Society Pages

The March Society Pages will feature Step Three; "Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him." The Saturday, 8:00a.m. Circle Pines group has volunteered to write for that issue. Articles on the Step or a personal story are still accepted from other OA members, however. Please indicate if it is OK to include your name with your article and send your contributions to [ellen\\_oa@hotmail.com](mailto:ellen_oa@hotmail.com) for publication in Society Pages.

**The deadline for submission of articles is 12:00 noon on Thursday, February 22, 2007.**



## PI/Outreach Committee

The Public Information Group and the Outreach Committee meet just before the Intergroup meetings at the same location from 11a.m.-12:15p.m. Join us and help find ways to reach others who suffer from food addiction

### We Need You!

Contact Nea D. at 612-227-3854 or Robin H. at 612-724-5506 for more information.

**Step 1**  
**We admitted we were**  
**powerless over food, that our**  
**lives had become**  
**unmanageable.**

## This Is a We Program

I came to O.A. because I was desperate over my weight. My self-esteem had plummeted and I didn't know where else to turn.

I struggled with the steps and tools. I finally followed a food plan, became abstinent for a year and half and lost all my weight. I felt great.

However the obsession that I could now eat as a "normal eater" returned. The Big Book says self-confidence is our greatest liability. Cunning, baffling and powerful, my progressive disease was waiting for me.

After a year I had steadily gained weight, felt isolated and miserable and completely helpless. I had bottomed out. I now became willing to go to any lengths to get my recovery back.

I am on day 45. I realize this is a "we" program and I depend upon the fellowship. I am truly teachable and want to thank you all.

~Debbie M.

*Editor's note: This article was inadvertently skipped in the January Society Pages.*



## February 24th is Unity Day.

Unity Day recognizes the strength of the Fellowship worldwide. On the last Saturday in February, (February 24, 2007) at 11:30 a.m. pacific standard time (that's 1:30 p.m. Central standard time), OA members pause to reaffirm the strength inherent in OA's unity.

## **COME ONE! COME ALL! SHUFFLE OFF TO BUFFALO MARCH 30, 31 and APRIL 1!**

I am going to the Buffalo retreat this year. It will be the 4<sup>th</sup> year that I treat myself to a wonderful time away. I really enjoy going to the retreat for several reasons.

First of all, it's fun! There is a wonderful energy and light about the whole time. Secondly, the speakers are fabulous! I need a boost because Convention can only carry me so far into my year. I find that I really need a shot in the arm as winter drags on. Thirdly, I have found some wonderful fellowship there. Meeting people from all around the metro area and out state is a HUGE gift!

Lastly, I can have my own agenda and decide my own time for things. It is a GRAND thing to go away and have someone else cook wonderful abstinent meals for me, engage in uninterrupted conversation with people, and not even make my bed if I don't want to!

I hope you consider gifting yourself and going to the Buffalo Retreat this year. I will bet you won't regret it! **The Buffalo Retreat is March 30, 31, and April 1. Cost is \$130 before February 14 and \$140 after that date. Scholarships are available! For more information, visit the OA Unity website at [www.overeaters.org](http://www.overeaters.org) or look for flyers in Society Pages.**

**Step 2  
Came to believe that a Power  
greater than ourselves could  
restore us to sanity.**

Hi. I am a sugar addict and a compulsive overeater who has recently re-joined the OA fellowship after a two and a half year relapse. Even though I got quite thin during the two and a half years I was in program, I believe the main reason I remained unhappy and kept slipping was because I wasn't willing to surrender my will to that of my Higher Power. That surrender included diligently using the tools of the program.

In order to take Step 2, I had to finally realize that I was insane in so far as food was concerned and probably in other areas as well. For years, I looked around the OA meeting rooms and told myself that I wasn't as bad off as the other folks. Their rock bottoms seemed so much lower than mine, so how could I really be so insane? I am now able to see and acknowledge that I have no sanity in regard to food decisions -- the "research" I conducted (80 pound weight gain) during my relapse has taught me that.

During relapse, I didn't want to go to affairs or celebrations because I had nothing to wear and/or I felt ugly in what did barely fit. So, in my misery, I overate. That is true insanity. As a result of a few G-d-inspired conversations and events, I understood that I needed to come back home to OA. After consuming just ONE abstinent, weighed and measured meal, which had been committed to my sponsor, I felt my self-esteem being restored. For the past two months, I have not acted compulsive or insane with my food because I have a plan and I follow the tools of the OA program.

At every OA meeting I attend, I witness the miracles of the 12-step program when the sponsors all stand up and briefly state their abstinence stats. Each and every sponsor attributes their recovery to their Higher Power, whether they call Him G-d or simply use the fellowship itself as a Power greater than themselves. The point is that, on my own, I can't lick my addiction. But, when I am willing to let go of my will and my control, only then can my Higher Power restore me to sanity and freedom.

~With blessings, Jill

## The Miracle of Sanity

My insanity was the compulsion to eat and the food obsession which dominated my thinking and pressed against my mind most of my waking hours. I had little chance to speculate on what sanity might look or feel like, because the insanity of food addiction had become the most powerful and familiar force in my life. When I became desperate enough to admit my utter powerlessness to help myself, I sought out others who had found a way out of this disease by leaning into a Power greater than themselves. My disease had become so hopelessly powerful by this time that it took a leap of faith to believe that **anything** could be more powerful than my compulsion to eat, and my inability to stop once I started.

When I saw the joy and peace which radiated from the faces of friends I had known for years in OA—friends who had struggled and failed to stay abstinent, just like I had—I knew there was a Power greater than any of us which had allowed the impossible to happen. Their physical recovery was dramatic, but it was the sense of freedom I saw in their faces, the fact that they were actually **happy** without a food ‘fix,’ that was a miracle to me. I knew, without any doubt, that I could never make this happen in my life. I had thousands of experiences that had taught me I could never win against the compulsion to eat.

While I had a vague sense of a God of some kind, it wasn’t the kind of power which could and would actually help me out of the hell of food addiction. I came to believe in that kind of Power through the miracle others had experienced, and through my willingness to do what they had done to find recovery. The gift of desperation left me ready to do anything, to give up anything to escape the agony of living in active addiction—it left me willing to open my mind to the **possibility** that a Power greater than myself could and would relieve me of the insanity of compulsive eating if I sought help from that Power. I didn’t know it for sure—I just recognized that a Power had made it possible in the transformed lives of friends I’d known for decades in the rooms of OA. Maybe it could happen to me, too.

That was almost five years ago, and my faith in that Power has steadily deepened as all aspects of my life have been transformed in ways I never could have imagined, let alone brought about. It is only through that Power that these deep changes have been possible in my life, that four years and nine months of continuous, weighed and measured abstinence has been possible, 24 hours at a time.

What has happened to me is clearly described on page 50 of the Big Book: “...since they have come to believe in a Power greater than themselves, to take a certain attitude toward that Power, and to do certain simple things, there has been a revolutionary change in their way of living and thinking.” Taking the Twelve Steps lets me receive that Power one day at a time—without that Power, ‘ole cunning, baffling, and powerful is waiting to take me back into that special hell we compulsive overeaters know so well.

~Victoria V.

## Talk to God

I asked my sponsor what she did to make it through feelings of loneliness, anger, frustration and sadness. She said, “I talk to God. I tell God exactly what’s going on and how I’m feeling, just like I would a friend.” Her answer has brought me to a closer relationship with my Higher Power.

At first when I tried this, I simply vented - yelling and screaming about whatever was upsetting me. This got the feelings out, but I still struggled. And the awful feelings didn’t go away. Recently, however, I’ve found a new way of making these venting sessions into a prayer. After saying all of the gritty details of my heart and mind, I ask my Higher Power to help me to open my tight fisted heart enough to let Love come into me. Before long, the heaviness is lifted and I am able to continue on with life with more ease and joy. It is a miracle, a strength I can always depend on to carry me back to Love.

~Allison R.

## A Most Wonderful Blessing

In the Big Book on page 180, Doctor Bob says, "It is a most wonderful blessing to be relieved of the terrible curse with which I was afflicted." I know how he feels. I am truly grateful for each day that I am relieved of my obsession with food.

Though I didn't or couldn't see it at the time, food ruled my every move. Every decision somehow involved food. I attended or skipped events based on the availability of food. I didn't want to stay anywhere for long, because I wouldn't be free to eat until I was at home or until I was alone.

Throughout the day, I would wait for my next opportunity to eat. At work, instead of participating in meetings, I'd be thinking about what the cafeteria would have for lunch, or an afternoon snack. In some meetings, the only notes I took was a grocery list!

At home, if anyone got between me and my food, I would chase them away with harsh words. I wasn't aware that that was my goal. I felt they were bugging me for some unknown reason, and I'd say something hurtful which made them walk away. I'd grab something to eat to "settle my nerves," because they had upset me!

I was what the Big Book calls 'the bewildered type'. I had a childhood faith, and as my problems grew, I came to believe God had abandoned me. I couldn't find relief in my church, so I stopped attending. Prayers did not fix my problems, so I stopped praying.

It took many months and many assignments to open my mind to see my own defiance. Step 2, page 31 says, "At no time had we asked what God's will was for us; instead we had been telling Him what it ought to be...Belief meant reliance, not defiance."

It was a struggle for me to pray for God's will, not mine. I had to give up my lifelong idea that self-sufficiency had saved me from harm. I truly believed that my distance from God and people was saving me from pain. Self-reliance pushed my weight up to 340 pounds. I knew in my heart my solution was not working.

I set aside my resentment, my self-pity, and most of all my fear, and got down on my knees. A most wonderful thing happened to me – I was

relieved from my bondage of self and my obsession with food.

Today my Higher Power has relieved me of nearly 100 pounds. I didn't do this on my own! To start the process I had to open my mind, and come to believe that a Power greater than myself could restore me to sanity. Today I attend events because I want to connect with people, and I no longer pre-eat or post-eat. I am grateful for the love and support I receive from the Fellowship which has helped me put down the food, and challenged me to give my problems to God, and live with His solution, not mine.

~Anonymous

## A Magnificent Journey

Came to believe – that powerful idea has changed for me over time.

As the years go by my belief and awareness have deepened. I realize how much God is doing for me that which I could not do for myself. In the beginning, I clung to the desire to be self-sufficient and independent. I wanted to believe that if I just knew everything I needed to know then I could get this food problem under control – even as my binges were escalating and my weight soaring -- again. I was the classic example of doing the same thing and expecting a different result – like the jaywalker in the Big Book.

When I finally became willing I not only recognized I was powerless, I felt totally hopeless. I was teachable. I did what I was told instead of what I wanted to do. My first task was to get clean; so my first higher powers were my nutritionist and my sponsor. I did not argue about or manipulate my food plan in any way.

Being clean and sober from my food addiction brought awareness, on a new level, the depths of my spiritual desolation. I was disconnected from family, friends and any God of my understanding. I had long ago given up any faith in a personal God -- any faith that anyone or anything could relieve me of addiction – so I had to do it myself. Those last years of compulsive eating were a living hell – I did not want to eat compulsively – I tried everything I could to stop it but nothing worked.

The Big Book in several places tells me that all I had to do is seek God's help and I would be helped – I would be relieved. But I had to be willing to surrender and ask (without conditions or expectations.) First, surrender the food – then, surrender my ideas, attitudes and assumptions. As a result of that willingness, born of desperation, I have been relieved. And I have found a relationship with a God of my understanding. The more I surrender, the freer I become. The more I am willing to change, the more I see the possibility of becoming the person I was meant to be. As I accept life on life's terms, I find peace and serenity in difficult situations.

Recovery is a journey – a magnificent journey -- one you should not miss. For me it started with the willingness to put down the food and work the steps. My step 2 started with the smallest of insights regarding my need for a God of my understanding, fueled by desperation to do anything to be relieved of the relentless food obsession that had been driving me for so long. It was all that was required at that time. As the years have passed, one day at a time my willingness has increased and my desperation has changed into gratitude and wonder at the gift I have been given.

~Anonymous

### Saying Uncle

A great part of the 12 steps is no one defines a higher power for me. As a result, the program is open for everyone. There is one stipulation: the higher power I define cannot be me.

During my childhood, I believed, but I never surrendered. I really believed that if I worked hard enough, wanted it bad enough or set my mind to it, I could accomplish any goal I was aiming for.

I wore the mask that I had it all together. Who, in control, would allow themselves to weigh 240 pounds and feel so out-of-whack with food? Step one helped me accept that I am a compulsive overeater.

Step 2 is saying "uncle" or admitting defeat. I cannot do it myself. I need help. The people in the rooms of O.A. were the ones who could help, for they had been where I was and had the solution. The sponsors in the circle had serenity and peace along with a sparkle of hope in their eyes. My O.A. fellows were the tangible higher power that I could physically see, hear and touch. Granted they were not God, but I do believe God works through the people that help me stay sober one day at a time.

A foundation was built using this spiritual program (the tools and the steps) and surrender came out of it in Step Two. Today I relinquish my food plan to my nutritionist and my sponsor. I choose to pause and ask for help with life decisions. I use the program's tools to process trials, feelings and everyday occurrences. I have a real connection today with a Godly Higher Power and He is active and alive in my life today. I trust in God's plan for me and that He is in control at all times. I'm grateful for this step because once I got out of the way then the miracles of recovery could really happen.

~Shannon S.

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