

# *Expressions of Unity*

The Newsletter of Unity Intergroup

[www.overeaters.org](http://www.overeaters.org)

**STEP TWELVE: “Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these Steps, we tried to carry this message to compulsive overeaters and to practice these principles in all our affairs.”**

## Service Saves

### Elections!!

**Join us on  
January 12th  
for the 2019  
elections and  
help guide the  
direction of  
Unity  
Intergroup!**

### HOT LINE

**Call our  
24/7 hotline at  
612-377-1600  
and one of our  
volunteers will  
return your call.**

I first came to the fellowship in November of 2004--the week of Thanksgiving. I had a year of uncontrolled, bottom-dwelling, addictive eating, after “success” losing almost 90 pounds my way, which was neither soft or easy. My weight was scooting past 200, gaining back over in less than a year half of what I had lost over a five-year period. I knew that I would never make it through those holidays without well surpassing my top known weight of 260. On a Monday night, I came into the room in a church, sobbing, hopeless, and gratefully teachable.

My first sponsor, who no longer is in the rooms (as far as I know), said, “Do you want to try to weigh and measure and commit your food for me for a week?” I was shaky, desperate, and for some unfathomable reason, I said yes. I can’t say I was abstinent that week, but every day I her my food for the day, unclean and imperfect as it was, and she was there, like a steady lighthouse guiding my ship to port. The next week I decided that the peace in my head over food that I experienced over Thanksgiving week was enough to trust that this program, this woman, and the process of the working the 12 steps. At the meeting I heard, “Any service, no matter how small, helps a fellow sufferer.” I could barely make eye contact with those glowing, radiant, confident OA members, but I could put away chairs, heat water for some tea and instant coffee, and come early to get the chairs set up. I volunteered to time speakers at the meeting, to come early, doing this work to help the meeting be there for the next newcomer. At the time I didn’t think what I was doing was that important, but less than a month later, at Christmas I felt shaky. I would be weighing and measuring with my family, people who ate like addicts. Could I make it through, especially with still some solid and clinging resentments that I gripped like a security blanket against the very people I was about to sit down and eat Christmas dinner with. My sponsor heard me and said, very clearly, “You are going there to be of service to your family. Do service like you do at the meeting.”

That first Christmas dinner was painful. I had hurriedly gotten my food weighed and measured in the kitchen, while the rest of the family were just starting to sit down. I brought my plate over and sat down and started to eat. My brother looked at me and sneered, “Can’t you wait for the rest of us?” I had an abstinent bite in my mouth and my throat tightened with sadness. I couldn’t swallow, feeling the tears starting to fill. But I didn’t show my feelings are hurt, I swallowed, put my fork down and waited until the rest of my family was served, and resumed after they had all started eating. In my head I heard my sponsor say, “Be of service”. After

dinner, I volunteered to help with the dishes and clean up the kitchen, so my sister could rest and hang out with my kids. My brother and I washed dishes and laughed, forgetting that awkward, painful moment at the beginning of dinner.

I have been luckily and gratefully in this program for over 14 years with almost 12 years of back-to-back abstinence. Service is remarkable. The spirit of the 12<sup>th</sup> Step is love; we must always reach out to those who share our compulsion, and those who do not, with the hand of service and love. We must also let others help us. I have gone through lots of Christmases since that first one, and some have been harder than others. There have been times when my presence was all the service I needed to extend. The Christmas after my brother died, was hard, as was the holidays after my husband passed away. But through celebration or loss, we can be abstinent, as service to others and to ourselves. Service is action and requires willingness, not ability. There are times when its hard to muster either the willingness or the ability to face pain. In those times, we need to let people do service for us. When my husband was ill, fellows came to my house at the holidays to help decorate and clean. They made food, not just abstinent meals for me, but for my kids. They also helped my kids with paper routes, homework and drove them to school. We all need to exchange service. I am grateful for the service that I can give and that I can receive.

Thank you for your service!

Anonymous

## It's the Principle of the Thing

Both Step 12 and Tradition 12 mention the principles of the program. Step 12 says we “practice these principles in all our affairs” and Tradition 12 says we “place principles before personalities”. Just what are these principles and what does it mean to incorporate them into our lives?

I was in the program a long time before I discovered that there is a principle associated with each of the 12 Steps. In order the principles are: honesty, hope, faith, courage, integrity, willingness, humility, love, justice, perseverance, spiritual awareness and service. Looking over these principles my 1<sup>st</sup> reaction was, “who can possibly be so perfect?” Then I was reminded of the word practice. Practice means “to perform or work at repeatedly so as to become proficient”. Just as one practices the piano, we can, to the best of our ability, apply these principles in our everyday affairs until they become habit.

It is perhaps easiest to practice these principles in our groups and with our OA fellows. The greater challenge may be in our respective homes, work places, civic organizations, places of worship and communities.

Can we be humble when challenged by a colleague who has an air of superiority? Are we willing to do the work that does not put us in the spotlight? Are we courageous enough to abstain from gossip or to speak out against racism and hatred? Do we foster hope in the hearts of those who are troubled, disillusioned or defeated? Are we courteous to the cranky bank teller and patient with the slow driver? Are we generous with praise and slow to judge? Can we persevere in the program even in the face of adversity? Do we reach out to our partners and our children with kindness and affection without waiting for a “reason” to do so? Just offering a smile or a kind word can be enough to change one’s attitude and perspective. ..The other party may benefit too!

If practicing the principles in all your affairs seems like a daunting exercise, remember what the Big Book says, “Do not be discouraged. No one among us has been able to maintain anything like perfect adherence to these principles. We are not saints. The point is that we are willing to grow along spiritual lines. The principles we have set down are guides to progress. We claim spiritual progress rather than spiritual perfection.”

Anonymous - Rochester

## Willing to Show Me the Way

After I had blown diets and started eating again, I never really thought twice about it. It was just another failure of my willpower, and proof that I was doomed to be a fat person forever. I didn't blame the diet or the counselors at the commercial diet centers. I blamed myself and moved on. But after my first experience with OA and abstinence, there was never any looking back to a diet again. I knew that what I had heard about addiction and compulsive eating was true to every fiber of my being. I wasn't ready to surrender immediately, however. It took some time to find OA HOW and to find abstinence, but from the first OA meeting I attended, I never enjoyed compulsive eating again. Never again did it seem like my "normal". That I could stuff myself and not think about what I was doing to my body and soul. My disease got called out. It had a name. There were others who behaved the way I did around food, and they had found a way out. I could not erase this from my mind. The seed was definitely planted, the ugly beast recognized. Other people, friends, family, doctors, they didn't know this monster lived inside of me, but people in recovery did. They told me I was not unique, and that I was beyond the help of any diet. They also told me my weakness, if I could recognize it, admit it, and then surrender it, would be my saving grace. No one had ever understood like they did, and no one ever offered me a solution like they did. Not only that, but they were willing to show me the way. No strings attached. No shame. I was never the same again. This realization took all the fun out of being reckless and carefree with food and replaced it with the grim reality of my situation. They helped me prepare to surrender. They changed my life.

Lori A, Minnesota

## 22 Strategies to Curtail Overeating During the Holidays or How to Nourish Ourselves Without Food

1. Have a plan everyday: A food plan, an exercise plan, an action plan, some kind of plan.
2. Stay conscious: Be aware of what you are thinking, feeling, doing, eating, wanting, and needing
3. Don't arrive anywhere "just starving". Eat a good food item before you go out.
4. Stick to one plate. Don't go back for seconds.
5. Prepare to face rich foods, but don't even look. Remember sometimes it's the eye, the hand, the mouth and the process bypasses the brain.
6. Move your body: A little bit everyday at least.
7. Don't be concerned with weight loss at this time: Maintaining is good enough.
8. Focus on the joy of the gathering. Keep yourself people focused, not food-focused.
9. \*Very important: Stay mindful of unpleasant emotions surfacing. Plan to attend to them later, and do attend to them. Don't go home and eat over them. Write them out, talk to an OA friend, or talk to your sponsor.
10. Carve out some quality alone time to decompress and fill back up every single day. If you are in a high-stress situation, take time out- go for a walk, call a friend, take a break.
11. Use all or some of our tools everyday. They are wonderful help at our fingertips.
12. Practice meditating: 5, 10, 15 minutes a day.
13. Realize overeating is a drive within us and very powerful- the same as a drive to smoke, a drive to spend money, a drive to gamble, a drive to drink. We have many drives; be aware of them.

14. Absolutely have a daily quiet time every day, especially first thing in the morning. Get up 15 minutes early if you need to.

15. Buy a small notebook for your “Happy Holidays and Recovery Manual”, and use it daily to record your victories, and your challenges, your fears and your gratitudes, your plans for the day, your food journal. Write, write, write. Don’t eat, eat, eat.

16. Learn to check in with yourself every hour on the hour.

17. Let go right away of any “food mistakes” we may have made. Make peace with food this holiday season and eliminate self-defeating thoughts completely.

18. Avoid guilt and shame over food or people. *No matter what.*

19. We need to practice, practice, practice nurturing ourselves without food. Use scented candles, music, cat naps, a warm fire, a warm bath, massages, aromatherapy, seeing old friends, a good book, a hobby, puzzles, Sudokus, and for women: a manicure, and a pedicure.

20. \*Also very important: If you are comfortable, talk to your hostess about your food intentions and needs if you are invited out to dinner and you are anxious and concerned about it. Trust she will understand.

21. Don’t criticize, condemn, or complain.

22. Use role-playing to face difficult situations *ahead of time.*





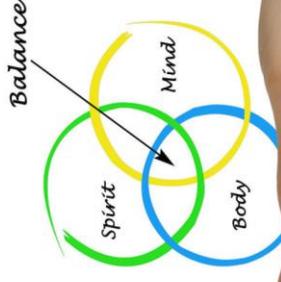
Full day workshop presented  
*in the spirit of OA's 12 Steps and 12 Traditions*

# "Body Image: A Change in Time"

Being at peace with your body – physical, emotional, and spiritual recovery

*Workshop*

Saturday – January 26, 2019  
8:30 AM – 3:00 PM



*Suggested Donation: \$15*

Please make check payable to: *Unity Intergroup*

*Mail Checks to:*

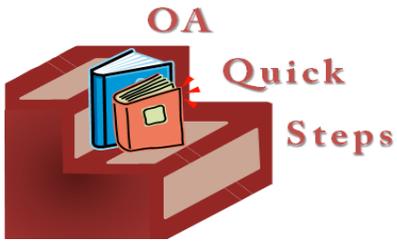
Unity Intergroup  
3208 West Lake Street #45  
Minneapolis, MN 55416

**Contact: Bob S**  
**763-229-6196**

First Congregational Church  
1923 Third Ave South  
Downstairs  
Anoka, MN 55303



**\*Bring 2 photos – either  
on your phone/or hard copy  
- (it is for a writing exercise)**



**Are you new to OA or just need help getting through the Steps?**

**Completing this two-part  
OA Quick Steps Workshop  
may be just the answer.**

**Dates: Saturday, February 2, 2019  
and Saturday, February 16, 2019  
Time: 9:00 am to 12:30 pm**

**Location**

**Living Spirit Methodist Church  
4501 Bloomington Ave.  
Minneapolis, MN 55407**

**One of the promises in the AA Big Book is that before you're done with Step Nine, the obsession is lifted. Increase your chance of success—join the OA Quick Steps series, get abstinent**

To register, contact Pat at 612-804-4563 or godhpandme@gmail.com. Registration is required as class size is limited.

You will need to have a sponsor who can help you through the 4th and 5th Steps. (We can help you find someone.)

There are no fees for this workshop, but we will be collecting a 7th Tradition donation.

Time commitment is two, Saturday sessions, plus homework. **Expect to be very busy** working on recovery for these weeks!

**The purpose of this workshop is to get people through the 12 Steps quickly, to help people obtain a successful, life-long recovery, and aid in retention and growth of recovered compulsive eaters in OA.**



The January 2019 **Expressions of Unity** will focus on Step One: “We admitted we were powerless over food-that our lives had become unmanageable.”

Although one meeting or group generally sponsors each newsletter, articles from anyone are welcome. Please indicate if it is okay to print your name with your article and email your contributions by December 30 to [ExpressionsOfUnity2018@gmail.com](mailto:ExpressionsOfUnity2018@gmail.com).

**Be Part of Unity Intergroup in Action!**

The next meeting is December 8th from 12:30-2:30 at the Sumner Library, 611 Van White Memorial Blvd Minneapolis, MN 55411. All OA members are welcome to join us in person or on the phone (515) 604-9700

Access code: 896976#

**Intergroup Board**

Chair - Cathy G.	612-867-9804	<a href="mailto:cathyunityig@gmail.com">cathyunityig@gmail.com</a>
Vice Chair - Betty C.	+1 (763)-535-3939	<a href="mailto:books1216@gmail.com">books1216@gmail.com</a>
Treasurer - Paula R.	612-387-6970	<a href="mailto:PaulaR.UnityIG@gmail.com">PaulaR.UnityIG@gmail.com</a>
Secretary - Corey H	952-994-3989	<a href="mailto:corey.unityig@gmail.com">corey.unityig@gmail.com</a>

**New Storage Unit**

Unity Intergroup has a new storage unit. Lock Up Self Storage located at 701 North 7th St. in Minneapolis, MN 554511.

Contact Betty C. for more info

763-535-3939

**Mark Your Calendar...for 2018**

December 8	Intergroup Meeting
December 15	Newcomer Meeting
January 26	Body Image Workshop

All articles written are the opinion of the writer and not of OA as a whole or of the *Expressions of Unity* newsletter.



**Unity Intergroup** meets the **second** Saturday of each month at Sumner Library.

**Newcomer Meeting** is the **third** Saturday of each month at Sumner Library. All are welcome.

**Newsletter articles** are due the **week before the end** of each month.